



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, December 9, 2014**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, December 9, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 16 petitions.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement Implementation Coordinating Committee's 2010-12 annual report, the Nisga'a Final Agreement 2011-12 annual report, the Westbank First Nation Self-Government Agreement annual report on implementation for 2011-12 and the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement implementation report for 2012-13.

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[*English*]

### MODERNIZATION OF CANADA'S GRAIN INDUSTRY ACT

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Canada Grain Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

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### PRICE TRANSPARENCY ACT

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (for the Minister of Industry)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Competition Act.

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

## EVENTS OF OCTOBER 22, 2014, IN OTTAWA

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations between the parties and I believe that if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, at the conclusion of Oral Questions on Thursday, December 11, 2014, the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole in order to thank the Security personnel of the House of Commons for the professionalism demonstrated on October 22nd, that the Speaker be permitted to preside over the Committee of the Whole and make remarks on behalf of the House; and, when the proceedings of the Committee have concluded approximately 10 minutes later, the Committee shall rise and the House shall resume its business.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## PETITIONS

### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition that has been signed by hundreds of people from my region who are saying that biodiversity and the future of food are in jeopardy if we do not support family farms and labourers who work hard to save seeds. The petitioners are calling on Parliament to adopt international aid policies that support small farmers and women in particular, in order to acknowledge their vital role in the fight against hunger and poverty.

[*English*]

### CANADA POST

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present another petition, wherein the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to reject Canada Post's claim to reduce services, and explore other options for updating its current operations business plan.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by many constituents and Canadians from neighbouring ridings, expressing their disappointment with and opposition to Canada Post's decision to end home mail delivery to five million households.

The petitioners state that the elderly, disabled, self-employed, and small businesses will suffer the most from the cuts, that the government broke its promise to better protect consumers by accepting the plan to reduce Canada Post's services, that between 6,000 and 8,000 Canada Post workers will lose their jobs, and that this reduction in services could lead to the privatization of Canada Post, which is an essential public service.

[*Translation*]

## QUEBEC BRIDGE

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure and honour to present petitions on behalf of residents in the Quebec City region. They want the Quebec Bridge to be maintained and everyone involved to sit down together to discuss and maintain this infrastructure, which is vital to the Quebec City region.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present this morning.

The first is about banking fees. The petitioners are calling on the government to take meaningful and effective action to make life more affordable for Canadian families who are having a hard time making ends meet.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is about climate change accountability. Once again, the petitioners are urging the government to take measures to ensure climate change accountability. That is very important, especially these days.

## QUEBEC BRIDGE

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour to present a petition signed by nearly 300 people from the riding of Beauport—Limoilou and elsewhere around Quebec City. The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to work with Canadian National to ensure the longevity of the Quebec Bridge. It is a major piece of infrastructure and a national monument.

## FOSSIL FUELS

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions signed by my constituents in Laurentides—Labelle.

In the first, the petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to terminate federal subsidies for the fossil fuel industry and to invest in building a more sustainable economy.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the other petition calls on the government to adopt international aid policies to support small farmers, particularly

women, in recognition of their critical role in fighting hunger and poverty.

• (1010)

## IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my right and my duty to present this petition asking the government to do more to fight drunk driving and to amend the Criminal Code by adding more penalties for drunk driving cases.

[*English*]

## PENSIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I table today a petition signed by residents of Winnipeg North, dealing with old age security program, the guaranteed income supplement program, and the Canada pension program. In essence, the petition states that they make up a critical part of Canada's social safety net and provide basic needs to hundreds of thousands of residents in Canada every day. The petitioners believe this, and they are asking that people be able to continue to have the option to retire at the age of 65 and that the government not in any way diminish our pension programs.

## DEMENCIA

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition addressed to the Minister of Health and the House of Commons in regard to the need for a federal strategy in regard to Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases. The petitioners would like the minister and the government to initiate discussion, develop specific national objectives, provide an annual report in regard to Canada's progress, establish a standing round table, encourage greater investment in research on the disease, and strengthen our capacity to care for persons with dementia.

[*Translation*]

## QUEBEC BRIDGE

**Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues from the greater Quebec City area, I too have the pleasure of presenting a petition to ensure the longevity of the Quebec Bridge.

The people of the south shore are represented by Conservative government members, but apparently not well represented. I have a petition asking decision-makers to sit down together, get the discussion going without delay, and do the necessary work to ensure the longevity of a piece of infrastructure that is essential to the greater Quebec City region.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour today to table a petition with several hundred signatures concerning the Quebec Bridge. It of course calls on the federal government, CN and all levels of government to come to an agreement about ensuring the longevity of the Quebec Bridge. As members know, last weekend, many of us took action in order to ensure the longevity of the bridge structure.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the exceptional work done by François-Xavier Labranche, a committed young man who helped me collect all these signatures. He is proof that young people have an important role to play in our society. They can take meaningful action because nothing is impossible for the intrepid.

\* \* \*

[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, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 2**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (for the Minister of Finance)** moved that Bill C-43, A Second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for this opportunity to present Bill C-43 at third reading. This important bill implements key initiatives from economic action plan 2014.

This year's budget has further illustrated the responsible leadership of our government. It is a budget that builds on our strengths and continues to implement the government's plan for jobs and growth. Our efforts to support jobs and growth are underpinned by our plan to return to balanced budgets in 2015. This commitment to fiscal responsibility has helped to ensure that Canada maintains its hard-earned international economic fiscal advantage, which will help foster a growing, healthy economy that creates stable, well-paying jobs for all Canadians.

Indeed, our government's plan to return to balanced budgets is not an end in itself, but a means to increase Canada's economic potential, improve employment opportunities for Canadians, and raise our standard of living. It is for this reason that we made returning to balanced budgets the cornerstone of our economic action plan. To that end, economic action plan 2014 continues to focus on creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity: long-lasting prosperity, the

kind that our children can rely on and that future generations can appreciate.

• (1015)

[Translation]

However, I must remind members that the global economic situation remains fragile and that difficulties beyond our borders may affect Canada.

Thus, it is truly important for our Conservative government to implement its economic action plan, which will create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

Bill C-43 does not deviate from these objectives. It supports jobs and growth, helps families, strengthens communities and continues to improve the fairness and integrity of the tax system.

I would like to highlight today some of the key budget measures in Bill C-43 and thereby demonstrate how this government is demonstrating strong and responsible leadership with this major legislative measure.

[English]

First, let me touch on some ways our government is making our tax system simpler and fairer. This includes closing tax loopholes and strengthening tax enforcement to ensure all Canadians pay their fair share. Since 2006, our government has taken significant steps to establish our country as a global clean energy leader, including through regulatory actions, investments in technology and innovation, and broad-based incentives. The government has also supported these sectors through the tax system by expanding eligibility for the accelerated CCA for clean energy generation equipment.

In 2013, we encouraged businesses to invest in new clean energy technologies by expanding the types of organic waste that can be used in qualifying biogas production equipment and the range of qualifying equipment that can be used to treat gases from waste. Today's legislation would build on that success by expanding eligibility for the accelerated capital cost allowance, CCA, for clean energy generation equipment to include water current energy equipment and a broader range of equipment used to gasify eligible waste.

However, that is not all. Today's legislation also focuses on connecting Canadians with available jobs by helping them to acquire the skills that will get them hired and will help get them better-paying jobs.

[Translation]

In Canada, apprentices in skilled trades do most of their learning during on-the-job paid employment and are required to participate in technical training for short periods ranging from six to eight weeks each year. Apprentices can face significant costs to complete these periods of technical training required by their program, including educational fees, tools and equipment, and forgone wages.

*Government Orders*

That is why, in order to help connect Canadians with available jobs, we created the Canada apprentice loan. This initiative will help apprentices in Red Seal trades by providing them with access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans each year to complete their training.

More specifically, Bill C-43 amends the Income Tax Act to extend the existing tax credit for interest paid on student loans—a non-refundable tax credit for interest on loans paid under the Canada student loans program and similar provincial programs—to interest paid on a Canada apprentice loan.

By helping Canadians get the skills they need to find a new job or a better job, we are investing directly and effectively in this country's greatest asset—our people, who are supporting the economy in general.

● (1020)

[English]

Another way we are proposing to improve our system of taxation is by updating the Income Tax Act and the Excise Tax Act. Earlier this year, the government released for public comment draft legislative proposals relating to technical changes to the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act, and related regulations.

Following this public consultation, Bill C-43 includes amendments to relieve the goods and services tax or harmonized sales tax on services of refining precious metals supplied to a non-resident person who is not registered for GST/HST purposes and to implement real property technical amendments that provide for the consistent treatment of different types of housing and ensure that the special valuation rule for subsidized housing works properly with the GST/HST place-of-supply rules and in the context of a GST/HST rate change.

We will continue to build on our government's stellar track record of improving the fairness and integrity of Canada's tax system, and as is evident from some of these measures, Bill C-43 does exactly that.

There is so much more to this bill than simply tax measures. This bill implements many positive budget measures that I would like to address now, and at the same time I would like to highlight some of the misinformation that the opposition would have Canadians believe.

Bill C-43 proposes to establish the governance structure for a new world-class science and technology research facility that would serve as a hub for Canadian and international Arctic research. The Canadian High Arctic Research Station, also known as CHARs, will not only strengthen Canada's position as a world leader in cutting-edge research in the Arctic but will also support the local economy in the region by creating jobs.

The opposition consistently accuses our government of a lack of consultation and an aversion to science. This research station will provide a very clear example of our government's commitment to exercising stewardship over Canada's Arctic lands and bringing together industry, academia, aboriginal governments, and international stakeholders to co-operatively leverage their expertise, experience, and resources.

It is also important to note that our government engaged widely on all phases of this project, and there is overwhelming support behind it. I could not be more proud of the action our government is taking in this bill, which will cement Canada as a global leader on Arctic issues and scientific research.

If the opposition had its way, it would also attempt to convince the public that our government is taking social assistance away from those who genuinely need it. This could not be further from the truth. Let me clear: that is categorically false.

Bill C-43 would simply give the option to the provinces and territories to establish minimum periods of residence to qualify for social assistance. The specifics of this option would be up to the provinces and territories. Subsequently the provinces and territories would be accountable to taxpayers, who believe that refugees, specifically bogus asylum claimants, should not have access to better health care than Canadians.

By making these changes, our government would ensure that our immigration system would be protected from those who are seeking to take advantage of taxpayer-funded health care, welfare, and other social benefits. We have had numerous examples of these over the last number of years.

Let me spell it out for the opposition one more time. Our government is committed to helping all newcomers, including genuine refugees, integrate into Canadian society and fully contribute to our community and our economy. Those in genuine need will continue to receive Canada's protection more quickly.

Another key measure of this bill supports job creation and grows Canada's economy. I am talking about our government's small business job credit. This measure would lower EI payroll taxes by 15% and save small businesses over \$550 million over two years. This is real money we would be giving back to small businesses, to job creators. It is money they would use to help defray the costs of hiring new workers and to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities, thus supporting growth and job creation.

These are small businesses all across the country, some in my own riding of North Vancouver, all of which have frequently told us that the number one job killer is higher payroll taxes. We listened to the voice of small business, the business experts who actually understand what this measure will do for job creation.

Dan Kelly, the President of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, called the small business job credit “a big, big deal for small business. It's good news for people looking for jobs....”

*Government Orders*

Of course, we can expect the opposition members to continue attacking job creators with massive tax hikes, such as a \$20 billion carbon tax, and foolishly ignoring what small business is saying about this measure. They will argue that their ideas of an expanded CPP and a 45-day work year that would cost Canadian taxpayers \$4 billion and thousands of jobs alone are the best options for job creation. If we ask any small business if they would prefer increased payroll taxes, the divide is clear.

We will not apologize for listening to small business concerns. On the other hand, our government will continue to lower payroll taxes for 90% of businesses and support some of Canada's most important job creators. Over 780,000 small businesses will benefit from this program.

• (1025)

[*Translation*]

This legislation will also help consumers. For instance, our government has a strong record of supporting consumers in the telecommunications industry. Since the last wireless spectrum auction in 2008, prices for wireless services have decreased by nearly 20% and jobs in the wireless industry have increased by 25%.

The legislation before us today builds on this record by prohibiting wireless service providers from charging their customers for paper billing, thereby fulfilling a commitment we made in the 2013 Speech from the Throne to put an end to this pay-to-pay practice.

Furthermore, the bill includes changes to simplify the certification process for telecommunications equipment used by consumers and businesses.

[*English*]

Finally, I want to touch on a set of measures that I believe are critical in strengthening Canada's financial sector.

Credit unions play an important role in our communities and in our economy. Across our country, credit unions and caisses populaires work hard to serve their members in the best way possible. Measures in Bill C-43 support a vibrant and robust credit union system here in Canada.

Specifically, our government is moving forward to clarify federal regulation of provincial credit unions and support those that want to become federally regulated. Some of these initiatives include access by provincial credit union centrals to federal intervention tools, such as lending by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation; ceasing supervision of provincial credit union centrals by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions; and making changes to the federal credit union framework to promote continued growth and competitiveness of credit unions that want to offer services on a national scale by streamlining the federal amalgamation process from multiple steps into just one.

We understand there is some interest, so as we build on these measures, we will continue to consult with provinces and industry to ensure the federal regime for credit unions is as clear and simple as possible.

Twenty minutes allows me to touch on only a very small portion of the positive measures included in Bill C-43. Some of the other measures contained in the bill include doubling the children's fitness tax credit to \$1,000 and making it refundable. This is a way to put money back into the pockets of Canadian families, allowing families to save on putting their children into sports or after-school activities.

The bill also proposes to strengthen Canada's intellectual property regime to improve conditions for business investment and access into international markets while reducing costs and red tape. It also introduces new reporting standards to meet Canada's 2013 G8 commitment to increase transparency for entities operating in the extractive sector. It would create new indices in the national DNA data bank that would contain DNA profiles for missing persons, allowing families of victims to have better tools available to get closure.

Let me remind members that since the global recession, Canada has created nearly 1.2 million net new jobs. This is one of the strongest job creation records in the G7. Both the International Monetary Fund and the OECD still expect Canada to be among the strongest growing economies in the G7 over this year and next. The Canadian middle class is now among the richest in the developed world, ahead of our neighbours to the south for the first time ever. Just recently, we saw the International Labour Organization say in its global wage report that pay gains here in Canada are the second best in the G20. This is great news for Canadians.

These results do not happen by sitting idly and hoping for budgets to balance themselves, nor do they happen without a steadfast commitment to a proven plan for job creation and high growth. In this respect, Bill C-43 delivers a comprehensive and forward-looking agenda that will continue putting Canadians to work and building a strong economic future.

I urge all members of the House to pass this good bill.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance for his speech. I also want to congratulate him because I think that is one of the few speeches we will hear from the Conservative benches that is mainly on the content of Bill C-43.

We noted both at second reading and at report stage of this bill that most of the members prefer to talk about anything but the content.

*Government Orders*

I very much enjoy sitting on the Standing Committee on Finance with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance because we have some interesting debates there. We also have a chance to talk about the various aspects of the bill, and we supported certain aspects because we considered them to be good measures. Nonetheless, if we look at the bill as a whole, there are still a number of aspects that are extremely problematic.

One of the most controversial aspects of Bill C-43 is the premium holiday that is being given to small business through the employment insurance fund, a holiday that comes with no guarantee of creating jobs.

The only testimony we heard about this came from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who talked about the creation of 800 jobs. The only organization that denounces these numbers and claims that this measure will create more jobs is the one that will benefit from this measure. What is more, the government included this measure in the bill without any impact analysis by the Department of Finance.

How can the parliamentary secretary justify the fact that the government does not properly analyze the impact of these measures?

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague also sits on the finance committee and knows as well as I do that we heard from countless witnesses. We debated the bill at committee, and in fact several different committees had an opportunity to discuss this bill and debate it at length. We have debated it in the House of Commons and are doing so again today.

The member referred specifically to the small business job credit. Our government is very proud of this. It would give back to small businesses the money they were paying into the EI fund. It would give them an opportunity to reinvest those funds, to create more jobs for Canadians, to reinvest in their businesses, to reinvest in equipment to make their businesses more productive and more efficient. It is a great opportunity for small businesses, which happen to be some of the biggest job creators in this country. This credit would give them more opportunities to create new jobs and to enhance their businesses as well.

I just wish that the NDP would get onboard and support this good measure, which is being supported by many groups. It is expected that thousands of jobs will be created as a result of this small business job credit.

• (1035)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, whether it is from the Prime Minister's Office or the Conservatives generally, spin is out there. The Conservative spin is that we are going to have a balanced budget in 2015-16, which happens to be an election year.

I wonder if the member would acknowledge that when the Conservatives took power they were handed a multi-billion dollar surplus from Paul Martin. Prior to the recession the Conservatives turned that budget surplus into a billion dollar plus deficit and now, going into an election year, they are talking about balanced budgets.

Could the member explain to me why a Conservative government has really not been able to balance budgets in any sort of a consistent fashion? As they pointed out, they even turned a surplus into a deficit prior to the recession.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question coming from a member of a party whose leader thinks that budgets balance themselves. It is also interesting coming from a member of a party that balanced its budgets on the backs of the provinces and the territories by cutting health care spending, cutting education spending, and cutting spending on individuals and transfers. The Liberal Party raided the EI fund of \$60 billion when it was in power. That party balanced its budgets by raiding funds and cutting transfers. That is not what we are doing.

We have increased transfers to the provinces and territories by over 50% since coming to power. In the first two years we were in government we paid down the national debt by over \$39 billion. We did all of that while lowering taxes for Canadian families. Average Canadian families now have over \$4,000 extra in their pockets at the end of each year because of the tax relief we have given them. We are proud of that.

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have to laugh at the last question of the hon. member. I understand that he has not been here that long, but he was here in 2008.

I would like to give a little history lesson before I ask my question.

In 2008-09 Canada suffered through a horrendous recession. Some would call it a depression. Canada is the only country in the G8 that has moved out of a deficit situation. We were able to do that and manage the economy to the degree where today we are looking at a surplus position in our budget rather than a deficit.

Could the parliamentary secretary tell us what difference that is going to make and what the government can do for families in general? Could he elaborate on that and tell the House why it is so important?

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. When the world entered a global economic recession, the greatest recession since the Great Depression, our Conservative government was ready to take action. That is what it did through the economic action plan.

