



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 139 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[English]

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

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

POTASH INDUSTRY

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the proud representative of the Palliser riding, I know first-hand the economic impact of the fertilizer industry in Saskatchewan and indeed across Canada. Canada's potash sector accounts for 40% of the world's potash trade and contributes more than \$6 billion annually to our economy. This sector delivers more than 25 million metric tonnes annually to feed our country and the world, in addition to employing 12,000 Canadians in high-skill, high-wage jobs.

I am proud to relay that my riding boasts some of these jobs at agri-retailers like Avonlea's Wigmore Crop Production Products and at facilities for multinationals, like Yara and the Mosiac Company.

Our government is proud to support the fertilizer industry and will continue to contribute to this vital sector of our economy.

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BLOOD SUPPLY

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, in the 1980s, the worst preventable health crisis in Canada's history occurred when 30,000 Canadians were infected with HIV and hepatitis C. Thousands died, because profit took precedence over public health. The Krever Commission subsequently reported that blood is a public resource, and donors should never be paid.

The Ontario government is poised to pass the voluntary blood donor act to prevent private companies from paying blood donors. However, the Conservative government is not taking action. For example, in 2012, Thunder Bay lost the only stand-alone blood

plasma clinic in Canada, and 30 skilled employees were fired. Now Canada may be forced to import plasma that has been paid for, outsourcing jobs and putting our blood supply at risk.

I call on the government to promise Canadians that it will not license any private pharmaceutical company to pay for plasma or blood.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government chose to cut services to Canadians and use the resulting surplus to reduce taxes for wealthy families. Single-parent families will not benefit from income splitting. They are simply left out.

According to the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal, one-third of families on the island are single-parent families. In my riding alone, 6,000 families will not benefit from this measure.

[English]

The Conservatives' proposal on income splitting will not help a single mom trying to make ends meet. Not just that, it will do nothing for the vast majority of middle-class Canadian families. In fact, 86% of families will not get a dime.

New Democrats have concrete proposals that would help millions of Canadians, such as a plan for affordable child care and a federal minimum wage.

[Translation]

Canadians can see which side of the House is really working to make life more affordable for their family, as we will demonstrate in 2015.

* * *

[English]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday morning Parliamentarians were privileged to attend a special ceremony at the National War Memorial to commemorate the commitment and sacrifice of our incredible men and women in uniform and to honour the memory of all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of Canada.

Statements by Members

Next week we will be back in our ridings to attend local Remembrance Day services. This year I am honoured to be joining veterans, community leaders, and youth at a Remembrance Day ceremony in Saskatoon, where I will lay a wreath to honour those who have given their lives for our country.

Saskatoon's Remembrance Day ceremony is one of the largest indoor Remembrance Day services in Canada. It provides an opportunity for the residents of Saskatoon and surrounding areas to commemorate the sacrifice of those who have died for our freedom.

I encourage all residents of Saskatoon and surrounding areas to participate in our Remembrance Day ceremony to honour the fallen and commemorate the brave.

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to recognize all those who participated, in any number of ways, in the municipal elections held on Monday, November 3, in P.E.I. This, in fact, was the first time all incorporated municipalities held elections at the same time.

I would especially like to congratulate all the candidates themselves. Whether they were successful in winning their wards or not, democracy is the victor. Running as a candidate at any level of government is both a challenging and rewarding experience.

My sincere thanks to all who ran for putting their names on the ballot, for putting their ideas forward in an open debate, and for trying to enhance and improve their communities. A high number of quality individuals put their names forward, and each and every one of them should be proud of their efforts to engage, contribute, serve, and better their communities.

To conclude, I am sure I have the support of the House in wishing all candidates, new and re-elected members, all the best in their duties going forward.

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●(1410)

UKRAINE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just one week after the Ukrainian parliamentary elections, the Kremlin-backed terrorist groups of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics held pseudo-elections in eastern Ukraine that were illegal and illegitimate. Ballots were cast in the presence of armed men, and information was actively spread that those who did not come to vote would be deemed disloyal and judged according to martial law.

Pensioners were told that to receive their pensions, they would have to come to voting precincts to confirm their residence.

The National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine has said that the results of the election have no meaning. There were no official voters lists. Russian soldiers voted in Donetsk and Luhansk, and there was voting in Russia.

The Security Service of Ukraine has said that these events in terrorist-controlled Donetsk and Luhansk were acts of violence against Ukrainian citizens.

This election was a farce, conducted by coercion, at gunpoint, and was in violation of the expression of the people's true will. Canada will never recognize this election and continues to call on President Putin to stop the illegal occupation and invasion of Ukraine.

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REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like many families on Remembrance Day, we remember those who are serving, modern veterans, and those who went before them.

My two grandfathers both served in the First World War. Just before 1914, my one grandfather lost both his wife and child in childbirth. He was among the first to join the war effort. He entered the war a private, and through battlefield commissions, ended the war a Lieutenant-Colonel.

My other grandfather, a minister, was a pacifist and refused to bear arms, but he believed in the war effort and spent much of the war as a stretcher-bearer on the front lines.

The story of my grandfathers is the story of many Canadians. They were very different men, with very different beliefs, but both stepped forward in the service of our country, our people, and our values when they were threatened.

On behalf of my constituents, from all different backgrounds and beliefs, I would like to thank our active personnel and veterans and their families for their service and their sacrifice.

Lest we forget.

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CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize 33 youthful delegates who have visited with us for the past seven weeks. They are here, in members' offices, to gain a valuable perspective on Canada's most important democratic institution: the Parliament of Canada.

These young people, representing the Canada-Ukraine parliamentary program, embody the highest ideals of achievement and community service. They are the future leaders of Ukraine. They are young people like Mykhailo Oleksiienko, in my office.

Canada and Ukraine are inextricably linked forever by prior migration. Fully one in 30 Canadians are of Ukrainian descent, as are my wife, daughters, and granddaughters. Ukraine holds a special place in the hearts of Canadians. Canada was the first country in the western world to accord diplomatic recognition in 1991 to an independent Ukraine.

As the young emissaries depart, we wish them well and say to them, *Mnohaya Leeta*.

*Statements by Members***WORLD WAR II VETERAN**

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mathew Bunko was born March 9, 1918, on the family farm near Humboldt, Saskatchewan. He purchased his own land in the fall of 1941. Then, on November 4 of that year, he was called to serve his country.

After basic training in Winnipeg and Nanaimo as a private with the Rocky Mountain Rangers, he left for action to recapture Kiska Island, in the north Pacific, on August 15, 1943. After six months, he was sent overseas with the South Saskatchewan Regiment to England, Holland, and Germany, until his discharge on January 24, 1946.

He returned home to farm, and on October 10, 1948, he married Myrna Kaminski. Together they raised five children on their farm.

Mathew and Myrna Bunko both reside at St. Mary's Villa, the long-term care facility in Humboldt. They recently celebrated their 66th anniversary.

The Parliament and people of Canada thank Mr. Bunko for his service. We thank him for what he was willing to give, where he was willing to go, and what he was willing to do.

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●(1415)

[Translation]

MEDIA LITERACY WEEK

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are right in the middle of Media Literacy Week, an annual event led by MediaSmarts and the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Activities will take place across the country until Friday to help Canadian youth understand the importance of using social media well.

We all know that digital platforms are powerful tools. They can promote worthy causes, but unfortunately, they can also be used for cyberbullying, cyber-misogyny and spreading hate messages. To combat the negative aspects of online communication, Media Literacy Week invites all participants to explore the positive uses of social networking.

This week, over 100 organizations across the country are working with young people to help them develop good media skills and make a positive contribution to progress in their community.

As the digital issues critic, I hope that all of my colleagues will help draw attention to Media Literacy Week so that together, we can encourage young Canadians to make good use of digital technology.

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[English]

1984 ANTI-SIKH ATTACKS

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 30th anniversary of the tragic massacre of Sikhs in India in 1984.

Thousands of Sikh men, women and children were tortured and brutally murdered in New Delhi and other parts of India. This

massacre of Sikhs was a deliberate and calculated act by the perpetrators responsible.

In 2009, the New Delhi high court proclaimed:

Even though we boast of being the world's largest democracy...the sheer mention of the incidents of 1984 anti-Sikh riots in general and the role played by Delhi Police and state machinery in particular makes our heads hang in shame...

These were not just fundamental human rights issues. Sikhs around the world call for answers for this senseless killing and justice for the victims of this tragedy.

I call on all members of this House to join me in condemning this atrocity and remembering the victims of 1984.

* * *

[Translation]

WEST ISLAND WOMEN'S FORUM

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to invite the women of Pierrefonds—Dollard to the fifth edition of the West Island women's forum being held in my riding this Sunday, November 9.

This forum will provide the women of the West Island with an opportunity to exchange views on issues that matter to them, including access to work for women 50 and over, domestic violence and access to community services for West Island seniors.

[English]

It is now a tradition to conclude our women's forum with a delicious multicultural buffet prepared by the community kitchen of the Pierrefonds community project, the Hindu Mandir, WIBCA, and members of the Sikh community of Pierrefonds—Dollard. I am grateful for their contribution.

[Translation]

I wish to thank my team, the volunteers and the community organizations, including the West Island Women's Shelter, the West Island Community Resource Centre, the Arthritis West Island Self-Help Association, the West Island Women's Centre and Cloverdale Multi-Ressources.

[English]

I wish to thank the West Island Association for the Intellectually Handicapped.

[Translation]

I wish to thank all of them for their help in making the fifth women's forum possible.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the forum.

[English]

I am looking forward to seeing them this Sunday.

*Statements by Members***TAXATION**

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has announced four new measures: the family tax cut, an enhanced and expanded universal child care benefit and children's fitness tax credit, and an increase in the child care expense deduction.

This is a family prosperity plan that will benefit 100% of families with children in Canada: low and medium-income families, one-earner and two-earner families, single parents, working parents.

Each and every family with children will be better off, thanks to our new measures to reduce taxes for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Under our plan, Canadian families will receive an average benefit of more than \$1,100.

However, the Liberal leader has pledged to reverse our tax relief and force all families with children to pay more, and the Liberal leader's borrow and spend plan would only mean higher deficits and more taxes on Canadian families.

Unlike the Liberal leader, who will raise taxes, our Conservative government is giving money where it belongs, back to hard-working Canadian families.

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FAMILY DOCTORS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next week is Family Doctor Week. I am proud to stand in the House to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of family doctors to the quality of life of Canadians.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the upcoming family medicine forum, which will take place in Quebec City from November 12 to 15, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Family doctors understand the importance of patient-centred care and access to a family doctor defines the haves and the have-nots in our health care system.

I would personally like to acknowledge the tremendous care provided to our family by our family doctors, Jean Marmoreo and Rae Lake.

I encourage all Canadians to take time to recognize the dedication of their family doctors to their patients and the crucial role they play in access and advocacy for health and quality health care.

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● (1420)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Human Rights Watch released a disturbing report which suggests that the terrorist group ISIL abducted more than 150 children and systematically abused and tortured them over a period as long as six months. These children were forced to undergo intense religious indoctrination. Those who did not conform to this coercion were beaten with cables.

This is in addition to a video purporting to show a number of ISIL fighters discussing, in an all too familiar manner, a modern-day slave market where Yazidi girls are bought and sold as property.

These are absolutely shocking developments, and further proof of the fact that ISIL is a depraved and barbaric organization that needs to be confronted with military force.

This is precisely why the Canadian Armed Forces is involved in the fight against ISIL. Our CF-18s recently destroyed engineering equipment being used by ISIL to flood villages and roads near Baghdad. Because of the efforts of our armed forces, ISIL's capability to further terrorize this area has been substantially degraded.

We thank the men and women in uniform of the Canadian Armed Forces.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after years of inaction by federal and provincial governments, New Democrats are working to get the job done on the Ring of Fire.

Today, the leader of the opposition announced the appointment of Howard Hampton as the NDP leader's special adviser on the project. This once-in-a-generation opportunity for northern Ontario should mean thousands of good jobs and economic development that will transform our region.

However, the Conservatives have not shown leadership, which means no new jobs, no investment, and a refusal to work with first nations communities. Almost all of the Conservatives' Ring of Fire announcements have failed to materialize.

Northerners are fed up. There are important infrastructure challenges to address. Skills development and worker training are also vital.

It is a good thing that the NDP understands the importance of this development, and Howard knows how to help get results, so that in 2015 an NDP government can finally get this job done.

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TERRORISM

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were shocked by the horrific terrorist attacks that occurred on October 20 and October 22 near Montreal and in Ottawa which claimed the lives of two Canadian Armed Forces members.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast came together, not only to mourn but to also deliver a message: "We will never be intimidated by these cowardly and despicable actions".

Our allies, such as the President of France and the U.S. Secretary of State, have stood by us, recognizing these heinous acts as terrorist attacks.

Canada has never and will never bow to aggressors who wish to change our way of life. Our Conservative government understands the seriousness terrorism poses to the world and within Canada.

We will not be intimidated and we will continue to fight terrorism in all its forms.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Governor of the Bank of Canada has just issued a scathing criticism of the Conservatives' performance. He notes that under the Conservatives, exports have slowed down in 500 categories.

What is more, more than 400,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost since the Conservatives came to power. Worse yet, according to Governor Poloz, those losses are permanent.

Why are the Conservatives abandoning the manufacturing sector?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is focusing on what is important to all Canadians: jobs and economic growth.

More than 1.1 million net new jobs have been created since the recession. The IMF and the OECD both predict that Canada will be among the G7 economies with the strongest growth in the coming year. The economy is in good shape.

* * *

• (1425)

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Finance agree with the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who says that young people should be prepared to work for free and live with their parents?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada will remain one of the G7 countries with the lowest rate of youth unemployment.

Since 2006, our government has helped six million young people acquire skills, training and employment. The economic action plan will help young people learn skills and help young entrepreneurs.

[English]

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under this Prime Minister, the youth unemployment rate is now 14%. That is double the national average. Conservatives, side by side with Liberals, have watched while a generation of good middle-class jobs disappeared. They did nothing to help create the next generation of middle-class jobs.

The job market is now so dire that the Governor of the Bank of Canada is telling young people that they may have to work for free.

Is this really the best the Conservatives have to offer to a generation of young Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has been voting against every job creation measure for youth that we have put forward. They include: investing \$330 million per year through the youth employment strategy; supporting more paid internships for our recent post-secondary graduates; helping young entrepreneurs, as I mentioned, by investing more in the Canadian Youth Business Foundation; and more.

The opposition would introduce crippling new taxes, which would kill all the job prospects for youth and all Canadians.

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CHILD CARE

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they are offering nothing and a generation of young Canadians are paying the price.

Child care is another pressing economic issue. Families are now paying as much as \$2,000 a month. Young people graduating into a dismal job market are worried about the cost of raising kids. The Conservative response is to borrow \$3.1 billion to help wealthy families.

Will Conservatives shelve the tax cuts for the few and finally deliver on their promise of 125,000 new child care spaces?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are doing a lot better than that.

We created the universal child care benefit that is providing benefits to nearly 2 million Canadian families with kids. Now we are expanding it. We are expanding it to all children between the ages of 6 and 18. This means that under our plan, 4 million Canadian families with children would receive support for their child care choices.

That is 100% of families with kids under 18, unlike the multibillion dollar government-knows-best bureaucratic NDP day-care scheme that would benefit fewer than 10% of families with kids.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2006, the Prime Minister promised parents he would create precisely 125,000 child care spaces across Canada. Precisely how many of those child care spaces did Conservatives create?

I would like to give the minister a hint. The answer begins with the letter zed.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. We have increased transfers to the provinces by 50%. They have created over 175,000 more child care spaces, which is in their jurisdiction.

Here is what else we are doing. Every single parent in Canada with children under the age of 18 will receive a benefit from our universal child care benefit as well as our expanded family tax credit.

Oral Questions

We believe that parents know what is best for their children. We believe it is not a party or an ideology; it is mom and dad. That is who we trust.

* * *

• (1430)

TAXATION

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, income splitting will not help 85% of Canadian households. Income splitting will not benefit 2.4 million two-parent families and it will not benefit any single-parent families.

How can the minister pretend income splitting is all about families when he knows full well that the vast majority of parents will get absolutely nothing?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question is absolute rubbish.

In fact, 1.7 million Canadian families with kids, that is nearly half of the families with kids under the age of 18, will benefit from income splitting and 100% of families, that is four million, will benefit from the total tax package and benefit package announced by the Prime Minister last week, which will deliver an average net benefit of nearly \$1,200 for the average family with children. Two-thirds of those benefits will go to low- and modest-income families.

We are going to give families tax relief. We are going to help them with their kids as opposed to delivering that money through an expensive bureaucracy.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see the jobs minister up, because the Prime Minister and the finance minister in the past week have not been able to say the words “income splitting” in the House. They are running from their own policy. They clearly do not want to draw attention to the fact that 85% of Canadian households get absolutely nothing from this plan.

Will the minister acknowledge that his income splitting plan will only benefit a small minority of Canadians?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it benefits an enormous number of those with children and they are who we are focused on.

I want to remind the leader of the Liberal Party of his own finance critic's commitment, the member for Kings—Hants, who said in his 2003 leadership platform that the tax system that treats single incomes and dual incomes identically should be ended in order to stop penalizing Canadian single-income families.

This is about fairness. This is about treating families as an economic unit. This is about ending discrimination against some families who make sacrifices for their kids. We support the choices of Canadian parents.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, back in 2003 our finance critic was misguided enough to be a Conservative.

[*Translation*]

It seems that the minister does not understand what I am asking—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Papineau.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are spending \$2 billion on an income-splitting proposal that does not apply to 85% of Canadian households.

Does the minister understand that his income-splitting plan is simply not a good idea for Canadian families?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said, two-thirds of the families who will benefit from these changes will be low and modest income families.

The Liberal Party's policy is clear: it wants to take away all these tax cuts, advantages and benefits for children and families, just like it wants to take income splitting away from seniors. We are there to support Canadian families and their choice. We do not do things the way the Liberal Party does.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the minister a chance to set the record straight, because there seems to be some confusion about his reaction to the decision, and more specifically about the changes made to the interim federal health program.

The court of appeal ordered that the health program for refugee claimants be restored to what it was in 2012.

Can the minister confirm that that is indeed what he has done?

• (1435)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is unfortunately mistaken. We did what was necessary to comply with the court's decision, but we are disappointed and we will appeal.

We have a question for the NDP: do the New Democrats understand the real meaning of refugee? Do they really think that someone whose refugee claim was rejected, who was found to be an illegitimate claimant and who is waiting to be removed from Canada is a refugee? This person is not a refugee. Not from a legal or moral standpoint.

Our government will continue to defend the interests of taxpayers.

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe what we are hearing. The NDP is not the only one saying this. The court said that the changes made to refugee health care benefits are cruel and unusual. That is not insignificant. The court said it.

It does not really matter whether the government agrees or not. We just want the government to uphold the court's ruling.

Will the minister finally respect our courts? Will he ensure that refugees, refugee protection claimants and their children will have access to proper health care?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will uphold the court's ruling, even if we do not agree with it.

However, I have a question for the NDP. Do they respect Canadians? Twice yesterday and once again today, they said that we took health care benefits away from refugees. We did no such thing. The NDP wants to give better health care benefits than those Canadians receive to people whose refugee protection claims have been rejected or found to be fraudulent. That is shameful.

[English]

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that minister's disdain for some of the most vulnerable people in our society is on full view today and it is not a pretty sight.

First, he refused to accept when the Federal Court ruled his actions were unconstitutional. Then he continued his attack by using the omnibus budget bill to sneak in changes that would take social assistance away from refugees. Now he is refusing to fully respect the court's decision on refugee health care.

What does the minister have against refugees?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): There he goes again, Mr. Speaker.

Does the member opposite have any respect either for Canadians or for the English language, because there is no case when refugees, those determined to be so by our independent Immigration and Refugee Board or by the UNHCR and then resettled to Canada, have failed to receive health care under this government, and refugees will continue to receive health care.

What New Democrats are asking for, and we really find it unbelievable, is that people whose claims were found to be false, people whose claims were found to be fraudulent, people waiting to be removed from Canada, should receive better health care than Canadians themselves.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): That is wrong, wrong and wrong, Mr. Speaker.

The Federal Court and the Federal Court of Appeal could not have been more clear. Conservatives' treatment of refugees was deemed inequitable, unconstitutional, and yes, causing refugees harm.

However, instead of restoring the interim federal health program, the minister is playing politics, deciding some people get it and some people do not.

Why will he not just respect the court's decision and restore health care to refugees?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, refugee health care has been in place all along. It remains in place. Even the member for Markham—Unionville gets that, as he said yesterday.

The Federal Court gets that, if the hon. member would read its decision. It understands that the issues it was pronouncing upon relate to claimants, not to those refugees whose claims have been found to be legitimate and have refugee status.

The hon. member should stand in the House, acknowledge that he has been misleading Canadians and acknowledge that he is asking for better health care for fraudulent claimants, for failed claimants and for those who are about to leave Canada. We do not think that is appropriate.

* * *

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for weeks now, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has been trying to convince us that the decision to eliminate one in four jobs at CBC/Radio-Canada was made by the CBC's top executives. Seriously. How can the minister claim that CBC is independent when nine of the 12 board members are Conservative Party backers?

People are not buying it. The minister's henchmen are just doing the government's dirty work. What is more, she and her predecessors are elbow-deep in the day-to-day management of CBC. How disgusting is that?

• (1440)

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, CBC makes its own decisions independently of the government.

Let us talk about the appointments our government made. They were made as part of a rigorous and transparent process. We try to find the most competent candidates to meet the requirements of these positions. Our government never interferes with the democratic rights of board members. It is false to suggest that we take away their votes and their right to make donations to any party they want.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, nine out of 12 is not bad.

CBC/Radio-Canada is a cultural institution that is vital to Canada, and especially to Quebec. It would even be fair to say that Radio-Canada has been one of the key instruments to the affirmation of Quebecers. The people running it should be aware of that heritage.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives like appointing their cronies to that corporation. Nine out of 12 members of the board of directors are thugs who have been placed there to dismantle our public broadcaster and who could not care less about the impact these cuts will have on our heritage. Will the minister ever acknowledge this reality? Her government is responsible for this mess.

[English]

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely ashamed of what was just said with regards to some of the members of that board. These are volunteers who come forward to enter into a competition, which is based on merit, and they have the competencies that are required.

In fact, I will cite the competencies of one of the board members from Quebec. Pierre Gingras was the mayor for Blainville from 1993 to 2005, and he brings a vast wealth of experience in both economic development and business administration.

Shame on that member for insulting his competencies.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is shameful is what this government is doing.

CBC/Radio-Canada is the engine of television production in Montreal, and in many francophone minority communities, for instance in western Canada, it is the only news source.

The minister and her predecessors have taken control of CBC/Radio-Canada by stacking its board of directors. The minister's henchmen have begun gutting our public broadcaster. One out of every four jobs will be cut.

Why is the government attacking CBC/Radio-Canada and culture in Canada?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, CBC operates at arm's length from this government.

When it comes to respecting both official languages, as the president, Hubert Lacroix, said, that is clearly part of the public broadcaster's DNA.

We will continue to make a significant investment—\$1.1 billion—in CBC, which will have to prove that it is fulfilling its mandate under the Broadcasting Act.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us move on to another Canadian value.

We cannot believe our ears when we hear the Minister of Immigration say that providing health care to the most vulnerable, such as children, is not a Canadian value.

In 1986, Canada received the United Nations Nansen award in recognition of the major contribution by the people of Canada to the cause of refugees.

How does the minister explain that we have gone from being a model country to a country that attacks refugees because of this government?

[English]

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's commitment, Canada's commitment, to the most vulnerable remains clear. We continue to resettle one in ten refugees worldwide who find a new home every year. Our commitment to maternal, newborn and children's health, and the leadership of this Prime Minister is second to none, and second to none in history.

What remains scandalous is that the member's party, and it is only the NDP this week, is asking for generous health care, health care that goes beyond what Canadians receive, not to go to refugees, not to go to protected persons, not to go to successful claimants, but to go to those who betrayed Canada's trust, who betrayed the generosity of Canada.

• (1445)

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about children.

Now the minister can protest all he likes, but he cannot change the basic facts. He cannot change the fact that it is a core value of Canadians to take care of one another. He cannot change the fact that Canadians believe children, families and all people should be treated equitably no matter where they come from. He cannot change the fact that the Federal Court ruled that these cuts were cruel and unusual, and caused harm to refugees.

Why will the minister not accept the facts and end his heartless attacks on refugees, and families and children?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is no attack on refugees. From this government, there has been unparalleled generosity to refugees and full health care every step of the way.

What we have had from the other side, on the other hand, is disinformation. What we are hearing from the member opposite is that a claimant who was not found to be a refugee, who was not persecuted, who is heading back to his or her country of origin should receive better health care than Canadians actually receive. That is not generosity, and that certainly does not uphold another vital Canadian value, which is the rule of law.

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TAXATION

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the Bank of Canada, 200,000 young Canadians cannot get work. The situation is so dire, economists are joking that our central bank is following a grim new indicator: the kids living in their parents' basements index. In fact, it is so hard to get a job today that young people are being advised to work for free. This is our lost generation.

How can the government justify giving a tax break to wealthy boomers, while leaving Canada's young adults behind?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our plan for all four million Canadian families with kids will be tremendously beneficial. The bulk of the benefit will go to low and middle-income families, with 25% going to families earning less than \$30,000. They will receive a benefit of \$1,200.

The opposition wants to take that \$1,200 out of their pockets. This is a shameful thing. Our plans are progressive and we are proud of them.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the late Jim Flaherty said, "I think income-splitting needs a long, hard analytical look...to see who it affects...because I'm not sure that, overall, it benefits our society". Perhaps Mr. Flaherty was thinking about the people in his riding. There are 5,700 single parent families in the riding of Whitby—Oshawa that will not get a dime from income splitting.

Why are the Conservatives going ahead with this \$2 billion regressive income splitting scheme that does nothing to benefit single parent families?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the package that he critiqued at that time was a package with no limit. This has a \$2,000 limit on the benefit of income splitting. It benefits nearly half of the families with kids, and the overall package benefits 100% of families with kids. Two-thirds of those benefits go to low and medium income families, an average benefit of nearly \$1,200, which the Liberals would take away.

Let us not forget, that very member stood in this place and called for income splitting because he said that the current tax code was unfair to single income families. He should listen to his own advice.

Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I saw the light and I followed the guidance of my better angels who told me that income splitting would only benefit 15% of Canada's wealthiest families. When I learned that, I knew it was wrong, as did Jim Flaherty. Beyond that, in the riding of Yellowhead one out of every five families with children is a single parent family.

Why are the Conservatives taking away a \$2 billion tax credit that actually helps single parent families to pay for a \$2 billion income splitting scheme that leaves these vulnerable families behind?

• (1450)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposite is true. In fact, the remarkable support for families announced by our Prime Minister last week will deliver \$1,500 in benefits to a single parent on an income of \$30,000 and will deliver \$1,000 in benefits to a single parent with a \$50,000 income.

This is the only plan being proposed in this Parliament that benefits 100% of families with children, over four million Canadian families, with a focus on low and medium income families. It is why we have now seen child poverty at its lowest level in Canadian history. The Liberals would take this back. They are wrong.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization has been clear that visa bans for West African countries do not work and can actually increase the spread of the disease. Now the WHO is demanding an explanation from Canada for its misguided policy, and it has received nothing.

Why is the minister sidelining the WHO during a global health crisis?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Health and all of us on this side have been saying, we will do whatever is required to protect public health in our country, and to protect the health and safety of Canadians. That is why many months ago we began discouraging Canadians from travelling to Ebola infected countries, because of the potential risk to them and to Canada.

We are simply being consistent here. We are discouraging new travellers from coming from Ebola infected countries, and we will continue to take these precautionary measures to ensure the safety and health of Canadians.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the policy just does not work.

[*Translation*]

If the government does not want to send doctors to West Africa to deal with the Ebola crisis, as it should, then could it not at least help people like Mr. Perras?

This summer, Mr. Perras, a citizen of Longueuil, adopted a young girl in Sierra Leone. The girl's file is currently in the Conservatives' bureaucratic limbo. Mr. Perras is very concerned about the girl and wants to bring her here as soon as possible.

Will the minister help Mr. Perras?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just provided some details about this case to my colleagues across the way. The legal process for completing an adoption is not over yet in this case. It has nothing to do with Ebola. Under the Privacy Act, I am prohibited from discussing this case in more detail.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at present, 61% of aboriginal youth in their twenties have not completed high school, compared to only 13% for the rest of the population. Meanwhile, the minister sits back and blames everyone else for the failure of his ill-advised education bill.

Will the minister acknowledge his failure, respond to the request by the Assembly of First Nations and reopen discussions to give first nations real control over their education?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government was really disappointed that the Assembly of First Nations dropped the ball and did not honour the agreement it entered into with the government to reform elementary and secondary education.

That said, there are many programs to improve primary and secondary education outcomes on reserves. As the most recent budget demonstrated, we are determined to continue working with first nations to improve the situation.

[*English*]

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the minister refuses to take responsibility for his failure, first nation schools continue to be woefully underfunded. Approximately 47% of first nations currently need a new school and 22% of those have been waiting for 10 to 15 years. That is simply unacceptable, yet the minister continues to ignore this situation.

Why is the minister still refusing to provide first nation children the funding they desperately and deserve for a quality education?

Oral Questions

●(1455)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2006, our government has invested over \$10 billion to support elementary and secondary education for about 118,000 first nation students. In addition, during that period, we have invested approximately \$1.7 billion just for school infrastructure. We are on the right path, and we will continue in that direction.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to Human Rights Watch, the terrorist group ISIL has abducted, tortured and abused more than 150 Kurdish children over the past six months. Captured children described being forced to undergo intense religious indoctrination and being beaten with cables if they did not comply. In recent videos, ISIL fighters seem to brag about buying and selling Yazidi girls on the open slave market. These atrocities cannot be allowed to continue.

Could the Minister of National Defence please update the House on Operation Impact and on Canada's contribution to the fight against these barbaric terrorists?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems every day we hear new reports of the malicious and despicable acts that ISIL is committing across the Middle East.

Recently, Canada's CF-18s attacked and destroyed engineering equipment that was being used by ISIL to divert the Euphrates River. ISIL's intent was to flood roads and villages, and to divert traffic onto roads that it could then mine with improvised explosive devices.

Depriving ISIL of the means to commit mass atrocities is exactly why the Canadian Armed Forces are involved with this fight. I again want to thank and commend our men and women in uniform for their efforts in this successful strike.

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POVERTY

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, food banks report that almost half of food bank users are families with children. Child poverty will not be solved through what Food Banks Canada calls an “alphabet soup” of programs.

It is time for federal leadership to eliminate child poverty. Canadian children deserve no less.

Will the government finally listen and take a comprehensive approach to eliminating poverty for children and their families by supporting our Motion No. 534?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2006, we have lifted over 225,000 children out of poverty. In fact, UNICEF recently reported that during the height of the recession, we lifted over 180,000 children out of poverty.

How did we do that? It was through our tax measures and our benefits for families. Specifically cited was the universal tax benefit,

which we are increasing and expanding to help every single family in Canada with children.

I would expect the opposition to support that so that we can continue to help children who are experiencing poverty.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one million children are living in poverty. That is nothing to brag about. Every month, 840,000 people in Canada have to use a food bank. The most alarming thing of all is that one-third of those people are children.

We proposed an affordable day care plan to give Canadian families a break. Why are the Conservatives refusing to help low-income families with children?

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are collectively shaking their heads at the NDP when we have a plan that UNICEF has said helped lift 225,000 children out of poverty by directly putting money into the pockets of Canadian families. The only plan that the NDP has is very expensive, and it would take money out of their pockets.

Canadian families can trust this Prime Minister, this Minister of Finance, and this government to keep putting their money into their pockets, not into government coffers.

* * *

[Translation]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a report from TD Bank shows that the female labour participation rate is at its lowest since 2002. This decrease could even jeopardize our economic growth. We proposed a plan for affordable day care, which would make it possible for thousands of women to return to the labour market. Why are the Conservatives introducing regressive measures like income splitting?

●(1500)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is implying that mothers and fathers who stay at home are not workers. We disagree. On the contrary, we know that fathers and mothers who work with their young children at home are important and productive workers who help future generations grow. That is why we fully support the parents of four million families with children with the large number of reforms we announced last week.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the impact of child care on women's workforce participation is clear. Quebec's child care program allowed 70,000 women to return to the workforce, but the Conservatives' wasteful income-splitting plan would have the exact opposite effect and discourage women from working at a time when women's workforce participation is already sliding.

Why put up more barriers? Why are they so opposed to policies like child care, which help women enter and remain in the workforce?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the highest rate of female participation in the labour force in the G20.

What the member is suggesting really describes the NDP mentality. The NDP does not believe that dads and moms who spend some time at home with their young kids to raise them are in the workforce. We could not disagree more profoundly. They are working. They are working to raise their children and they are making sacrifices very often to do it.

This is the problem with the NDP approach. It denigrates those families and their choices. It says that they are not working. It says that they do not deserve support. It wants to attack those families and force them to take only one option, and it is wrong.

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*[Translation]***CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE**

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, can you imagine if the Americans decided to change the name of the George Washington Bridge to the Babe Ruth Bridge? Every Canadian admires Maurice Richard, who has Acadian roots. There are many ways to honour the Rocket but not by changing the name of the Champlain Bridge.

Does the Prime Minister need to be reminded that Samuel de Champlain is a key figure in our history, that he was the founder of Canada and that, without him, Canada as we know it would not exist?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government would never jeopardize anyone's historical recognition. It is wrong to pit historical figures against each other, and our government would never do that.

That being said, what we will do is build a bridge, a bridge that was not maintained while the Liberals were in power. We made that announcement on October 5, 2011. We will have the bridge built on time and it will be ready for the greater Montreal area in 2018.

*[English]***CO-OPERATIVES**

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2012, the government ended the \$4 million co-operative development initiative, the only national program for co-ops.

In January 2013, the government announced a \$400 million venture capital action plan. To date, the investment funds that have received contributions under this program have not made any investments in co-ops.

Also, Futurpreneur Canada receives \$10 million annually to fund business ventures by young entrepreneurs; however, it cannot provide capital to young co-operators.

Why is the playing field so uneven? Why are these two federal programs not allowed to provide funds to help create co-operative businesses?

Hon. Ed Holder (Minister of State (Science and Technology), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that member along with the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London for the strong work they have done over the years on co-operatives. I think that leadership was important.

As that member would know very well, for 100 years co-operatives have been a fundamental part of communities across the country in creating jobs and promoting growth.

Let me say with regard to our action plan that our government has launched a four-point action plan to support the growth and innovation of co-operatives across Canada. That is a review of Industry Canada's programs to identify obstructions that any co-operative would have. We think that is great news for co-operatives and we would like to celebrate them.

* * *

*[Translation]***CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE**

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister just said that he deplores the debate about the name of the Champlain Bridge, but the problem is that he is the one who started the debate. He is the one who wants to find a new name when all the government is doing is replacing the Champlain Bridge.

Will the minister focus on his actual responsibilities—ensuring that the tendering process is transparent—and avoid bogging down greater Montreal with his toll?

● (1505)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the premise of that question is false. The current Champlain Bridge is being properly maintained in partnership with The Jacques Cartier and Champlain Bridges Incorporated. The NDP voted against the hundreds of millions of dollars we are putting into maintaining the bridge, and then they say that Champlain is important to them. They have stood back and done nothing but complain. We will continue our work on the new bridge over the St. Lawrence.

Oral Questions

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we forced the government to commit to replacing the Champlain Bridge, which is quite significant in and of itself.

Everyone in Quebec agrees: as much as people love Maurice Richard, they think it is ridiculous to change the name of the Champlain Bridge. The minister should stop stirring up fake debates and get back to the topic at hand.

Can he tell us if he will finally sit down with representatives of greater Montreal to talk about the toll that he plans on charging on the Champlain Bridge?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 5, 2011, we announced that a new bridge would be built over the St. Lawrence. It is a new bridge, an expenditure, a construction investment of \$3 billion to \$5 billion. It will create 30,000 jobs in the Montreal area while it is being built.

When we made the announcement, we also said that there would be a toll and public transit and that the bridge would be built through a public-private partnership. We are following through on that.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday Skills Canada launched National Skilled Trades and Technology Week.

Now in its tenth year, this event creates awareness for young Canadians about good career opportunities in skilled trades and technologies across Canada.

With a growing demand for workers in the skilled trades, would the Minister of Employment and Social Development update this House on what the government is doing to help young Canadians who want to pursue these careers?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has made record investments in encouraging young Canadians to pursue great vocations in lifetime careers in the trades. That is why we created the apprenticeship incentive grant of \$2,000 a year for those who enter the trades and the apprenticeship completion grant, which provides another \$2,000 when they complete their training. We have provided these grants to thousands of young Canadians.

We have also provided the employer tax credit for hiring apprentices, the tool tax credit, and most recently, the Canada apprenticeship loan that provides interest-free financing to apprenticed students, because we believe that apprentices are worth every bit as much as—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past August the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses came into force after Vietnam ratified the convention. Why has Canada not ratified the convention? Why did Canada, a water nation, leave it to Vietnam to trigger the convention's coming into force?

Canada should be an international leader on water issues. Why are we not?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has always fulfilled its international obligations. We will continue to work with the United Nations and with other countries to ensure that we are a responsible world citizen.

As to answering the member's question, I will get back to him in due course.

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TAXATION

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are all talk and no action when it comes to tackling tax evasion.

Most Canadians pay their fair share, but the Canada Revenue Agency acknowledged that last year alone it collected just 1% of the \$220 million it lost to tax cheats. This comes amid reports that Canada is backing down on the commitment it made to the OECD to go after international corporations that avoid paying their fair share.

Why does the minister show so little commitment to tackling international tax cheats?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, through successive budgets we have continued to invest heavily in CRA's tax collection programs, including a \$30 million investment made in budget 2013.

From 2006 to March 31 of this year, CRA audited over 8,600 international tax cases. It identified, and is in the process of collecting, \$5.6 billion of additional taxes.

As a result of our aggressive action on this file, Canada now has one of the most extensive tax treaty networks in the world, with 92 tax treaties and 21 tax information exchange agreements.

* * *

● (1510)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, in a fitting tribute to Remembrance Day, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and a representative from each party will make their Remembrance Day addresses in Parliament. Shortly thereafter, veterans and stakeholders will meet in Toronto for the annual True Patriot Love Foundation dinner.

Will the Minister of Veterans Affairs take a moment to speak about this important organization and how it supports Canadian veterans?

Oral Questions

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tonight I will join veterans and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and many leading Canadian corporations and other Canadians at the True Patriot Love Foundation event in Toronto.

Started by Shaun Francis and our very own member of Parliament from Durham, the True Patriot Love Foundation has gone on to support veterans and their families through numerous efforts, including championing improved employment opportunities, research, and much more.

On behalf of a grateful nation, we give our thanks. We will not forget.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as part of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Confederation, Quebec City would like to host about 40 tall ships. This is a wonderful opportunity to promote tourism and highlight the beauty of the St. Lawrence.

Quebec City submitted its proposal to the government in May 2013. If the Conservatives do not commit funding by February 2015, the event may not go ahead. When will the government get on board with this major tourism proposal and provide financial support to the Quebec City tall ships? We want a date.

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 150th anniversary of Confederation is an event that will be celebrated across the country. We are still waiting for an announcement, and we encourage all municipalities and provinces, as well as all organizations, to plan their events in order to celebrate this occasion with tremendous pride.

Since we are talking about this event, I should say that we are on our way to 2017. We are celebrating a number of events now.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, earlier today a number of us parliamentarians gathered to call on the Prime Minister in his upcoming visit to China to take action on the particularly distressing and indeed appalling case of Canadian citizen, and also Chinese citizen, Dr. Wang Bingzhang, who has been in solitary confinement for 12 years. He is a political activist and dissident, and he stands for democracy. He was illegally arrested in Vietnam and taken by force to the People's Republic of China.

There are thousands and thousands of cases that call out for action from the People's Republic of China, but could the Prime Minister assure us that in this instance he will do everything possible to obtain Dr. Wang's return to Canada?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the case. The promotion of human

rights is an integral part of Canadian foreign policy. These issues have been raised in the context of our open and frank relationship with China.

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RESIGNATION OF MEMBER

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, Cons. Ind.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 20, I would like to rise on a point of personal privilege. I appreciate the opportunity to do so.

To my colleagues here in the House, first and foremost, I want to say that I hold this place in the highest regard. Today, coming to this place and to this building, as I have many times, I have never once taken that for granted. The trust, the honour, the distinction to serve in this House, this House of Parliament, in the nation that I hold out as the finest in the world is an honour that each and every one of us uniquely hold. It is something that we should never, ever take for granted.

I am from Peterborough. I am Peterborough. I grew up picking stones in the fields of Peterborough County. I love that place. I love everything about it. The people of the riding of Peterborough have three times chosen me to be their representative in this House. What an honour. What an incredible honour.

I want to speak a little about the election in 2008. However, before I do that, I want to reinforce the fact that I have never been defeated in standing for election at any time. I first stood for the nomination in the Conservative Party as a relative unknown. The local papers called me a neophyte, asking "Who is this guy?" and "What business does he have to run for the nomination?"

I did run. A lot of people came out. I was 34 years old, and had been in business for 10 years. I had created dozens of jobs in Peterborough, and I am proud of that. I demonstrated to each and every one of them that I was a person of consequence, and that I would be a person of consequence, representing them if they gave me the honour. They did.

After a 56-day campaign, I was the Conservative member of Parliament for Peterborough. I never wasted a day. I have not wasted a day since April 14, 1994, the day my father died.

I fought for the people of Peterborough. In 2008, I sought re-election, but I sought re-election on a record that I was proud of, running for a government that I believed had done great things in a short period of time for this nation. We continued to work hard after 2008. I can list the achievements, things I have gotten done since 2008. The people in Peterborough know them well.

They know Peterborough today is a stronger city, a stronger region. It is more outward looking. If I was to speak to my achievements, I would start with the Peterborough Airport, a report that I wrote myself. So often in Parliament and in elected levels of government, at every level, we send away for reports. We commission reports to be completed. Not me.

I was always determined that I was going to be proactive, that I was going to force the issue, that I would be in every way working hard and making things happen for my region, because I thought that for years we had underachieved in Peterborough. Not anymore, not with me as their representative.

Oral Questions

In 2007, I wrote a report calling for an investment into the Peterborough Airport. I got buy-in from the Peterborough City Council. I got buy-in from the federal government. I got buy-in from the provincial government. Today, that airport is now a gateway to the world. It used to be a flying club. It is not a flying club anymore. It is creating jobs each and every day.

We had significant investments into our downtown, such as the Market Hall theatre. The Hunter Street Bridge is completely redone. We have new seniors centres, the Mapleridge seniors centre. We have the Peterborough Lawn Bowling Club; it is brand new. We have a renovated arena in Ennismore. We have a renovated curling club in Ennismore. We have a renovated arena in Lakefield.

● (1515)

We have new wastewater treatment facilities and new water treatment facilities across the riding, meaning that people in my riding are drinking safe water and my small communities can actually grow and build themselves. I worked hard for all of them. We have better roads and bridges, but we also have people who believe in our region and believe in our community and believe in our potential.

When I went back to Peterborough in 1994 from university, most of my friends were leaving. I was the only one who went back. Almost my whole graduating class is somewhere else. As a guy with a business who had gone through university as an accounting and finance major, I was told to go to Bay Street because that is where I would make money, but I was convinced that my place was in Peterborough, the place that I loved, the electric city. God bless it.

I was re-elected in 2011, and people poured through those files. They poured through my election filings: 2006, 2008, 2011. I was re-elected in 2011, and I have not wasted a day since then either. In 2008, I set a record for the most votes ever garnered by a candidate in Peterborough. In 2011, I broke that record and it is not because of me. I hope colleagues will agree with me that no one person wins an election. We do not do it on our own; we have so many volunteers. Ultimately, it is about the people, the individuals who go out and cast their ballots. They leave their homes in the morning and at some point in that day they put an X on a ballot. It is such an honour for the candidate who they decide that X should be for. That is how elections are won.

I want to speak a bit about the case that is against me. Yesterday, I watched the debate. I was not here. I had a new little girl born on Sunday. I still have the hospital bracelet on my wrist. She is a miracle I have waited a long time for. I think my wife is watching at home so I would ask her to give her a kiss for me.

I want to be clear that the matter that was discussed here yesterday is very much still before the courts. It may well be there some time. I wish it was not. I wish it was not a distraction. I wish it was not something that I had to fight, but it is and I will fight. People in this House know one thing about me; they know I am no shrinking violet. I have a big heart, but nobody should ever confuse that with any willingness on my part to ever back down. I often tell people that I have a distinct design flaw. It is that I was not built with a reverse gear. I only know how to go forward, and I will press forward.

As I said yesterday, I did not feel that people were very judicious in their comments, and I regret that. I understand it. There is a lot of politics in this place. However, I did want to come out and make a number of comments in that regard.

To begin with, I want to make one thing clear, and I stand by this: I did not donate too much money to myself. I did not, and I stand by my filings in 2008.

I also want to say something to the people at home who are listening, the more than 27,000 people who voted for me in 2008 and the almost 29,000 who voted for me in 2011. I want them to ask themselves a simple question, and not listen to the people on the blogs and the haters. There are lots of them out there. I wish there were not, but that is just the world we live in today.

However, those people who went out and cast a ballot for me in 2008 or in 2011, I ask them to ask themselves a question. Did they vote for me because somebody phoned them at some point and asked if they were going to vote for me? Or did they vote for me because they believed I was the best choice on the ballot, because they believed I was an advocate, because they liked what I had been doing, because they believed that I was the best hope for Peterborough and that the Conservative Party was the best hope for this country? I believe that is why they voted for me and nothing changes that.