We invested in our economy and created thousands of jobs. We created brand new infrastructure that will benefit Canadians for generations to come. As a result of that, Canada today is a model for the rest of the world.

I have travelled to other places in the world and am frequently asked how Canada did it. How did we manage to come through this great recession in such good shape, relatively unscathed in comparison with our neighbours and trading partners? It is because we took firm action as soon as the recession started.

*Government Orders*

Since forming government, we have had the strongest economic growth of any country in the G7. We have created almost 1.2 million net new jobs since the recession. The G20 growth strategy initiative paves the way for 2% GDP growth, or \$2 trillion, over 5 years. The IMF and OECD both project that Canada will have among the strongest growth rates in the G7 in the years ahead.

As a result of that, we have been able to help Canadian families by increasing child care benefits and putting more money back into the pockets of Canadian families.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are currently at third reading stage of a budget that we will have only one day to debate. I find that very unfortunate.

Once again, we will be unable to look at the impact the measures contained in this omnibus bill will have because too many of those measures have nothing to do with the actual budget. We have learned from that in the past.

What does the parliamentary secretary think about introducing measures in a budget that have nothing to do with the actual budget and that the provinces did not ask for? I am thinking in particular about how the government wants to take social assistance away from some types of refugees.

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleague that legitimate refugees would be looked after in the same manner they have always been. Canada is an extremely generous and thoughtful country, and it will continue to be generous and thoughtful.

However, we do not want people taking advantage of Canada's generosity. That is why, for bogus claimants, people who are coming here simply to take advantage of our system, provinces and territories would have the option of not giving them services as they see fit.

I would like to remind the member opposite of the good things in Bill C-43 that he should be supporting, like the government prohibiting fees for receipt of paper bills, eliminating pay-to-pay billing; supporting charities, and allowing them to use modern electronic tools to eliminate red tape; creating the DNA-based missing persons index; strengthening Canada's intellectual property regime by cutting red tape and creating efficiencies for small businesses; amendments that would increase the capabilities of social security tribunals in the face of an increasing workload; and establishing a new federal research organization that would strengthen Canada's leadership in the Arctic.

I do not have time to mention all of the great things in this particular bill, but I encourage the member opposite to vote for it and for Canadian families.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-43 at third reading. This is the second budget implementation bill.

I am pleased to rise given that I will be one of the few members of the House who will have the opportunity to speak to this bill at third reading because, as my colleague from Louis-Hébert mentioned, the government has limited debate to just one day. We have just one day to debate a massive budget bill that is 460 pages long and contains 401 clauses. It amends dozens of laws by creating, amending or eliminating legislation. We had very little time to examine this bill in committee given the scope of the measures it proposes. The process was seriously flawed in this case. Not only was the bill much too long to examine in two weeks—that is how long we had to examine it in committee—but there was also not enough time for the committees to which we referred certain sections to do their job properly. I would like to remind hon. members that the only authority these committees had was to hear from witnesses and make recommendations to the finance committee, which did not hear from those witnesses. This process is completely inadequate. Anyone who believes in parliamentary democracy cannot claim that this process is adequate for good governance.

As we have seen with all of the government's previous budget bills, as a result of mismanagement we end up with all kinds of flaws, errors, omissions and mistakes in these bills that must then be fixed in subsequent budget bills. That is not an effective way to govern.

Some elements in this bill show that the government refuses to abide by the principles of good governance.

One of these elements—which is something I just asked the parliamentary secretary about—is probably one of the most costly measures in the bill. This measure gives business that pay less than \$15,000 in EI premiums a tax credit, without any conditions, to supposedly create jobs. That money is taken from the EI fund, which, as we know, is projecting a surplus in the coming years. That surplus would already be spent. This measure is estimated to cost more than a half-million dollars—around \$550 million.

We would expect to see some guarantee of job creation if the government is forgoing \$550 million in revenue from the EI fund. However, that is not the case. The only independent analysis we have had is from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who estimated that this measure would create 800 jobs. Just 800 jobs. The only organization that appeared before the committee and contradicted the Parliamentary Budget Officer's figures was the organization whose members will benefit the most from this measure. It was the organization that promoted this measure and it was this organization's study on which the government based its decision.

*Government Orders*

When a measure costs more than half a billion dollars, one would expect the Department of Finance to conduct an independent analysis to estimate how a break from paying premiums would affect job creation. However, the Minister of Finance himself came to committee and told us that the Department of Finance had not conducted any studies, and that the only analysis that he relied on had actually been conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. The organization does a good job representing its members and determining what government benefits and measures will help them. That is what it does. That is why the government should rely on an independent analysis before adopting this type of measure. The government should not be sub-contracting the finance department's work—which is essentially what happened—and entrusting it to an outside organization that will first and foremost make sure that its members will benefit. This is one of the measures that clearly demonstrates that this government is completely off track when it comes to good governance. I must say that I have rarely seen another government use such a misguided and erratic approach to the economy.

• (1045)

There is no doubt that we are in pre-election mode, because most of the measures in the bill do nothing to stimulate economic growth and job creation, except for the measures we intend to support. In a 460-page bill, we are bound to find some measures we agree with, measures that support economic growth and job creation. However, many of these measures do not do that. Those measures should be studied separately in their own bill, but the government will hear nothing of it.

Even when it comes to measures that actually are related to taxation and the economy, the government has clearly shown that none of the measures, including the tax credit I just talked about, were analyzed by the Department of Finance. They were not analyzed by the Department of Finance or by independent parties, whose analysis the government ignored.

The government is so proud of its move to double the child fitness tax credit. The goal might be laudable, but the measure will be extremely expensive. According to estimates, this will result in more than twice as much lost revenue, and that the money will be given to parents of children who participate in physical activities.

Once again, the goal is laudable, but is the tax credit the right way to achieve that goal? Was an impact assessment done? In committee, one tax expert told us that the tax credit would not achieve—or would go only a short way toward achieving—the government's goal, which is to increase children's physical activity, and that this is not the right approach to take.

The questions that the Conservative members asked at the Standing Committee on Finance had more to do with anecdotes. They said that some of their constituents benefited from the credit and were happy about it. Fiscal analysis of how effective a tax credit is has to be done independently by the government and must be based on fiscal analysis of the numbers, not anecdotes. Governing on the basis of anecdotes is a bad idea. That is an irresponsible way to do it.

Another aspect that justifies our position at third reading of Bill C-43 is the government's lack of prior consultation on a number

of measures. As I said, there are 401 clauses. The fourth part of the bill is on measures that have nothing to do with tax measures. This is one of the largest parts of the bill and it deals with a variety of topics that often have nothing to do with the budget or the economy in general. We might expect the government to at least do its homework and consult industry stakeholders, whose opinion should count to ensure that these measures are effective.

What is more, the division on changes to the Aeronautics Act seeks to centralize the powers of the department and the minister with regard to the expansion of and changes to airports. This could increase the risk of eliminating local consultation in cases of controversial proposals because these provisions give the minister discretionary power. We can see this in the case of the Toronto Island airport expansion.

Was the Canadian Airports Council consulted on this measure? No. Was the Canadian Federal Pilots Association consulted on this measure? No. How can the government propose measures like these without doing its homework? Is this the only proposed measure in Bill C-43 where the Conservatives failed in their responsibilities to Canadians? No. I could go on, in part 4 alone.

For example, the bill changes the rules that apply to co-operative credit societies without understanding the full repercussions. Again, was the Credit Union Central of Canada, the agency that represents credit unions, consulted? Was the Fédération des caisses Desjardins consulted? No. How can the government introduce such measures, which will have significant impacts on various industries?

• (1050)

How can the Conservatives claim they are doing due diligence in this process when they have not even bothered to ensure that there are no flaws in these measures or that they will have no adverse effects?

We do agree with some measures, but they have been watered down. They do not fully honour the Conservatives' commitments, including ending pay-to-pay practices, which is when consumers have to pay a fee to receive a paper copy of their bill. This legislation proposes eliminating these fees in the telecommunications sector. That is great.

We on this side of the House have been calling for an end to these pay-to-pay fees for years now. We have come back to this point again and again. I therefore want to ask the government why it chose to stop there, when it promised to eliminate those fees in the banking industry too. The government did not follow through on its commitment. The banking industry must have better lobbyists than the telecom industry. We know that this government does not necessarily have the best relationship with the telecom industry. That is the only reason I can think of to explain this decision. Once again, this is another half measure for consumers, when the government should be going all the way in meeting consumers' demands.

*Government Orders*

None of the measures the government has proposed, not only in Bill C-43, but also in all of its economic policies, have any real direction. The government has no policy framework to give its efforts some direction so that they do not end up wasted or focused on vote-chasing, as is quite clear in Bill C-43 and as I am sure we will see in the pre-budget consultation report. This is a real piecemeal approach.

This government does not have a proper industrial policy. However, in part 4 of the bill, the government has included measures that water down the Investment Canada Act and make it easier for foreign interests to acquire companies. There were not really any consultations about this measure. The Investment Canada Act needs much more transparency and much more specific guidelines, so that foreign investors have little or no chance of seeing arbitrary or unjustified decisions. The government must be much more predictable for these investors, which is very important if we want to attract foreign interests.

There is no comprehensive health policy or strategy. The government could show leadership. Naturally, we recognize that health is a provincial jurisdiction. However, that does not prevent the government from working with the provinces, taking a leadership role and ensuring that we have a pan-Canadian health policy that the provinces and territories support. However, the government is making unilateral changes, and our fear is that this bill is specifically trying to politicize the Public Health Agency of Canada.

There is no credible policy on the part of the government to ensure retirement security. However, there are amendments that create other investment vehicles without improving income security. Furthermore, the government does not have a coherent energy policy. Despite that, changes are being made to the law on marine transport. Changes are being made to tax rules with respect to the right to organize and the environment in order to allow the oil and gas sector and extractive companies to apply the same rules in Canada as in developing countries. They are actually being allowed to comply with laws that are much less rigorous than what we have here.

Although we could play a role in developing and implementing coherent policies in the countries with which we do business, the government is going in the opposite direction. It is extremely frustrating to come back to the House for third reading with very little time to debate this bill, as was the case in committee.

● (1055)

That was definitely the case at the Standing Committee on Finance. However, other committees, although they had no real power, tried their best to invite witnesses who could speak to those far-reaching bills that should have been split into multiple bills.

This is extremely frustrating because it clearly shows that this country is moving in the wrong direction. The majority of the government members will give their speeches, at least those who will have the opportunity, and will sing the praises of their economic policies.

When the parliamentary secretary answered a question about this government's performance, in 2008 in particular, when the recession hit, he said that the government was a leader in terms of what

governments were doing around the world to mitigate the effects of the economic crisis.

However, that is not what the Conservatives did. During the 2008 election, they denied that there was an economic crisis on the horizon. I remember quite well that the Prime Minister played down the looming economic crisis, but we saw how bad it was. On national television, he simply said that it was a good time to buy stocks and invest in the stock market. How completely irresponsible.

We have called on this government to invest specifically in infrastructure, in the sectors where private enterprise could no longer or would no longer invest because of the current economic situation, in order to make up for the gap left by the private sector, which should be investing and ensuring a thriving economy. The government had to play its role, in large part thanks to the opposition. Boasting about taking the lead on this and acting alone is completely irresponsible. That interpretation is a complete misrepresentation of what we are dealing with.

We are not out of the woods yet. We need concrete measures from this government that are not just intended to win votes, but rather are focused on what they claim is their slogan: job creation and growth. That is not what we see in this bill.

That is why we have no choice but to oppose it. Before doing that, I would like to move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Compton—Stanstead:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"this House decline to give third reading to Bill C-43, A Second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, because it:

- (a) amends dozens of unrelated Acts without adequate parliamentary debate and oversight;
- (b) does not take measures to create jobs and address slow economic growth;
- (c) seeks to restrict access to social assistance for refugee claimants, even though there is no financial need and there has been no request from the provinces for such a measure;
- (d) makes amendments to patent legislation that could lead to costly legal action against the government;
- (e) introduces a tax credit whose effects have not been analyzed by the government and that will significantly diminish the employment insurance fund; and
- (f) breaks the government's promises to protect small businesses from merchant fees and to ban banks from charging pay-to-pay fees."

● (1100)

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I listened to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and my colleague, and I would like to point out that we are talking about a worrisome number of subjects that have nothing to do with the budgetary process.

*Government Orders*

It is also extremely worrisome to hear the parliamentary secretary talking about DNA databases in a debate about a budget implementation bill, regardless of what we think about that issue. It is rather worrisome. Every time we have had to deal with this process since we were elected in 2011, the government has always done the same thing.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Finance, my colleague understands just how important it is for the various witnesses who appear to submit their briefs and talk about their needs.

Does my colleague agree that this type of catch-all bill is insulting to people who take the budgetary process seriously?

• (1105)

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Chambly—Borduas for his question, which is very relevant despite the fact that it is a bit repetitive. We ask this same question every time we discuss a budget implementation bill.

The creation of a DNA data bank is important. We support it in principle. However, it has an impact on other things, such as privacy. It is therefore important to properly consider the proposal.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security did its work on this file. However, it would be a good idea for other sections to also conduct an in-depth analysis of this issue.

When I have the opportunity to do so at other stages of the process, I often ask members questions, particularly Conservative members who give speeches about aspects of this bill. I find it interesting that the Conservative members never answer my questions because they do not really know what impact the measures will have. I am thinking, for example, of the measure that changes the electoral process in the Northwest Territories.

Although this is an important issue, it should be examined independently, not included in an omnibus bill like this one, where it will be extremely difficult to properly analyze the consequences.

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. His speech was not just good, it was excellent. Not often do we hear an economic speech in this House that is so on the ball, so well written and so well structured, and I sincerely thank him for that.

He underscored this government's incompetence when it comes to proposing tax measures. He focused on the fact that there was no impact analysis of the tax measures, which I find very worrisome.

Aside from the absolutely horrible and ineffective EI measures, what measures does my colleague think are completely amateurish and appear to have been introduced simply because the Conservatives thought it was a good idea?

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Hébert.

I appreciate getting questions from members. However, I find it ironic that the Conservatives remain seated and would not dare challenge what I said in my speech. I am sure they do not agree with me on everything, but they would rather remain seated. I imagine they will feed us the same old lines, hoping to convince Canadians

that their process and their budget bill are credible. However, that is not the case.

Their incompetence is evident in all of the measures they have brought in. For example, I mentioned the tax credit, which they call a job creation tax credit, but which is nothing but an EI premium holiday. These measures have not been properly analyzed by the Department of Finance, although it is their job to do so.

The minister himself confirmed that the department had not done an analysis, but he did not seem bothered by that. Government officials also confirmed this.

If the Conservatives managed a private company the way they are managing government money—and taxpayers are trusting them to manage it properly—the private company would not last long. The Conservatives do not appear to follow the principles of good governance or the basic principles of administration, although this is something one would expect, especially from a G7 country.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that great speech. He brought up some very good points.

I was banging my head against the desk about the fact that the government did not actually look into the numbers with respect to the EI holiday. It simply relied on the group that was lobbying it to make the change to provide all the statistics. It is just mind-boggling that the government would do that.

I wanted to bring up the issue of pay to pay, which is near and dear to many of my constituents, people who are on fixed incomes and who are being charged \$2, \$3, and \$4 just to get their paper bills. It is great to see the government finally moving on this. Of course, the NDP, especially with the work of the member for Davenport, has been trying to convince the government to make this change for almost three years now. However, why would the government slip in an exemption for the banks? It makes absolutely no sense that the government would say that it is going to cut this practice out but is going to let the banks do it.

I just want to ask my colleague if maybe he has some ideas about why the government might have done that.

• (1110)

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to explain. I do not have the answer.

I do not think we got an explanation from the government as to why it actually decided to basically play favourites, picking the winners and losers of such policies. It does not make sense to me.

If the government is opposed to the concept of pay to pay for the telecommunications industry, it should be opposed to it for all industries, including the banking sector. The government has refused to go in that direction. I cannot answer my colleague properly simply because the government has not really explained why. It has not explained why to the committee. It has not explained why in the media. It has not explained why to us, as the official opposition. It is really disappointing, because this is an important measure for his constituents, for my constituents, and for all Canadians.

*Government Orders*

It is a measure that falls short. There are many other measures we asked the government to include in the budget bill that are not here.

Incidentally, and ironically, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business brought forward the issue of how credit card fees are actually killing many small businesses. What is there in this bill that addresses this important situation? Nothing. The government is still going down the road of having a voluntary approach to this, which is not working for businesses. They are paying the price.

I would like to answer my colleague, but I cannot, because the government has never, ever explained why such a policy is falling short of what it should be. I am still waiting for an answer. Hopefully we will have it on this short day of debating this bill at third reading.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again congratulate my colleague for his speech.

I would also like to comment on the fact that the government is not really taking any measures to help the regions. Once again, we have an omnibus bill that is detrimental to small business. That means it will be detrimental to the regions.

In that regard, I would like my colleague to explain why, instead of helping the regions, the government is proposing a \$500 million exemption, which could nevertheless have helped all regions, agriculture, SMEs and all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, especially those in remote areas.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Compton—Stanstead for his question.

It is an important question, but we must nevertheless be careful. The promised tax credit or premium holiday will be paid for out of the employment insurance fund. As the parliamentary secretary mentioned, this fund was raided by the government—because that is what actually happened—to finance its corporate tax reduction measures beginning in 2000. The amount of \$57 billion disappeared, but the theft of this money was approved and confirmed by the Conservative government when it eliminated the employment insurance fund.

It is expected that higher contributions and reduced access to benefits will result in a surplus in the new employment insurance fund. This reduced access to EI particularly affects regions where there is a great deal of seasonal work, such as eastern Quebec and also the region that I represent.

[*English*]

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I rise to speak to the government's budget implementation act at third reading, I regret that we are debating, yet again, another massive omnibus piece of legislation.

[*Translation*]

This legislation contains many specific flaws, but I would like to start by addressing its conceptual failure. It covers too many subjects which are non-budgetary in nature and therefore not suitable for inclusion in a budget implementation act.

●(1115)

[*English*]

This legislation is frankly a smokescreen designed to ram through a multitude of changes without allowing for careful scrutiny and rigorous analysis. It is 460 pages long, with 400 separate clauses amending countless different laws. Bill C-43 represents a continued abuse of power, disrespect for Parliament, and plain bad judgment on the part of the government.

I would like to review a few of the specific laws in this legislation.