When people say that I am guilty of fraud or whatever comments that were made the other day, they disrespect the more than 27,000 people in 2008 who voted for me and the almost 29,000 people who voted for me in 2011. Those voters would tell them, to a person, that it had nothing to do with how they cast their ballot.

● (1520)

If that position were true, then I would advise every person in the House to invest all their money in nothing but phone calls, which is the only sure way to be elected. That is what I heard here yesterday, that somehow this was a means of stealing an election. That is absolutely false. It is founded in absolutely nothing. The best way to be re-elected is to work hard, to be a person of conviction and consequence, and I say that for the people at home who are standing for election.

It bothered me yesterday that a day in the life of the House was wasted on this issue. I believe Parliament should be focused on attacking issues on behalf of Canadians, not attacking each other. Yesterday, that day was lost, and I will not see any more days lost on that.

I spoke about my love for Peterborough county. I will not be a distraction in Peterborough. I have talked about how Peterborough is more outward looking, about how I believe its future is bright and the people who live there believe the future is bright. I will do nothing to distract from that.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2014-15**

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (B) for the financial year ending March 31, 2015, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

* * *

● (1530)

[Translation]

PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2013-14

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 92 departments and agencies, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the departmental performance reports for the 2013-14 fiscal year.

[English]

I also invite members to access the performance reports at tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr.

* * *

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)(b) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 51 petitions.

* * *

VETERANS' WEEK

Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was exactly two weeks ago today that we in this chamber shared a terrifying brush with a dangerous new reality spreading around the world.

I know it deeply affected all of us, as have the deaths of two brave and dearly loved members of our Canadian Armed Forces family, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo, who were targeted simply for wearing our nation's uniform in service to country.

What is more, if it were not for the heroic actions of our security and policemen and women serving on the front line, including our own Sergeant-at-Arms, the terrible loss of life both here and south of Montreal could have been much worse. We will be forever grateful for their dedication to duty.

That is a sample of the troubling world that we now live in, and it makes Veterans' Week even more poignant and meaningful for all of us this year.

While the threats to our safety and freedom have changed over the years, Veterans' Week reminds us that brave men and women have been defending this great land, even before Canada was a country. That is why I consider it one of the finest honours in my life that I have been asked to serve as Canada's Minister of Veterans Affairs.

It is important, I would argue, that the people of this place, the people in Peterborough and the people across the country understand that this institution, Parliament itself, is fixed and focused on the issues that matter to them. We may not all agree on the best way to serve our constituents at home, but one thing we should agree on is that this place should always be used to better their lives, to better their outcomes and to better this great nation, and yesterday that was not the case.

I told a number of my colleagues in the Conservative Party that I would never ever put them in a position where they had to vote with respect to my future, my position in this place or otherwise, and I will not do that. A number of them know they are like my brothers and sisters, but all of them know they are my political family. They are the greatest hope for this nation, in my view. I know others in the House disagree with me on that, but I believe it to my core.

No united Conservative Party has ever been defeated since 1980. It has never happened. The members should stay united. I will not be the one to divide them. I believe too much in what they do and what they stand for, and it is with that, with appreciation, humility and gratitude, I tender my resignation, effective immediately, in the House.

I stand before the House as one of the most fortunate and blessed individuals that the good Lord has ever put breath into. Nothing will ever change that. I hope some day to be back in this place, but if I am not, always keep in mind it is a simple chair, but it represents the hopes, dreams and futures of the thousands who members represent, millions across the country. Never take it for granted.

* * *

● (1525)

VACANCY**PETERBOROUGH**

The Speaker: Mr. Del Mastro, member for the electoral district of Peterborough, having resigned, it is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation.

Pursuant to paragraph 25(1)(a) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I will address a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill this vacancy.

* * *

MEMBER FOR PETERBOROUGH

(On the order: Privilege)

November 4, 2014—Motion on the member for Peterborough—Mr. Peter Julian

The Speaker: In light of the statement of the member for Peterborough, any further proceedings on the motion standing in the name of the member for Burnaby—New Westminster are now unnecessary. Therefore, the order for consideration of the motion is dropped from the order paper.

(Order discharged)

Routine Proceedings

Nothing unites Canadians like our profound pride and gratitude for those who have worn our nation's uniform and those who still do today. We saw it again through the outpouring of grief and sorrow across our country last month. We saw it along the length of the Highway of Heroes and on the overpasses above, as Canadians waited hours to pay their final respect to a fallen hero.

We understand, as a truly grateful nation, the enormous debt we owe to all those who have stood on guard for us, at home and abroad, on land, at sea and in the air, and who still do so today.

We understand, as citizens of a strong, proud and free nation, that our debt continues today with those still serving in harm's way, including Iraq, and I ask all Canadians to keep them in our thoughts and prayers. More than ever we pray for those who are serving in those places for their safe return home to their loved ones.

We must never take for granted this amazing country that our are men and women in uniform helped to build. We must be vigilant in defending our shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and we must never take their sacrifices for granted.

We must never forget that freedom is not free, that it has never been free. So many of our allies can appreciate this at a personal level of appreciation, obviously, because they have lived with foreign armies occupying their countries, and they have never forgotten that Canada was there to help liberate them. I know that is true, because I have watched the awe, and with awe, as our veterans have been welcomed back as heroes from the north of France to the south of Italy, from Cyprus to South Korea.

I felt this same gratitude as I shook hands with the last Canadian soldiers returning from our Afghanistan mission in March, and when I broke bread with the families of the 158 fallen men and women on our National Day of Honour in May as well.

I was proud to represent Canada when the world gathered in Belgium in August to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, just as I was honoured to stand before two dozen Canadian veterans in Vancouver in September as we launched a new national tribute to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Canada's engagement in the Second World War.

That is why we have launched our world war commemoration period. Between now and 2020, we will encourage Canadians to join us in making the many milestone anniversaries from the country's extraordinary role in the allied victories of the two world wars as a significant passage of our history.

• (1535)

Later this month, more than two dozen veterans of the Italian campaign will return to Italy, where more than 93,000 Canadians served in one of the longest and fiercest struggles of the Second World War.

It is imperative that we remember our proud military history and that we preserve it for future generations to discover, appreciate, and commemorate. That is why we today speak volumes about Veterans' Week, and that is what Veterans' Week is all about. It is about paying tribute to the sacrifices, the contributions, and the achievements of

our service men and women, past and present, and I would add, their distinguished families.

It is about remembering their service and honouring their sacrifice. That is what stays with us after all these years. That is what defends us from bad people. It is what we stand for. It is what defines our men and women today. It defines who we are as a nation.

Their sense of duty goes to the heart of what it means to be Canadian. It is who we are. They reflect the very best in all of us, and they have earned their place among our nation's truest heroes. They represent in a truly honourable way the best Canada has to offer, and we will never forget them. We will remember them.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to stand in the House to pay tribute to Canada's honoured veterans on behalf of the New Democratic Party, our leader, and in fact, Canadians across the country.

This year marks the commemoration of the 115th anniversary of the start of the Boer War, the 100th anniversary of World War I, and the 75th anniversary of World War II.

I cannot help but think of some of the names of individuals who have served. Captain Paul Triquet earned the VC in Italy. Herb Peppard, part of the Devil's Brigade, from of Truro, Nova Scotia, served valiantly with the American allies as well. Tommy Prince, an aboriginal veteran, served not just in World War II in the Devil's Brigade but also in Korea.

Last night the minister and I were at a wonderful event for Helen Rapp, who has, unfortunately, passed on. She was a young woman who lied about her age so that she could serve her country in World War II. Last night the City of Ottawa and Mayor Jim Watson honoured her with a street named after her. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that if I had the money, I would buy a house on that street, because she really was an amazing dynamo of woman.

There are other people. Jack Ford, of Newfoundland and Labrador, was the only allied person to survive the Nagasaki bombing in Japan during World War II. He lived to be 90 years old, up in Newfoundland. There are people like Louise Richard, who served in the first Gulf War; Captain Nichola Goddard, the first woman to die for Canada in combat; Ed Carter-Edwards, of Ontario, who survived the Buchenwald concentration camp as an airman serving his country; and many other people. These are just some of the names of the people who were willing to give up their lives for the sanctity of Canada and the sanctity of the free world.

I cannot tell members how proud I was when I woke up this morning and realized something I had not realized before. My father once told me that we immigrated to Canada because after being liberated from a prisoner of war camp, he said, "If they have a military like that, imagine what kind of country they come from".

Routine Proceedings

I stand in the House today as a representative of Nova Scotia. The Minister of Veterans Affairs is from a country that was liberated by Canadians. The official opposition critic is from a country that was liberated by Canadians and their allies. That is what Canada is all about.

Canada is a beacon of hope. Canada is a beacon of light. Right now, wherever our servicemen and women are when they are serving around the world, young people are looking up and saying, "I wonder what kind of country they come from".

It is truly an honour to be able to pay our respects to the men and women who have given their lives. There are over 117,000 Canadians, buried in over 72 countries around the world, who fought for peace, freedom, and democracy. If anyone ever wanted to know whether their sacrifice was worth it, I am here, so it was well worth it for my family to come to Canada in that regard, although the Conservatives may not think that.

Every day I wake up and see that Canadian flag, and when I am in Ottawa and I see the national cenotaph, and I think how honoured I am to be in this great country.

Allow me to pay my respects to the great memory of Nathan Cirillo, a young man, 24 years old, with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Hamilton. No, he did not deserve to die. That man deserved to live a full and fruitful life, all the way into old age, and to look after his son. However, because of an act of violence, which was uncalled for, this man standing sentry at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier gave his life for all of us. I know that everyone in the House of Commons, and all Canadians, will never ever forget that man's sacrifice.

Nor will they forget Patrice Vincent, who was in a parking lot with his friend, when a madman killed him with his vehicle. He had 28 years of service in the military. He was a well-decorated veteran and a soldier. To give up his life like that is just unconscionable.

We, as Canadians, thank them for their services. We thank them for their sacrifices, as we do all their brothers and sisters who have also given up their lives. We also consider their families, the invisible force behind the force. Without the mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, aunts and uncles, and grandparents, they would not be able to do the job Canada asks them to do.

I salute the men and women who serve our country. I salute every one of their families. I salute, on behalf of a grateful nation, the cadets who one day may become military people. They are our future heroes.

As they say in the Legion:

At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

• (1540)

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Veterans Affairs for his remarks and add an additional thanks to my hon. colleague in the official opposition for his comments. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to speak this Veterans' Week on behalf of the Liberal Party.

In the shadow of the events of the past month, Remembrance Day takes on an extraordinarily special meaning this year. In less than a week, thousands of Canadians will gather at the National War Memorial, just feet from where Corporal Nathan Cirillo stood when he was slain standing guard over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Hundreds of thousands more Canadians will join them at cenotaphs, Legion halls, and other memorials remembering his sacrifice and that of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent. These two men were murdered just days apart by individuals who would have us be afraid.

The words of my leader, the hon. member for Papineau, are particularly apt. He said:

They want us to forget ourselves. Instead, we will remember. We will remember who we are. We are a proud democracy, a welcoming and peaceful nation, and a country of open arms and open hearts. We are a nation of fairness, of justice, and of the rule of law.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent died for these values, as did tens of thousands more Canadians who served our country with courage and honour over the years. We remember them all.

[*English*]

From its beginning a century ago, 625,825 Canadians fought in the First World War. A total of 61,082 never returned home, and 154,361 were wounded. In the Second World War, although the First World War was to be the war to end all wars, 1,086,343 served Canada; 42,042 died and 54,414 were wounded. In Korea, 27,751 Canadians served, and 516 gave the ultimate sacrifice, while 1,072 suffered injuries.

[*Translation*]

Hundreds of thousands of soldiers have served Canada as peacekeepers and have worn the blue beret, a lasting symbol of Canada's contribution to peace and order around the world. One hundred and twenty-one people have died for these values, and many more have been injured.

[*English*]

More than 40,000 Canadians served in Afghanistan. Most of us watched as each of the 158 Canadians who died returned home. The thousands who were injured, with wounds both visible and invisible, are our neighbours, co-workers, friends, and family.

Canada has never been reticent, when the call came to protect those vulnerable and in need, both at home and abroad, to say "Ready, Aye, Ready" and take up the cause for those values we hold dear. Even among us there are 13 members of this House who were ready to answer that call. I thank each of them for that service.

Routine Proceedings

I never served in the Canadian Armed Forces. I remember Remembrance ceremonies at the Memorial Gardens while growing up in Guelph. They were always powerful but seemingly beyond comprehension. It was a reality far removed from my own. Then, when I was elected to the House of Commons, I had a couple of opportunities to spend time with our forces at CFB Wainwright and again on the HMCS *Saint John*. Both gave me a keener understanding of the lives of our forces and their resilience, skill, professionalism, and dedication.

However, it was not until I stood on Vimy Ridge this year, in the shadow of an immense monument to Canada's sacrifice in the First World War, that the enormity of the impact of war was made so clear. Before us stood a memorial, a testament to a conflict colossal in its overwhelming effect on the lives of all those who fought and died or returned and lived and tried to carry on in its wake. The contrast of something so beautiful serving as a reminder of the horror and cost of war was made even more stark by the sheep quietly grazing off to the side in areas still unsafe because of the unexploded munitions that lie dormant in the ground.

Early one morning as the trip drew to a close, I stood alone at the Essex Farm Cemetery on the outskirts of Ypres. This was where Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, a Guelph native, performed his work as a field surgeon in the Canadian artillery. It was here that McCrae's friend and student, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer died from wounds sustained in battle. It was here that he composed *In Flanders Fields*, a poem we all know.

I had heard the words hundreds of times, worn the poppy every Remembrance Day and now stood between those crosses. Suddenly, I was aware of a small group of Canadian high school students on a similar pilgrimage of the remembrance trails of the first world war. They sat quietly, pondering the carnage upon the surrounding fields 100 years earlier and the transformation of those events into words written by McCrae.

I listened as they recited the poem, each of three stanzas recited one by one. It was as if I was hearing it for the very first time. Everything was still as the last student recited:

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

In that single moment, I understood the fundamental truth of our sacred covenant to our veterans. Our solemn obligation, which we affirm every year at this time, cries out that we must not break faith with those who died. Therein lies our sacred obligation, that our commitment to their well-being, their families and all who return home to tell their story, is bound forever by the sacrifice made by those who lived and died on those fields and elsewhere.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Therein lies our sacred obligation. Our commitment to their well-being, their families and all who return home to tell their story is bound forever by the sacrifices of those who lived and died on those battlefields and elsewhere.

[English]

At Vimy, on Juno Beach, at Kapyong, Kandahar province, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and at the National War Memorial, they call out to us to honour that covenant through their sacrifice.

During this Veteran's Week, on Remembrance Day and every day, we must remember them.

Lest we forget.

[Translation]

We will remember them.

[English]

The Speaker: Is the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands rising as well?

Does the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands have unanimous consent of the House to respond to the ministerial statement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a great honour for me to speak here, but even more so today, since all my colleagues and I are paying tribute to Canada's veterans.

[English]

It is always an honour to speak here, but never as much as when we turn our attention to the sacrifices of so many who have put on the uniform of the Canadian Armed Forces and left our safe shores to protect us in hostile places.

I spoke last year of how I know so many veterans within my own family and my circle of friends who always remember the sacrifices, the people they lost, the friends they lost, the carnage of war, the inhumanity of war, and come back home as veterans, seeking nothing more than that we strive harder for peace.

We need to remember the sacrifices of veterans without glorifying war. We need to remember that those who put on that uniform did so at such a cost, but in the hopes of a durable peace.

Canada has stood for peace for a very long time. Our former prime minister, Lester B. Pearson, received the Nobel peace prize for creating peacekeepers. When I am in my hometown of Sidney, British Columbia, I am always honoured when the veterans who served with UN peacekeeping forces ask me to ride with them on Canada Day.

Our veterans put on many different shades of uniforms, but as they come home, regardless of where they served, how they served, where they fought, or if they just put themselves in a position to be ready to be called, we owe them.

We owe it to them to take care of them when they are injured and provide the services they need. When we say, "Lest we forget", we remember that those words are hollow if we do not attend to the needs of all of our veterans.

[Translation]

Today is an incredibly sad day. Everyone here has suffered a great deal over the last few weeks. A young man, Nathan Cirillo, lost his life. Everyone now knows so much about him and he remains close to our hearts. To his loved ones and his family, everyone here is paying tribute to Nathan Cirillo and Patrick Vincent.

• (1555)

[English]

We have lost a lot the last few weeks, but let us remember that Canada's traditions and the hopes, and indeed, to honour veterans who served to protect the peace that we must do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand that there is agreement to observe a moment of silence for those veterans who gave their lives for our country.

I now invite hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association respecting its participation in the bilateral visit to London, United Kingdom, from March 8 to March 13, 2014.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-China Legislative Association respecting its participation at the Co-Chairs' Annual Visit held in Shanghai, Beijing, Urumqi, Hong Kong, People's Republic of China, May 11 to May 15, 2013.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development on the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to Bill C-247, an act to expand the mandate of Service Canada in respect of the death of a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House, with amendments.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, entitled "Bill C-518, An Act to amend the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act (withdrawal allowance)".

Routine Proceedings

The committee has studied the bill and decided to report the bill back to the House, with amendments.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee of Agriculture and Agri-Food in relation to Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report this bill back to the House, with amendments.

• (1600)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved that the first report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources presented on Thursday, November 28, 2013, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Joe Preston: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the House gives its consent, I would like to move that the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House on September 30, be concurred in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

PENSIONS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today and table two petitions.

The first petition is from people from Elliot Lake, which happens to be a retirement community regarding the CPP and QPP.

The petitioners have noticed that the Conservatives have cut old age security. This would mean that it would slash \$11 billion from seniors' retirement income. They recognize that the CPP Investment Board is one of Canada's most successful investment funds. They also recognize that pension experts, labour unions, provincial governments and seniors organizations all support increasing the CPP.

The petitioners call on the government to work with the provinces to expand CPP as well as to reinstate the retirement age to 65.

Routine Proceedings

CANADA POST

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is with respect to the cuts to Canada Post. It is also signed by residents of Elliot Lake who will be drastically affected by these cuts.

The petitioners recognize that postal service is a vital communication link. They also recognize that there will be a loss of 8,000 good paying jobs. They do not understand the increase in postal rates given the fact that Canada Post is looking at reducing services.

The petitioners call on the government to reverse the devastating cuts to postal service.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House to present a petition on behalf of Canadians.

The petitioners are asking for the current impaired driving laws to be changed and made tougher. They are asking for the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentences for those persons convicted of impaired driving causing death.

They are also asking that the Criminal Code of Canada be changed to redefine the offence of impaired driving causing death to vehicular manslaughter.

CANADA POST

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents regarding the cuts to Canada Post.

This petition is signed by a number of people in the small rural region of Lodge Bay, Labrador. This is just one community of many across my riding and other places across Canada that has been adding its voice to this issue.

The petitioners are not happy with the cuts that are being made at this time. They feel that rural postal service has been under attack, and that the cuts will have a tremendous impact on them and the regions in which they live.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today with respect to affordable child care.

The signatories to this petition draw the attention of the House to the fact that after nine years of Conservative government, child care costs continue to soar and nearly one million kids with working parents have no regulated child care space available.

The petitioners point out that quality child care and early learning offer children a head start in life while also easing poverty.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to work with the provinces and territories to implement the NDP's plan for affordable child care across Canada.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition

signed by individuals who live in the lower mainland of British Columbia.

The petitioners believe that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient. They want to see tougher laws and the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentences for those convicted of impaired driving causing death. They would like to see the Criminal Code definition changed to vehicular manslaughter.

• (1605)

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by about 400 people who are denouncing the cuts and the elimination of Canada Post's postal service to roughly 5 million homes. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to reject Canada Post's planned cuts, which will also mean the loss of excellent jobs and will reduce an essential public service. It is very important to me to present this petition today.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Question No. 671 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 671—**Ms. Peggy Nash:**

With regard to the Advanced Manufacturing Fund for fiscal years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 (year-to-date): (a) how many companies have applied for funding; (b) what is the total amount of funding that has been given out, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) electoral riding, (iii) applications submitted by for-profit businesses, (iv) applications submitted by not-for-profit businesses; (c) how many companies have been rejected for funding, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) electoral riding, (iii) applications submitted by for-profit businesses, (iv) applications submitted by not-for-profit businesses; (d) what is the success rate of funding applications, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) electoral riding, (iii) applications submitted by for-profit businesses, (iv) applications submitted by not-for-profit businesses; and (e) what is the average amount of funding granted, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) electoral riding, (iii) applications submitted by for-profit businesses, (iv) applications submitted by not-for-profit businesses?

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first intake for the advanced manufacturing fund opened on December 9, 2013, and closed on October 1, 2014. Applications undergo a rigorous review and due diligence process. Applications are still under review and no contribution agreements have been executed for the advanced manufacturing fund.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 672 to 677 and 679 to 683 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 672—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:

With regard to materials prepared for ministers or their staff, from June 4, 2014 to the present: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date on the document, (ii) the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 673—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:

With regard to government communications: for each announcement made by a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary in the National Capital Region between January 1, 2007 and October 15, 2013, both dates inclusive, in a location other than the parliamentary precinct or the National Press Theatre, what was the (a) date; (b) location; (c) purpose or subject matter; (d) name and portfolio of the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary; and (e) what were the amounts and details of all expenses related to making each such announcement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 674—Hon. John McKay:

With regard to government communications since May 30, 2014: (a) for each press release containing the phrase "Harper government" issued by any government department, agency, office, Crown corporation, or other government body, what is the (i) headline or subject line, (ii) date, (iii) file or code number, (iv) subject matter; (b) for each such press release, was it distributed (i) on the web site of the issuing department, agency, office, Crown corporation, or other government body, (ii) on Marketwire, (iii) on Canada Newswire, (iv) on any other commercial wire or distribution service, specifying which service; and (c) for each press release distributed by a commercial wire or distribution service mentioned in (b)(ii) through (iv), what was the cost of using the service?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 675—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to materials prepared for deputy heads or their staff from June 4, 2014 to the present: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date on the document, (ii) the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 676—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to materials prepared for Assistant Deputy Ministers from June 4, 2014 to the present: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date on the document, (ii) the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 677—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With respect to government advertising: for each television advertisement which has been aired during the 2014 "Fédération Internationale de Football Association" (FIFA) World Cup, what is the (a) identification number, name or ADV number; (b) number of times each advertisement has aired during such a broadcast, specifying the total number of times and the total length of time (seconds or minutes), broken down by date and match for each advertisement; (c) total cost to air each advertisement,

broken down by date and match; (d) criteria used to select each of the advertisement placements; (e) media outlet used to air each advertisement, broken down by date and match; and (f) total amount spent per outlet, broken down by date and match?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 679—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to Canada's response to the international Ebola outbreak in West Africa: (a) how is Canada working with other countries to address the outbreak, (i) through the Global Health Security Action Group and the Global Health Security Agenda, (ii) in other ways; (b) what specific departments are involved in the Canadian response and what is the lead agency in each of (i) preparedness, (ii) response, (iii) recovery related to the outbreak in West Africa; (c) what specific actions is each of the departments listed in (b) undertaking; (d) what is the government doing to ensure the safety of Canadians who are travelling to West Africa to undertake activities including, but not limited to, (i) humanitarian work, (ii) commerce and trade, (iii) safeguard the well-being of those who are there now and in areas where Ebola is spreading; (e) what guidance is being provided to Canadians traveling to West Africa (i) before they leave, (ii) while in areas in which Ebola has been reported, (iii) if they think they have symptoms consistent with Ebola, (iv) for after their return to Canada; (f) how specifically was the April 18, 2014, funding of \$1,285,000 to address the outbreak spent, broken down by item and amount spent on each item; (g) how many specialists, and in what disciplines, did Canada send to work with the World Health Organization (WHO), or to West Africa to help; (h) how specifically was the August 8, 2014, funding of \$5 million to address the outbreak spent, broken down by item and amount spent on each item; (i) what specific plans were put in place to monitor the health of the three-person mobile team from Winnipeg's National Microbiology Laboratory as they were brought home from Sierra Leone and afterward kept in voluntary isolation; (j) for how long will the persons mentioned in (i) be in isolation; (k) does the government plan to respond to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's "international rescue call" and the WHO's \$600 million request for funding; and (l) is the government ready to isolate and care for someone if affected with Ebola within Canada; (m) does the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) have a public awareness plan to help Canadians understand the prevention, transmission, and signs and symptoms of the disease; and (n) does PHAC have a communication link with all provinces and territories?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 680—Mr. Hoang Mai:

With regard to the transshipment of an endangered fin whale from Iceland to Japan through Canada: (a) is the government committed to stand against the illegal trade of endangered wildlife; (b) when were the following departments first notified of this transshipment, (i) Canada Border Services Agency, (ii) Fisheries and Oceans Canada, (iii) Environment Canada, (iv) Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, (v) Canadian Food Inspection Agency; (c) what actions did the following departments undertake after being notified, (i) Canada Border Services Agency, (ii) Fisheries and Oceans Canada, (iii) Environment Canada, (iv) Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, (v) Canadian Food Inspection Agency; (d) what steps is the government taking to ensure that this transshipment of endangered species across Canada does not happen again; (e) did Environment Canada's Wildlife Enforcement Directorate raise any concerns regarding this shipment, (i) if so, what were they, (ii) if not, why not; (f) has the government examined the appropriateness of this shipment in light of the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act; and (g) has the government considered following the example put forward by the United States by banning the transit of meat from endangered fin whales or any endangered species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 681—Mr. Arnold Chan:

With regard to Service Canada: (a) what products and services does it offer and when did these products and services begin to be offered; (b) what is the service standard for all on line products and what is the current average wait time for these products; (c) what is the service standard for in-person wait times and what is the wait time at each in-person site; (d) what is the cost per transaction for each of the services offered, broken down by different delivery channel; (e) what is the transaction volume of each Service Canada centre and what year did that centre open; and (f) what is the number of full time equivalency positions for each centre and for the other divisions of the Department, from 2008 to the present?

Government Orders

(Return tabled)

Question No. 682—**Mr. Arnold Chan:**

With regard to announcements by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario after August 1, 2009: (a) what were the costs of each project announced and what was the final cost when the project was completed, including (i) the year, (ii) the program the project fell under, (iii) the organization receiving the funds; (b) when was each project announced, including multiple dates if the project announcements were for milestones or other changes; (c) what were the costs of these announcements including the cost for (i) room or facility rental, (ii) staff travel, including the number of staff that attended, (iii) exempt staff travel, (iv) Minister travel, (v) media staging company, (vi) outside consultants, including what service they provided; and (d) what were the costs associated with any canceled events, including the reason for canceling the event?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 683—**Mr. Arnold Chan:**

With regard to announcements by the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario after April 1, 2006: (a) what were the costs of each project announced, and what was the final cost when the project was completed, including (i) the year, (ii) the program the project fell under, (iii) the organization receiving the funds; (b) when was this project announced, including multiple dates if the project announcements were for milestones or other changes; (c) what were the costs of these announcements, listing the (i) room or facility rental, (ii) staff travel, including the number of staff that attended, (iii) exempt staff travel, (iv) Minister travel, (v) media staging company, (vi) outside consultants, including what service they provided; and (d) what were the costs associated with any canceled events including the reason for canceling the event?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following: Bill C-501, An Act respecting a National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***PROTECTION OF CANADA FROM TERRORISTS ACT**

The House resumed from November 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, an act to amend the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we resume debate, I wish to inform the House that because of ministerial statements, government orders will be extended by 23 minutes today.

When this matter was last before the House, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay had the floor. He had completed his comments. Consequently, resuming debate, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this House to debate Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. I am confident that in the bill before us we have effective legislation that will go a long way toward improving our national security.

This bill contains two separate elements. Let me turn to the first part of the bill, which deals with the changes to the CSIS Act.

This act is the legislation that governs CSIS's activities. It was introduced three decades ago when CSIS was first established, and the act itself has not changed. Given what has occurred in the last few weeks, I would submit that it is certainly time.

When this was done 30 years ago, it was the era of the rotary phone. The Internet was just in the experimental stage. Social media did not exist, so social media were not applied toward the recruitment and radicalization of people across the world. Therefore, as all Canadians can appreciate, the nature of the environment in which CSIS must operate has changed. As an example, the terrorist threat has evolved considerably. All the way from the Cold War, we expected a peace dividend, but threats are more dangerous now, and with Mr. Putin and others threatening global borders, we have to be vigilant.

Mr. Speaker, please let me state that I am also splitting my time today with the great member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Canada has had some notable successes in this country in detecting and disrupting terrorist plots, but the reality is that Canada is not immune to violent extremism. This is especially clear now that it has touched us on our very own soil, including on the very day and in the very place that we had planned to introduce this carefully considered legislation in this House.

While it is true that we have always been vigilant about the threat of terrorism, in recent months we have become particularly seized with the task of moving beyond vigilance to decisive action. This is something that we have an obligation to do for all Canadians. As parliamentarians, we can and we must take action to ensure that our security and intelligence agencies have the tools they need to protect Canada. Our government has been clear about its commitment to doing that.

Government Orders

With keen awareness of the challenges that CSIS faces in investigating threats to Canada, we have proposed measured yet critical amendments to the CSIS Act. It is evident to us, as I hope it will be to members on all sides of this House, that CSIS must have clear authority to investigate security threats to this country, whether they originate here or they originate abroad.

How would this bill allow for that? First of all, the bill would allow confirm CSIS's authority to carry out investigations outside of Canada. Specifically, it would amend the CSIS Act to state, for greater certainty, that CSIS has the authority to perform its duties within or outside of Canada for the purposes of investigating threats to the security of Canada or conducting security assessments.

Another important change would see to it that the Federal Court need only consider relevant Canadian laws, such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the CSIS Act, when issuing warrants authorizing CSIS to undertake certain intrusive activities in order to investigate a threat to the security of Canada outside of Canada.

In addition, the bill would address a shortcoming in the act as it stands with respect to the disclosure of human sources in court proceedings. At the present, there is no automatic protection for the identity of CSIS human sources similar to the common law privilege available to police informers. This is problematic, given that human source intelligence is so central to CSIS's work.

To address this problem, we have proposed an amendment that would create a prohibition on disclosing in court proceedings the identity of any CSIS human sources who have provided information to CSIS on the condition of confidentiality.

There are two exceptions that would allow this information to be disclosed. One is if a person is not in fact a confidential human source; the second is if the information is needed to demonstrate the innocence of the accused in a criminal proceeding. Overall, with these exceptions included, we believe that this amendment would successfully balance the need to protect the identity of CSIS human sources with the need to ensure fairness in legal proceedings.

Finally, we have proposed an amendment to safeguard the identity of CSIS employees who are likely to become involved in covert operational activities in the future. This is critical. Our operatives are serving in perilous situations on our behalf, so it is incumbent upon us to ensure that their families are safe as they do their very important work to ensure that our families remain safe.

• (1610)

Our government is convinced that these amendments are needed to ensure that the CSIS Act provides CSIS with the means to use reasonable and necessary measures to investigate threats to the security of Canada for the safety and security of our nation.

Nevertheless, as we make these carefully considered changes that will help CSIS investigate threats to Canada, I want to reassure Canadians that some fundamental elements will not change.

First and foremost, the rule of law applies. A judicial warrant is absolutely required in order to authorize CSIS's more intrusive activities. To be sure, this requirement serves as an important safeguard on the rights of Canadians. The CSIS Act clearly states that in order for a warrant to be issued, CSIS must satisfy a judge

that, among other things, there is reason to believe the activity constitutes a threat to the security of Canada.

Second, I want to stress that CSIS's activities will continue to be consistent with the rule of law and Canadian values.

Last, CSIS will remain subject to robust oversight by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, just as it will remain subject to external arm's-length review by the Security Intelligence Review Committee, SIRC.

For the safety and security of Canadians, we need to move forward with these targeted and limited amendments to the CSIS Act to ensure that CSIS has the tools it needs to investigate threats to the security of Canada.

At the outset of my remarks, I mentioned that there were two elements to this legislation. Now I am going to turn to the second part.

The bill also contains technical amendments to the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, which received royal assent earlier this year.

These amendments will allow for quicker implementation of the citizenship revocation provisions in that act, including provisions to enable the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to revoke Canadian citizenship from dual citizens convicted of terrorism, treason, or spying offences. We believe that an earlier timeline to implement these important provisions is warranted.

Citizenship is a pledge of mutual responsibility and shared commitment to the values rooted in our history and to our fellow Canadians. Dual citizens convicted of serious crimes such as terrorism should not continue to benefit from Canadian citizenship, a citizenship that provides foundations of democracy, human rights, and the protections afforded to all Canadians in this great nation.

In closing, I would like to clearly state that it is imperative that all parties support this legislation. In the past, both the Liberals and the NDP have been guilty of under-reacting to the threat posed to Canadians by radical extremists. Clearly both parties, I hope, have now come to realize the true threat that we face and will work with us to ensure that all Canadians are protected and safe.

The Liberals opposed taking citizenship away from terrorists. Bizarrely, they claimed that it was an affront to Canadian values. I am quite sure that they may have re-evaluated that position. Even further afield, the NDP opposed the Combating Terrorism Act, which was well ahead of its time. It effectively criminalized what we have now come to know as foreign fighters. What is more, the NDP leader has rejected the assessments of the President of France, the U.S. Secretary of State, and even the Commissioner of the RCMP, who said what Canadians knew all along: that the horrific events of late October were the acts of deranged terrorists bent on establishing an Islamic caliphate.

Government Orders

I hope that in the coming days, all parties in the House will take this opportunity to stand up for security and to stand up for all Canadians. Our nation must be preserved, and to do so, we must ensure that we provide those who protect us with the right tools to enable them to do it.

• (1615)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I have a specific question for him on something that he left out of his speech, and that is civilian oversight of CSIS.

This bill provides more power to CSIS. However, it makes no mention of better oversight of CSIS, which is charged with ensuring that everything is consistent with the law and our rights and freedoms as Canadian citizens.

Does the hon. member think it is necessary to have better oversight of CSIS given that the current oversight seems inadequate in many ways? Why is there nothing in this bill about better oversight when it is already falling short and CSIS is being given more power?

[English]

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, I disagree. There is oversight through the Security Intelligence Review Committee. Of course, CSIS is an important element in the security of Canada. Keeping us safe, looking forward, looking within the bounds of this nation and outside of it, and scanning for the threats that have very recently affected us all in Canada.

Our having civilian oversight to look into CSIS, monitor its activities, and make sure it complies with Canadian law is strong and robust, and will remain in place.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would disagree with the member's last statement that it is strong and robust, thereby implying that there is no room for improvement.

We need to recognize that there are foreign intelligence agencies. I am sure the member is familiar with the Five Eyes, which includes Australia, New Zealand, the U.S and the U.K., all partners of sorts with Canada dealing with intelligence. We will vote later on today to ensure that there is parliamentary oversight of the agencies.

Would the member not agree that if our partners in the Five Eyes recognize the value of parliamentary oversight, it would be a mistake for the House of Commons not to support private member's bill, Bill C-622, which the Liberal defence critic brought forward, as an opportunity to give strength to the oversight system that we have in Canada today?

• (1620)

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, my friend is right about one thing. There is room for improvement, and that is why we are having this debate. We are looking to improve the ability of our security agencies to protect us, to give them the necessary tools to robustly defend us, to look ahead, to ensure they detect the threats facing Canada and eliminate them before they come to our soil. After the events of the last few weeks, I have absolutely identified areas that

we have to work on. That is why I gave my speech today and why others will also rise to speak to this.

In terms of the robustness of our ability to oversee and manage our security agencies, I agree that we have to work very closely with our allies, which we already do. CSIS and others extend outward. They work with our allies and others to share information and make sure that as an allied group we are protected and have mutual support in the defence of terrorism and criminality that threaten Canada.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to speak to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

The bill seeks to clarify elements of CSIS' mandate that address serious operational gaps at CSIS bases, including protecting the identities of CSIS's human sources and employees.

The bill would also confirm that CSIS can operate abroad to investigate the threats that have become all too common of late on the nightly news, threats such as the Islamic State, which has demonstrated particular brutality and is drawing individuals from all over the world to join its cause.

As we have now unfortunately seen over these past few weeks, events abroad can inspire radicalization at home with terrible consequences. The RCMP has been quite clear that both of the terrorists who committed these attacks against members of the Canadian Armed Forces had radical ideological motives inspired by extremist views.

The bill is important to ensuring CSIS remains able to investigate such threats to Canada's national security. Whether those threats be radicalized individuals at home, those seeking to travel abroad and cause harm to others, or Canadians abroad committing acts of terrorism, the Canadian public expects and rightly demands that CSIS have the legal authorities to take all necessary steps to investigate threats to the security of Canada and ensure our safety and security.

That said, Canadians also rightly expect that our security agencies be subject to proper review and accountability to ensure they operate within the law. Some members of the House have noted such concerns, and I would like to address these matters directly.

Just over 30 years ago the House passed the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. CSIS was created on the basis of recommendations made by the McDonald commission, itself an independent commission of inquiry.

The McDonald commission spanned four years, from 1977 to 1981 and carefully examined complaints against the RCMP security service at the time. Notably for our discussion here today, its primary recommendation was to create a civilian security intelligence agency separate from law enforcement. This key recommendation is what led to the creation of CSIS.

Government Orders

At the time, the establishment of CSIS had bipartisan support. It is important that the legislation also created a sophisticated and extensive system of accountability and review. That review system is built on the function and role of the Security Intelligence Review Committee or SIRC, judicial authorization, and accountability to the minister and Parliament.

Canadians should be aware that historically SIRC's membership has consisted of individuals from diverse political backgrounds and walks of life. Such a varied membership helps to ensure the trust of all Canadians. It is also important to note that SIRC is one of the most robust review bodies in the western world.

SIRC's mandate is threefold. First, SIRC's review function allows it to make observations and provide recommendations in regard to CSIS' activities, operations and tradecraft. Such review helps ensure that CSIS' operations are effective, safe and legal.

Second, SIRC's complaints function mandates it to investigate formal complaints from members of the public in regard to specific activities of CSIS. Commonly, such complaints are in regard to the denial of a government security clearance by their deputy head, but SIRC can certainly examine any complaint regarding an activity of CSIS.

Third, SIRC is also charged with certifying that CSIS' investigative activities, as described in the director's annual report to the minister, are consistent with the CSIS Act and ministerial direction, and demonstrate a reasonable and necessary use of the service's powers. In that regard, in its most recent report, SIRC found that the operational activities of the service complied with the act and ministerial direction, and were reasonable and necessary in the execution of its mandate.

Canadians should be aware that SIRC's mandate knows no geographic boundary. In that regard, SIRC can and does review CSIS' foreign operations and stations abroad.

● (1625)

As CSIS has increasingly expanded its operations abroad in response to growing threats, particularly after 9/11, SIRC, too, has expanded its own review of those operations. SIRC's expansive mandate means that it provides a robust system of checks and balances on the powers and activities of the service. Canadians can be assured that SIRC continues to carefully review both CSIS' domestic and international activities.

In its 30 years of existence, CSIS has adopted or addressed the majority of SIRC's recommendations, and the director of CSIS has stated forthrightly and publicly that it is a better organization because of SIRC's recommendations. It should also be noted that CSIS' activities can be and regularly are reviewed by the Privacy Commissioner who can issue public recommendations. Members should also be aware that certain CSIS investigative activities require judicial authorization.

CSIS' warrant powers are managed through a rigorous and comprehensive regime and require the prior approval of the Minister of Public Safety. The Federal Court has complete discretion whether to approve, deny or renew warrant applications from CSIS. Markedly the bill would clarify that the Federal Court can also

issue warrants for certain intrusive investigative activities by the service abroad, and in consideration only of relevant Canadian law.

Members should also know that such a rigorous warrant regime for international intelligence operations is unprecedented among our closest allies and provides a level of assurance both for the legality and appropriateness of CSIS activities abroad. Further still, the service reports directly to the Minister of Public Safety who is accountable to Parliament for the activities of CSIS and tables an annual public report on CSIS' activities.

CSIS appears regularly before parliamentary committees to address concerns of members and senators. In fact, as recently as October 8, the CSIS director and RCMP commissioner appeared at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to provide members with a frank, open and candid discussion of the terrorist threat. I am quite sure that CSIS officials will appear at the public safety and national security committee to address any concerns and answer any questions on the bill before us today.

Simply put, CSIS' review and warrant regimes are robust and extensive. Canadians and members of the House can be assured that CSIS is acting well within its mandate to investigate threats to the security of Canada.

To me, this is all very impressive. It is reflective of our shared Canadian values of respect for individual rights and the rule of law. However, still the Liberals continue to bring forward proposals that would create duplicate oversight mechanisms. It seems that many, especially the members for Vancouver Quadra and Malpeque, seem focused on well-meaning proposals that have the unintended consequence of causing our national security agencies to go head to head with the terrorist threat with one hand tied behind their backs.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all members of the House to stop under-reacting to the terrorist threat and to support this important legislation.

Lastly, we all like our privacy and security, but we live in a different world today. I know that there is an expectation among most Canadians that the government has to take action. Some of the things that happened here in the last two weeks in this place and this city has made that reality very apparent to all of us. The Government of Canada will and has to respond to that threat.

● (1630)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the NDP agrees that this bill should be sent to committee for further study so that we can hear from the experts on this matter.

Government Orders

However, we do have some serious concerns about this Conservative bill, which enormously expands the powers of CSIS. It allows for espionage in other countries, outside Canada's borders. Following the Maher Arar case in 2006, a commission of inquiry made several recommendations for improving civilian oversight of CSIS. There is nothing in the bill about increasing civilian oversight. Justice O'Connor made several recommendations, but this government ignored all of them. Then the Conservative government eliminated the position of inspector general of CSIS. There are still two vacant positions on the Security Intelligence Review Committee, and there are huge gaps when it comes to civilian oversight of CSIS.

Does the member think this bill could be amended to address this?
[English]

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that there were two vacancies on SIRC right now. However, as in any other committee or kind of structure like this in government, from time to time there are vacancies. I would like to think, and I am quite sure I will be right in saying this, that there is probably a process going through right now to replace those people.

As for the member's comments about oversight, to me it is obvious that is part of this bill.

On her comments with respect to overseas, I am not sure by her comments whether she is opposed or for CSIS expanding outside of Canada to watch people. The reality is, and it is well known, that some Canadians are in other countries and if they are in the process of trying to plan a terrorist attack or some kind of event, it is the responsibility of CSIS, in conjunction with other policing organizations around the world, to know what they are doing and to do what it can to stop them, such as taking away their passport.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague and I are on much the same wavelength in terms of the bill. Requiring CSIS to obtain warrants is certainly a good thing.

It should be noted that yesterday the Federal Court of Appeal upheld a ruling that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service hid the fact that it was relying on foreign intelligence agencies to spy on Canadians abroad. That basically backs up the Federal Court decision by Justice Mosley, which is one of the reasons why this bill has come forward.

However, my question for the member really relates to the previous discussion between the two MPs, and that is the need for oversight. SIRC is after the fact oversight. Although there may be two members missing, I will submit that the Security Intelligence Review Committee does great work, but it is after the fact. All of the five eyes partners have parliamentary oversight.

My colleague from Vancouver Quadra has a bill before Parliament to be voted on I believe tonight. There is another private member's bill as well. We really need parliamentary oversight for all of our security agencies to protect the minister and Canadians, and I hope the member would support that.

• (1635)

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I knew if I stayed around here long enough, my colleague from Malpeque and I would find something that we both agree on.

With respect to parliamentary oversight, as I said during my speech, there is a lot of oversight right through to the minister. Do we really want something where we have 308 members of Parliament making a decision on every little thing? The member has been around this place long enough, in his profession outside of here and in some of the posts that he has held, to know that it cannot work quite as simply as he is trying say it would. I agree with him with respect to the philosophy of oversight, but there is a lot of it now.

This is a very good bill. Since he agrees with me, I will certainly be happy when he stands to support it.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, National Defence; the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, Employment Insurance; the hon. member for Québec, Small Business.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House to speak on behalf of the people of Gatineau concerning Bill C-44. Although their experience was very different than ours here in the House, the people of Gatineau were affected by the events of October. Many people will never be the same because of what happened. I am convinced that the Remembrance Day ceremonies, which will begin this weekend and culminate on November 11 in the national ceremony here in Ottawa, will take on quite a new, although similar, significance. In fact, what we celebrate every year is the fact that we must not forget. Perhaps this year more people will remember.

I know that I will be very happy to be with the people of Gatineau at the two cenotaphs in my riding. First, I will lay a wreath at the Legion on Baie Street. Then I will go to the cenotaph at the Norris Branch Legion. I try to alternate every year. Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo will certainly be in our thoughts.

That said, we have to keep things in perspective. The comments I sometimes hear from the Conservative benches are disconcerting, including the comments by the member for Etobicoke Centre.

• (1640)

[English]

He accused the opposition of being guilty of under-reacting to threats against the country and its citizens.

[Translation]

I take offence at that type of comment. It certainly does not encourage thoughtful debate in view of what is happening right now. What is more, it sheds a negative light on the picture that the Conservatives are trying to paint of Bill C-44.

Government Orders

As an aside, I am convinced that quite the opposite was true when the mass killing occurred at École Polytechnique. At the time, the government's response was to create a firearms registry. As I recall, the Conservatives were accusing the government in power of overreacting. Sometimes one has to be consistent in life to keep things logical.

The best tribute we can pay to Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent, if we want to honour their memory, is to continue to uphold the values that they staunchly defended by fulfilling their duties every day. That is what Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent would ask of this noble institution, which is supposed to represent our democracy. They would ask us to protect the security of Canadians, something they did valiantly and courageously. As I was saying, I will be pleased to honour them during my visits to the cenotaphs and the Greater Gatineau Elementary School, when the young children hold a Remembrance Day ceremony. They are going to talk about Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent. However, these individuals would also want us to remember the values that Canada has always stood for, the values of democracy and the protection of freedoms. We send our soldiers around the world to defend these principles. That has always been my understanding.