First, there is the small-business job credit. The Minister of Finance conceded, in his appearance before the finance committee, that his department did absolutely no economic analysis of this measure before allocating more than half a billion tax dollars to it.

[*Translation*]

At the Standing Committee on Finance, we heard from experts who say that this tax credit has a serious design flaw. It creates a perverse incentive for employers to lay off workers or reduce their hours of work in order to qualify for the tax savings.

[*English*]

The Parliamentary Budget Officer told us that this so-called job credit would create only 800 jobs over two years, at a cost of about \$700,000 per job. Obviously, it is outrageously expensive and ineffective as a job creation measure. We know that there are better ways to manage half a billion dollars in tax dollars and at the same time better ways to create jobs. There are other measures or potentially better-designed investments that could do more to bolster the economy and create jobs cost-effectively.

We offered a focused alternative. The Liberal plan would create a two-year EI premium holiday for businesses that create new jobs, that actually hire and add to their payrolls. This would be a true incentive for employers to do more hiring. Our proposal would fix the design flaw in the government's tax credit. It was endorsed by Canadian employer organizations, such as the CFIB, Restaurants Canada, and the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters.

Second, I would like to address the government's latest attack on refugee claimants. Having been overruled by the courts on their previous attempt to deny claimants proper medical care, the Conservatives now wish to make it easier for provincial governments to deny them social assistance. It is a harsh and punitive policy that certainly should not be buried in an omnibus budget bill.

*Government Orders*

Third, there is the restructuring of the Public Health Agency of Canada. The government would demote the position of chief public health officer, a move that would carry potential risks for the health of Canadians. At the finance committee, we heard from experts about how the Public Health Agency was created in the aftermath of Canada's SARS crisis. They told us that the chief public health officer was deliberately, at that time, made a deputy head so as to have the necessary power and autonomy to work with the provinces and effect change. The omnibus bill would undo much of that good work.

This omnibus bill also attempts to clean up the mess and correct some of the errors contained in previous Conservative omnibus bills. For example, in the last omnibus budget bill, Bill C-31, the Conservatives forgot to include a tax credit for interest on Canada apprentice loans. In the same bill, they forgot to include foreign money-service businesses as foreign entities in measures under the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act.

The Conservatives also forgot to introduce a refund for duties paid on destroyed tobacco products when they hiked these duties in Bill C-31. As well, they forgot to subject pooled registered pension plans to the same GST rules as registered pension plans in previous legislation.

There is a litany of forgetting, and it is an unfortunate result of not just a lack of competence and attention to the detail, the nitty-gritty of government or economic management, but also the design flaw of the overall approach of putting all these changes in a budget omnibus bill and denying the appropriate committees of Parliament to both review and vote on measures pertaining to their area of public policy and expertise.

In this litany of forgetting things, the government may actually be forgetting about the needs of Canadians. However, I do not think Canadians will forget about the failings of the current government come the next election.

Principal among those failings is a lack of consultation, which is clearly evident in this omnibus bill. The government did not consult with aviation groups when changing the rules around aerodromes. It did not listen to Canada's only international cable-laying company when excluding cable laying from the definition of international shipping. It did not listen to the provincial governments when pressing ahead with measures aimed at denying social assistance to refugees.

The Canadian people have made it clear that they need economic growth and employment, and they need growth and jobs to be an absolute priority for the government. Unfortunately, the government is out of touch with Canadians' needs and aspirations, and it is certainly doing nothing to create growth and prosperity.

For example, consider the government's new income-splitting scheme, which will cost \$2.4 billion this year. It benefits only 14% of Canadians, the most privileged of Canadians. The measure completely overlooks single parents and parents who happen to both make similar incomes.

The late Jim Flaherty had doubts about it, and he expressed them clearly. These are the words of the late Jim Flaherty:

I think income-splitting needs a long, hard analytical look...to see who it affects and to what degree, because I'm not sure that overall, it benefits our society.

If the Conservatives followed his advice and took a long, hard look at income splitting, they would see that it does nothing to really create growth and prosperity, and does nothing to help a lot of the Canadian families that need the help the most. It also puts the government more deeply in deficit this year. The government would already project a surplus, or be close to a surplus this year, if it were not for this income-splitting scheme, which actually puts us back into a deficit situation.

While the Conservatives are borrowing to benefit a small and relatively well-off segment of the population through income splitting, they are neglecting a vulnerable group that has served Canadians with true patriotism and valour; that being our veterans.

In addition to closing Veterans Affairs offices, the government lapsed \$1.1 billion that was earmarked to invest on behalf of veterans. Instead of following Parliament's direction and using those funds to take care of our veterans, the government clawed that money back for the federal treasury.

Meanwhile, the government skimmed on much-needed mental health services for our veterans. In his recent report, the Auditor General found that 80% of veterans had to wait nearly eight months to find out if they were even eligible for long-term mental health services, and the other 20% had to wait even longer than that.

This is callous treatment by a government that likes to lionize the military, but will not treat individual veterans or their families with care and respect. The Conservative government is even trying to argue in the courts now that it does not have a sacred obligation to those who served in the Canadian Armed Forces.

A Liberal government would have a very different agenda than the current government, economically and socially. We believe that members of the Canadian Armed Forces and veterans should have nothing less than the best of care and support from a grateful nation and government. Our goals would be fair treatment for all members of society and the strengthening of Canada's middle class through an agenda of jobs and growth.

*Government Orders*

● (1120)

We would grow the economy in a way that would benefit all Canadians, investing significantly in infrastructure, innovation and trade. We would partner with the provinces and Canadian municipalities. We would work with progressive investors, including, potentially Canada's pension funds, to invest significantly and massively in infrastructure. We would follow some of the lead of countries like the U.K. and Australia. This year, Australia is investing \$13 billion of federal money into infrastructure. It is leveraging with the state governments and with pension funds to create \$60 billion of new investments in infrastructure.

We have the capacity, through a forward-thinking and innovative infrastructure agenda, to create jobs and growth in the short term during this time of secular stagnation and slow growth and soft employment. We can create jobs and growth in the short term, but we can also render our economy more competitive in the long term by addressing Canada's crumbling infrastructure needs.

The reality is that we probably have the best opportunity in our lifetime to actually invest in infrastructure. We have bond yields at historic lows, real interest rates actually negative, a crumbling infrastructure and soft employment market, and a slow growth economy. Put those factors together and there is little wonder why people like David Dodge, or the OECD or the IMF are saying that countries like Canada ought to be investing significantly in infrastructure.

This is no time for the government to do what it did in the last budget; that is, cut planned infrastructure spending by 89% in order to achieve a notional surplus on the eve of an election.

Infrastructure spending needs to be significant, it needs to be consistent, it needs to be long term in nature, not just around electoral scheduling.

We would invest, as a government, in getting better labour market information to provide a clear understanding of the skills mismatch to the situation of jobs without people and people without jobs, address labour shortages and, at the same time, give opportunities to young Canadians who need work.

There are 200,000 fewer jobs for young Canadians today than before the downturn. One of the things we need in Canada is better labour market data. We need to invest in organizations like Statistics Canada. We need to ensure that young Canadians and their families know more about what the jobs of today look like and what the jobs in the future will look like. We need to get better data and we need to make that data available in a user-friendly format for young Canadians, starting in junior high school, such that they can start thinking long term, not just what they want to do but what those jobs actually pay so they can get a job that will provide them with the means to have a place of their own. There has never been a time, in recent history, when we have seen more young Canadians living at home, on the sofa in the basement, because they simply cannot get work to financially sustain themselves.

One of the drivers of high levels of personal debt for Canadian families right now is the direct financial subsidization of adult children who cannot get a job or cannot get jobs that will actually financially sustain them. Canadian families today are seeing record

levels of personal debt—\$1.65 for every \$1.00 of annual income—as parents and grandparents directly financially support young people who have skills, who have good educations, but whose skills do not match current labour market needs. We need to close that gap and part of it is simply providing good information to young Canadians as they are planning their career and their lives, and informing them as to the types of jobs, professional trades, that can provide them with the capacity to support themselves into the future.

We need to work with the provinces to restore the honour and respect paid to professional trades. We have seen a diminution in the respect for professional trades over the last 30 years. We need to reverse that because we know there is a shortage of skilled trades and an opportunity for young people, if they are given the correct information, to choose paths in skilled trades, I think we will see more young people doing that.

● (1125)

We also need to invest more in training and apprenticeships. We need to track unpaid internships, for instance. We have asked the government to mandate Statistics Canada to track unpaid internships. We have been told that there is more use of unpaid interns today than ever before. It is kind of a supply and demand issue.

There are a lot of young Canadians who are desperate for work, desperate for the experience they need to start off their careers, who simply cannot find work. The issue with unpaid internships is that it can deepen inequality of opportunity significantly because only children from privileged families can afford to work for no pay. In other words, it is more likely a child from a privileged family will actually get a good start and get some work experience.

This has tremendous long-term impacts on equality of opportunity. We have learned from a recent report of the IMF that in fact inequality of opportunity is not just a social issue; it impedes economic growth. That is why issues like unpaid internships and income inequality are important and why we should, at the very least, not make the situation worse with a tax change that has the capacity to deepen inequality, like income splitting.

We also need to recognize that over the last 30 years the nature of work and training has changed, not just in Canada but throughout the industrialized world. The old days where one could get a degree, or a diploma, or trade and be set for life and never have to go back to school, university or college, are over, in the same way that working for 30 years, retiring with a gold watch and defined benefit pension plan is largely behind us.

*Government Orders*

We need to update and modernize our Canada student loans program as part of a suite of support for not just young people as they graduate from high school to get their education, but as they move forward through multiple decades of their careers and lives. There is nothing really there for people in their 30s who have young families, who find that their skills do not match the current job market. It is very difficult for them to finance the education and training they need to get a job to support their families at that time. It would be good for productivity and competitiveness, and jobs and growth, if we worked with people throughout their careers and life cycles to help them get the skills they needed during that entire period.

We also believe it is important that we go back to evidence-based decision making, as opposed to the Conservatives' decision-based evidence making, when we are crafting public policy. What we may think, based on an ideological perspective, is the right thing to do, when exposed to the bright light of fact and information, we may be surprised. It is important that we get the best possible information and data, whether scientific or statistical.

We live in an age of big data. Smart companies and smart governments are investing massively in knowing more about their customers and the demographic trends and how to prepare for them. There is only one organization I can think of globally that has deliberately chosen over the last 10 years to both reduce the quality and quantity of data it collects, and that is the Conservative government. It is an ideological perspective that is wrong headed.

Instead of dividing Canadians with ideologies, a Liberal government would unite Canadians with ideas, based on fact, creativity, imagination and innovation, to create the jobs and growth that Canadians need.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech.

I would like to come back to something he said, which I have a hard time believing. He said that the Conservatives' EI premium holiday was announced without any consultation. I have a hard time believing that the government would have announced such a costly measure—we are talking \$550 million here—without any consultation or a study conducted by the Department of Finance itself.

Is that really what I heard? Did the Department of Finance propose a \$550-million tax measure without basing it on an internally conducted impact assessment? Did I understand that correctly?

• (1135)

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the question.

Unfortunately, that is the case. It is true that the government did not conduct an analysis; there are no facts or figures. The government decided to spend more than \$500 million on a program that will not create jobs. That is nonsense and bad policy. It may be good policy for the Conservatives before an election, that much is true, but it does not reflect the principles of good governance.

When the government is considering implementing a policy, it needs to do research to understand the potential results. That is not what the Conservatives did, and this is not the first time. The Conservatives always do the same thing.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I too, like my colleague across the way, had difficulty believing some of the things I heard. I say that because, along with the member, I serve on the finance committee and shared the same testimony that he shared.

I could probably mention a number of things, but I want to talk about his reference to the Chief Public Health Officer and his understanding of what he heard, which was much different from what the rest of us heard. The Chief Public Health Officer actually said that he was quite in favour of the changes and thought that the changes would have a positive effect on his job and his ability to do the job.

I am wondering if the hon. member could maybe let the House know what he heard. I think he was in committee at the time, and I would ask that he make a comment on that as well.

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, we heard from a number of experts at committee who told us quite clearly that this represented a demotion. It is not surprising that the individual who was being demoted, appearing before a parliamentary committee, might feel somewhat intimidated in speaking truth to power.

I do not know when the thumb screws come off these public servants before they are put before a parliamentary committee to testify. The reality is that it is very difficult for senior public servants to speak truth to power to the current government. There is a significant list of public servants who have been moved out, demoted, or simply quit. It started within weeks of the current government forming or taking office, or within months, when it removed the chief science adviser to the Prime Minister, Arthur Carty. It continued, and it continues.

The government's attack has been well documented; the attack on science, on internal and external research, and on the people who actually provide the kind of independent voice that we need. In this case, the changes actually make it more difficult for the Chief Public Health Officer to speak directly to Canadians. It is a continued trend of the muzzling of senior public servants because the government does not want them telling Canadians the unvarnished truth and information.

In the area of public health, it is particularly important that Canadians have direct access to the Chief Public Health Officer and that it not be impeded or reduced in any way.

• (1140)

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a fellow maritimer, I wish to pose a question with respect to the impact of the government's economic policies on our region.

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In their chest-thumping over payroll taxes, the Conservatives seem quick to forget that, in the last several budgets, payroll taxes had been increased. As the economic policies affect our region, I wonder if the member could comment on the disproportionate effect that the gutting of the EI program has had on our seasonal industries and the effect of austerity budgets of recent years on front-line services in my own province.

There was a time when immigrants could go and talk to a live person. That time has passed because the office is closed. There was a time when a taxpayer could go and talk to a live person. That time has passed because the counter service for taxpayers is closed. There was a time when veterans could go and talk to a live person. That has passed because the veterans' district office has been closed.

We see a back-end loading of infrastructure projects and an outright cancellation and delaying of infrastructure projects, the most important to my province being the subsea cable between New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

Therefore, when we talk about the austerity budgets of recent years and we see the Conservatives trumpeting the fact that we are about to come into balance, my question is this. Was it worth it?

**Hon. Scott Brison:** Mr. Speaker, I remember when the Prime Minister referred to Atlantic Canada and Atlantic Canadians as having a culture of defeat. He said that as an opposition leader. Since then he has gone from contempt for the region to neglect. It is a region that is struggling, particularly the Maritimes. Newfoundland and Labrador are fortunate that, based on natural resources, they are seeing some progress. That is a good thing. However, the Maritimes are struggling. It is not just the cuts to EI benefits and changes that have been negative for the region, but it is a real lack of leadership on issues where traditionally federal governments played leadership roles in our region.

On the issue of immigration, the Maritime provinces have a terrifying demographic trend before us whereby our populations are teetering on decline and are aging rather significantly. As a result, we will see a diminishing of the labour pool and the productive capacity of our region. We need immigration. When provincial governments and the Maritimes came to the current government, they were told that it would not raise the cap and it would not enable them to bring in more immigrants.

In our region we ought to be working on a future Liberal government that would work with the provincial governments. For instance, we would look at the Manitoba model for immigration. We would ask ourselves if we could do that in our region, if we could work with the federal government to change our immigration strategy to have perhaps even a unified immigration strategy among the maritime provinces, so that they would have a greater capacity to attract and retain more new Canadians to our region.

There is a lack of vision in the federal government for Atlantic Canada, which reflects a lack of creativity in terms of public policy. It also reflects a lack of compassion or real interest in moving our region forward. Most importantly, it reflects a lack of understanding of the potential of the maritime and Atlantic Canadian people and the capacity through leadership for us to harness that innovation, which could do so much to create jobs and prosperity for our region.

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, it is a pleasure to rise in the House and speak on behalf of my constituents, the people of Crowfoot, in central Alberta. It is a riding that I have had the pleasure of representing for 14 years.

I am also pleased to be able to split my time with the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

When we talk about budgets, budget implementation acts, and the economy, there are a number of issues to which we can broaden out. Budget implementation act no. 2 would bring forward a number of those measures. This morning, I would like to speak about three of those measures. I would like to speak a little bit about the economy. We have heard the opposition talk about doom and gloom and the economy of Canada. I would like to share a little bit about how Canada is leading the industrialized countries in the world in job creation and in growth.

Secondly, I would like to take some time to speak about the measures we have brought forward to help hold jobs and make certain we can create an environment where new jobs are created, and speak about how we can ensure people have the skills for those new jobs.

Finally, I would like to speak a little bit about what our Conservative government has done, especially in this budget bill and in other measures, to help support families and communities. How would the government help in a tough global economic downturn? How would it help families?

First of all, let me talk about the state of the Canadian economy. Thanks to prudent fiscal and economic decisions that were made before the recession in 2008-09, Canada has boasted one of the strongest recoveries and strongest records of the advanced economies in the world. When faced with that unprecedented global crisis, our government responded with the economic action plan, which stimulated the economy, protected Canadian jobs during the recession, and invested in long-term growth.

Today's real GDP is significantly above pre-recession levels. Our GDP is one of the top GDPs and best performing in the G7. The Canadian economy has boasted one of the strongest job creation records in the G7 over the recovery, with more than 1.2 million jobs created since July, 2009.

Canada has weathered the economic storm well, and the world has noticed. Bloomberg has ranked Canada as the second best country in the world to do business. Are people thinking about expanding a business? Are they thinking about a new business? Canada is the second best place in the world for business. Both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development expect Canada to be among the strongest growing economies in the G7 over this year and the next year.

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This does not mean that our work is done, however. For Canada, while the recession is long gone, its effects still linger in the world economy. We see signs of this global challenge everywhere. European debt is too high and inflation is very low. Given this ongoing uncertain global economic environment, it is crucial that we carefully target our initiatives to meet objectives that continue to strengthen Canada's economic action plan. That is why Bill C-43 includes measures that would help to support jobs and growth.

Last year, we reformed the skills training system to better help Canadians get quality jobs. With economic action plan 2014, our government is taking further steps to ensure that federal funding in programs is directed toward meeting labour market needs. First, our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians can find available jobs by helping them acquire the skills that will get them hired or help them find a better job.

In Canada, apprentices and skilled trades do most of their learning during on-the-job, paid employment periods. They participate in technical training. They can face significant costs to complete these periods of technical training, and they require these types of programs in order to do that. That is why we helped apprentices and created the apprentice loan in the first budget bill. This initiative certainly helps apprentices in the Red Seal trades by providing access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans each year to help complete their training.