It is misleading to claim that Bill C-44 is a solution to a problem that could have caused the absolutely tragic events that took place in October. To expect people to believe that is to take them for fools and to try to take advantage of a situation, which I think is despicable and certainly flies in the face of our role here as legislators, which is to introduce sensible legislation that is in line with our Constitution, our charters, our rights and our values.

We lack confidence in this government because we often get information bit by bit.

The Conservatives give roundabout answers to specific questions. Then they accuse us of not supporting the solutions they are trying to shove down our throats.

Bill C-44 was already on the radar. The bill is exactly the same as it was when it was to be introduced on that day we all remember, Wednesday, October 22, the day of the tragic events that led to the death of Corporal Cirillo. The introduction was pushed back, in light of the circumstances, and the bill was introduced a short time later.

I think the comments by the member for Malpeque bear repeating:

[English]

The Tories lost the July court ruling on CSIS spying overseas.

[Translation]

Bill C-44 is nothing but a response to the July rulings by the Federal Court and the Federal Court of Appeal, by Justices Mainville, Dawson and Blais. Sometimes I lose a little confidence in this government, and that is the understatement of the year. We learned yesterday that this ruling had been made and had been partially redacted. That is understandable, since a government cannot disclose everything when it comes to national security.

●(1645)

I try to be familiar with court rulings, in light of my amazing and fascinating role as justice critic for the official opposition. However, I learned about this ruling from the papers. This is what Tonda MacCharles, a journalist with the Ottawa bureau of the *Toronto Star*, had to say:

[English]

The Conservative government revealed that it lost an important Federal Court of Appeal ruling that found CSIS hid the extent of its overseas spying activities from a judge.

A redacted version of the decision of the Federal Court of Appeal, dated July 7, 2014, was posted on the court's website Tuesday with no notice to the media — a highly unusual move.

It upheld an earlier Federal Court ruling by Justice Richard Mosley that rebuked the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the federal government for hiding the fact that CSIS had turned to CSE, Canada's electronic spy agency, and its allied partners in the "Five Eyes" international spying network to carry out intrusive surveillance abroad on two Canadians.

The ruling gives strong backing to CSIS's power to operate abroad.

[Translation]

In light of the threats, we can understand that some powers are necessary.

[English]

But Justices Eleanor Dawson, Robert Mainville and Pierre Blais, the recently retired chief justice, declared that a judge's decision to issue a warrant is "not the simple 'box-ticking' exercise the attorney general suggests." And they said CSIS had to level with the courts.

"The duty of candour and utmost good faith required that CSIS disclose to the Federal Court the scope of its anticipated investigation, and in particular that CSIS considered itself authorized by...the CSIS Act to seek foreign agency assistance without a warrant. CSIS failed to make such disclosure."

However, the appeal ruling disagreed with the lower court, and found that a Federal Court judge does have jurisdiction to issue a warrant that would authorize intrusive surveillance by CSIS overseas.

[Translation]

I will spare the House the rest, but that gives members an idea of the implications of Bill C-44.

Our colleagues in the House, especially the Conservatives, say that we must provide a proper response to what happened in October. They would have Canadians believe that this bill is part of that response. However, it is part of something even bigger than the tragic events of October that resulted in two deaths.

I do not believe that we are under-reacting to the threats to our country and our fellow Canadians when we clearly and explicitly say that we will support Bill C-44 in order to send it to committee to be studied. Canadians are asking not just the official opposition, but also the government, to take action in that regard.

Sometimes, good suggestions are made, and witnesses will be heard.

Government Orders

Just recently, at a conference on the O'Connor commission, there were speakers who know a lot more about espionage and international terrorism than I do, such as the Information Commissioner of Canada, the Privacy Commissioner and former justice O'Connor. Those are some high-powered speakers. Former justices Dennis O'Connor, John Major and Frank Iacobucci spoke at the October 29 conference, "Arar +10: National Security and Human Rights a Decade Later".

I did say "and human rights" because for the Conservatives it is often a question of one or the other. They believe that human rights must be curtailed in order to protect security. Both can be maintained in a reasonable world, and that often happens with oversight mechanisms. In the House we often hear that organizations are given extensive powers to protect us.

Yesterday, on the local news, the reporter was asking, in a very straightforward manner, if the government should increase security in its buildings. That is like asking if the sky is blue. Of course everyone will answer yes.

The discussion really starts to get interesting when we start looking at the details. How do we make the buildings more secure? Everyone has an opinion on that. However, one fact remains: we have a starting point and the government wants to give certain powers to an organization

Sometimes, I feel as though the government is not taking the most logical action. I like logic, I like to be able to understand and I like to visualize what is happening. Like everyone, I want to feel safe. I do not want to walk down the street, afraid of my own shadow. That has never been the case in Canada, and I do not want that to change.

However, I am not naive. I know that there are people with bad intentions. I do not want to get into a discussion about their reasons because it will only be divisive. Instead, we need to find good solutions.

I am concerned when I hear people from CSIS tell us that they do not have the resources to use their powers while, at the same time, the government is getting ready to grant them more powers. I do not think anyone can get angry with me for saying that I am concerned when our major security institutions, such as the RCMP and CSIS, tell us that they need more resources.

Make no mistake. These agencies had their budgets cut and were asked to reduce their complement of police officers. It is not easy to deal with the Internet threat. Everyone has to adapt to these changes. At the same time, if we want to give these agencies powers, we also have to give them the means to exert those powers.

This bill is very technical in that it will make it possible for some people's identities to remain hidden, and likely with good reason. We therefore have to ensure that we have the means of overseeing these agencies since we are giving them a practically limitless mandate to protect our security.

No one wants to see what happened to Maher Arar happen again. Ten years later, we have to pay out tens of millions of dollars because of an illegal arrest and the government has had to apologize. We all want to avoid that.

At the same time, we want to ensure that Canadians here and abroad are safe. Let us do things right. That is the completely rational and logical message that the official opposition is sending to the government regarding Bill C-44.

I do not want to blow things out of proportion or ascribe motives to anyone, but it makes my blood boil when I hear people say that we under-react to threats against the country and its citizens. It hits close to home for me because we want everyone to be safe. That is part of the mandate of everyone here.

We do not want people to have to relive events like what happened here in October when they hear explosions, as we did three or four times this morning during our caucus meeting. We want to do things right.

• (1650)

All the experts agree: a committee is needed. I think this committee should be as independent as possible. I listened to the member who spoke before me, and he did not know that there are still two vacant positions. I would say there is even a third: there is an interim chair, a former Reform Party colleague, Deborah Grey. I am sure she is very nice, but does she have much experience in this area? Two of the five seats on that committee are vacant. As an oversight committee, it has an extremely important role to play, and yet no one seems to take it very seriously.

We are being accused of all kinds of things, blamed for every evil under the sun, as though we could not care less about what happens in terms of security. It is as though only the government cares about this, cares about our soldiers and remembers the sacrifices our veterans made on our behalf. I would be inclined to say that our veterans deserve more. It is all well and good to send them off somewhere, but how they are welcomed home at the end of their mission is also very important, I think. However, I digress.

That being said, I think this bill deserves serious consideration. Many provisions of the bill seem quite all right, such as providing the courts with certain mechanisms. We shall see. I have already talked to a number of legal experts about this, because it is not my area of expertise. Three people I consulted had different opinions or differences in opinion on certain interpretations and certain clauses. I would say to my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, who will have the extremely important task of studying Bill C-44, to pay close attention and be as open-minded as they can. They should not do as the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons sometimes does and say that they have to pass the bill quickly.

Government Orders

When we consider the circumstances in which Bill C-44 must have been drafted during the summer, following the unfavourable rulings on the government's position on this issue, it is easy to see that we have to spend more than just a few hours reviewing this bill in committee. I hope that my official opposition colleagues who sit on that committee will be able to make their voices heard calmly and make the other members realize that we are all in the same boat. We all live under the same flag, a flag that is dear to all our hearts, perhaps now more than ever. That is what should unite us and make that sense of camaraderie that we felt on October 23 last. I am not saying that we should all be singing Kumbaya. I know that we may not always agree, but we have to at least study the bill with respect, because the issue is extremely important.

In conclusion, I do not think that Corporal Cirillo and Warrant Officer Vincent would want us to be creating a police state. That is not at all what these individuals—now national heroes—were protecting. With all due respect for their memory, that is what I will keep in mind when I lay my wreath at the cenotaph and visit with young people at the Greater Gatineau school for their annual ceremony. I hope that my colleagues will examine Bill C-44 not with a tough-guy attitude, but with respect for the security, rights and freedoms of Canadians.

• (1655)

[*English*]

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague alluded in her speech to her desire for simple answers to direct questions, so I wonder if she would just humour me and live by her principle.

Does she believe that the horrific events of late October were terrorist attacks? If not, could she share with the House what she knows that would contradict the President of France, the Secretary of State of the United States, and more specifically, the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I will tell the hon. member that he must not have listened to my speech, because those types of questions only serve to divide. What I am definitely 100% sure of is that those were criminal actions.

How would we define it? The only point I made was that I cannot say, on this day, in this House, seriously, that I do not believe 100% that it could be a terrorist attack. I do not know. As I have been saying through my speech: share the information. It is nice for people to be on their high horses when they have the video, when they have been privy to things that we do not know. On October 22, the thing I thought was worst for me was not knowing what was happening. To get information from U.S. news, not from my government, not from anyone here, was unacceptable.

I think what it shows is that there are some people who are very severely disturbed, to say the least, and that criminal action, be it an act of terrorism, an act of craziness, or an act of whatever, remains a criminal act. It remains murder. It has to be treated as such if it is based on evidence, and I think there is still some review.

Good for those who feel at ease with some definition. As a lawyer, I am a bit inclined to wait for all the facts before I can express a definite answer.

• (1700)

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, further to the member for Gatineau's comments about not having full information, I want to point out that the Information Commissioner, Mme Legault, pointed to "information asymmetry" when it comes to national security measures—the government has all the relevant information, and Canadians are asked to approve of new measures without that information".

She is concerned about that, because it is not just about protecting fundamental security rights. There are also other fundamental rights, and we need to have the appropriate information to make the appropriate judgement call.

The commissioner also called for "a complete review into the oversight of national security bodies". I know that has been mentioned by a number of speakers.

One of the reasons for the Liberal Party's support of a parliamentary oversight committee, aside from our Five Eyes partners all having such a thing, is that it can be more effective, in terms of security, than a patchwork of oversight for individual security and intelligence agencies and nothing to integrate them.

I would like to ask the member for Gatineau, especially given the tragic events of October 22, whether that oversight that could look at the gaps between different security agencies, whether it is the RCMP, parliamentary security, CSIS, or CSEC, could strengthen our security as well as strengthen privacy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

I am very proud to say that the NDP is moving a motion on this topic. I think that this is the real problem now. Information comes in bits and pieces. We get information from one place, and the other place does not know what is going on. The government has all that information and will not give an answer. I can understand that if an answer discloses confidential information, that can make things dangerous around the world. However, I cannot believe that is the case for all the information.

How do the various agencies provide security on Parliament Hill to protect tourists, Canadians who come to visit their Parliament, members of Parliament, parliamentarians, employees of the various services on Parliament Hill and the adjacent buildings? What is preventing people from sitting down to explain—perhaps even confidentially—how we can improve our methods and procedures in order to fully guarantee that Canadians are safe?

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Gatineau for her excellent speech.

Government Orders

In the aftermath of the events of September 11 in the United States—which was a tragic event similar to the one here in Canada on October 22, in that it created an atmosphere of fear and terror—the U.S. government's approach was designed to limit personal freedoms in order to increase the powers of security agencies.

Unfortunately, I am now seeing the same tendency with the Canadian government, which is using the events of October 22 to mimic what was done in the United States. The difference is that on October 22, the criminal in question had serious mental health problems. They are two completely different situations.

Could my colleague comment on the fact that the Canadian government is adding to the atmosphere of terror so that it can turn around and say that we need to protect ourselves from these terrorists?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

I always try to avoid imputing motives to others. The only thing I constantly take exception to—and I always will by rising in the House—is how the government gratuitously tells us that we are under-reacting to the threat to our country and Canadians. I take pride in reacting logically, intelligently and with compassion and understanding to the events we all went through a couple of weeks ago.

Just because we are asking questions does not mean that we are friends with terrorists or that we are too soft. Of course, the initial reaction is to oversimplify things. We see that everywhere. Even though politicians may not be asking the question, the media, with the kinds of questions they ask every day on the radio or television, often end up oversimplifying things. When we do that with such complex issues, we are at risk of making mistakes.

That is why I often say that we need to take a deep breath, step back a little and listen to the experts, including representatives of the organizations responsible for keeping us safe, so that we can make the best possible decisions and avoid racial profiling and abuses. That is what is most important, because no one in this House wants to see other human tragedies caused by attempts to create some kind of mass hysteria with overblown rhetoric. We need to take our role as legislators seriously.

I know this is my last speech on this topic at this stage, but I truly hope that the committee will have ample opportunity to study this—not taking forever, but taking the time needed to talk to the real experts in the field—and report back to us here in the House so that we can make an informed decision at third reading.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Calgary Centre.

It is my honour this afternoon to speak to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. As the House knows, this measure was introduced before the events on the Hill on October 22.

Before I start my speech, I want to say one thing. First, I am glad to be anywhere to give a speech after the events on October 22, but what surprised me was the outpouring of concern and affection for

my family back home, not just for me but to find out how my wife and kids were doing that day. There were hundreds of calls and contacts and emails to my wife and family. I appreciate the outpouring of concern for my family and myself on that day from the people of my riding. It was very heartwarming. I sent a letter off to the local newspaper thanking people for their concern.

It is my privilege, as I said, to rise today to voice my opinion in this debate on the protection of Canada from terrorists act. As we have seen over the last number of weeks, acts of terror are not limited to troubled areas of the world, such as Syria, Iran, and Iraq. They are carried out by individuals and groups in cities and regions around the world. All of these actions are done for a variety of motives and by different means, but they all have a common goal, which is to strike terror and fear into the hearts of governments and citizens and all of the people they affect.

We will not be intimidated by those cowardly acts. In late October, terrorism hit Canada twice in the span of only a few days. In our typical Canadian fashion, we picked ourselves up, got back to work in the House, came together to grieve for our fallen heroes, and carried on.

The one thing I will never forget is the opportunity I had to attend Corporal Cirillo's funeral in Hamilton. My riding of Burlington is a neighbouring riding to Hamilton, where Corporal Cirillo and his family are from, and many of his colleagues in his regiment live and work in my riding. It was a great honour to be at the funeral to pay my respects on behalf of my community and of the House.

We will continue to strive to protect individuals' rights and stand up for the rule of law, because that is who we are. However, it is clear that our national security agencies need new tools, particularly in the areas of surveillance, detention, and arrest. We will not overreact to threats against us, as some have suggested, but it is high time that we stop under-reacting. We need to be more proactive and start taking terrorist threats seriously, because nothing is more important than keeping Canadians safe from harm and fear, whether in the streets of their communities or when they are travelling or living abroad.

No government can guarantee that it will be able to stop every terrorist act from occurring, but we can make every effort to prevent, detect, deny, and respond to terrorist threats. At its most basic, this means reaching out to communities and religious leaders who will help law enforcement identify individuals who are threats to our collective peace and security.

There are a number of initiatives and programs in place to help governments and law enforcement build those relationships, and we have seen that trust and collaboration flourish over the past few years. This type of interaction is invaluable in terms of helping to uncover potential threats.

Government Orders

• (1710)

We often hear the terms “lone wolf” and “radicalized individuals” used to describe people who may become radicalized to violence without law enforcement having any signals or warnings. While these individuals may be hidden from view, they are often inspired by terrorist entities that are strong in number and loud in their calls for death. Terrorist groups often are happy to let the world know who they are, what they believe in, and what their plans are. Through the Internet in particular, groups like ISIL and al Qaeda broadcast their message of hate and terror, calling on new recruits and followers to carry out their acts of violence against innocent civilians.

Members of the House know the influence the Internet can have on individuals and organizations. We do not need to talk about terrorism to see the effect it has. We all get emails that are inaccurate and tell the wrong story about all kinds of issues. They all end up on our desks, and we all have to respond about inaccuracies and so on. It is this kind of access to information—even erroneous, poorly informed information—that causes individuals who are not being radicalized to make inaccurate statements, believing what they are reading on the Internet. Unfortunately, for individuals who are lost in terms of their place in this world, the Internet is a source of radicalization. Terrorist organizations are able to do this through countless online outlets that are easily accessible and available throughout the globe. We need to be very diligent in that area.

However, these large groups need more than cheap communications, which the Internet provides. They need money, weapons, explosives, people, and other types of resources to carry out their work. That is why our government is taking decisive action, through legal means, to stop terrorist groups.

One way is to cut off their source of funds and resources. We know that global terrorist groups actively seek funds and resources internationally. Under Canada's Anti-terrorism Act, our government can list an entity under the Criminal Code if it has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in, or facilitated a terrorist activity, or if it is knowingly acting on behalf of, at the direction of, or in association with any entity involved in a terrorist activity.

The listing process requires analysis of intelligence and criminal information. These reports are submitted to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness for consideration. If the minister has reasonable grounds to believe that the entity's activities fall within the parameters I just mentioned, the minister can place that organization on the list of terrorist entities. Once on the list, the entity is effectively denied its source of critical funding from Canadian sources. Its assets are frozen and subject to seizure, restraint, or forfeiture.

As a further measure, the listing makes it a criminal offence for any Canadian, at home or abroad, to knowingly participate, directly or indirectly, in the activities of a listed entity for the purpose of enhancing its ability to carry out a terrorist activity.

Which entities are on the list? They include al Qaeda, which serves as the strategic hub and driver for the global Islamist terrorist movement; al Shabaab, a group that is waging a campaign of violence and terror in Somalia; and, of course, ISIL. As we know, this barbaric group has carried out prominent attacks involving

suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, improvised explosive devices, armed attacks, hostage takings, and beheadings.

This is just one way we are able to use legal means to address threats to our safety and security.

As I have heard from all the parties, it appears that the bill is going to go to committee, which I think is appropriate. There we can discuss the issues further and gain a better understanding of them.

I hope all parties can accept the legislation put before us today. It is balanced, reasonable, and effective. It would create new and important tools to allow CSIS to continue to operate successfully. It is the first step in keeping Canadians safe.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian national anthem was heard for the first time in June 1880 at the French-Canadian National Congress. It had been commissioned by the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, Théodore Robitaille. The lyrics were written by Adolphe-Basile Routhier and the music, by Calixa Lavallée. One of the most famous lines in the French version is “protégera nos foyers et nos droits”, which is about protecting our homes and our rights.

I wonder if my colleague thinks that it is important to protect our homes and our rights at the same time, rather making them mutually exclusive. Would he agree that it is important to protect our homes and our rights, without putting them at odds with each other, in order to ensure that our homes are indeed protected and that our rights are as well?

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Wallace: Mr. Speaker, that is a reasonable question, but I do not think that Bill C-44 would change that balance.

Canadians, including those from Burlington, believe that we do have a role and responsibility as a government to protect our citizens, particularly in a world where, unfortunately, terrorism is not a far-off threat. It is something that can happen here on this soil, in homes, communities and places of work.

We have organizations, such as the RCMP, police forces and CSIS, which are our agencies to help with protection. In a careful review of what Bill C-44 would do in terms of protecting Canadians, it would actually enhance the ability for Canadians to enjoy the freedoms they have in their homes, in their communities, in their province and in their country.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has said that the bill is a measured and reasonable step forward. However, we are supporting the bill to go to committee because it needs thorough scrutiny. There are measures in the bill that experts are concerned might violate international law. There are other measures that include provisions to enact an element of another bill that really does not have very much to do with the core elements of the provisions around CSIS.

Government Orders

My largest concern is that, unlike the advice that the Information Commissioner has given, any movement to strengthen or increase security measures should also be accompanied by an increase in oversight. However, that is completely ignored by the current government. In fact, the member's government has said that security oversight is just fine as it is.

In his view, does the member feel there is no need or any benefit in having an oversight that would tie together the various security agencies, such as CSEC, the Canada Border Services Agency, the RCMP, immigration and others, which, in some cases, are operating in silos in terms of oversight?

Would an integrated overview approach, as proposed by Bill C-622, which we will be voting on tonight, and other legislation, not be a positive thing in order to identify any gaps among the agencies and fix the—

• (1720)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member for Burlington.

Mr. Mike Wallace: Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the motion to have parliamentary oversight.

I have been on the Hill for eight years. One of our key functions as members of Parliament is financial oversight. Today our supplementary estimates (B) and performance reports were tabled. In having parliamentary oversight, there is a lot of room for improvement on the financial side.

If the member thinks there needs to be oversight, then we should change, improve or enhance the abilities of those organizations that already exist to provide oversight. Adding another layer, particularly a set of parliamentarians, will not enhance or improve the oversight of the spy agency or the other agencies or bodies that already exist and have that responsibility. Improve their responsibility, but do not add another layer of bureaucracy, particularly one that has a political element to it.

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Burlington for sharing his time, so I can speak to Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act.

This legislation includes amendments to the CSIS Act as well as the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act and today I am going to address my comments to the CSIS Act.

Before I begin, let me explain why we have introduced this important piece of legislation. Recent events both here and in Quebec really serve as a very stark reminder that ISIL is a very real threat to Canadians. It is all too real to the people who sit in this House and I want to take a moment to thank everyone who personally called, emailed or texted me to express their concern for me.

Because of these and other threats, our Conservative government is working very determinedly to strengthen the tools that are available to the police and to our intelligence community in the areas of surveillance, detection and arrest.

The protection of Canada from terrorists act is just the first step in our efforts to do that. Canadians can be assured that we will not overreact in response to these terrorist acts, but it is also time, as the

member for Burlington stated, that we stop under-reacting. To do this, we must give those who are investigating these threats to the security of Canada the tools that they need to ensure that they can investigate these threats wherever they might occur.

For the past 30 years, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service has played a key role in helping to ensure the safety and security of Canadians. Today, CSIS investigates and analyses a really wide range of threats from terrorism, to countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and foreign espionage.

CSIS has evolved into a world-class professional intelligence service that is respected and relied upon both here at home and globally. That achievement is ultimately due to the really high calibre of people who have chosen to work there. These are men and women who have joined CSIS because they really wanted to make a difference and they wanted to protect the safety and security of Canada. That is in the face of evolving national security threats.

However, those threats have changed dramatically since CSIS was created with the CSIS Act in 1984. The threat of terrorism is now a lot more complex and it is a lot more diffuse. Radical individuals or groups of extremists with the motivation and access to certain kinds of technology can really do significant harm to Canada. Global conflict, particularly the abhorrent violence that is perpetuated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant serve as a reminder of our obligation to address these threats and this was underscored and echoed by the President of France here in the House this week.