• (1145)

Furthermore, Bill C-43 proposes that the Income Tax Act be amended to extend the existing student loan interest credit.

By helping Canadians acquire those skills that will get them hired or help them get better jobs, we are also supporting our small businesses. That is exactly what our small businesses are looking for. They are looking for people who are employable. They are looking for people who already have the skill set when they arrive at their new workplace so that the small business does not have to spend much longer periods of time bringing their skill set up to where they can really benefit the company.

We recognize that small businesses create good jobs. We also recognize that small businesses serve as the engines of economic growth and prosperity. Small businesses employ half of the working men and women in Canada's private sector and account for two-fifths of our country's business sector GDP. That is why I am pleased that today's legislation includes the small business job credit. Ninety per cent of employees making EI contributions in Canada, about 780,000 each year, will directly benefit from the credit that we have brought forward.

In addition, this credit requires no new paperwork on the part of the business. It will be a refund through the Canada Revenue Agency, so this will not be labour intensive administratively for small- and medium-size business. The Canada Revenue Agency will calculate it and the agency will return it. Small businesses are pleased by that.

Following me, the member for Brandon—Souris will be speaking. The Brandon Chamber of Commerce has said that this credit "...has provided some fast relief to small employers, and at the end of the day, it gives those businesses a little bit more money to spend on the

investment, it gives their employees a little bit more money. It's definitely good for small business...It will absolutely provide some relief for small business, and that's the core of our economy." The chamber of commerce gets it. The member gets it. He brings the concerns and the needs of his communities to the House.

Jayson Myers, the President and CEO of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, also praised this initiative by saying, "The Small Business Job Credit will help a powerhouse—the thousands of small businesses—of the Canadian economy become more competitive."

That is what we want to do in government. We want to give our businesses the opportunity to compete better, the opportunity to compete in a global economy. This job credit represents yet more action by our government to lower taxes for Canadians and for small- and medium-size businesses.

Finally, I want to touch on how our government is supporting families in our communities. Unlike the opposition, we believe that Canadians should benefit from the surplus, not bureaucracy and not big government. We want to make certain that we can put money back into the pockets of Canadian families, Canadian seniors, all Canadians.

Notwithstanding the comments made by the Liberal leader that budgets will just balance themselves, we also understand that it takes discipline, a focus on priorities, and sound judgment. It is important to understand that a balanced budget is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Right now, 11¢ of every \$1 goes to service our federal debt. By balancing the books and paying down debt, we will be freeing up taxpayers' dollars that might otherwise have been spent on servicing debt, so that we can invest in such things as infrastructure and social programs. This will also help to keep interest rates low, thereby instilling confidence in consumers and investors. It will strengthen our country's ability to respond to long-term challenges, such as aging infrastructure. It will help to ensure fairness and equity for generations to come. Our government is pleased to be in a position to bring our budget into balance and to help Canadian families do that.

I see that my time is up. I will just mention also that we brought forward the child fitness tax credit and many other credits that I may be able to speak a bit about in questions and answers.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about what is not in this bill because my colleague's speech was clear. He talked about all of the measures that the government wanted to bring in.

However, this week we learned that Canada ranked 58th out of the 61 biggest greenhouse gas emitters. We also learned that of the 10 largest countries in the world, Canada was in last place in the fight against climate change. What is not in the budget is what the government plans to do for our children and future generations in terms of fighting climate change and higher greenhouse gas levels. What is the government planning to do?

• (1155)

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat taken aback, because now the opposition is saying that we should have put more measures in the budget bill. They say that some measures were not mentioned in the budget and that this is an omnibus bill.

What we really see is the opposition wanting environmental policy brought into the bill, and others will want social housing, all of which can be debated in the House. But make no mistake about it, we want to assure Canadians that the environmental issues are solid.

We want to be certain that we do not hamper the development of our resources, but come forward with responsible measures for developing resources, which are a driver of our economy. However, Canadians also expect that we keep our environment clean. They expect that we will develop those resources—which are needed for social programs—in a responsible way.

We will not bring about the type of environmental policies the opposition has asked for. These would drive people into the unemployment lines and make it impossible to support some very important measures, like health and social transfers to our provinces. We will have a balanced approach on those measures.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, building on my colleague's previous answer, I wonder if he could speak to how this budget implementation bill will help to ensure the sustainability of government spending in an effective and efficient manner, particularly since we are both Alberta MPs and recognize that there is concern right now about the price of oil and some of the key revenues generated from that particular commodity.

Certainly, one of the things we have been trying to do in our government is to ensure a balance between economic growth of our natural resource, in the energy sector in particular, and environmental stewardship. I am wondering if my colleague could perhaps expand on some of the measures we have taken that will be further increased by the bill, ensuring the major determinants of economic growth and investments in these sectors, such as our corporate tax regime and certainty in our regulatory process. Could my colleague speak a little bit about certainty in the regulatory process helping to attract foreign direct investment and to sustain operations, one of our key economic growth drivers?

Could he also talk about some of the measures in the bill that will ensure economic diversification, such as the changes to our intellectual property regime and skills training?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson:** Where do I start, Mr. Speaker? There were so many good questions.

Certainly, part of what the hon. member said in her question concerned living within our means and economic, responsible,

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prudent types of budgets and measures that we bring forward. We have said all along that Canadians expect that if they have to live within their means, government should also have to live within its means. That means we come to balanced budgets.

That is why our record is a good one. Even before the recession hit, we paid \$38 billion down in national debt. That showed investors that Canada was serious about getting its economic house in order.

When we moved into this global recession, what did we do? Did we withdraw? Did we stop investment? Did we say that regardless of what happens, we will stick to a balanced budget? We invested in things that mattered to Canadians: in infrastructure. We invested in roads, bridges, and things that will lend themselves to long-term prosperity.

This budget implementation bill carries on from there and speaks of the very important measures in the next step forward.

• (1200)

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today in support of Bill C-43, the economic action plan 2014 act, no. 2. I would like to thank the member for Crowfoot for sharing the time that he has as the Minister of State for Finance with me.

Just over a year ago I was honoured to be elected to represent the riding of Brandon—Souris. At that time, I made a commitment to my constituents that I would support measures to continue building on the economic growth of the region I represent.

The economic action plan is good for the residents of Brandon—Souris, as it is for all Canadians. Our government supports initiatives that will leave more money for small businesses, more money in the pockets of apprentices, and more money in the pockets of hard-working families.

As my colleague, the member for North Vancouver, mentioned earlier, our government is committed to ending unfair billing practices of telecommunications companies and reducing the administrative burdens on charitable organizations.

Our government recognizes the fundamental importance of small business in fuelling our economy, which makes up 82% of Manitoba's economy, and a similar percentage elsewhere in Canada. For that reason, we have introduced the new small business job credit, which is anticipated to reduce employment insurance premiums by 15% for the next two years.

Any small business that pays employer employment insurance premiums equal to or less than \$15,000 will be eligible for this credit. It is expected to save small businesses more than \$550 million over this timeframe. This new initiative will assist local businesses to hire new employees and create new jobs in southwestern Manitoba.

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Small businesses are the backbone of the Canadian economy, employing approximately 70% of the total labour force in the private sector, accounting for nearly 90% of Canadian exporters, and contributing about 41% to Canada's private sector gross domestic product. It is essential that our local small businesses remain globally competitive and successful, and this small business job credit will do exactly that and enhance opportunities for small business.

Our government also created the Canada apprentice loan. This initiative will allow apprentices registered in a Red Seal trade to apply for interest-free loans of up to \$4,000 for a period of technical training. It is anticipated that at least 26,000 apprentices will apply for these loans each year. Right now, there are more than 50 trades in the Red Seal program, accounting for almost 90% of all apprentices and more than 80% of the total trades workforce in Canada.

As with student loans for university and college students, interest and repayment of the Canada apprentice loan will not start until after apprentices complete or leave their training programs. This will ensure that apprentices will be on the same playing field as college and university students.

As is the case for many members of the House, the constituency I represent is experiencing a skills gap in the labour force. There are too many employers looking to hire skilled tradespeople, and every time a job posting goes unfilled is a lost opportunity to grow our local economy.

As a father and a grandfather, I understand the importance of children being involved in fitness activities. In my constituency, just as in many constituencies across this country, hockey, soccer, baseball, and for sure curling are popular activities. Sports are also expensive and our government understands that.

To reflect that reality we are increasing the maximum amount of expenses that may be claimed under this tax credit, from its current limit of \$500 to \$1,000 for the 2014 tax year and beyond. As well, beginning in 2015, this tax credit will be made refundable, which will benefit low-income families.

Currently, the children's fitness tax credit provides tax relief to 1.4 million families, and when these measures are fully implemented, they will deliver additional tax relief to approximately 850,000 families. Eligible activities for this tax credit include hockey, soccer, golf lessons, horseback riding, sailing, bowling, and other activities that require a similar level of physical activity.

We are supporting the families in southwestern Manitoba and the families across this country through these initiatives. By promoting the physical health of Canadian children, we are also promoting the financial health of families.

• (1205)

Our government is supporting Canadian consumers by ending the pay-to-pay practice that is being followed by some telecommunications companies. In these unfair pay-to-pay billing practices, Canadians who receive a paper copy of their telephone or wireless bill were being charged a fee to receive their bill in the mail, but now Canadians would no longer be charged a fee for receiving a bill in paper form.

Canadians who do not have Internet access are often low-income individuals or seniors. They are at a disadvantage, as they are unable to get an electronic bill. We listened to the complaints and we are ending this unfair practice. Our government made a commitment in the 2013 Speech from the Throne, and we are delivering on this initiative through this legislation.

As well, our economic action plan proposes to amend the Criminal Code to allow charities to use modern electronic technology to raise funds. Every year, charities in Canada raise millions of dollars through lottery sales to support their good works. However, because of outdated legislation, charities cannot use modern electronic technology such as computers to process their lottery sales. Under the current system, charities must process and activate all sales manually and then send customers their tickets in the mail. As a result, it is more time-consuming and costly to charities.

Our government is proposing to amend the Criminal Code to allow charities to conduct their lotteries by using a computer. This change would allow charitable organizations to use e-commerce to issue lottery tickets and issue receipts to donors. This change would help charities save millions of dollars in administrative costs by allowing them to use electronic technology for their tickets. For example, the Heart and Stroke Foundation has noted that by using computers for a lottery, it could save potentially \$1 million in administrative costs annually. If this change is made, charities will be able to allocate more of their budget to support their initiatives and programs. That is how it should be.

To summarize, this legislation is good for our economy, it is good for families, it is good for consumers, and it is good for Canadian charities.

I remain as focused as ever in supporting the growth of our economy and providing support to job creators and hard-working families throughout Canada. I urge all members of this House to support this legislation so that we can continue to get results for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on participating in this debate.

I know that he has a lot of experience in the agricultural sector, and I would like him to explain to me why this budget contains no specific measures to improve working conditions for farmers across Canada, particularly in terms of supporting farmers' markets.

In many parts of the country, small local producers would like to raise awareness of their products, create prosperity in their region and participate in a regional economy, especially in Quebec and Ontario.

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[English]

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question, but it is very obvious that support for agriculture is immense in areas other than in this particular economic action plan bill no. 2. I just referred to the CETA agreement on trade with the Europeans that we are signing. We have already signed an agreement with South Korea that is ongoing. There is a huge benefit in those areas, in pork and beef particularly, and there are many other areas.

We have just put an AgriRecovery program in place in some of the flooded areas of the Prairies to help move feed into and out of those areas. There is a plethora of areas that the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of Transport have worked on in regard to ensuring that agricultural goods, both raw and processed materials, move efficiently across our country and into our export markets.

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments shared on the record by my friend and colleague. He did reference the tax credit for sport. When we look at the statistics of the participation rates in Canada in sport by young Canadians, we see that the numbers taking part in sport are pretty similar year after year. In 2003, there was a significant spike. Of course, that was because our girls won the gold medal in Salt Lake City. All of a sudden, there were new heroes and idols. The Cassie Campbells and the Jennifer Botterills inspired young female hockey players in this country. However, after the Conservatives brought in the tax credit in 2007, in subsequent years there was no discernible increase in participation in sport. If that was the intent, then it failed.

Perhaps the member could share his thoughts with me. By doubling this, by taking more money out of the treasury for this specific initiative, what is the hope? Is he hoping to double the amount of non-response this measure got in the first place?

• (1210)

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, the initiative here is try to ensure that families already in sports can continue to be in them, as well as to attract new participants.

This is a child tax credit with respect to sport. It is to help with fitness, thereby relieving dollars that would perhaps have to be spent by provinces in health budgets. It would help the provinces out immensely and help families immensely by helping to maintain the physical activity of our youth and therefore their health. It is an opportunity as well to make sure that families that are participating can continue to participate in sports. I know the hon. member realizes that the cost of being involved in these areas has gone up significantly since 2003 as well.

**Hon. Bal Gosal (Minister of State (Sport), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for an excellent speech, especially on the sport side.

I do not agree with my colleague's remarks about participation. When girls won the 2012 soccer bronze medal, participation in soccer skyrocketed. We have over one million kids registered in soccer across the country, and 42% of them are girls.

When I talk to people, especially athletes, they tell me they love the credit. Parents love this credit, as it helps them register their kids

into different sports. I think that is the biggest single help they are getting with this budget.

I would ask my colleague to explain how families back home are reacting to this tax credit for participation in sports.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a great opportunity. As I go through my constituency, I see that the local community rinks are receiving this news with open arms. I have been in many of them already this fall, and they certainly praise the idea of having the opportunity to move from \$400 to \$1,000 for the child sport tax credit and the fitness tax credit. They all acknowledge that this is a big help, whether it is with respect to buying skates, uniforms, baseball bats, or other items to enable them to participate in their sports or whether it is being able to afford gym costs and costs in other areas where they would be participating.

A tremendous number of athletes have come out of southwest Manitoba, and we continue to grow the number of strong athletes who participate in our national events.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Sherbrooke, who does wonderful work. He is without a doubt the best member of Parliament that Sherbrooke has ever had since Confederation.

I might say that I am pleased to speak in the House to this bill. However, I must say that it is not necessarily a pleasure for me to do so, because this is yet another omnibus budget bill, another bill that undermines our democratic institutions.

What is more, it does not allow us to do our job properly as parliamentarians and to debate all the issues it contains. This is the fifth edition in a series of omni-budgets. It is not for sale, but I do not think many people would want to buy it. This is like getting a series of books that no one wants to read because they are too long and too perverse. In fact, they are horror stories.

Bill C-43 has 460 pages and more than 400 clauses that affect dozens of statutes. Most of the proposed changes in this mammoth bill have no connection with last spring's 2014 budget.

I understand that the government is in a hurry to remake the country in its own image. However, it is going about it in an underhanded way so that journalists, parliamentarians, and Canadians do not have enough time to say everything they want to say about the measures set out in the budget.

I would like to give an example. I apologize for using my phone. In these modern times, people communicate with me, as they do with all my other colleagues, through incredible new technology.

To come back to my example, my constituents are worried about the clauses in Bill C-43 pertaining to airports, which centralize more ministerial power over the expansion and modification of airports, raising the risk that local consultation will not occur in the face of controversial proposals like the Toronto Island airport expansion.

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Some of my constituents also raised the issue of security in private airports. Who will monitor the arrivals, departures and contents of small planes if the government does not set up a monitoring system? How can we ensure that all of the airports or municipalities in which they are located have the required emergency measures in place in case of an air disaster? Will the federal government help the municipalities so that they have all the tools they need to ensure the safety of Canadians?

The NDP is in touch with Canadians. That is why I took the time to read the comment made by one of my constituents. People are concerned that the measures in this omnibus bill will affect their safety and air security across the country. They are rightfully asking what might be the consequences, whether their municipality will be consulted on these changes and whether these changes will affect their family's safety.

It is just a comment, but it shows how much my constituents and other Canadians want to discuss the measures hidden in this bill.

● (1215)

[English]

This bill amends dozens of unrelated acts without adequate parliamentary debate and oversight. It fails also to take meaningful action to create jobs and address weak economic growth.

The riding I represent is one of the poorest in Quebec. It has challenges related to a number of industries. The forestry industry, which was a fundamental backbone of the economy in the region, has been in crisis for several years. It is also an agricultural community, but the price of various agricultural commodities has been an issue in the past, which has also led to increased poverty.

Particularly for youth, but also for seniors, it is very difficult to get a job in the Pontiac riding. It is very difficult to keep a job, and the changes the current government made to EI have made it even more difficult. Essentially, due to those changes, the entire region of the Pontiac is being emptied of its best brains, skilled workers, and youth, because they are forced to go even further to get jobs. They are forced to prove that they have to go further. Therefore, communities like Low, Kazabazua, and even Danford Lake are having issues with retention. How are these communities going to last? Unfortunately, they are scratching their heads with regard to this budget and how it would help them.

What kind of investments are there in the forestry industry? There was a promise at one point to put millions of dollars into ensuring that the forestry industry could renew itself and have new technologies. The problem is that the amount is not enough, nor is there any guarantee for communities that are rural and poor that they will receive that money. With \$225 million for the whole country, and it taking millions of dollars to renew just one particular industry in one particular town, that \$225 million spread out across the country would do little or nothing to help the people in the Pontiac.

I would point out that I spoke in favour of and supported a bill in the House to ensure the consumption of Canadian wood products by Public Works. It seems reasonable that taxpayers should expect that the Canadian government would consume Canadian products when it is building Canadian infrastructure, and wood is a particularly good material for building a number of buildings.

I would also point out that Bill C-43 is an outright attack on some of the most vulnerable people in our society, such as refugee claimants.

As well, there is the implementation of a job credit that has already been panned by experts and the Parliamentary Budget Officer as wasteful and extraordinarily expensive. We are going to waste even more of taxpayers' money through this omnibus bill.

There is nothing in the bill to get, as I mentioned, the almost 300,000 more unemployed Canadians than before the recession back to work or to help replace the 400,000 manufacturing jobs lost under the current Prime Minister's watch, mostly in southern Ontario but also in places like the Pontiac.

This is a question of choices. The Conservatives can choose to help the rich and help the largest corporations in this country that have the ear of the Prime Minister and the government, or they can choose to use the budget to help those who are in need. They can choose to give them the services they need and deliver those services and ensure that it is done efficiently. They can also choose to invest in the health, well-being, and security of Canadians.