Our government proposes to amend the CSIS Act to allow CSIS to better operate and investigate these threats to Canada's national security. I want to highlight the most recent measures taken by our government to continue to improve our counterterrorism tools, to face this evolving threat environment we are in.

The Combating Terrorism Act, which came into force in May 2013, created new criminal offences of leaving or attempting to leave Canada for the purpose of committing certain terrorism offences outside Canada. This is close to home for me because there have been people radicalized from Calgary who have done this.

This last July, a B.C. man was charged with leaving Canada to take part in a terrorist activity under this new act for the first time. Our government also employs many means to deny terrorists the opportunity to be able to carry out terrorist activities. This includes the RCMP-led high risk travel case management group and revoking and suspending passports of these prospective travellers.

However, our law enforcement people need more tools. We are committed to doing everything in our power to prevent Canadians from becoming either victims or perpetrators of terrorism-related activities.

That is why in our government's 2014 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada, it lays out our actions to address terrorism in all of its forms, including addressing this phenomenon of extremist travellers and returnees. Though the numbers are fluctuating, as early as 2014, the government was aware of more than 130 people who had Canadian connections, who had travelled abroad and were suspected of terrorism-related activities. This is real.

More recently, CSIS indicated that it is aware of 50 Canadians directly involved with activities being undertaken by ISIL and other extremist groups in the region.

● (1725)

Our government believes that prevention is really fundamental to combat violent extremism and that all key players, including community members who are very important, government and law enforcement and intelligence agencies, have to share a common and comprehensive understanding of violent extremism. We have to all work together to stop people from being radicalized into violence. Some of the methods are intervention and building community and law enforcement capacity.

While we are working here at home, we also have to take action on the international front. This is why we are collaborating with our allies on global efforts to counter violent extremism and to address this threat of extremist travellers.

More recently, as we know, our government voted in favour of joining our allies in the global military action in Iraq. In doing so, we are going to work to destroy the ISIL threat and its barbaric actions, which have resulted in the deaths and displacement of innocent civilians across the region and caused a global security concern.

While we are continuing to take strong action against this despicable organization, we must give our intelligence agencies the tools that they are going to need to really confront these kinds of threat to our security.

That is why we have introduced Bill C-44, the protection of Canada from terrorists act. Through this legislation, our government would amend the existing CSIS Act to confirm that CSIS does have the necessary methods and tools that it needs to investigate these threats and protect the security of Canada.

The legislation governing CSIS really does need to keep pace with this evolving terrorism threat to ensure that CSIS can investigate these threats, no matter where they occur. To that end, the protection of Canada from terrorists act would specifically confirm CSIS's authority to conduct investigations outside of Canada. These would have to be related to threats and to the security of Canada and security assessments.

It would confirm that the Federal Court can issue warrants for CSIS to investigate, within or outside Canada, threats to the security of Canada.

It would give the Federal Court the authority to consider only relevant Canadian law when issuing these warrants to authorize CSIS to undertake certain intrusive activities to investigate a threat to the security of Canada or outside of Canada.

It would protect the identity of CSIS human sources from disclosure, which is very important, and it would also protect the identity of CSIS employees who might engage in covert activities in the future.

It is important to note that CSIS would continue to require judicial authority to conduct certain investigative activities both within and outside of Canada. It would still remain subject to independent review by the Security Intelligence Review Committee.

Government Orders

The protection, safety and security of Canadians and our interests are a top priority for the Government of Canada, and should be for all members in the House. To that end, the important role that CSIS plays cannot be overstated. We will continue to equip it with the tools that it needs to investigate threats to the security of Canadians in what we are facing right now, which is an increasingly complex global environment.

I would encourage all members of the House to ensure that they vote for this very important and needed legislation.

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech.

We know that Bill C-44 is not a direct response to the events of October 20 and 22. The government announced other measures in reaction to those events. I would like to hear the member's opinion on the legislator's responsibility to react responsibly.

Does the member think that reacting to specific events or isolated cases is the right way for the legislator to make laws? I have raised this question in the House on a number of occasions over the past three and a half years. I would therefore like to know what she thinks about the legislator's responsibility to be cautious. The threats change and society changes, but the laws remain. That is why it is important for us, in the House, as legislators, to be responsible when it comes to the new laws that will be passed in response to very specific and often isolated incidents.

[*English*]

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Sherbrooke knows that the events we suffered here in this House and the events in Quebec were entirely regrettable and have affected all of us.

This legislation was in the works prior to that. Those events just brought home to us, and to all Canadians, the real need for this legislation. I think the members opposite recognize that it is not a reaction to the events that occurred here. This is a reaction to the events occurring globally that have been reported and that we have seen in Iraq and have heard about so vividly: the atrocities, the loss of life, the incredible difficulties people have faced worldwide, and the threats to our security at home.

Those events just brought that home to us. This is very well-considered legislation. I think it shows real balance.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments of the member across the way.

Liberals certainly feel and believe that strong security measures that protect Canadians are very important. Our intelligence agencies, our security agencies, do very important work in this regard.

It was under a Liberal government that the Order in Council to create, for example, our signals intelligence agency were put in place by cabinet, and it was also under a Liberal government that the National Defence Act and the Anti-terrorism Act were put in place to strengthen the ability of our security agencies to do their work.

Government Orders

The member used the word “balance”. What is missing in the government's approach is that very idea. I was listening carefully to hear any mention of the words “freedom”, “privacy rights”, and “civil liberties”, and I did not hear those words even once.

I ask the member whether she is aware that the deputy director of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security considers the embedding of privacy rights and civil liberties in every program, system, and activity of Homeland Security to be essential to having a strong and effective security outcome for that department. How does she think that relates to the government's approach?

• (1735)

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Mr. Speaker, I think I addressed that at the outset. Canadians need not be concerned that we are overreacting. We recognize that freedom is very important, and it is that very freedom the bill would protect.

As I mentioned in my speech, CSIS will continue to require judicial authority before it can conduct certain investigative activities and will remain subject to independent review by the very important Security Intelligence Review Committee.

Those are our checks and balances in the system. It is freedom that we are interested in protecting. That is why this piece of legislation is being introduced. From the member's comments and the comments of the official opposition, I hope and pray that they will support it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate the opportunity to share with members some of my personal thoughts and to express some thoughts and ideas from the Liberal Party.

It goes without saying that Canadians have a burning desire to see security measures in place that will allow them to feel safe in the communities in which they live, whether it is here in the parliamentary precinct or in communities throughout the country.

On that note, it would be a mistake not to pay tribute to all those individuals who put in the effort to make us safe. Whether it is the intelligence officers of CSIS, the RCMP, border patrols, or other policing agencies, there are so many individuals who play a proactive role in ensuring that we have a sense of security. I wanted to express my appreciation for that.

It is not easy to provide a 100% guarantee that Canada will never have to endure a terrorist attack. What we can do is work hard to prevent one, wherever possible, and adequately support the different agencies. In particular, today we are focusing on CSIS.

We can bring in new legislation, but at the end of the day, legislation is only one aspect. We have to challenge the government to ensure that it is putting in other types of resources to support the different agencies that are there to protect us. Whether the government is in fact doing enough can at times be called into question.

This is really the first opportunity I have had to comment on what we all experienced just a couple of weeks ago. In the days that followed, I happened to be on a flight to Ukraine. Whether it was at the airport in Frankfurt or in Ukraine itself, I saw our beautiful Parliament buildings on the news. What took place a couple of

weeks ago made international news, as many people around the world were quite concerned about what was taking place in Canada. Constituents, family, and friends at the time also expressed a great deal of interest and concern and offered their prayers and best wishes.

As has been pointed out, from Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers all the way down, people did a phenomenal job, and they should all be applauded for their efforts in ensuring that there was minimal impact because of what took place.

We have heard some amazing speeches. There were political speeches from leaders and others who paid tribute to Corporal Cirillo, who ultimately made a sacrifice that has reached into the hearts and minds of all Canadians. I raise that because I want to put it in the context of Bill C-44.

• (1740)

The bill would do nothing to address the national security concerns related to the events in Quebec and Ottawa a couple of weeks ago. It would simply amend the present legislation to meet current CSIS practices and would expedite the CIC amendments in Bill C-24.

The government needs to explain why the provisions already in place in the Criminal Code have not been utilized in response to those individuals who represent a threat to this country.

The sections of the Criminal Code in question are section 83.181, relating to the laying of charges against an individual attempting to leave Canada to participate in terrorist activities; section 83.3, which could be used to place recognizance with conditions on those suspected of terrorist activities; and section 810, relating to peace bonds and possible detention.

I was intrigued by some of the discussions. One of the most interesting statements I came across was from the Minister of Public Safety on October 8 at the public safety committee. This is in regard to the 80 individuals who returned to Canada after having travelled abroad to take part in terrorism-related activities. This is what the minister stated to parliamentarians and Canadians at committee:

Let me be clear that these individuals posing a threat to our security at home have violated Canadian law.... These dangerous individuals, some skilled and desiring to commit terrorist activity, pose a serious threat to law-abiding Canadians.

This begs a number of questions with respect to whether we are acting on the current legislation that has been passed.

What would Bill C-44 actually do? There are three things I can detect. First, there would be protection for informants. I can appreciate why that would be necessary. Second, it would provide more clarity on the need for warrants. CSIS needs to investigate, and this legislation would provide more clarity with respect to warrants from judges to complete those investigations. Third is the issue of dual citizens. The House voted on this not that long ago, and it is being expedited.

The government needs to be aware of what is missing, and that is oversight. Oversight was mentioned today in questions.

Private Members' Business

In an hour, we will be voting on Bill C-622, an important piece of legislation. Bill C-622 was introduced by my colleague from Vancouver Quadra. She has done a wonderful job in recognizing the importance of parliamentary oversight. The government has been negligent on this issue, and I do not say that lightly.

● (1745)

What the member from Vancouver Quadra is asking of the government is already being done and is in place for our Five Eyes partners. In Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom, it is already being done. They have recognized the value of having parliamentarians provide oversight.

I do not understand why the government is resisting that idea. This is not necessarily the first time, but it is definitely an opportune time for the government to recognize that the House of Commons and parliamentarians as a whole do have a role to play.

We hope that the Prime Minister will allow for an open vote on this issue. I would encourage the government to reflect, to seriously consider the benefits of accepting what the member for Vancouver Quadra, the Liberal Party defence critic, has put on the table for us today, and to vote for parliamentary oversight.

Oversight would go a long way in providing peace of mind, in many different ways. Oversight is a good way to ensure the protection of the rights of all Canadians. It is in our best interest, I would argue.

Parliamentary oversight is not just a Liberal Party proposal. As has been pointed out, our other partnering nations have already done this. Why would the government not respond in kind and recognize the value of oversight?

We in opposition recognize how important it is to provide protection for informants. It only stands to reason that there would be protection of informants, who provide critical, valuable information when a CSIS agent is doing an investigative report or conducting an investigation into the potential for some form of a terrorist act here in Canada or abroad. We have to depend on informants.

I have no sense of the actual number of informants out there, but I do understand and appreciate the need for us to protect them. In looking at this piece of legislation, we see that protection as a positive thing.

In terms of warrants and the need for warrants, again this concern does not come from any individual political party. Based on the discussions and comments I have heard here this afternoon and even previously, it seems there is virtual unanimity in recognizing how important it is that we provide additional clarity to CSIS as an organization and in terms of the role of warrants in ensuring that investigations are conducted in a proper fashion. There is an understanding that unusual circumstances come into play when terrorist activities and organizations are investigated.

As a whole, Canadians are very much aware of what terrorism is all about. We understand and appreciate that we are living in a very different world. Through the Internet and all forms of media outlets, we know there is a much higher sense of awareness. It is there and it is very real.

● (1750)

That, I believe, is one of the reasons that Canadians expect the Government of Canada to do what it can to ensure that they have a sense of security in the communities where they live, and I suggest many of my colleagues would concur. However, at the same time, there is an expectation that we will demonstrate leadership at the international level.

In bringing forward legislation such as we have before us today, it is very important that we consult with the different stakeholders and ensure that the legislation is, in many ways, a bit more inclusive in terms of having the right balance. I am not convinced that we have the right balance here. That is why, in my last 15 or 20 seconds, I would ask the government to recognize the importance that parliamentarians have when it comes to ensuring that Canadians feel much safer in their communities. Parliamentarians need to be, and should be, more engaged in the process. Whether it is oversight or whether it is parliamentary committees, we can make a difference.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Winnipeg North will have three and a half minutes remaining for his comments when the House next resumes debate on the motion and, of course, the usual 10 minutes for questions and comments.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CSEC ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

The House resumed from October 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-622, An Act to amend the National Defence Act (transparency and accountability), to enact the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:53 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-622 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1830)

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

(Division No. 270)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Ashton
Aubin
Bélangier
Bennett
Bevington
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Charlton

Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Byrne
Casey
Chan
Chicoine

Private Members' Business

Chisholm
 Christopherson
 Côté
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Day
 Dionne Labelle
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Foote
 Freeman
 Garneau
 Genest
 Goodale
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hughes
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 May
 McGuinty
 Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Mulcair
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Patry
 Perreault
 Quach
 Rankin
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sgro
 (sor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 St-Denis
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Trost
 Turmel

Choquette
 Comartin
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Freeland
 Fry
 Garrison
 Giguère
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hsu
 Hyer
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 Mathysen
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Murray
 Nash
 Papillon
 Pécelet
 Pilon
 Rafferty
 Rathgeber
 Raynault
 Saganash
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
 sor)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Thibeault
 Tremblay
 Trudeau
 Valeriotte — 120

Hayes
 Hillyer
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
 Kerr
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leaf
 Lizon
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 O'Neill Gordon
 O'Toole
 Payne
 Preston
 Reid
 Richards
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Tilson
 Truppe
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Watson
 Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Williamson
 Yelich
 Yurdiga

Hiebert
 Hoback
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kent
 Komarnicki
 Lake
 Lebel
 Lemieux
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Nicholson
 Obhrai
 Oliver
 Opitz
 Paradis
 Poilievre
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Smith
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Sweet
 Toet
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
 Sky)
 Wilks
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Zimmer — 142

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

● (1835)

HOLIDAYS ACT

The House resumed from November 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-597, An Act to amend the Holidays Act (Remembrance Day), 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-597.

● (1840)

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

*(Division No. 271)***YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy
 Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Anderson
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Boughen
 Breitzkreuz
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Falk
 Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)

Adams
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Barlow
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Bruinooge
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeschen
 Dykstra
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Grewal
 Hawn

Ablonczy
 Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anderson
 Armstrong
 Aspin
 Aubin

Adams
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Welland)
 Allison
 Ambrose
 Angus
 Ashton
 Atamanenko
 Ayala

Private Members' Business

Barlow	Bateman	Papillon	Paradis
Bélanger	Bellavance	Patry	Payne
Bennett	Benoit	Péclet	Perreault
Benskin	Bergen	Pilon	Poilievre
Bernier	Bevington	Preston	Quach
Bezan	Blanchette	Rafferty	Rajotte
Block	Boivin	Rankin	Rathgeber
Borg	Boughen	Ravignat	Raynault
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet	Regan	Reid
Brahmi	Braid	Rempel	Richards
Breitkreuz	Brison	Saganash	Sandhu
Brosseau	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Bruinoooge	Scott	Seeback
Butt	Byrne	Sellah	Sgro
Calandra	Calkins	Shea	Shipley
Cannan	Carmichael	Shory	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Caron	Carrie	sor)	
Casey	Cash	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Chan	Charlton	Smith	Sopuck
Chicoine	Chisholm	Sorenson	Stanton
Chisu	Chong	St-Denis	Stewart
Choquette	Christopherson	Storseth	Strahl
Clarke	Clement	Sullivan	Sweet
Comartin	Côté	Thibeault	Toet
Crockatt	Crowder	Toone	Tremblay
Cullen	Cuzner	Trost	Trudeau
Daniel	Davidson	Truppe	Turmel
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)	Uppal	Valcourt
Day	Dechert	Valerioté	Van Kesteren
Devolin	Dewar	Van Loan	Vellacott
Dionne Labelle	Dreeschen	Wallace	Warkentin
Dubé	Dubourg	Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Sky Country)	
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault	Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Dykstra	Easter	Williamson	Woodworth
Eyking	Falk	Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Yurdiga	Zimmer— 258
Fletcher	Foote		
Freeland	Freeman		
Fry	Galipeau		
Gallant	Garneau		
Garrison	Genest		
Giguère	Gill	Schellenberger	
Glover	Goguen		
Goodale	Goodyear		
Gosal	Gourde		
Grewal	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)		
Harris (St. John's East)	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)		
Hawn	Hayes		
Hiebert	Hillyer		
Hoback	Holder		
Hsu	Hughes		
Hyer	James		
Jones	Julian		
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)		
Kellway	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)		
Kent	Kerr		
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)		
Lake	Lamoureux		
Lapointe	Latendresse		
Lauzon	Laverdière		
Lebel	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)		
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leef		
Lemieux	Leslie		
Liu	Lizon		
Lobb	Lukiwski		
Lunney	MacAulay		
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie		
Maguire	Mai		
Marston	Masse		
Mathysen	May		
Mayes	McCallum		
McColeman	McGuinty		
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod		
Menegakis	Miller		
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)		
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)		
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mulcair		
Murray	Nantel		
Nash	Nicholson		
Norlock	Nunez-Melo		
Obhrai	O'Connor		
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon		
Opitz	O'Toole		

NAYS

Members

Tilson— 2

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

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

The Speaker: It being 6:43 p.m., the House will now proceed to consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

RAILWAY SAFETY ACT

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC) moved that Bill C-627, An Act to amend the Railway Safety Act (safety of persons and property), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely honoured to open the debate on my private member's bill, Bill C-627, an act to amend the Railway Safety Act, regarding safety of persons and property.

The bill proposes amendments to the Railway Safety Act that would help ensure the safety and security of all Canadians.

I have heard loud and clear from my constituents that rail safety is an issue that matters to them. As the servant of Winnipeg South Centre, I chose to use my private member's bill to achieve greater rail safety in the constituency with the happy consequence that all Canadians across this great country would be safer and more secure because of my bill.

Private Members' Business

This is why I ask all of my colleagues in the House to support my bill. When I say “all of my colleagues”, I mean my colleagues from every party and my colleagues representing every Canadian. It is all of these colleagues from whom I seek support.

The amendments I propose to the Railway Safety Act would give additional powers to the Minister of Transport to intervene, when required, to help better ensure the safety of Canadian citizens, their property and our communities. My proposed legislation seeks to empower railway safety inspectors so that they may quickly intervene to restrict the use of unsafe works and equipment, and to forbid or restrict unsafe crossings and road crossings.

This is a very important issue to me, because in my riding I have been receiving a number of calls from my constituents about the condition of some rail crossings. This led me to take action. I have heard loud and clear from my constituents that rail safety is a vital issue to Winnipeg South Centre and to Canadians everywhere.

I want our crossings to be safe for a child riding a bike, to be safe for a senior on a motorized wheelchair and to be safe for a family out for a stroll or bike ride together. I want our crossings to be safe for vehicles and not, as has recently been the case, have wood planks fly up and hit vehicles as they drive over a crossing area even at very limited speeds.

Rail crossings criss-cross my riding, and the safety of them can be enhanced. This bill is a bill about prevention. The essence of the bill is to solve problems before they occur.

When I was first considering this issue, I approached officials at Transport Canada to find out if such provisions already existed. To my surprise, they did not. When I then approached the minister to seek her support for my bill, she indicated that she always welcomed such measures to improve rail safety in our communities.

My proposed regulation would improve safety at federally regulated grade crossings, including approximately 14,000 public and 9,000 private grade crossings along 42,650 kilometres of federally regulated tracks in Canada.

I think it is important to give a little background on what has already been done to achieve rail safety in Canada by my government.

On October 29, the Minister of Transport announced Transport Canada's response to the final Transportation Safety Board recommendations on rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods.

Transport Canada has taken and continues to take meaningful and timely action to improve railway safety and the safe transportation of dangerous goods by rail. Transport Canada is committed to ensuring that the Canadian railway system is safe. Transport Canada continues to work with stakeholders very closely to protect the safety of all Canadians.

Our thoughts and prayers will always remain with those people of Lac-Mégantic who were so affected by last year's tragic accident. Immediately following the derailment, the Government of Canada took very decisive action to enhance the safety and integrity of Canada's rail system. We will continue to implement each and every recommendation made by the TSB in its report on this incident.

● (1845)

Transport Canada has accepted and is committed to implementing all the recommendations made by the Transportation Safety Board in its final report. In fact, effective immediately, Transport Canada is requiring railway companies to meet standardized requirements for handbrake application and to put into effect physical defences to secure trains.

It is increasing oversight by recruiting additional staff to carry out more frequent oversight through audits and creating processes for increased information sharing with municipalities. It is conducting further research on crude oil properties, behaviour and hazards, and is launching targeted inspection campaigns to verify the classification of rail shipments. Finally, it is requiring certain railways, including short lines, to submit training plans to Transport Canada for review, and is conducting an audit blitz of short lines to determine specific training gaps.

These measures would further strengthen Canada's railway system and the transportation of dangerous goods by rail.

The department would continue to work with the Transportation Safety Board to do all it can to maintain and enhance the safety of Canada's railways and the railway system. By announcing these measures, Transport Canada is being proactive in developing concrete solutions in a timely manner to further strengthen Canada's railway system and safety.

My proposed amendments to the Railway Safety Act seek to give additional powers to the Minister of Transport and railway safety inspectors so that they may intervene when required in order to better ensure the safety of citizens, property and communities.

Additionally, this proposed legislation seeks to empower railway inspectors so that they may quickly intervene to restrict the use of unsafe works and equipment, and to forbid or restrict the use of unsafe crossing works and road crossings.

Our government takes the safety of Canadians and the Canadian railway system very seriously and is committed to ensuring that appropriate levels of safety are maintained. We have invested \$60 million to support response and recovery efforts, and committed \$95 million for decontamination and remediation efforts.

Furthermore, our government took very decisive action to address the Transportation Safety Board's recommendations, and this past April, directed Transport Canada to remove the least crash-resistant DOT-111 tank cars from service, require the DOT-111 tank cars that do not meet certain safety standards to be phased out within three years, and require emergency response assistance plans for even a single tank car, which is carrying crude oil, gasoline, diesel, aviation fuel or ethanol.

We created a task force that brings municipalities, first responders, railways and shippers together to strengthen emergency response capacity across the country, and we require railway companies to reduce the speed of trains carrying dangerous goods and implement other key operating practices.

Private Members' Business

We have issued a protective direction directing rail companies to share information with municipalities. We recognize the responsibilities of all parties involved in maintaining safe railway transportation in Canada, and our government remains committed to two-way dialogue and information exchange with key transportation stakeholders in communities across Canada.

The health and safety of Canadians is a priority for our government. We announced a directive that would ensure that all crude oil being transported is properly tested and classified and that results are sent to Transport Canada. This provides Transport Canada with an additional means to monitor industry compliance and focus our efforts for the greatest safety benefits for all Canadians.

Our government has completed more than 30,000 rail safety inspections in one year alone, invested more than \$100 million in our rail safety system, continued to hire more inspectors, increased the fines for companies found to be breaking our regulations, and created whistle-blower protection for employees who raise safety concerns, as well as requiring each railway to have an executive who is legally responsible for safety.

• (1850)

Earlier this year, as part of rail safety week, our government marked the occasion by investing \$9.2 million in improvements to over 600 grade crossings across our country. Our government has also proposed new regulations that would improve safety at rail crossings by establishing comprehensive and enforceable safety standards for the grade crossings, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of railway companies and road authorities, and also ensuring safety information is shared between the railway companies and road authorities.

Members might think that with all of those actions taken by this government, a seemingly exhaustive list, we would be done. However, I want to do more to build upon that momentum. They are all positive systemic actions and directives taken to ensure railway operational safety. My bill is really a bill focused on the security and safety of people. I believe it is very complementary to actions already taken by our government to enhance rail safety.

In the course of preparing my bill, I reached out and spoke to many individuals and organizations. They include a great number of constituents in my riding of Winnipeg South Centre who voiced their concerns with safety at rail crossings in our community. I was very proud to bring together the private sector, law enforcement, various levels of government and unions to enhance the safety of all Canadians. It is apparent to me from the conversations I have had that all stakeholders in this industry want to have exceptional safety records.

My private member's bill is designed to assist in expediting the quick resolution of safety issues encountered at crossings, all in order to ensure the safety of the public. This is always our number-one priority, and it is my number-one priority.

I am very proud to be part of this government and contribute to the service of this nation. I am equally proud of the work that has already been done by my government on rail safety, and I am happy to present this private member's bill to further enhance the safety of people, particularly at rail crossings in our communities. I am asking

my colleagues on all sides of the House for their support of my private member's bill, Bill C-627, an act to amend the Railway Safety Act, regarding safety of persons and property.

• (1855)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Winnipeg South Centre for her speech and her bill.

She mentioned that rail safety is very important and that is why she introduced this bill. She spoke at length about what the government has done with regard to rail safety.

I would like her comment on the budget that the Conservative government has allocated to rail safety. In 2012, it was \$38 million. In 2013, it was \$34 million—which is already a reduction of \$4 million—and last year it was \$33 million. The budget for rail safety has therefore been reduced by nearly \$5 million.

To make matters worse, \$3 million set aside for level crossings has not been spent. A program that exists to get things done with regard to—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly hope that since we are debating a private member's bill, Bill C-627, the question would be relevant to the particular bill in question and what it proposes to do. I appreciate that the member has questions for the government, but those are to be asked in a different venue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I admit I was listening to the question in French and while I am not 100% there, I followed the question and it seems that it will have relevance in respect to the subject area that is proposed by the bill. I will let the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie finish his question and I am sure that it will probably address the issue that is before the House, and then we will ask the hon. member to respond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary should have listened to his colleague's speech. My question is directly related.

The government is reducing the amount of money allocated and not spending the money budgeted for rail safety, especially when it comes to level crossings, which are very important in this bill because that is what the bill seeks to improve.

I would like my colleague's reaction to the government's actions, particularly with regard to the change she proposed to subsection 4 (4) of the Railway Safety Act.

• (1900)

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my very hon. colleague for the question.

I must first assure my colleague that my bill entitled An Act to amend the Railway Safety Act (safety of persons and property) is a bill that I am very proud of.

Private Members' Business

As far as our government's actions are concerned, this year alone it invested \$9.2 million in improving more than 600 level crossings, to mark the occasion of rail safety week. My bill has to do with all the other level crossings.

[English]

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the member for her bill. The bill purports to give additional powers to the minister and to inspectors for an important issue like grade level railway crossings. We had a terrible accident recently here in my home town of Ottawa where a double-decker bus, unfortunately, collided with a train which led to the deaths of several Ottawa citizens and injuries to others.

The problem I am having with the notion of empowering the government and the minister further is that the real gap here, the lacuna, the problem that all parties have identified is not power. It is inspectors; it is capacity. It is actually being able to ensure that the standards we have in place are being enforced and audited. I will come back to this during my speech shortly.

Are we not better off to fight for additional resources, given for example that this year we are spending more money on economic action plan advertising of \$42 million, than we are on rail safety?

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Mr. Speaker, the reality of my bill is that it is plugging a gap in our regulatory system. This is an important preventive measure. In my view, we do not want to wait for a child on a bicycle to be caught in a crossing. We do not want to wait for a senior citizen, on an electronically operated wheelchair, to be caught at a railway crossing. We do not want to have a family of five cross a railway and only have four make it.

We want to prevent those problems and that is the essence of my bill.

[Translation]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague opposite once more for her speech and for introducing Bill C-627, An Act to amend the Railway Safety Act (safety of persons and property).

As the official opposition critic, I am very pleased to be a member of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. We have had and continue to have the privilege of examining in detail everything to do with rail safety. In the wake of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, this is clearly a very important file for Canadians, especially since they are asking to be better informed and they want to know what the government is doing to ensure their safety.

I will go back to the bill. As I mentioned, the bill amends the Railway Safety Act. As my colleague said, it authorizes the Minister of Transport and railway safety inspectors to order a railway company or the owner of a crossing—for example, a level crossing—to do certain work, not only when rail safety is threatened, but also when the safety of persons and property is threatened.

I want to say right now that we will support the bill at second reading. At its core, this bill is designed to improve rail safety. I listened to what the member said, but we still have some questions about how the bill will be enforced and what it will do, in particular. One of our questions has to do with why these changes were

proposed. That is something I was going to ask the member before my colleague opposite interrupted me.

The member said that the amendments to subsections 31(1) to 31(3) would improve rail safety because it would include the safety of persons or property. However, as I was going to ask her, subsection 4(4) of the Railway Safety Act already provides that in determining whether something constitutes a “threat to safe railway operations”, consideration must be given “not only to the safety of persons and property transported by railways but also to the safety of other persons and other property”.

We will surely have the opportunity to study these issues in committee, but it does not seem as though the bill would change much in the act itself.

I listened closely to the bill sponsor's speech. From what I heard, she spoke more about what the government has or has not done than about the bill. It is relatively straightforward in comparison to the government's omnibus bills. It is about five pages long.

Once again, if the bill is referred to committee after second reading, we should be proposing some changes and asking some questions. It seems as though she chose to use certain terms instead of others, which could have an impact on environmental protection. It does not make much sense.

Getting back to public safety and level crossings, it is true that people's safety is important. During the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, I was the deputy critic of the NDP, the official opposition. After the tragedy, I travelled across Quebec as part of a railway safety consultation to hear what people had to say. We also wanted to hear what mayors and elected municipal officials had to say on the subject. This is a very important issue when we consider all of the communities, even downtown areas, through which trains travel. We need to ask questions, especially when it comes to level crossings.

When I asked the member that question, I briefly mentioned that the government said it was making progress on rail safety and that this is very important, especially in the wake of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. However, the fact is that the rail safety budget was cut by \$5 million between 2012 and last year. Every year, the rail safety budget shrinks. The most ironic thing is that, in this case, we are talking about level crossings.

● (1905)

The government has a plan for level crossings, but the money allocated to that plan is not being spent. There was \$3 million left over that was supposed to have been spent on improving level crossings.

We asked the government about that in the House, and it gave us a number of reasons. When I toured around talking to people about rail safety, elected officials told us that the program existed, but that it was hard to get funding from it. I wonder if the government makes these funding announcements with the full intention of making it very hard for anyone to actually get the money.

Private Members' Business

When I went to Verchères on Montreal's south shore and to Montreal, I attended a meeting where I talked with various municipal elected officials. My colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie was there too. They told us that the program exists, but that they had a hard time getting information and funding.

One of the problems that keeps coming up again and again inside and outside the House is the government's way of doing things, even though it says that rail safety is very important. I must admit, the government has taken action since the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, but could it have taken action sooner? Yes, it could. Can it do more? Yes, it can.

The budget does not seem to contain any measures to ensure that Transport Canada and rail safety organizations have the tools, training and resources needed to ensure public safety. Unfortunately, the budget has been reduced. It is completely incomprehensible and goes against all common sense.

This bill gives the minister the power to intervene should any problems related to level crossings arise. However, the Auditor General and the Transportation Safety Board have made it very clear that the department does not have enough resources.

When I asked the parliamentary secretary how many railway safety inspectors there are, he could not answer. We still cannot get those figures. Regulations are being put in place, as is the case here, but no one knows how or if they will be enforced.

Why use a private member's bill to amend something as important as the Railway Safety Act, which has to be reviewed periodically anyway? Why not conduct a full review of the act itself in committee?

We are making a change here. I noticed some irregularities and some confusing passages in this bill. That is why we want to study it in committee. Often, the problem is that we are unaware of the unintended consequences.

Why use a private member's bill? Why is the government doing nothing to ensure that railway safety legislation is solid and much safer?

The government has a tendency to allow companies to self-regulate. That is its approach, which the Liberals support. We often hear the question, "Why is the company not doing anything?" The government allows these companies to do what they want. Sometimes, both the Liberals and the Conservatives wonder why the company did not act on its own initiative.

In 2010, the Transportation Safety Board made recommendations specifically on crossings. Those recommendations have still not been implemented, despite what the hon. member said. I will quote an excerpt:

Transport Canada must implement new grade crossing regulations, develop enhanced standards or guidelines for certain types of crossing signs, and continue its leadership role in crossing safety assessments.

● (1910)

Regulations should be implemented, but that still has not happened and we do not know why.

Why is the government taking so long to implement the recommendations made by the Transportation Safety Board?

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish everyone a good evening.

The bill introduced by my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre is part of a piecemeal approach, the Conservatives' typical approach to rail safety over the past year or so. That is unfortunate. The Liberal Party believes that these measures should be part of a more comprehensive bill introduced by the transport minister.

For the past several years, Transport Canada's Rail Safety Directorate has been underfunded. It does not have enough staff and the employees it does have do not have enough training. The department has been led by a revolving door of Conservative ministers, with five ministers in just eight years.

According to the 2013 fall report of the Auditor General, Transport Canada needs about 20 inspectors to audit each of the federal railway companies every three years. Right now, the department has only 10 inspectors who are qualified to conduct these audits.

● (1915)

[*English*]

Part of the problem is that we have a capacity problem inside the department at Transport Canada. We know that with the current workforce, the department has conducted very few audits, only 26% of the audits that Transport Canada said was needed to keep rail safe in Canada. At this pace, it will take many years before the department audits all key components of safety management systems, the regulations and the key safety systems they are under.

VIA Rail, for example, carrying 4.5 million passengers a year, has not been audited in the three year period audited by the Auditor General, and likely not since then. For five years, carrying 4.5 million passengers a year, our passenger train system under VIA Rail has not been audited by Transport Canada's qualified inspectors.

As I said in my question for the member presenting the private member's bill, it is important for Canadians to understand that governments make choices. It is important to get the big things right. Transportation safety and rail safety are one of those big things.

The government in its choices, as it has a mandate to do, has spent more money each and every year it has been in power on advertizing than it has on rail safety. This year, it is spending \$42 million on economic action plan advertizing and new ads launched today, announcing the government's new income splitting plan, measures that have not even been passed through the House of Commons.

While it spends \$42 million on advertizing, it is spending \$38 million on rail safety, this in the wake of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy and a 1,600% increase in the transportation of oil by rail in the last three years.

When we built our country, and Canadians know this, we built it around our railway. Many towns, cities and municipalities were built up and around the railway because it was our lifeline. It was our support system.

Private Members' Business

We have a lot of transportation of dangerous goods now through our municipalities, which is a high risk, as we have learned tragically through the Lac-Mégantic incident.

The government says that it will be phasing out the DOT-111 cars in a three year period, and I commend it for that aspiration. However, when we bring to committee representatives from the largest manufacturer of these cars in Canada, they tell us that is impossible. Not only is it impossible to phase them out, but they cannot retrofit the rolling stock they have and they do not know what to do with the rolling stock coming from the United States.

Furthermore, the government announces that it will inform our municipalities after the fact, that it will tell them a month after a train has rolled through their jurisdiction what the trains were carrying.

The Liberal Party has been arguing for months, trying to convince the government to come to its senses and ensure that municipalities are given advance notice so their fire departments, most of which in rural Canadian setting are volunteer, know what exactly they might have to deal with if there is an accident or a tragedy.

With respect to labelling requirements, the government said that it brought in new labelling requirements to deal with the type of oil coming from the Bakken oil reserves in North Dakota and southern Saskatchewan. It said that it was all fine, that there were no problems, until *The Globe and Mail* broke several stories saying that was not happening.

The government admitted it, had to climb down, and did the right thing by saying it was going to strengthen the labelling requirement and the inspection of that labelling requirement to make sure we know exactly what we are dealing with.

There is one thing more troubling for a lot of Canadians right now and it is one of the things being learned in committee. As one member of the committee, there is something that is beginning to deeply concern me, and that is the proximity of relationship between the regulated industry, the rail industry, and the regulator, Transport Canada. I am deeply disturbed by what I see in terms of the coziness of that relationship. I think this safety management system that is the meeting point between the regulated industry and the regulator is an important mechanism. It is an efficient mechanism, but as Ronald Reagan might have said in the past, "You trust, but you verify". To verify, one needs the capacity to be able to do so.

This proximity of relationship was demonstrated recently in two statements made by Canadian Pacific, CPR, one by its chief operating officer, Keith Creel, in a speech in Toronto, where, if I can paraphrase, he essentially said he wanted government to stay out of the rail business altogether, that it was going to impede efficiency. Then a week earlier, CPR's chief executive officer, Hunter Harrison, was quoted in *The Globe and Mail* as saying that regulators "overreacted" to the Lac-Mégantic catastrophe, going on to blame it on one person's behaviour, which is unfortunately reminiscent of a lot of the debate around the Walkerton crisis, when another Conservative government weakened our capacity to inspect our water systems. That Conservative government's defence was to blame it on one sole water plant operator. Unfortunately for that government, Justice O'Connor's report on Walkerton demonstrated that government's cabinet was in part responsible.

We have to be careful here. There is a role and purpose for government in the 21st century in dealing with rail and transportation safety. The bill goes some distance in giving some powers and that is why Liberals are supporting the bill being sent to committee, so it can be explored in more detail and see how it connects with all the other measures, this grab bag of measures that has been brought forward since Lac-Mégantic by the government in piecemeal fashion.

However, we have to be very careful here. If all the pipelines that are contemplated are built in this country in the next several years and are fully operational going south, going east, going west, here is the challenge. With the expansion of the oil sands, by 2024 we are going to have an additional one million barrels of oil a day, which cannot be transported through pipelines, even with all the pipelines that we are planning to build being built.

Where is that oil going to go? It is not going on trucks because it is not economic, as we are told by the trucking associations. It is going to go on rail, longer trains, more cars, higher volumes. CPR is calling for higher speeds. We are going to have to be very judicious. There are a lot of risks inherent. Of course, there is money to be made and there is shareholder value to be created. We are not speaking against industry. We are saying that there is a role and purpose for government to step in.

I will close with this. I asked the minister several times to give us details about how many inspectors are on staff. When I got the answer from the minister, I sent it to the Auditor General. This is what I heard back in writing:

...we cannot provide any level of assurance on the information recently provided by Transport Canada officials. The Department does not specify how many qualified inspectors it currently has available to conduct audits.

It is a deeply disturbing comment from the Auditor General of Canada. We have a long way to go to get this right.

• (1920)

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in support of Bill C-627, in the name of the member for Winnipeg South Centre. I would like to commend her initiative. It is proof positive that individual members can take a local issue and have an outcome with national significance and that an individual member can make a difference in national matters. It is proof positive, once again, that individual members of Parliament in the House are engaged in relevant and meaningful matters.

We have just heard that the NDP does not support the bill, but it does support a study of the bill. I find that troubling. It is the same with our Liberal colleagues across the way, who waited until minute nine of 10 to mention the number of the bill.

Let me speak in support of Bill C-627 right off the bat. It is important for a number of reasons. First, it fits with what the government is doing. It is complementary to a number of initiatives it has taken. We heard some of those amendments to the Railway Safety Act in May, 2013, which expanded regulation-making authorities. A number of concrete actions have been taken with respect to the Transportation Safety Board's interim report and final report regarding Lac Mégantic.

There was decisive action on crude classification testing. We heard the Liberal member say that the government did the right thing.

There is railway company information-sharing with municipalities. That was a product of discussions with the FCM, which represents the municipalities, and the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, representing firefighters and first responders. Of course, there are our measures to take the least crash resistant DOT-111s out of service entirely.

There have been important actions and an emergency directive, as we heard last week, on having a minimum number of handbrakes to be applied; secondary redundant physical systems to ensure that trains are completely secured; additional staff to improve oversight at Transport Canada, including more specialized auditors to help the inspectors and auditors do their jobs well; in-house scientific capability regarding the properties of crude oil; and testing so that when we have the targeted regime in place, we can verify that what is placarded is, in fact, what is in the car. There are also important improvements related to training employees.

While the proposed amendments in Bill C-627 are focused on protecting people and property from railway accidents that may occur on railway tracks and at grade crossings, they are entirely complementary to the series of actions that were taken both before and after Lac Mégantic. They are helping us achieve our goal of improving the railway safety regime. As we heard from the member herself, they will help plug a gap in the regulatory environment, and that is important for our communities.

We have additional measures we are accelerating in terms of regulations as well. That is important for people to know. They include the work done for a railway safety panel review some years ago, SCOTIC's own review, and the Auditor General's reports more recently.

New railway safety administrative monetary penalties, which have just been added, have a coming into force date of spring 2015. That will help us expand the suite of compliance measures to enforce the compliance of railway companies with the regulatory environment.

We have regulations for the implementation of safety-based railway operating certificates for federally regulated railways. That work is well advanced as well. The certificates will be issued to railways once they meet certain safety conditions. They will significantly strengthen Transport Canada's oversight capacity by giving the department the authority to stop a company from operating altogether in the event of severe safety concerns.

● (1925)

We have grade crossing regulations as well that would improve safety by establishing comprehensive and enforceable safety standards for grade crossings, clarifying the roles and responsibilities, who does what in relation to what the railway companies or road authorities may do at crossings and the approach to crossings. This would assure the sharing of key safety information between railway companies and road authorities. We believe the overall result would be efficiently managed and safer grade crossings.

Private Members' Business

With respect to Bill C-627, I will provide an explanation for the official opposition critic who does not understand what the bill is about.

One amendment would provide the minister of transport with the new authority to order railways to take corrective measures in the event of a significant threat to persons, property or the environment. The remaining amendments would provide express language to emphasize that certain authorities already in place would also be exercised to protect the safety of persons or property.

The first key amendment proposes to provide the minister with express authority to disregard objections received for suggested railway work if the work is in the public interest. As it stands currently, the Railway Safety Act requires that a notice of proposed construction or alteration of a railway be given to persons whose safety or property may be affected, for example an adjacent landowner or municipality.

If adjacent landowners, for example, think the work would prejudice their safety, or the safety of their property, they can file an objection to the work. If the objection cannot be resolved and the work is to continue, then the minister of transport must approve the work. In his or her assessment, the minister takes into consideration any objection received and has the authority to disregard objections that are frivolous or vexatious, or in other words, not in the interest of safety.

Bill C-627 proposes to expressly allow the minister to also disregard objections when the proposed work is in the public interest as it relates to the safety and the protection of people, property and the environment.

The second major amendment proposes to provide express authority to allow a railway safety inspector to restrict a railway's operations should those operations pose a threat to the safety of persons or property. For example, the amendment would provide the inspector with clear authority to order a company to reduce the speed of trains over a certain grade crossing due to poor sight lines caused by brush or trees in order to mitigate the threat to those crossing that track, until such time as the company comes up with a permanent solution.

The third major amendment proposes to introduce a new ministerial order, which will provide the minister with the authority to require a company to take specific corrective measures if a significant threat is created by railway operations to persons, property or the environment. For example, the amendment would allow the minister to issue an order requiring a company to take corrective measures where crossing signals continued to malfunction on a railway line.

Private Members' Business

All the initiatives being implemented right now, and specifically the amendments being proposed in Bill C-627, will improve railway safety in Canada in the long term. The bill would provide increased safety for Canadians and Canadian communities; economic benefits to the industry by decreasing the likelihood of costly accidents and delays; a variety of benefits to external stakeholders, including provinces, municipalities, shippers and the travelling public; and last, but not least, it would provide support for a stronger economy, a modern infrastructure and a cleaner environment for all Canadians.

I encourage all members to support the bill on its merits and for what it would do. It is an important step forward.

I want to again commend the member for Winnipeg South Centre for her initiative. A local concern exposed that there was a gap in a regulatory environment. She worked to propose a solution that would address the concerns that we are talking about today, a solution that is not only effective but entirely relevant.

When passed and implemented, these measures will provide not only greater safety in her community, but also in communities from one end of the country to the other, including mine. I commend her for her work. I wholeheartedly support it. I look forward, when the time comes, to standing in this place to vote for it, not just to get it to committee but beyond committee and into law in our country.

• (1930)

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House this evening and represent the constituents of my riding of Parkdale—High Park in Toronto on the very important issue of rail safety.

Tonight we are debating Bill C-627, a private member's bill. The focus of this bill is on the issue of railway level crossings. That certainly is a major issue. A number of people are injured or killed every year.

I would first like to salute the hard work of my colleague from Brossard—La Prairie for all his diligent work in holding the government to account on this very important issue of railway safety. Following the disastrous crash in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, Canadians awoke to the very real concern that perhaps their safety was not being as diligently monitored as it should be by our federal government.

I want to speak a bit about my riding of Parkdale—High Park. The northeastern part of my riding is called the junction because it is an intersection of multiple rail lines that cross and become the northern and eastern boundaries of my riding. The southern part of the riding also has a rail line running through it. We are a riding of railways and the issue of rail safety is important to the people of Parkdale—High Park.

The disaster in Lac-Mégantic got the attention of people because those same runaway tank cars that crashed and exploded went right across the northern boundary of my riding. Our community was horrified to find out about the dramatic increase of tank car traffic in Canada.

In 2009, there were 500 tank cars. In 2013, there were 140,000 tank cars rumbling through our community so quite rightly people are concerned. Some of the people in Parkdale—High Park look out

their bedroom window and see hundreds of these tank cars rolling by or children who are playing in a nearby parkette on Vine Avenue. Therefore, it is of great concern to the people in my riding.

We recently had a meeting on this issue of railway safety. We had a huge turnout. Many community members came out to discuss this issue. We were pleased that CP Rail sent a representative. While not everyone who attended the meeting was happy with the answers they received from the representative of CP Rail, they were pleased that a representative attended the meeting.

However, they were frustrated that the Minister of Transport refused to allow any officials from Transport Canada to attend the meeting and answer the questions of the people from my community. We found that shocking.

While I want to acknowledge that the federal government has made some moves forward and some strides on railway safety following the disaster at Lac-Mégantic, let us be clear that there remains a lot of work to do. People have questions and concerns. I find it shocking that the minister would refuse to allow officials from Transport Canada to hear the concerns of the people of my community, so I will bring those concerns here right now.