However, the choices being made are the wrong ones. They are fundamentally not in the public interest. They are in the interest of a few, and it is unfortunate to see this lack of dedication to the well-being of hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

● (1220)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned manufacturing jobs in southern Ontario. We all know that manufacturing has many determinants in terms of its profitability and the ability to expand. Input costs are certainly one of those things that need to be considered when looking at the sustainability of an industry, particularly manufacturing. Labour is part of that, but certainly in southern Ontario, we have seen the input costs around electricity basically skyrocket. I think that has been cited.

I wonder if the member could speak to some of the Ontario provincial government's negative impact, in terms of the green energy policy, on manufacturing jobs in southern Ontario.

● (1225)

**Mr. Mathieu Ravignat:** Mr. Speaker, I am from Quebec. In the Pontiac, I follow Ontario provincial politics out of interest. I used to live in Toronto. However, by no stretch of the imagination am I an expert on what is going on in Ontario and on what is going on with the Wynn government.

However, it seems to me that the manufacturing crisis in Ontario could be answered by an intelligent investment in the building of infrastructure for green technology. I think that is the idea behind that for the Government of Ontario. I cannot comment on whether that plan has actually been effective or has been done efficiently, but certainly the principle is a good one.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the nice things he said about me at the beginning of his speech.

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I have a question for him about the pay-to-pay fees because we have heard a lot about them in the past few months and years. The Conservatives have finally decided to do something, but only in the telecommunications sector. The Conservatives are going to prevent this sector from making users pay to receive paper copies of their bills.

However, unfortunately, for some unknown reason, the Conservatives decided not to regulate other sectors, including banks and credit card companies, in the same way.

Could my colleague explain why it is unethical to make clients pay for their bill, which is the same as making them pay twice, and why the government should take action in this sector?

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnat:** Mr. Speaker, there are things we can tolerate as taxpayers and other things we can tolerate when we pay for a service.

One thing I cannot tolerate, and neither can the vast majority of my constituents, is when a company randomly decides to charge ridiculous fees for something that should be free. I deplore the fact that this government does not have the nerve or the courage to stand up to industries that are spending their time picking our pockets.

**Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again congratulate my colleague for contributing to this debate, even though it will only last a day. The Conservatives are making a mockery of democracy once again.

I know that my colleague's riding is a fairly rural area. I would like him to talk about how this budget does absolutely nothing for our regions. This is the third time that I have asked the same question today.

What is happening far from major centres? The economy is stagnating. SMEs are also stagnating because of high credit card fees. There are no community groups or housing co-operatives in the regions, which nevertheless need them. Furthermore, we have to promote family farming.

Why is that not in this budget? Why is the government instead considering a measure that will result in \$500 million in tax exemptions? Nothing will be done with that money. Then there is the \$1 billion taken from veterans that will be given back to the Treasury Board.

**Mr. Mathieu Ravnat:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

When the Prime Minister sits down with his cabinet and his Minister of Finance, who does he think about? Does he wonder who needs help, who is left behind in our economy and how he can ensure that most Canadians are doing well? That is what an NDP government would do.

On the other side of the House, the Conservatives think of their friends first. They first look after the industries that put pressure on them. The government believes that in this way they will help ordinary Canadians eventually. The problem is that this economic system has been in place for hundreds of years and it has often been proven that doing things this way does not help the majority of the population.

● (1230)

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the people of Sherbrooke, the beautiful riding that I have proudly represented for three years, with respect to Bill C-43, the second budget implementation act. It is another omnibus bill, and it is not called that for nothing, as it contains 460 pages and 400 clauses. I will therefore not be able to address every measure and its effect on the economy.

What is deplorable is that the measures sometimes have nothing to do with the economy. Everyone is in agreement on that point. Even the minister agrees that most of his budget implementation bill has nothing to do with the budget. I do not know why these measures were included in a budget implementation bill. There are several possible theories, but the most likely is that the Conservatives are looking to hide things.

When something is hidden among 460 other clauses, it becomes difficult for the average Canadian who obtains information through the media and the *Debates* of the House of Commons to know everything that is in the bill.

Therefore, although we openly support some of the measures, we are opposed to the bill as a whole, since the majority of the measures are detrimental and the bill is not the right way to go. We are also opposed to the way it was drafted. It is a repeat of many previous budget implementation bills. We have grown accustomed to Conservative government omnibus bills that contain numerous items. It is difficult to summarize them in 10 minutes, as I will attempt to do.

I wanted to mention the problems caused by this process that we have seen in the past and we still see today. I hope that they will have ended by the next parliamentary session, when we come back in the winter of 2015.

This bill is proof that the Conservatives could not care less about Parliament and parliamentarians' input in the legislative process. The Conservative government is using its majority to enact things without consulting Parliament properly. There is a pretense of discussions on amendments in committee, but we know very well that the only goal of the majority Conservative government is to enact as many things as quickly as possible, without debate, by limiting parliamentarians' input in bills as much as possible.

Since these are occasionally technical bills, the expertise on each side of the House of Commons could offer improvements, because the bills introduced by the government are rarely perfect. We could seek a consensus. However, we are not accustomed to a consensus with the Conservatives. That is not the way they govern our country, unfortunately, even if it could be much more effective and beneficial and increase Canadians' confidence in our institutions.

What is the Conservatives' economic record since taking office? I will try to dispel the myth that the Conservatives have been trying to make us believe in for years. They claim to be building a strong economy, but evidence suggests otherwise.

*Government Orders*

•(1235)

Today, our trade deficit has reached more than \$60 billion. This is a negative trade balance of more than \$60 billion. However, when the Conservatives came to power, the trade surplus was \$26 billion. Currently, the trade deficit is over \$60 billion.

I am particularly concerned about the issue of youth unemployment, which is currently at 13.4%, more than double the average national rate. Something is obviously happening in this area, and measures must be taken to try and solve the problem. Clearly, the Conservatives have not addressed this problem in the budget.

There are currently 300,000 additional unemployed Canadians; 375,000 jobs were lost in the manufacturing sector. This was a very active and vibrant sector in Sherbrooke and in the Eastern Townships. However, unfortunately, it has suffered the effects of Conservative mismanagement: 375,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost. This sector offers high-paying jobs and good working conditions. The lack of leadership from the current government on the employment file has likely caused great difficulties and serious challenges for the sector.

It should be noted that the sector faces serious challenges. Unfortunately, the Conservative government has only proposed small measures and is not providing the much-needed help the sector needs. We all agree that, because of today's globalization, our manufacturing sector is in direct competition with emerging countries that have very different conditions within their domestic market, which means that our businesses are competing with businesses from those countries.

Currently, it is important to support these businesses, and to support them in terms of innovation, as innovation plays a key role in helping the manufacturing sector and enabling it to remain competitive with businesses from emerging countries. This means that unique and highly innovative technologies are required to make it possible to compete with these countries, and to create quality jobs with quality work conditions. This is something that is very important for the riding of Sherbrooke.

There are other things about the budget that I want to mention. I will try to sum up and let the people of Sherbrooke know what is in it.

There are changes affecting access to social assistance for refugee claimants. That is an important issue for Sherbrooke. I am very involved in several organizations that support and help newcomers to Canada and refugees. A significant proportion of the immigrant and refugee population is in Sherbrooke. Every year, over half of all newcomers are refugees.

That means they come from troubled countries. Sometimes, these people are escaping dangerous situations in their home countries, even threats to their lives. These people seek refuge in Canada. There is a reason it is called refugee status. Unfortunately, the Conservatives are attacking our refugees, and not for the first time. I think that is utterly deplorable. Many of these people are among society's most vulnerable. We should be doing more to support these people when they come to Canada, to help them manage and to provide financial help.

However, this bill includes a measure that was proposed by a Conservative backbencher: allowing the provinces to impose residency requirements on individuals with no permanent status and to deny basic social assistance to refugee claimants and people who do not have permanent resident status in Canada. This means that if a refugee comes to Sherbrooke, the provincial government could, based on certain criteria, deny that person access to social assistance.

Basically, people might come here without a penny to their names and have to adapt to life in Canada. They might come here in the winter. Just this week, newcomers arrived from Africa. This is their first time in a country as cold as Canada.

•(1240)

It was 10 degrees below zero, and they had nothing. It is very important to support them. Conflicts are ravaging their home countries. We must absolutely help them when they arrive in Canada and not abandon them, as the Conservative government has done time and time again, and as it is doing once again with Bill C-43.

My time is up, so I would be pleased to answer any questions my colleagues might have.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I was particularly moved by the colleague's comments about refugees. I have been involved with refugees in my riding for a long time, and the Conservatives are trying to somehow cast aspersions on those who are seeking a safe place for their families when they come to Canada.

Has the member had the same problem, and not just the attempt by the Conservatives to deny access to social assistance? My riding has lost a lot of the training programs that were directed at refugees because of the federal government's insistence on cutbacks in these areas and underspending its budgets. Therefore, more and more people who have arrived here and are trying to get themselves established are having trouble getting access to the language and skills training courses they need to become productive members of Canadian society, which of course is their goal.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention and his comments. That is indeed a common problem in many areas and many ridings. In my own riding of Sherbrooke, the Conservatives have made cuts that have affected many areas. A number of organizations that support refugees and receive funding from many sources have criticized the fact that the federal government eliminated more and more programs, even though they are essential and have proven to be effective. Those projects have unfortunately not been able to continue.

*Government Orders*

In my riding, the Conservatives have managed to affect immigrants in many other ways. Citizenship and Immigration Canada closed its Sherbrooke office completely and without any explanation. For some time after that, people had to travel to Montreal to take their citizenship test. We are talking about people who often did not have the means to travel to Montreal and stay there for a couple of days. Then they had to go back later in order to swear an oath. That was the case for two years. This situation is starting to change and a few citizenship ceremonies have taken place in Sherbrooke this year.

These numerous examples demonstrate how little support the Conservatives have been giving to immigrants—and they give even less to refugees. It is unfortunate. I hope that in 2015, we will have a government that makes this a priority immediately, in October 2015.

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we have far too short a day, just one day, to debate this bill. I am nonetheless very proud of the official opposition members, especially the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, who told us that no analysis had been done of the fiscal consequences of this bill. There is also the hon. member for Pontiac, who asked who this budget is for, and the hon. member for Sherbrooke, who targeted some measures. That is what it takes to draft a coherent and effective budget. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be what we are getting with the bill before us.

My question for my colleague from Sherbrooke is quite simple: what is missing from this budget? What would he have liked to see for his riding and what issues would he have liked this budget to address?

• (1245)

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:** Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. The preamble is on point, but I will not speak to it because there is not enough time. I will, however, answer my colleague's specific question about what could have been in the budget.

First, the budget should have included tax incentives. I am talking about innovation in the manufacturing sector. For Sherbrooke, this is a very important component that should have been included in the budget. There should have been significant measures to help our manufacturing sector.

I was also interested in the measures having to do with airports, even though they are not necessarily budget-related. The Conservatives decided to change the airports system, but they failed to account for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority designations. However, the Minister of Transport was supposed to be working on this for the past two years. Two years ago she opened the door to the City of Sherbrooke to work on a mechanism to allow non-designated airports to have security staff. However, we have seen nothing in two years and there is nothing in this budget.

Why make a change that affects airports and leave Sherbrooke, its airport and its requests out of it? That is too bad.

[English]

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry.

I thank the House for this opportunity to discuss Bill C-43. The bill would implement important measures announced in economic action plan 2014. The measures in the bill would make a real difference in the lives of hard-working Canadians.

Life for all Canadians has never been better. We are blessed to live in the greatest country on earth, the economic envy of the post-recession world. However, we must also remain where we came from. We can never forget the great recession, the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the downturn that erased \$10 trillion in global market value and eradicated 62 million jobs. The great recession taught us one lesson: we can never take our affluence for granted. We must constantly and relentlessly take action to create jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity, and that is exactly what our government is doing through Canada's economic action plan. We have recovered all the jobs lost during the recession, but far more than that, we have created more than 1.2 million net new jobs since the depth of the downturn. These are overwhelmingly full-time, high-paying private sector jobs. More than that even, more Canadians are working now than at any other time in our history.

All Canadians are wealthier for their work. A recent *New York Times* analysis found that after-tax, middle-class incomes in Canada, substantially behind in 2000, now appear to be higher than in the United States. In fact, the Canadian middle class is among the richest in the developed world.

Yet despite our success, we cannot afford to be complacent. Canada refuses to be mediocre. That is why our measures take action across the economy. There are many measures contained in Bill C-43, but unfortunately I cannot touch on all of them. Today I would like to highlight measures to create jobs and growth and support hard-working Canadian families.

Let me begin with creating jobs. Central to our efforts in this regard is making sure Canadians have the skills they need to get hired. In Canada, apprentices in skill trades do most of their learning during on-the-job paid employment and participate in technical training for periods ranging from six to eight weeks each year. They face a challenge. There can be serious costs to complete the technical training required by their programs. That can include fees, tool and equipment costs, and living expenses. That is why we introduced the Canada apprenticeship loan in the first budget bill. This initiative will help apprentices get registered in Red Seal trades by providing access to over \$100 million in interest-free loans each year to complete their training.

*Government Orders*

The parameters of Canada's apprentice loan program are similar to those of the Canada student loan program. That is why we believe that both programs would benefit from the same tax treatment. Bill C-43 proposes that the Income Tax Act be amended to extend the existing student loan interest credit—a non-refundable tax credit available for interest payments on loans approved under the Canada student loan program and similar provincial programs—to interest paid on the Canada apprentice loan. We are proud to help Canadians gain the skills they need for the jobs they want.

To create even more good, paying jobs, Bill C-43 takes action to lower taxes for small businesses. Small businesses and the entrepreneurs who power them are the lifeblood of our economy. Under our government, Canada is open for business, and in 2013 leapt from sixth to second place in the Bloomberg rankings for the most attractive destination for business. According to KPMG, Canada's total business tax costs are the lowest in the G7, 46% lower than those in the United States. We will not rest on our laurels. Those hard-working entrepreneurs deserve more money in their pockets, money they can use to expand their businesses and create more jobs.

● (1250)

That is why today's legislation includes the new small business job credit. This new credit would effectively lower small business' employment insurance premiums from the current rate of \$1.88 to \$1.60 per \$100 of insurable earnings in 2015 and 2016. Any firm that pays employers' EI premiums equal to or less than \$15,000 in those years, would be eligible for the rebate. That means 90% of the employers making EI contributions in Canada, or about 780,000 in each year, would directly benefit from the credit. There is even better news for business owners. This credit would require no new paperwork. The Canada Revenue Agency would automatically calculate it on a business' return.

Overall, our small business job credit would reduce the EI premiums paid by small businesses by nearly 15%. We expect to save businesses over half a billion dollars over the next two years.

This job credit represents yet more action for our government to lower taxes for Canadians. Today, the overall tax burden is at its lowest level in over 50 years. An average family of four now pays \$3,400 less in taxes as a result of actions taken by our government.

That figure does not even include our latest measures to cut taxes for hard-working Canadian families, and our strong action stands in stark contrast to the Liberals and the NDP. Unlike them, we will not raise taxes for Canadian families, drive the country into deeper deficit, and pile on debt.

There is a simple difference between our Conservative government and the opposition. They want more money in the pockets of Ottawa bureaucrats and less in the pockets of hard-working families. They need to raise taxes to pay for their reckless schemes, and that is not our Conservative approach. We believe in stronger families, more money in the pockets of those who care most about their kids, which is their moms and dads.

This past October we offered hard-working families even more tax relief, tax relief that would help literally every family with children in Canada. We increased and expanded the universal child care benefit, introduced the family tax cut, and raised the child care

deduction expense limits. Before that in October, we announced our intention to double the children's fitness tax credit and make it refundable.

Bill C-43 confirms that our government would double the maximum amount of expenses that may be claimed under the credit from its current limit to \$1,000 for the 2014 tax year and subsequent years. Parents would be able to take advantage of the new \$1,000 maximum limit in the spring of 2015 when they file their tax returns for 2014. Making the credit refundable would increase the benefits to low-income families claiming the credit for 2015 and subsequent years.

This represents even more action by our government to cut taxes for low-income Canadians. In fact, since 2006, we have taken more than a million low-income Canadians off the tax roll entirely.

Let me conclude as I began. We live in fragile economic times. Canadians expect our government not to sit on its laurels. They expect us to take action, to create jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity, not just for this generation but for our children and grandchildren. That is its top priority. Bill C-43 would do precisely that. It would deliver the actions Canadians expect from us and ensure that Canada continues to be the envy of the post-recession world.

As such, I would like to ask all hon. members to support the implementation of this important legislation.

● (1255)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting that the member made reference to how important it is that we create jobs, and yet it was not that long ago when the leader of the Liberal Party, on behalf of the Liberal Party, talked about something that would have done just that, and that was the EI premium break for new hires in Canada.

Independents outside of this realm and apolitical types of organizations, came forward and said that the Liberal idea would create literally tens of thousands of jobs and all regions of this country would benefit.

We compare that or contrast that to the Conservative government EI plan, which in a bizarre way, could potentially even have had people losing their jobs.

If the member is right in his assertion that the government is concerned about creating jobs, why then did it not adopt the Liberal plan that would have created tens of thousands of jobs for our middle class in every region of our country? Why did the Conservatives oppose that plan? It was all about creating jobs, and he just finished talking about how he thinks it is important to create jobs.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure which fantasy world my colleague is working from, but the Liberals' plan would definitely not create the jobs that we would provide here. The jobs are created by small businesses, the hundreds of thousands of small businesses that actually employ real people and create the jobs. Our way of reducing the costs of that by \$0.5 billion is a real incentive for small businesses to create those jobs for the long term.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments, but I was particularly interested when he talked about the government's commitment to create jobs. I just wondered whether or not he really agrees with the Parliamentary Budget Officer, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer has told us that the EI job credit would cost \$0.5 billion and create only 800 jobs. That means it would cost something around \$550,000 per job created. When the member is talking about the government's ability to create jobs, does he think this is really good value for money for taxpayers?

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think any government creates the jobs. It is those to whom we give the tax rebates who actually create the jobs. These are the small business owners who work so hard. They are entrepreneurs who make their ideas come to reality, take them to market, and create the businesses that actually create the jobs. By doing what we are doing, we will actually be doing that and creating many more jobs than this particular statement.

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a fairly simple question, because the issue of pay-to-pay has certainly come up. The New Democrats have been pushing for the elimination of pay-to-pay for years, so this is actually one small element that we like.

However, the Conservatives have gone and given the banks an exemption to this policy, and they have not explained yet why. I wonder if the member would perhaps be able to explain why the Conservatives decided to give the banks a free ride with respect to the ability to charge people to receive paper bills.

• (1300)

**Mr. Joe Daniel:** Mr. Speaker, the banking system is sound. That is why banks are able to function as they do. They do a great service for all of us, including not just at the personal level but for small businesses, et cetera, and will continue to do that. The telecom industry is quite different from the banking system. Telecom companies are actually providing a service that they are already charging for in terms of paper billing, and it is just a way of increasing their profit margin on the backs of all of us individuals.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-43 and the benefits it would have for Canadian consumers and businesses.

Our government has taken decisive action on putting Canadian consumers first. We have cut taxes nearly 180 times, which is saving Canadian families nearly \$3,400 per year on average. Our government has also committed to making it easier for small and medium-size businesses to invest, innovate, grow and create jobs. We are keeping taxes low, freezing EI rates for next year, cutting red tape and returning to balanced budgets. Canada is one of the most

tax-competitive countries and has the best job creation among the G7, and we will continue down that path.

Budget 2014 continued with these commitments, including consumer-focused measures to ensure that Canadian families would get value for their hard-earned dollars and measures that would help small and medium-size businesses to thrive.

Specifically, economic action plan 2014 committed to introduce administrative monetary penalties for the violation of rules in the telecommunications sector; eliminated the practice of pay-to-pay billing so Canadian consumers would not have to pay extra to receive paper bills; clarified the prohibitions against violating Industry Canada's spectrum auction rules to ensure fair and competitive bidding that would achieve the greatest benefit for Canadians; modernized Canada's intellectual property framework to better align it with international practices and reduced the burden for Canadian businesses; and continued to ensure that Canadian businesses and investors would have the market access they needed to succeed in the global economy.

I would like to take a few moments to explain these important initiatives and the benefits they will have for Canadian consumers and small businesses.

Our government is committed to ensuring that companies in the telecom sector play by the rules. That is why we are introducing new enforcement measures that will increase consumer protection in this sector. Bill C-43 would amend the Telecommunications Act and the Radiocommunication Act to provide the CRTC and the industry minister with the authority to impose administrative monetary penalties on companies and individuals that would violate the rules. Companies would face penalties of up to \$10 million and up to \$15 million for subsequent violations. These new measures would provide Canadian regulators with the needed tools to ensure companies would comply with the rules. They would protect Canadian consumers and support a competitive marketplace by promoting regulatory compliance and providing for appropriate remedies should violations occur.

Canadian consumers have been clear that they expect lower prices and better services from telecommunications providers. That is why our government committed to ending unfair pay-to-pay billing practices, putting the interests of Canadian consumers first.

More and more Canadians are finding a new charge appearing on their monthly bills, including their wireless bill. This fee is charged to those who receive their bill by mail. Increasingly, many Canadians are being charged for this new fee by companies from which they have been receiving service for decades.

*Government Orders*

In August, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre published a report in which it estimated that Canadians paid between \$495 million and \$734 million annually in fees for monthly paper bills and statements in the banking and communications services industries.

We believe Canadians should not have to pay more to receive a paper copy of their telephone or wireless bill. As such, economic action plan 2014 commits to ending this unfair practice. Bill C-43 would end these pay-to-pay billing practices by adding an explicit provision to the Telecommunications Act that would prohibit any person who provided telecommunications services from charging a subscriber for a paper bill. Any company that broke the rules would face penalties of up to \$15 million.

Canadians have also been clear that they want their government to take action to ensure the provision of more choice, lower prices and better service in Canada's wireless sector. I am proud to note that our government has consistently introduced measures to support a healthy, robust and competitive wireless industry.

For instance, we implemented a use it or lose it policy to ensure that wireless companies that did not use their spectrum licences would lose them. We have been taking important steps to increase the amount of wireless spectrum available to provide Canadians with the access they need on the devices they choose.

In January, the government unveiled details of the 2,500 megahertz auction, which would benefit Canadians in urban and rural areas. In February, we announced the results of the 700 megahertz auction, the most successful auction of spectrum in Canadian history, generating roughly \$5.3 billion in revenue for taxpayers and putting high-quality spectrum in the hands of at least four wireless providers in each region of Canada.

• (1305)

Bill C-43 would further ensure that spectrum auctions would be conducted in a fair and transparent manner, in accordance with rules of conduct, to the benefit of all Canadians. In particular, the bill would amend the Radiocommunication Act to require that any person who would be subject to the spectrum auction rules must comply with those rules or risk the imposition of an administrative monetary penalty of up to \$15 million.

These measures would increase regulatory compliance in the wireless sector and ensure that Canadian consumers would benefit from better service.

Our government also understands that reducing red tape for small and medium-sized businesses is central to Canada's economic growth. In budget 2014, our government committed to modernizing Canada's intellectual property framework by ratifying five international treaties. Earlier this year, our government passed the first three of the treaties relating to trademarks, the Madrid protocol, the Singapore treaty, and the Nice agreement.

Bill C-43 proposes amendments to the Patent Act and the industrial design act to ratify and accede to the remaining two treaties, the patent law treaty and the Geneva act of the Hague agreement.

Overall, the amendments in Bill C-43 would harmonize Canada's intellectual property regime with international practices, standardiz-

ing and simplifying administrative processes to lower costs and reduce red tape for small businesses. In particular, these amendments would allow a company to file for industrial design protection in multiple countries through one single application, filed in one language and for one fee. The resulting administrative and financial savings to Canadian businesses would be very significant.

The amendments would also harmonize administrative aspects of Canada's patent regime with international standards. This would result in a simpler application process and reduce the risk of errors.

Modernizing Canada's intellectual property regime and bringing it in line with international standards will continue the work to foster an environment in which businesses can grow and succeed in the global economy. These measures will increase Canada's openness to trade and investment and further reduce barriers to the international flow of goods and services.

Our government is also committed to making it easier for small and medium-sized businesses to invest, innovate, grow and create jobs. Bill C-43 contains updates to the Business Development Bank of Canada, which will help small and medium-sized businesses grow and succeed in an increasingly competitive and global environment.

Amendments to the Business Development Bank of Canada would help provide even more flexibility to SMEs that wish to grow beyond our borders. Changes would also establish a wider variety of consulting services for SMEs to access and help the BDC better leverage partnerships with third party organizations to improve its reach into the business community.

The BDC is the only bank in Canada solely dedicated to entrepreneurs and the legislative amendments in Bill C-43 would allow the BDC to expand its support for SMEs.

In conclusion, Bill C-43 proposes amendments that fulfill a number of the government's commitments to a stronger and more prosperous Canada. These initiatives, along with the other measures contained in the bill, will have significant benefits for Canadian consumers, families and small businesses.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this member the same question I previously asked the member for Don Valley East

When the Conservatives talked about enabling small businesses to create jobs, they came up with the EI job credit that the Parliamentary Budget Officer said would cost half a billion dollars and create only 800 jobs. That means the government is putting out money to small businesses at a rate of \$550,000 per job created.

*Government Orders*

Does he really think this is good value for money for taxpayers? Why was this program not run by the Department of Finance or the Department of Employment and Social Development and instead was allowed to be written by a lobbyist?

● (1310)

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the hon. member would ask a question regarding EI. I wonder if the hon. member has done any research into the NDP plan to introduce a 45-day work year, supported by the Liberal Party. It would increase costs dramatically for Canadian businesses and Canadian employees.

Our government has taken measures over the years that have resulted in an increase of 1.2 million net new jobs in the country, the vast majority of which are full time and in the private sector. The hon. member's party has voted against those measures every step of the way.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting when we hear in the media that the government will take action on the price gap between U.S. and Canadian merchandise. Coincidence has it that here we are in one of the greatest consumer spending times in the month of December and the government starts waving this thing, saying that it is going to narrow the gap.

The reality is that the government has done absolutely nothing to narrow that gap since it has been in government. There has not been any tangible evidence whatsoever that the government has been successful in doing that. Many would say that it will not be successful.

Could the member tell Canadian consumers exactly how the government will narrow the gap between U.S. and Canadian prices for consumer spending? Could he be very specific on how the government will do it, and put something on the table for us to look at? Could he tell us the law?

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, that is another interesting question from the Liberal Party. I would hope that, as we have the debate on this new legislation, the hon. member will read it and support it as it makes an impact on Canadian consumers in a positive way.

It would be unlike when the Liberal Party opposed measures in legislation we introduced over the course of time that had a significant impact on the prices in the wireless sector, for example, with Canadians paying about 20% less than they were paying in the past. It opposed those measures every step of the way.

It would be unlike when we have introduced measures that have been very positive for Canadian consumers, which have resulted in taxes coming down for an average family of about \$3,400 every year and, again, the Liberals have opposed those measures every step of the way.

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will follow up on my colleague's question, because the parliamentary secretary never actually answered the question about whether the Conservatives thought it was a good idea to be spending a half a billion dollars to create 800 jobs.

The more important question is this. Why did the Department of Finance not do its own research into the benefits of that program, and left it to the lobbyists to decide for it?

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member comes from a party that has proposed a 45-day work year policy in relation to EI. The NDP policies would drastically increase costs for both businesses and consumers. Every expert in the country who looks at its policy would say that it is the case and would back that up.

We hope the hon. member will look honestly at Conservative policies, which have created 1.2 million net new jobs in our country. The vast majority of those are in the private sector and are full-time. Hopefully, when he takes an honest look at Conservative policies and legislation as it comes before the House, he will vote according to his conscience and with the evidence on those things, instead of doing what his whip tells him to do.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-43. This is the 77th time the government has moved a time allocation motion. This time allocation motion is on a budget bill, which is very important. The government gave us two days to debate the bill at report stage and one day, today, for third reading stage. This is how much time we have had in Parliament to debate a bill that is more than 460 pages long, has more than 400 clauses and will amend a dozen of our country's laws.

We want to hold an intelligent debate on a budget that matters to Canadians. Ten minutes go by quickly, but I cannot ignore the comments made by our Conservative colleague, who said that the NDP wants to introduce a 45-day work year. Every time we ask a question about employment insurance, the government says that the NDP wants everyone to work only 45 days a year.

According to *The Globe and Mail*, the Minister of Employment and Social Development said that he would have to hire more than 400 employees to answer calls from seniors and workers, as a result of delays in processing employment insurance, old age security and guaranteed income supplement payments.

This same government wants to reduce employers' EI premiums by half a billion dollars, telling us that this will create jobs in Canada. However, Ms. Doucet, who runs a Christmas wreath company in a town in my riding, said that the EI reform was discouraging seasonal workers.

The government says that these cuts are justified. It says it wants to create jobs and help people work instead of being unemployed. The government thinks workers are lazy slackers. This is not the first time that I have criticized the government's actions in the House, and it will not be the last.

People have to wait up to 25 weeks to get their guaranteed income supplement, which helps the most vulnerable members of our society. I am talking about seniors whose only pension is old age security and who need a supplement. Can a person really live on \$543 a month? These people are being made to wait 25 weeks.

*Government Orders*

This week and last week, the Minister of Employment and Social Development had the nerve to say that he had asked some Social Security Tribunal officers who were working on employment insurance files to work on old age security and guaranteed income supplement files. However, the tribunal already has a six-month backlog of employment insurance files.

Yesterday and today, the minister acknowledged this and said that 400 people would be hired. However, it takes 12 to 18 months to train a person on how to process an employment insurance or old age security file.

• (1315)

The government has even admitted that Service Canada offices received 10,000 complaints. The government closed offices and cut front-line staff.

In Pleasantville, Newfoundland and Labrador, 100 to 150 people are visiting the employment insurance office because they cannot reach anyone by telephone. Even if the government hired 400 people tomorrow morning to work at Service Canada, they would not be answering the telephone. The Conservatives have created a mess for Canadians. The government should be ashamed of tampering with a program and a responsibility they have toward seniors and workers, and they should be ashamed of laughing at them.

Our colleague in the House of Commons from Madawaska—Restigouche said the following in the newspapers. I will not name the MP that he quoted, but it appears he is from Acadie—Bathurst. The member for Madawaska—Restigouche said:

The campaign of terror waged by [the member for Acadie—Bathurst] and company did not achieve the expected results. They scared people, and everyone across the region sees that.

Yes, people in that region clearly see that they cannot get employment insurance benefits. They see that they have to wait six months for the Social Security Tribunal to hear their case. In my riding, seniors see that they cannot get the guaranteed income supplement and they have to live on \$553 a month. People see that they need to apply for welfare.

Rather than allowing MPs in the House to express their views, as in a democratic country, on Bill C-43, the Conservatives have imposed a time allocation motion so that we can only debate it for one day. This is shameful.

It is shameful to hear a government tell Canadians that the NDP is proposing, among other things, that people should work only 45 days a year. It is shameful that the government thinks that workers are lazy slackers. In fact, this is what they are actually saying in their speeches.

It is completely unacceptable for men and women who have worked all their lives and who want to retire. This is the same government that increased the retirement age from 65 to 67.

Yes, I am proud of belonging to the NDP and to say that we are going to bring back 65 as the age of eligibility to old age security. Yes, I am proud to say that I am with the NDP and not with the Conservatives who persecute workers, seniors and ordinary Canadians. They are going to cut \$36 billion from the health care

sector by 2017. Yes, I am proud of the NDP, which has said that this \$36 billion is going to be returned to the health care sector.

We hope that Canadians are aware of what the Conservatives will do, if they ever get back into power.

The Conservatives are attacking the poorest and the most vulnerable people in our society. It is a shameful way to treat people who are just reaching retirement age after working all their lives.

This is the kind of thing that this bill does, in addition to decreasing contributions from employers. This is not something that will create 800,000 jobs, as the government would have us believe.

What do our entrepreneurs do when the Conservatives make cuts to employment insurance for seasonal workers? They go west, but that is artificial. Our national economy cannot be based on just one element, that is, only on oil wells.

The price of oil is going down. If there are layoffs in western Canada, what will happen to all the people who take the plane every week to go to jobs out west? The Conservatives boast about creating jobs, but those jobs have only been created in one place because the price of oil was going up. Jobs were created out west, but not here at home, in the Atlantic region, nor in the rural areas of the country. If they want people to stop needing employment insurance, they have to create jobs. This is absolutely not what is in this budget. The Conservatives should be ashamed of how they are leading the country.

• (1320)

It is to be hoped that Canadians will remember this when the next elections are held and that they will kick them out once and for all or for a long time.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the member's comments regarding the age of retirement, because it is an important issue. I can say from my personal perspective in Winnipeg North that I have not often seen such a reaction to an issue of importance. People have been signing petitions and expressing their concern. They want the government to change its policy.

Shortly after the government introduced this change, the Liberal Party and the New Democrats, from what I understand, indicated that they would not support increasing the age of retirement from 65 to 67. I know that the leader of the Liberal Party has been very clear that going from 65 to 67 was bad, unnecessary, and unwarranted. In fact, it was a crisis situation that the government itself created back when the Prime Minister was overseas and came up with the idea to change the retirement age from 65 to 67.

My question for the member is this: would he not agree that there is going to be an opportunity after the next election for us to change that policy and keep the age of retirement at 65 for individuals who want to collect OAS? At the end of the day, I believe a vast majority of Canadians support what we are talking about, keeping it at age 65.

*Government Orders*

•(1325)

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP and the party have been very clear that the retirement age of 67 that the Conservative government has put in place will go back to 65. We are proud of that, because people who are working for big companies and the government and have pension plans will still be able to retire when they have 30 or 40 years of service.

However, there are people who have worked for many years for different companies who do not have pension plans at age 65. People will agree with me when I say that I do not see the majority of people who work in fish plants being able to work until the age of 67. They have a hard time working until age 65. The Conservative government has put the burden on the provinces, because people will end up on welfare. Instead of being on welfare from the age of 61 to 65, they will be on welfare until the age of 67.

The cost burden will go to the provinces, and it is going to be a disaster for all provinces across this country when this change takes place. I am proud that New Democrats will not do that when we become government in 2015.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst for his excellent speech. He is still just as passionate as ever. I enjoy hearing him speak every time.

My colleague has put his finger on some of the problem areas in this budget. I am talking about support for the regions. He spoke about employment insurance, the fishery, pensions and the exodus of young people. Indeed, young people are leaving their communities to work elsewhere, a situation that I personally find tragic.

I would like my colleague to comment on the other shortcomings of the budget in terms of providing both social and economic support to the regions.

**Mr. Yvon Godin:** Mr. Speaker, from an economic perspective, what the government should have done in the budget was to transfer funds to agencies such as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, ACOA, or the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, so that economic development can be carried out locally, in our regions. This is something that we need.

Secondary and tertiary processing of our natural resources is necessary. Natural resources from our regions are shipped to other countries where they are processed and then sold back to us. Why could we not do the processing ourselves? Both the community and the industry would benefit from this kind of economic development. In fact, it would be profitable for everyone.

When we discuss these matters with business people in our regions, they tell us that all this red tape is an obstacle to development. This is how they see things. Regarding infrastructure investment, we can talk about ports and airports. As for our region, I can mention the port of Belledune and the Bathurst airport. How many times have we asked for money for the airport?

Investment in infrastructure is the kind of action that is needed for economic development in our regions. This is not something that is

in the budget. The budget should contain measures that are designed to help our regions.

•(1330)

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is always very difficult to speak after my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst, but someone must do it, so I will look upon the task as a challenge.

I am pleased to be able to speak about this bill, but another gag order has been imposed, and we only have one day to debate the bill at this stage, which is very disappointing.

This is another omnibus budget implementation bill. This is the fifth time that an omnibus budget bill has been introduced. The first time, we thought that it was outrageous to put so many things in a huge document that was very difficult for my constituents and people in general to understand. Everything must be considered at the same time. We hoped that it would never happen again in Parliament.

Unfortunately, this is the fifth time that an omnibus budget implementation bill has been introduced. I would like to point out that Parliament has been forced to deal with a total of 2,190 pages of omnibus bills because of the Conservatives' disregard for the legislative process. This omnibus bill is 460 pages long and contains over 400 clauses. It amends a dozen laws, and the debate is being rushed.

I dare any Canadian who is well versed in politics to try and follow what is going on in Parliament and every law that is being amended. In a large 460-page document, it is very difficult for people to see what is being done. There is so much content.