They want to know what the timetable is for phasing-out the DOT-111 cars. They want to know why the cars that will replace them are not the double-hulled cars, which are the safest, and have gas sensors in them to determine if there is a buildup of gas.

• (1935)

They want to know what the emergency safety procedures are in their community. At this meeting, one woman very poignantly said that her house backs right onto the railway lines. She wanted to know what to do if there was an explosion or a derailment: hide in her house, or run?

We had the head of the fire department for the City of Toronto at this meeting. He advised her to stay in her house, but he said that it depends on what the tank cars are carrying. It could be that there is a gas, and if she goes outside, she could be asphyxiated. However, it could be something very explosive, so staying in her house might be the worst thing to do. He recommended they stay there until they know what it is.

Frankly, we have no idea what the emergency procedures are. I think, most importantly, people have no idea what is being carried in these tank cars.

People wanted to know what is in the cars. They would also like to know if there have been any explorations of alternative routes that do not go through some of the most densely populated neighbourhoods anywhere in this country, because it would make a great deal of sense not to expose this massive number of people to potential tragedy.

It is not that Lac-Mégantic was an isolated example. We had a derailment in the junction a few years ago. Fortunately, the cars were carrying grain, not raw bitumen. That was very fortunate. We also had a huge derailment in Mississauga many years ago that resulted in the evacuation of the entire city of Mississauga.

Disasters happen. We need not only to be prepared; community members also need to know what the risks are and if they are being prepared.

The railway industry has been privatized and deregulated by previous Liberal governments, and then they proceeded, along with the Conservatives, to privatize and deregulate rail safety and rail enforcement. We saw that pointed out in the Lac-Mégantic inquiries as one of the major problems with the railway sector. That was something that was criticized very severely in the inquiry.

What we are debating tonight is a private member's bill that aims to make some improvements to safety at level crossings. My question to the government is this: why a private member's bill? Why is the government bringing this measure in through the back door? Why did it not spend the \$3 million on level crossing safety that was in the budget last year? Why is that still sitting on the books? Why has the budget for railway safety been decreased by \$5 million?

I see my time is up, but I just want to say this is a critically important issue. It is something that certainly affects the residents of Parkdale—High Park, but it also affects all Canadians.

There are some positive features in this private member's bill, and of course we will support anything that improves railway safety and level crossing safety. However, for goodness' sake, the government cannot shirk its duties. It must take full responsibility for railway safety. We need a thorough assessment of the state of railway safety in this country. We need action. If the government refuses to act, then it should get out of the way and let New Democrats take responsibility for railway safety, which we will do as the next government.

• (1940)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pursue a question I asked on October 3. It seems that so much has happened in this place since that day. My question was following on the Prime Minister's announcement that CF-18 bombers were going to be launched in an effort to fight ISIS. I asked the question, to which I had a response from the Minister of National Defence. I wish to take up some of the themes I raised on that day.

First, it has to be said that any discussion of ISIS has to be framed around the reality that we have never seen a terrorist organization as ruthless, sadistic, and brutal as ISIS, but that by itself, and I think we can all agree on that in this place, does not justify military action

Adjournment Proceedings

unless we are certain of a few fundamental prerequisites. Now that I have more time than I have had in the House before this moment, I would like to outline what these would be.

The first prerequisite is that whatever we do is legal under international law. Despite references in the speeches put forward by government ministers to a UN resolution on the matter of ISIS as a terrorist organization, there has been no UN declaration to justify military action by Canada in Iraq, nor is there any such declaration that would justify military action by the U.S. in Iraq, and so on.

We need to observe the rule of law globally. We cannot allow international action and the rule of international law to descend to a level of collective vigilantism: get the posse together, and we will all ride off. This is a serious, complicated, and difficult situation. We will only make matters worse if we ignore international law.

This is the second of my prerequisites. In confronting the threat of ISIS, we should ensure that whatever we do does not make matters worse. We have had some good advice from many very knowledgeable people that we, in fact, will be making matters worse. Such advice has come from the former ambassador to the United Nations and former deputy minister of National Defence, Bob Fowler, who himself knows quite a lot about terrorism, having been kidnapped himself. Bob Fowler said very clearly in *The Globe and Mail* that the current attempt, which he described as a “flaccid attempt”, “will undoubtedly make matters worse”. We should not engage in anything that would make matters worse. Things are quite bad enough.

Let us look at what we have done historically in the region. History matters here a lot. There was George Bush's illegal war in Iraq, which has created much of the instability that led to ISIS.

We have seen western forces make matters worse. In Libya, unfortunately, tragically, Canada's good intentions in going into Libya, using the cloak of responsibility to protect to start launching bombing campaigns, morphed from protecting the Libyan civilian population from Muammar Gaddafi to taking sides and deciding that we needed to side with the rebels and recognize them as the legitimate government of Libya, even though we knew that those rebel forces included al Qaeda.

I warned at that time in this place that there were warehouses full of weapons belonging to Gaddafi and the Libyan army and that if we allowed rebel forces, including al Qaeda, to take Tripoli and topple Gaddafi, without a peace plan in place, without the rule of law, those weapons would end up in worse hands. In a statement just the other day by Brigadier-General Alawki, of the Syrian Free Army, he said that is exactly what happened. The weapons that were in the Tripoli warehouses have ended up in the hands of ISIS. We made matters worse. We must not do so again.

• (1945)

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was not surprised but I was taken aback by the comments from my colleague from the Green Party. We have to remember that we passed a motion here, which was endorsed by the House of Commons, to take more military action because of the grave concerns and security issues that surround the ISIL situation in Iraq.

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The member talked about making matters worse.

Canada's coalition partners are some of our closest allies, the United States, Britain, France, Australia; plus regional partners, such as Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. They are all involved in this conflict because they do not want to see things get worse.

If we do not intervene, people will continue to be slaughtered and the genocide will continue. I do not think anyone in good conscience wants to sit back and watch innocent ethnic or religious minorities beheaded, raped, sold into slavery, beaten with hoses or beaten with cables in any way shape or form.

This is a brutal regime, as the member has already said. ISIL is one of the most brutal terrorist organizations, and it is a genocidal group of terrorists.

The member may not want to make matters worse, but what she is proposing is to sacrifice all of those innocent men, women and children who are in the hands of ISIL terrorists. We on this side of the House will not allow that to continue unabated. We want to make sure that we can scale down this crisis, and I think that the coalition partners are having an impact on doing that now.

We cannot let these extremists, we cannot let these terrorists and we cannot let these murderers continue their rampage throughout Iraq and Syria or bring that type of brutality here to Canada. We cannot let them spread it within the region, but they are promoting and aspiring to spread their ideology around the area, and around the globe for that matter.

We have all seen the videos. They are horrific. I have trouble watching them, and tend not to. However, we know that sexual violence against women and prepubescent girls is a common practice of the ISIL terrorists. We know that if people will not convert to the terrorists' idea of Islam, and it is sometimes the elderly laying in hospital, they will behead them right in their hospital beds.

We do not have to do anything more than just remind ourselves of what happened last month here in Canada. We are not immune. What happened down at the war memorial, here in the Hall of Honour and in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu is something that we have to keep in mind. Those individuals were inspired by this terrorist ideology.

I want to remind members that we are working closely with Iraqi security forces and the Kurdish peshmerga to ensure that we can bring peace and security, both from the standpoint of supporting them with aerial attacks so that they can win the war on the ground, and also in providing control and command to aid and assist in how they move forward from a ground force capability. We have a squadron of six CF-18 Hornets, two CP-140 Auroras as well as our Polaris aircraft for refuelling over there. I can tell members that it is welcomed by our coalition partners, welcomed by the Iraqi security forces and welcomed by the people who we are helping liberate.

● (1950)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I did not suggest that we do nothing. I just said that whatever we did should not make matters worse.

I referenced Brigadier General Hussam Alawak from the Free Syrian Army earlier. What he exactly said in a report from Murray Brewster from the Canadian Press was this:

If Canada wants to continue in a useless thing, then it's up to them....

Aerial bombardment of ISIS, as we all know, is not going to stop it. If ISIS terrorists did not want to draw the west into aerial bombardment, why did they post their brutal beheadings on YouTube? I think we are falling into a trap, and I have said that before.

What could we do instead?

We could be doing everything to stop the flow of arms to ISIS terrorists. We could be stopping the millions of dollars a day they get from selling black market oil. We could even be willing to go into the region in a multilateral force providing round-the-clock security for aid workers. We could provide much more assistance to the Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon that are breaking those countries.

We must do something. Let us just not make it worse.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, we need to remind the member that we are not in Syria; our forces are working in Iraq. That is what the motion from the House of Commons enabled us to do and that is what we are doing. That is the region that we are responsible for and that is where we are going to continue to work.

Regarding the member's comments about the free Syrian army, she has to remember that we also heard from experts in the media in the last couple of days and we have to be careful about which partners we want to enable. We are operating at the request of the government of Iraq with a large international coalition composed of our global and regional partners and allies.

I want to thank the brave men and women who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces who are there doing the hard work. They are always on the ready to go and do whatever we ask of them in the most difficult circumstances. As we enter Veterans Week, let us not forget their sacrifice and the risks they willingly take to defend us and the people of Iraq.

● (1955)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I represent Thunder Bay—Superior North and more than 85,000 northern Ontarians who have seen high rates of unemployment thanks to NAFTA, the recession of 2008 and the collapse of the forestry industry. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have consistently limited access to EI and residents who are struggling to make ends meet are forced to pay the price.

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Sadly, the Conservative attack on EI is nothing new. The Conservatives are simply taking a page from the playbook of the Liberal government that came before them. In 2000, the Liberals were the first to limit access to EI. They established a huge surplus for the government's benefit to pad the government's pockets with workers' money and the money of small businesses. Later, the Supreme Court ruled the Liberals had illegally turned the EI fund into a tax grab.

I had hoped that the Conservatives might be serious about ending the Liberals' excessive premiums for employers and workers, but in 2010, the Conservatives showed their real colours and followed in the footsteps of the Liberals.

The government of the current Prime Minister made it increasingly difficult for EI claimants to access benefits, all while hiking costs to workers and employers. The EI rate was increased 9% between 2008 and 2013. The Conservatives, after three successive years of EI premium hikes, have now elevated rates well above what the program actually costs, with no regard for the consequences the average Canadian will face.

When the Minister of Finance first announced a slight rollback in EI premiums for small-business owners in September, I was somewhat hopeful. As a small-business owner myself, I am keenly aware of how important small businesses are to our economic growth. Under the Conservatives, big businesses get plenty of subsidies. Meanwhile, small and medium-sized businesses are responsible for the lion's share of job creation and economic activity in Canada.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer found just this month that the Conservative approach to the EI will cost Canadian workers an incredible 9,200 jobs, almost 10,000 jobs, through mismanagement. What's more, their small business credit would cost \$0.5 million and would only generate 800 jobs over the next three years.

However, the government claimed the credit would create 25 times as many jobs as that. Once again, as is frequently true, the Conservative claims are at odds with the facts. Even conservative economists are slamming the government's bad plan. Jack Mintz, from the University of Calgary, says that EI premiums should be lowered across the board, which would make sense given the years of unnecessary hikes.

The extra EI money could have been used to extend benefits to those who need them. Instead, the Conservatives are slashing benefits. The surplus could have aided an additional 130,000 workers over the next three years, or they could have used it to boost the economy, health care or education, including job training. Keeping unemployed workers from slipping into poverty makes good economic sense. Each dollar dispensed to EI benefits sparks \$1.60 in economic growth.

It is incredible to me and to logical Canadians that the Conservatives keep reiterating their blarney about jobs, economic prosperity and long-term solutions, when all they ever seem to do is pad their own government pockets with taxpayers' money.

When and how will the Conservatives end their legacy of carelessness and damaging employment insurance policies?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that the entire Green Party caucus is here tonight for this late show. I think that is a first.

Let me remind the hon. member that our government has a proven track record of success when it comes to supporting our small businesses. On this side we recognize that small businesses create good jobs and serve engines of economic growth and prosperity.

Let me remind the member that small businesses employ about half of the working men and women in Canada's private sector. They account for a third of our country's GDP. On top of that, small businesses drive our prosperity and give back to the community.

We know that small business owners should be spending time growing their businesses and creating jobs. They should not be burdened with red tape and high taxes. We cut their red tape. We implemented the one-for-one rule. For every new regulation imposed by government, a regulation must be removed. By the end of 2013, that rule had reduced the administrative burden by over \$20 million.

We also cut their taxes. We cut the small business tax rate to 11% and increased the amount of income eligible for this preferential rate. Together these changes are providing small businesses with an estimated \$2.2 billion in tax relief in 2014 alone.

Under our government, the amount of income tax paid by a small business with \$500,000 of taxable income has declined by over 34%, a tax savings of \$28,600 that can be reinvested in the business to fuel growth and create jobs.

Let me be clear, our actions on EI are saving money for employees and employers. Last year, we froze EI premiums for three years, which is expected to save employers and employees \$660 million in 2014 alone. We instituted the seven year break-even rate, starting in 2017, to ensure that any surplus in the EI account will be used for EI expenses.

Under this government, Canada is open for business. In 2013, Canada leapt from sixth to second place in *Bloomberg's* ranking of the most attractive destination for business. When was the last time that happened? According to KPMG, total business tax costs in Canada are the lowest in the G7, 46% lower than those in the United States.

However, we will not be satisfied with this success. We live in uncertain economic times and cannot be complacent. That is why our government introduced the new small business job credit. This new credit will effectively lower small business employment insurance premiums from the current rate of \$1.88 to \$1.60 for \$100 of insurable earnings for 2015 and 2016.

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Any firm that pays employer EI premiums equal to or less than \$15,000 in those years would be eligible for the rebate. That means 90% of employers making EI contributions in Canada, about 780,000 in total, would directly benefit from this credit.

In addition, this credit will require no new paperwork. The Canada Revenue Agency will automatically calculate it on their business return. Overall, our small business job credit will reduce the EI premium rate by nearly 15%. We expect it to save small businesses over \$0.5 billion over the next two years. It is precisely why our government has introduced the small business job credit as the latest in our government's effective action to support small business efforts to create jobs and grow the economy.

We refuse to attack job creators with massive tax hikes in the form of increased payroll taxes or increased regulatory burdens.

Let me remind the member opposite that this measure has been applauded by groups that actually understand small business. Take the Canadian Federation of Independent Business which stated, "It's a big, big deal for small business. It's good news for people looking for jobs".

Indeed, I can go on. I certainly hope the member opposite will recognize the good things that this government has done for small business and to support them as well.

● (2000)

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, how are we supposed to believe anything the Conservatives say when it comes to EI, really? After years of bad policies, the government has forced workers and small business owners to pay for Conservative economic mismanagement, killing jobs left and centre, and especially right.

The Conservative government is inefficient, pure and simple. It hiked EI premiums for three consecutive years, then it froze premiums, and now it is trying to roll back its mistakes, but every job it creates will cost taxpayers \$687,000. That is two-thirds of a million dollars per job.

Canada needs a strong EI system to protect workers and generate economic growth. It certainly does not need this job-killing tax on workers and small businesses.

EI should be helping those who need it, not boosting the government's own revenues. Will the Conservatives admit to their past poor EI approach and commit to some reforms that actually support Canadian workers and our economy?

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what planet my hon. colleague is on, but on this planet he should realize that we have among the best job creation record in the G7. Our government believes that small business owners are taxed enough. Furthermore, we believe that our record on low taxes and support for small business speaks for itself. That is why we have delivered tax reductions totalling more than \$60 billion to job-creating businesses from 2008 to 2014.

Among these tax relief measures are the reduction of the federal general corporate tax rate to 15% in 2012 from 22% in 2007, and an extension of the temporary accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment through 2015. In addition, as I mentioned earlier, we cut the small business

tax rate to 11%. These actions have positioned Canada as an increasingly attractive place to invest and grow a business.

If the member wants to talk about jobs, it is our government that has seen almost 1.2 million net new jobs created since the recession in 2009. Over 80% of those jobs are full-time high-paying jobs.

Canada has a healthy and competitive business environment. That is why businesses from around the world are coming to Canada to set up their headquarters. In turn, it helps the economy grow, encourages the creation of new jobs and raises our standard of living.

● (2005)

[*Translation*]

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has now been over a year since the Competition Tribunal found that the credit card fees that Canadian businesses have to pay are excessive and unfair and that more coercive regulation is needed.

When I recently asked the minister what he intended to do to remedy this situation, he spoke about a voluntary code of conduct, since he is in favour of voluntary measures. Unfortunately, that is not enough.

We cannot let companies make their own rules. Clearly, the government needs to legislate in the public interest in order to lower prices for consumers and help our struggling SMEs.

The government's announcement once again shows that it is not prepared to introduce concrete measures to reduce these fees, which incidentally cost Canadian consumers and SMEs over \$5 billion a year.

A 10% reduction is far too little to result in lower prices for consumers. In fact, the minister announced a 10% reduction. That is not enough to have an effect on the goods we buy. Consumers will not benefit, and I think it is important to say that. The reduction announced earlier this week is not a step in the right direction.

While the government is patting itself on the back for this 10% reduction, in the last two years alone, Visa and MasterCard have boosted credit card transaction fees by about 25%. Canada will also continue to have the highest interchange fees in the world, and that is no small matter. The government is not proposing any measures to address that.

The NDP agrees with the Competition Tribunal, which found that Visa and MasterCard engage in anti-competitive practices by charging excessive fees. The tribunal asked the government to take action. However, it chose instead to ask the credit card companies, which are already very greedy, to make voluntary changes. That is shameful and makes no sense. It is futile and will yield no results.

If you need further proof, you only have to look at the official statement issued by Visa. This very important statement stated the following:

If Visa or our clients are disadvantaged as a result of entering into this undertaking [these voluntary measures], Visa reserves the right at any time to terminate or amend it.

This is a concrete example of the limits of a voluntary measure. We can be happy that Visa and MasterCard are moving forward and seem prepared to make some concessions, be accommodating and truly give consumers and small businesses more breathing room. However, at any time, for whatever reason, they can decide to terminate this arrangement.

We will end up right back where we started, debating this topic and wondering what should be done. We need legislation, which is what we are calling for today.

The Association des marchands dépanneurs et épiciers du Québec, or AMDEQ, had a very interesting response. This association of convenience and grocery store owners is somewhat satisfied with the federal government's decision to bring MasterCard and Visa credit card user fees to an average rate of 1.5%, but much remains to be done to bring our rates in line with those in Australia and Europe, which are around 0.5%.

AMDEQ has some concerns about the fact that this agreement is voluntary. It now wants an oversight mechanism to be put in place and an annual audit to be conducted so as to ensure that the two major credit card companies abide by the agreement announced today.

It is also important to point out that AMDEQ would have liked to see a much more substantial drop in the rate, and it is calling on the Minister of Finance to form a special parliamentary committee to ensure that all parties involved in this issue can have a say.

I think that is indeed worthwhile. It can be discussed in committee.

What does my colleague opposite think of that proposal?

● (2010)

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is rich hearing the member opposite talk about reducing costs for small businesses. Shamefully, the NDP has opposed all our efforts to protect Canadian consumers and small businesses. The code of conduct, for example, has been welcomed by consumers and industry groups, especially small businesses. However, shamefully again, the NDP voted against the code and against supporting small businesses and consumers.

On this side of the House, we have listened to the concerns of small businesses and we have acted. I urge the member opposite to listen to what small business is saying.

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The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said:

—the code has served merchants extremely well...(it) has done an excellent job in ensuring some fair ground rules and maintaining Canada's low-cost debit system...

It went on to say:

—the Code played a big role in saving low-cost debit in Canada and it gave merchants some degree of power in dealing with the payments industry.

That is not all. We have also taken action to expand no-cost banking options for more than seven million Canadians, including seniors and students, and to improve low-cost accounts. We have banned unsolicited credit card checks, limited anti-consumer business practices and ensured that prepaid cards never expire. We have also introduced rules requiring clear disclosure of terms in credit card contracts and applications.

While we are putting more money in the pockets of Canadians, the NDP wants to take it away with hidden carbon taxes and sky high business tax hikes. Unlike the NDP, which only talks about protecting consumers, it is our Conservative government that is acting on its commitments. Most recent, we welcomed the commitments from Visa and MasterCard, which represent a meaningful, long-term reduction in costs for merchants that should ultimately result in lower prices for consumers.

Do not just take my word for it, though. Again, I urge the member opposite to listen to small businesses.

The CFIB applauds the end of the credit card arms race. Dan Kelly, president of CFIB, said:

Canada's small business community is hailing new commitments that could bring an end to ever-increasing credit card fees...Today's announcement should be a win for consumers too.

How about the Retail Council of Canada? This is what Diane Brisebois, chief executive officer of the Retail Council of Canada, said, "this is an important first step towards ending the escalation of credit card fees".

If the member is still not convinced, this is what Garth Whyte, president and CEO of Restaurants Canada, said, "This voluntary move to lower rates is a positive step for restaurateurs".

Why is the NDP opposed to an approach that would see a reduction in Visa and MasterCard fees by approximately 10%? It is because the NDP's only solution is to regulate and tax everything.

On this side of the House, we are looking to cut regulation and red tape. This industry agreement is the best way to protect merchants and consumers.

On this side of the House, we are standing up for consumers and saving Canadians money. Our government believes Canadian consumers deserve accessible and effective financial services that meet the needs of consumers and operate in the public interest. We will continue to ensure their interests are well served.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

Ms. Annick Papillon: Mr. Speaker, that is completely false. Everyone knows that the NDP is the only party that believes consumers should get what they are entitled to. Banks rake in over \$60 billion every year, and their profit margins can be 700% or even 800%. That is disgusting. We need legislation. It is our job as legislators to make that happen, but the government is not doing it. People know what is going on. They know that when they go to an ATM or use their credit card, credit card companies are taking a huge cut at their expense.

There is a simple solution: the code of conduct for the Canadian credit and debit card industry must be mandatory and not voluntary. We do not want to have to rehash this entire file once again a few years down the road, when Visa and MasterCard have completely abandoned their voluntary measures. The Small Business Matters Coalition, which is concerned with this file and to which the Association des marchands dépanneurs et épiciers du Québec belongs, is disappointed that the Minister of Finance did not take the time to conduct an in-depth study of the real costs of credit card rates. That is what we need to do. That is what we must do. We must make a more informed decision, one based on facts and figures. That is what matters.

• (2015)

[English]

Mr. Andrew Saxton: Mr. Speaker, throughout our time in office, since 2006, our government has been focused on helping Canadian

consumers identify and take advantage of the best possible financial products and services for their individual needs.

As we announced in the economic action plan 2013, we are working to develop a comprehensive financial consumer code to better protect consumers of financial products and ensure they have the necessary tools to make responsible financial decisions. Such measures empower and protect Canadian consumers. They increase their financial literacy by providing them with the right information at the right time, so they can make financial decisions that best suit their needs.

As I have shown tonight, do not take my word for it, take the word of associations that know small businesses best. While we are trying to keep more money in the pockets of Canadians, the NDP wants to take it away with hidden carbon taxes and sky-high business tax hikes.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:17 p.m.)

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