We have found that it is part of a Conservative ploy to hide a lot of changes in a huge document and then say afterwards that we voted against them. In fact, we vote against them because this enormous document contains too much. There may be good things in it, but the good things are packed in with a lot of bad things. The way they operate is therefore highly problematic.

On that note, let us get to the heart of the matter and talk about the content. Employment is an extremely important aspect of the economy. All members of the House will admit that it is probably the priority; we must create jobs in Canada and ensure that people are not unemployed.

However, 300,000 people have become unemployed since the last recession, and we need to find jobs to replace the 400,000 manufacturing jobs lost. That is huge. That is 700,000 people without a job. I am very concerned about this. Last summer, I did a lot of door-to-door campaigning, and I was shocked to see how many people in their late fifties and early sixties had lost their jobs in manufacturing. Unfortunately, no one wanted to hire them. Even when they had training in another field, they had applied for jobs and they were willing to accept almost any job, they were unable to find work and they had exhausted their retirement fund. What is in store for them?

*Government Orders*

In addition, the age of eligibility for Old Age Security is about to be raised to 67. I think we are headed in the wrong direction, and several of my constituents agree. The fact that they cannot find work despite their best efforts is very worrisome for these people who are sitting at home, about to lose their homes.

In this omnibus bill, the Conservatives proposed a tax credit as a solution, which the Parliamentary Budget Officer deemed a huge expense and a waste of resources. He did not have nice things to say about this. The employment tax credit will cost the government \$550 million, which will be drawn from the employment insurance fund to create 800 jobs. It does not take a rocket scientist to understand that this is a huge expense for very little return.

To add insult to injury, the Minister of Finance did not even analyze the program before going ahead with it. This is unacceptable. The Minister of Finance is there for a reason.

• (1335)

He is supposed to scrutinize spending and to assess the programs the government wants to implement. An assessment must be carried out. It is the least we can expect. We are about to vote on a bill that has not even been properly assessed by the Minister of Finance. I think Canadians have a major problem with that, especially since we know that only 800 jobs will be created at a cost of \$550 million.

What we have to do is address recurring youth unemployment and structural youth underemployment. The unemployment rate for young people who are looking for jobs but unable to find one is 13.4%. This is a really high unemployment rate for this important segment of the population. These are people who want to work and who have a great deal of knowledge, but unfortunately are unable to find a job. However, at the same time, they are being told to donate their time as interns.

That is not what we can call a real economic plan. A real economic plan, a real budget, would provide for measures to put young people to work. A real economic plan would make proposals like those of the NDP to create a tax credit that will specifically encourage employers to hire young workers. These are the types of projects that will truly make a difference.

There are many other elements missing from this bill. The Conservatives claim to want to help consumers; they have said it over and over again. They eliminated the \$2 fee for receiving paper invoices from telecommunications companies, but they neglected to include bank statements. Does this measure really include all of the bills that people receive? Definitely not. The government also ignored the question of establishing regulations governing ATMs, which sometimes charge \$4 to \$5 per transaction. That is money that could be in the pockets of Canadian families. Considering that Canadian household debt is at 166% of their income, we should all be working together to lower expenses for families on little things like this. The government needs to establish a regulatory framework that is not just voluntary but mandatory, so that it can deal with these fees, which are hurting families. There is nothing about that in this bill.

As my colleagues mentioned, the government decided to go forward with its plan to increase the retirement age to 67, despite strong public outcry. There is nothing about this in the bill.

We would also like clarification of the concept of net benefit to Canada. We are often faced with this concept, but the definition is very vague. Important trade deals with foreign companies that want to buy our Canadian resources or companies have been approved, but the concept of net benefit remains vague. Why not work on clarifying what net benefit to Canada means? We have seen situations where it was not clear at all. If we want to ensure that there will be economic benefits or spinoffs for Canadians and the economy, it is important to clarify what a net benefit is. However, the government is not doing that.

A number of my colleagues and I participated in the fundraising drive on the weekend. The need is truly great. Use of food banks in Canada has increased by 25%. People need help. They are turning to their government for help. What is it doing? It is attacking the most vulnerable people in our society. Instead of giving them a hand, it is cutting programs that help them and turning its back on them. The government is pretending that they do not exist and is not helping them.

That is not why I was elected. I was elected to make a difference and to help these people. That is what I will do by voting against Bill C-43.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the member comment with respect to trade. She made reference to net benefits and wants further explanation.

One of the nice things about the issue of the trade is that there is a significant difference in the way in which the Liberal and New Democratic parties deal with trade. In principle, the Liberal Party supports the need for trade. For example, we see the trade agreement with the European Union as a positive step, as it has the potential to create many jobs here in Canada and to add valuable jobs.

Just the other day the leader of that member's party was in Paris, of all places, being very critical of the trade agreement, thereby giving the impression overseas that the NDP does not support the trade agreement with Europe.

I wonder what she believes the NDP is today. What would the leader be saying here in Canada? Does the NDP support the trade agreement with Europe?

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Charmaine Borg:** Mr. Speaker, I think that the Liberal member may have misunderstood. Yes, it is good to develop trade with other countries, but only when there are clear advantages and benefits for Canada. That is what I was saying earlier.

*Government Orders*

At present, the net benefit remains very elusive. We are not going to give other countries a blank cheque when we sign an agreement. We are not going to say that we support all free trade agreements and sign blank cheques all around without ensuring that this trade will really be beneficial for Canadians. We need to make sure that it will create jobs here and strengthen our economic sectors. That is crucial. It is also imperative that we know what sort of government we are doing business with when we sign a free trade agreement. There was a free trade agreement with Honduras, which has an extremely dubious human rights record.

We have to look at the details and assess all the proposals and make sure that there will be real benefits for Canada. In the case of the free trade agreement with Europe, some points have been raised but we have not yet seen the full text. I am sorry, but I do not feel comfortable signing a blank cheque without knowing the details of the agreement.

**Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her dynamic speech. A country's budget is meant to provide direction. It sets out the government's main priorities. Based on what I have seen and heard, and my colleague eloquently illustrated this, the government is out to get votes. It is bringing in piecemeal measures, hoping that maybe some of them will stick. There is some wishful thinking going on here.

I have a question for my colleague. Since she spoke about issues such as youth unemployment, for which she is our party's critic, and since she has an interest in privacy matters, what directions would she like to have seen in this budget? What does she think is missing?

**Ms. Charmaine Borg:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things missing from this budget. I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

As I explained, the budget has no real strategy for creating jobs, especially for young people. It does not contain any measures to encourage employers to hire young workers. The youth unemployment rate is 13.4%, which is very worrisome. I think everyone is concerned about that, including parents who see their children struggling to find work.

I would also like to have seen the age of eligibility for old age security lowered, because 67 is not realistic, especially for sectors in which people do manual labour. That is hard work. Forcing people to continue to work until the age of 67 is an attack on the most vulnerable members of society and people whose health is already compromised.

There are all kinds of other things. There is no real plan to help families and make life more affordable, such as targeting ATM fees, for example. There are many things the government should have done to give families some help, as they struggle more and more. That is where the Conservatives fell short.

• (1345)

[*English*]

**Mr. Erin O'Toole (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Transport.

I am pleased to rise on Bill C-43, economic action plan 2014 act, no. 2. In my preparation for these remarks, I was struck by the

importance of the date on which I am speaking. I am speaking for the second time on the budget from earlier this year. I spoke to it for the first time in this House on April 4. In my remarks, I praised the work of the late Jim Flaherty, because at that time, he had moved from being our long-serving Minister of Finance to being the MP for Whitby—Oshawa. That was on April 4. Sadly, six days later, we lost our friend Jim. I think this House and all Canadians recognize that what we are debating today is his last budget and his gift to Canada of securing our economic future.

When I was reviewing my remarks, I realized that today is the day the new member for Whitby—Oshawa, and since she has not yet taken her seat, I believe I can say that her name is Pat Perkins, will be taking her seat, in about an hour. She will be taking her seat as a proud Conservative caucus member and as a former mayor of Whitby who has worked very passionately with people like Jim Flaherty and our Prime Minister and with this government.

Sometimes these significant dates and the tremendous public service of people like Jim and Pat need to be recognized in this House.

In my remarks given in this place on April 4, I highlighted several parts of the budget, particularly some measures for small and medium-sized enterprises; research and development innovation, such as at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology; trade and some of our trade work; and our reinvestment in the Last Post Fund for veterans, something the Legion had been asking for, which would extend the century-long work of the Last Post Fund to modern-day veterans, veterans post-Korean War, who may have been indigent at the time they passed.

I think all members in this House are well served by the teams we have in our ridings. Today is also important to speak because I am fortunate to have Sheryl, Stacy, and Danielle from my riding here today in Ottawa at training. Without people like that serving our constituents, we would not be able to give the service we need to Canadians.

My remarks today are going to focus on some different parts of the budget and related amendments that are important to Canada and our prosperity. I want to focus on why some of these measures are here. Often my friends in the NDP like to talk about how many pages a budget implementation act has but do not actually read the pages.

We are looking at one of the most sophisticated economies in the world. With tax measures, measures to promote growth and job creation, and listening to families and promoting safe communities, there are going to be consequential regulations and amendments as part of that. If we dive into them, we can see that they actually echo the demands of Canadians.

*Government Orders*

The child fitness tax credit has been remarkably popular. It supports healthy activity for our young people and helps families bridge that gap as the costs of these sports and physical activities have gone up. This bill will implement our doubling of that fitness tax credit and will make it refundable as of next year.

I was very proud that the Prime Minister chose Whitby to make this announcement and that we were part of it in the Abilities Centre. It is a direct measure that has been benefiting families. We are extending it and making it better.

Consumers, particularly seniors in my riding, have asked me countless times why they have to pay to pay. They want to know why they have to pay for a paper bill if they want to get a paper bill. That provision is in here as a consumer measure. It is focused on giving choices to consumers, those who either pay online or the traditional way. It is also part of our multi-year project of making the wireless sector more competitive and more accountable.

There are also measures in this bill that will see administrative monetary penalties added to the Wireless Code and that will continue our work to bring cellphone costs down for Canadian families and businesses.

● (1350)

We see direct input from charities in this budget, building on the exceptional work done in the previous budget on the introduction of the first-time donor's super credit that encouraged Canadians to support the charitable sector. We would build on that to allow charitable groups, non-profits, and church groups to fund-raise and do their activities by computer, which would allow them to do more modern fundraising. We have been listening to these charities and acting.

We see NGOs' input reflected in here. I remember meeting Kady Séguin, from Publish What You Pay, in my extractive-sector outreach. Our G8 commitment, made by the Prime Minister in Scotland, to make resource companies around the world publish their payments in those countries is in here. That is listening. That is building on the work some of those NGOs are doing.

Business owners, particularly small-business owners, will see their demands in here, expressed through a number of groups, including CFIB. Our small business job credit, which would see a benefit for 90% of EI-dues-paying employers, would drop their EI payroll taxes by up to 15%, not only securing the jobs of today but building them for tomorrow. That is listening. That is in here.

We have heard from victims advocates across the country. The victims bill of rights is in this budget implementation bill. As well, there is something that many, including my friend, the leader of the Green Party, have advocated for. She has been advocating for the DNA missing persons database to try to give closure to some of these families. Victims groups have asked for that investment in the DNA data bank. That is in here. That is listening to victims. That is listening to groups across the country.

It is also an opportunity for small groups of residents, like those in my riding, to have an impact. When I was elected in 2012, I met with a group of people who were upset by some of the development around a small aerodrome in Greenbank. Large quantities of fill were being brought in. There was the expectation that because it was an

aerodrome, there was no regulation permitted by the local and provincial levels of government. That was not the case. We have clarified that. Operations like the fill operation will only attract the federal jurisdiction if they have a direct impact on aeronautics. However, clearly, there is a need to clarify this area, so there is another provision. We have listened. A number of us have advocated amendments to the Aeronautics Act that would clarify the ability of the minister to set regulations on the development of these aerodromes, small ones scattered throughout the country, and to make regulations with respect to consultations on the development of these aerodromes.

The great thing about a budget that will bring Canada to a balanced budget in the next year, spending in priority areas, and offering tax relief to groups like families and small businesses is that in many ways, it goes back to my first remarks that the legacy of our friend Jim Flaherty will live on through the secure economy he has provided. Budgets like this one make sure that our economic fundamentals are sound.

It takes prudent management. Budgets do not balance themselves. It takes setting priorities. It takes establishing a plan. It takes building an environment friendly to job creation, innovation, and growth.

This will mark a turning point. Canada not only stands tall with our success domestically but serves as a beacon to our G7 counterparts. Canada will be the first G7 nation, for many years, to have a balanced budget. What is more impressive is that we balanced that budget while creating jobs, spending in priority areas, like record health transfers to provinces like mine, Ontario, and controlling the overall pace of the growth of government, recognizing that small businesses, families, and seniors cannot be leaned on time and again just for the sake of growing every department of government and the size and scope of government.

It is with a mixture of sadness and joy that I recognize that Mr. Flaherty's legacy will be executed through this final budget, which will pass this House and secure a strong future for Canada.

● (1355)

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about the infamous fitness tax credit. The fact is that Canadian youth is getting a failing grade when it comes to physical activity, and this tax credit has not been working.

The fact is, I asked an order paper question a couple of months ago to find out whether the government had actually done any studies on the effectiveness of this policy. The answer was no, there had not been any studies, so I do not understand why Conservatives stand up all the time and say how effective it is.

Some folks who did do studies, however, such as the Parliamentary Budget Officer, showed us that the families who are benefiting from this tax credit are the ones who make the most money, that top tier. Those are families where the youth are already participating in sports anyway.

If we really want to help our youth get more active, we need to put in place measures that will actually help all families participate. The fact of the matter is that nothing the government has put forward in the last few years has done anything to improve the rate of physical inactivity among youth, and this policy is just another example of that.

I wonder if the member would maybe like to take the opportunity to correct the record, since his government actually has not studied the effectiveness of this policy.

**Mr. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I enjoy this period called questions and comments after speeches in the House. My friend has demonstrated the comment portion, because there was really no question there.

I will tell him, and he may find it interesting, that the government consulted with an expert before implementing this child tax credit. It met with a world-class pediatrician, with an MBA in public policy expertise, to design this program. Minister Flaherty worked directly with that person in the development of this exceptional program that not only promotes fitness but gives families a little break so that they do not hesitate about signing their kids up for dance, hockey, and soccer. The exceptional person who advised the minister got so excited by the public policy work she did, she is now the Minister of Labour in this government.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was a little surprised that my colleague opposite started out his speech with a reference to government support for the Last Post Fund, because we served together on the veterans committee at the time the contribution to the Last Post Fund was enhanced.

Part of that is good news. The amount to go to the families of deceased veterans doubled. The sinister part of it, and the member would know this very well, is that the government budgeted \$65 million for the Last Post Fund that it knew it could not and would not spend.

Will the member admit that the money allocated for the Last Post Fund was never spent, and will he advise us of how much of it lapsed and was therefore applied to the deficit, or is it sort of like the \$200 million for mental health? Will it be paid out over the next 50 years?

**Mr. Erin O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed serving with my friend from Charlottetown on that committee. We talked quite a bit about the Last Post Fund. I am glad his colleague from Guelph is here in the House today.

### *Statements by Members*

This is the way budgeting works. We have to set aside revenue that we forecast will be used. It is not exactly about using everything up in the timeframe. It is about that estimate or that allocation.

When it comes to the Last Post Fund, this is a fund Canadians should understand exists only for veterans who fall through the cracks. They have an estate of \$12,000 or less, not including their house or car. It is a small subset of Canadians. It is a fair amount. It was an amount the Liberal government set, actually.

Forecasting how many veterans will fall into those narrow parameters is very difficult. On an accrual accounting basis, once a statutory benefit has been created, enough funds have to be set aside to meet the anticipated demand. It is the same thing for the estimates. We look at the statutory entitlement and then the budgetary entitlement and estimate our spending for the year.

I think members opposite actually know this, but they prefer to play games rather than talk about the facts.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

### FORCES ET DÉMOCRATIE

**Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD):** Mr. Speaker, people have become extremely cynical when it comes to politics, and we must recognize that. It is our responsibility to question how we do things. Thirty-eight per cent of people no longer vote. Political parties reign supreme and have forgotten what is important, the reason why we are here, and that is Canadians. Not taxpayers or voters, but Canadians.

The parties cultivate the myth that this is just the way politics works. However, that is not true. The confrontational attitude, the party line and pettiness have become commonplace. Our democracy is not just ailing, it has become a farce.

All members, as individuals, agree that this type of behaviour has no place in the House of Commons. However, the parties, which control that dynamic, do everything in their power to prevent change.

In the last session of Parliament, Forces et Démocratie became a party. We are proud of the motion we brought forward that seeks to give all MPs back their right, or rather their duty, to speak. We believe that it is imperative that we change this dynamic. All MPs must understand the power they hold as individuals to collectively change things.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### MEMBER FOR MISSISSAUGA SOUTH

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the year comes to a close, allow me to highlight a few initiatives I have worked on in Ottawa this year.

*Statements by Members*

On the status of women committee, we completed a study on eating disorders that has already generated useful discussion and action.

In March, as chair of the special committee on violence against indigenous women, I was honoured to table a report with recommendations for our government about missing and murdered aboriginal women.

In July, I sat on the justice committee, which studied Bill C-36, the new prostitution bill. Protecting the many victims is the priority of this new legislation, which came into effect very recently.

This fall, I was delighted to rejoin the House environment committee as well as the Board of Internal Economy, which oversees all financial and administrative matters of the House of Commons, including security after the October 22 attack.

I also tabled a private member's motion that addresses an immigration regulation loophole on proxy telephone, fax, or Internet marriages. I have been overwhelmed by the positive response to it and I am looking forward to the vote tomorrow.

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**COMMUNITY OF WEST NIPISSING**

**Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday I participated in my seventh Parade of Lights in Sturgeon Falls in the municipality of West Nipissing. What fun. Thanks to Santa's community elves, hundreds of children enjoyed the candies and juice and the magic of Christmas. This community of 13,000 residents has a parade with 100 floats, longer than parades in much bigger cities.

Sturgeon Falls is one of the most bilingual communities in Canada, and perhaps the most bilingual. Two cultures and two languages are in harmony, working, living, and playing side by side.

[*Translation*]

The Parade of Lights brings attention to this wonderful area, which has an extraordinary sense of community spirit. The West Nipissing fire service's Christmas telethon recently raised \$32,600 to help families. Approximately 500 seniors will attend the annual Christmas dinner tomorrow.

[*English*]

There is the Kid's Safe Halloween, the Farm to Fork dinner celebrating our local farmers, and so much more.

[*Translation*]

West Nipissing, joie de vivre, you make us proud.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today and speak to our government's strong record on health care.

Since we formed government, health transfers have increased by almost 60% under our Conservative leadership. In 2014-15, the

Government of Ontario alone will receive \$19.2 billion through major transfers, an increase of \$8.3 billion from 2005-06.

Canada also has the highest number of physicians working than ever before. Last year, Canada had the most physicians per capita in its history, with over 77,000 doctors.

Doctors educated abroad represent over 25% of the doctors who entered the workforce in 2013. The word is out: Canada is one of the top destinations in the world to practise medicine.

To all my constituents in Northumberland—Quinte West, merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

\* \* \*

**LESLIE ARMOUR**

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 1 our community lost one of its better minds when Professor Leslie Armour passed away.

After obtaining a Ph.D. at the University of London in 1956, he taught at many universities and held chairs in philosophy at the Dominican University College, Saint Paul University, and the University of Ottawa, where, in 1996, he became professor emeritus.

A fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Dr. Armour had a distinguished career as a philosopher and commentator on social economics. Indeed, since 2004 he had been editor of the *International Journal of Social Economics*. The *Canadian Encyclopedia* said of him, "Like many Canadians foremost in their fields, his work is better known abroad than at home."

Next spring his family will host a memorial service to celebrate his life. I hope to be there, and in the meantime I will endeavour to read his last book, *Inference and Persuasion: An Introduction to Logic and Critical Reasoning*. Now, however, our condolences go to his grandchildren; to his children, Carol, Adriane, and Julian; and to his wife, Diana.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

**CHRISTMAS FUND BROADCAST IN OWEN SOUND**

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to congratulate the sponsors and organizers of the 75th anniversary of the CFOS-*Sun Times* Christmas Fund Broadcast in Owen Sound.

The Christmas Fund Broadcast began in December of 1940 and was created to raise funds for food baskets that were to be distributed to local families for the holidays. CFOS and the *Sun Times* began this tradition and still support it after 75 years. This year more than \$11,000 of the total funds raised will support The Hospital Campaign to improve cancer care and heart health treatment at hospitals through Grey Bruce Health Services, while the remaining funds will support 21 local charities.

Hundreds of people performed during the seven-hour broadcast, which brought in over \$17,000. The fund is still receiving donations and is on track to reach its goal of \$30,000.

I would like to congratulate and thank both CFOS and the *Sun Times* on their tremendous effort to support our local community. This is truly what Christmas is all about.

A merry Christmas to all.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### JEAN-RENÉ MICHAUD

**Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Gilles Michaud of Kamouraska is one of those people who gives selflessly to improve the lives of people in his community. He worked in the health care system. Among other things, he worked hard as the president of a community futures development corporation in his RCM.

Sometimes, fate reserves the worst ordeals for the best of us. On Wednesday, December 3, when I heard that Jean-René Michaud, the son of Gilles Michaud, had been shot several times, my first thought was how unfair that was. Jean-René Michaud is an RCMP officer based in Kamloops. He was shot during a routine operation that went terribly wrong.

This incident is a reminder that peace officers take risks every day to keep us safe and that we owe them so much.

On behalf of all members of the House, allow me to express our gratitude to Officer Michaud, who paid a heavy price for stopping an individual who happened to have a long rap sheet. Our thoughts are with Mr. Michaud's family members and their loved ones. We hope that Jean-René's health will continue to improve and that he will return to normal life as soon as possible.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### CHRISTMAS GIVING IN ELMWOOD—TRANSCONA

**Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to recognize people of all ages and abilities in Elmwood—Transcona who are taking the opportunity to give back to our community this Christmas.

Christmas is a wonderful time to teach our children about the joy of giving as well as receiving. Two of my younger constituents, Sarah and Noah, at just eight and six years old, understand that it is never too early to start giving back and were recently honoured by Cystic Fibrosis Canada for their charitable giving to Winnipeg Harvest and the Bernie Wolfe Community School breakfast program.

Many community groups, such as the Elmwood Community Resource Centre, the Transcona Food Bank, and Riverwood Church Community, also recognize the importance of supporting those in need. Their special initiatives are aimed at making Christmas fun and festive for those with less who depend on community donations and volunteers to create unforgettable memories for families in their community.

#### Statements by Members

During the Christmas season we are reminded of the importance of giving generously. By giving, we help to ensure the holidays can be enjoyed by everyone in our community.

\* \* \*

#### CHRISTMAS GIVING IN CALGARY EAST

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with the Christmas and holiday season upon us, families, communities, and businesses in my riding of Calgary East are joining together to celebrate this wonderful time of year, from breakfast with Santa at the Marlborough Park Community Centre to *The Nutcracker (In a Nutshell)*, which is presented in 30 minutes for young children to enjoy at the Cardel Theatre, to Christmas Day dinner at the Glenmore Inn.

As Christmas approaches, I encourage my constituents to reach out to those in need and give generously to make this a happy occasion for the less fortunate. I wish to thank the volunteers of Calgary East, who give their time and energy all year round to make our community a happy and safe place for everyone.

Let me also take this opportunity to wish all my Jewish constituents and friends a happy Hanukkah and my Chinese and Vietnamese constituents and friends a happy New Year as well.

I wish everyone a merry Christmas, safe and happy holidays, and a prosperous New Year.

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● (1410)

#### DEMETRIOS DIPLAROS

**Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday I had the honour and the privilege of attending a rededication ceremony in my riding at Corvette Junior Public School.

The ceremony was held to honour the memory of Private Demetrios Diplaros, a member of the 1st Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, who was killed in Afghanistan by an IED shortly after his 24th birthday on December 5, 2008. Private Diplaros was a former student at Corvette Junior Public School, and a special plaque will now hang in his honour in the school's hallways. This plaque will help to ensure that future generations never forget this brave young man and his sacrifice on our behalf.

I want to thank Kathleen and Jerry for raising such a brave young man. He personified the very best qualities Canadians have to offer. I also want to thank the Royal Canadian Legion Oakridge Branch 73 and the members of the Toronto Police Services 41 Division for organizing and hosting this important event.

Our women and men in uniform stand always ready to defend us. I will always remain committed to improving services for veterans and to making Remembrance Day a national statutory holiday.

*Statements by Members***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP leader just cannot help but fight against Canadian jobs when he is travelling abroad.

Canadians will not soon forget when he went to Washington to attack the Keystone XL pipeline project. This time, the leader of the NDP attacked Canada while on a trip to Paris. As reported by *Le Devoir*, the NDP leader said that Europe should not let itself be bound by the historic Canada-EU trade agreement.

This trade agreement is supported by Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It will give Canadian businesses preferential access to a market of over 500 million new customers and will boost the Canadian economy by 12%, which in turn will create thousands of jobs right here at home.

Canadians know that the NDP are ideologically anti-trade, and this attack by the NDP leader on Canadian jobs is further proof that Canada cannot afford the risky economic theories of the NDP.

\* \* \*

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for years I have fought alongside west-end Toronto residents to get the provincial and federal governments to listen to concerns about using dirty diesel trains on the UP Express. Diesel is a known carcinogen. The WHO ranks it right up there with mustard gas and arsenic, yet Liberals and Conservatives are prepared to roll the dice on the health of our children and our elderly.

Now, due to our community pressure, Metrolinx on Thursday will announce a date for electrification. However, let me be clear, this line should have been electrified in the first instance and must be electrified as soon as absolutely possible.

It will also announce a price for riding what is being called a “boutique service” for out of town business people. Rumoured to be between \$20 and \$30, this is yet another slap in the face of Toronto. With only two stops along the 23 kilometre route, this train will not even connect to TTC service.

We paid for this train and it must be clean, electric, affordable, and available as public transit for the people of Toronto.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is fulfilling its promise to balance the federal budget, and we are now in a position to fulfill our promise to help Canadian families balance theirs.

A single parent making \$50,000 a year, with two kids, will see almost a \$1,000 in relief and benefits. Families earning less than \$30,000 a year will see an average benefit of \$1,200 a year. Under our government's plan, all families with children benefit. A vast majority of these benefits will flow to low and middle income families.

Since coming to office, we have introduced the enhanced universal child care benefit, the children's arts tax credit, and now

the family tax cut. Our government lowers Canadians' taxes, we balance budgets, we put money back in the pockets of hard-working Canadians, and we will continue to stand up for Canadians day in and day out.

\* \* \*

**AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Northern Harvest Sea Farms Group, a company with operations in Atlantic Canada, including in my riding of Random—Burin—St. George's.

The company achieved four-star certification when its subsidiary in Stephenville, Northern Harvest Smolt Limited, earned its best aquaculture practices certification from the Global Aquaculture Alliance. This recognition makes it the first salmon company in the world to achieve such a designation. In addition to receiving best aquaculture practices certification for its hatchery, Northern Harvest has also received this certification for its processing plants, farm sites, and feed mills.

As well as the hatchery in Stephenville, the company has other facilities throughout the Coast of Bays region of Random—Burin—St. George's. The employees, who come from the small communities along our coastline, have proven to be the key ingredient in building the aquaculture industry and turning Northern Harvest into a world leader.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Northern Harvest Sea Farms Group for this impressive accomplishment and wishing the company and its employees many more successful years in the aquaculture industry.

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● (1415)

**TAXATION**

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the constituents in my riding of Scarborough Centre have spoken loud and clear. They want a government that will put more money into the pockets of hard-working Canadian families. That is precisely what our Conservative government has done and will continue to do with our latest tax cuts.

In fact, every family with children will benefit. That is about 4 million Canadian families. With the expansion of the universal child care benefit, families in Scarborough Centre and right across Canada will receive nearly \$2,000 per year for every child under 6, and \$720 per year for every child between 6 and 17.

However, the Liberals and NDP have said they will take this money away from moms and dads to pay for expensive and burdensome programs through big government bureaucracy. Only our Conservative government knows that parents, whether they work inside or outside the home, can be trusted to make the right choices for their own families

[Translation]

### LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Papineau became leader of the Liberal Party, he made a lot of promises, a pile of promises. He said that it was the rebirth of an honest, transparent and open Liberal Party. Yeah, right.

The NDP has had democratic nomination processes for a long time now. We were pleased to hear the member for Papineau say that he wanted to follow our example, but apparently, once red, always red.

Just recently, the coronation of Andrew Leslie in Orléans caused quite the kerfuffle. A number of Liberals were furious at their leader for blocking the candidacy of David Bertschi in favour of his buddy Andrew. As hon. members no doubt recall, he was the guy who billed taxpayers \$72,000 to move from Ottawa to Ottawa. Things got ugly and a number of Liberal supporters feel betrayed and cheated.

Having been part of a number of NDP nominations, I can say that unlike the Liberals, we have a dynamic team and a strong leader and we are ready to replace the Conservatives next year.

\* \* \*

[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the strong economic management of our Prime Minister, we are in a position to fulfill our promise to help Canadian families balance their budgets. With the enhancement of the universal child care benefit, moms and dads in North Vancouver and across this country will receive nearly \$2,000 per year for every child under 6 and \$720 per year for every child between the ages of 6 and 17.

Partnered with the family tax cut, the vast majority of benefits will flow to low and middle-income Canadian families, but the Liberals and the NDP want to take this money away and spend it on big government bureaucracy instead. Removing essential tax cuts like the enhanced universal child care benefit and the family tax cut is not looking out for Canadians.

Only our Conservative government can be trusted to balance the budget while relieving the tax burden on Canadian families.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### NEW MEMBER

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Jim Eglinski, member for the electoral district of Yellowhead.

### Oral Questions

#### NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Jim Eglinski, member for the electoral district of Yellowhead, introduced by the Right Hon. Stephen Harper and the Hon. Chris Alexander.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

#### NEW MEMBER

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mrs. Pat Perkins, member for the electoral district of Whitby—Oshawa.

\* \* \*

#### NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mrs. Pat Perkins, member for the electoral district of Whitby—Oshawa, introduced by the Right Hon. Stephen Harper and the Hon. Rona Ambrose.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### JUSTICE

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, the United States Senate Intelligence Committee released a report showing that so-called enhanced interrogation techniques used on militants were ineffective and never once produced information which prevented a terrorist plot. The conclusion is simple: torture does not work. Yet, in Canada, the Conservative government has repudiated basic Canadian values by issuing directives to CSIS, the RCMP and the CBSA that allow them to use and share information obtained through torture.

Will the government rescind these directives immediately?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, very simply, this is a report of the United States Senate. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the Government of Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we cannot wait to have a government with Canadian values.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs told us yesterday that he cut 1,000 specialists who help our veterans because they were just backroom bureaucrats who spent their days photocopying. That is false. Only 10% of those cuts involved administrative positions.

Why is the Prime Minister letting his minister mislead veterans? Why not fire him? He is incompetent and has lost the confidence of veterans.

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we understand the NDP's position very well: that party wants to protect the jobs of bureaucrats at Veterans Affairs and it is opposed to veterans' services.

[*English*]

Let me tell members, in line of this question, precisely what I am talking about. In fact, in the veterans independence program, the department cut 100 people whose only job was to process small claims from veterans, which are now allowed automatically. That is what we did. At the same time, we increased benefits under the veterans independence program. The NDP voted against that.

• (1425)

**Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, tell that to the 50% of veterans who cannot even access disability benefits.

Yesterday, when asked about cuts to front-line services, the minister responded, "veterans have been saying that we should in fact reduce", but the minister cannot tell us the names of these veterans who have supposedly been coming to him, demanding cuts.

In the minister's fantasy world, he has only been cutting backroom and internal services. He also says that cuts in his department are somehow reinvested back into service: wrong, wrong and wrong.

The minister has lost the confidence of veterans. Why does the Prime Minister not fire him?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I could give thousands of examples of where we have streamlined back office support, including, of course, eliminating photocopy and processing clerks in place of digital medical records.

There is the difference. The NDP wanted to keep bureaucrats to do nothing but process and delay payments to veterans under a program it actually voted against. On this side, we cut down the bureaucracy. We deliver service to the veterans.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for months the Minister of Employment and Social Development denied that there were delays in processing EI claims. He finally woke up yesterday, after being embarrassed by an NDP question on the order paper.

He said that cuts would not affect services. However, processing delays have increased by 54% since 2006 and the number of complaints has risen by 40% in one year. The minister's cuts have had a significant negative impact on EI recipients. Does he believe that hiring temporary workers is a long-term solution?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question. Obviously, the government is committed to providing a good level of service to EI recipients.

I would like to thank my parliamentary secretary for the important work he did. He provided me with a report on processing EI claims

more quickly, which we are implementing. Thanks to these commitments, we will give EI benefits to qualified claimants as quickly as possible.

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this minister is incompetent. He is responsible for the mess at the Social Security Tribunal of Canada. He is responsible for the mishandling of the foreign worker program, and it is his fault that unemployed workers cannot access their benefits in a timely manner. He has gotten rid of one in five employees since 2010 and he said that it would not affect Canadians. Come on. Will the minister stop playing games and finally take steps to fix the mess he is responsible for?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister just said, the NDP never wants to streamline public services.

This government is proud of the fact that it reduced the cost of processing each EI claim by 42%. We have found more cost-effective ways of delivering important programs to Canadians. That is what taxpayers want and that is what they expect.

I accepted my parliamentary secretary's advice in order to process EI claims more quickly.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a sacred obligation to our veterans who chose to put everything on the line for their country. The Prime Minister has denied this obligation in court and has slashed veterans' services.

Why is his priority a \$2 billion tax break for wealthy families like his and mine, instead of properly supporting our veterans?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unlike that party, we provide benefits both to families and to veterans.

The hon. member makes reference to a court case that is actually a court case against a previous Liberal policy. In any case, we have repeatedly enhanced the benefits under that policy to the tune of some \$5 billion, opposed every step of the way by the Liberal Party, which voted against all of those benefits.

It can keep voting against those benefits for veterans. We will keep bringing them forward.

*Oral Questions*

● (1430)

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has cut hundreds of front-line Veterans Affairs staff. He has cut Veterans Affairs service centres. He has cut funding for war graves. On top of that, he actually gave bonuses to managers to cut those services.

These are devastating cuts for our veterans, but a \$2 billion tax break for the most wealthy. Where are the government's priorities?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in fact, the truth is the complete opposite of everything the member just said. We have actually increased, by many fold, the number of service centres there are now for our veterans in our country. In terms of war memorials specifically, we have increased the funding for that for the community war memorial program, voted against by the Liberal Party. We enhanced the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, also voted against by the Liberal Party.

However, as I know, what the Liberal Party and NDP want to do is ensure that they protect those bureaucratic jobs at Veterans Affairs, instead of giving the services to the veterans. That is what we are doing on this side.

[Translation]

**Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have a sacred obligation to our veterans who risked their lives to defend our country.

The Prime Minister chose to cut services, close service centres and even give bonuses to managers who cut programs for veterans.

The government is giving billions of dollars in credits to the wealthy while making major cuts that affect our veterans.

Where are the government's priorities?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We have increased services for veterans and the number of service centres for them.

For example, we eliminated close to 100 positions in the veterans independence program, positions that actually slowed down payment of veterans' benefits, and we increased benefits provided to veterans through that program.

In any case, the Liberal Party voted against those benefits for our veterans. We enhanced the program and will continue to do so.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of the Environment is on her way to Peru for the climate change conference, her department has published a report that shows that Canada has not made any progress in the past year when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. What is the primary source of greenhouse gases? The oil and gas industries.

When will this government introduce a plan to regulate the large emitters?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, on this side of the House, we are not in favour of a carbon tax like the NDP.

For the first time in history, we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions during a period of economic growth.

[English]

Specifically to the issue of oil and gas regulations, this government's position has been clear that we want to see oil and gas regulations on a continental basis, given the integrated nature of this industry. With the current conditions in the oil and gas sector, this government will not consider unilateral regulation of that sector.

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the report shows that per capita our emissions are actually rising.

The UN Secretary-General, Environment Canada, in fact the whole planet knows that Canada is failing, yet the Minister of the Environment arrives in Lima with empty promises and more talking points. However, nobody is actually fooled here.

Ban Ki-moon has begged Canada to show more ambition and vision on the climate file. It is about global responsibility, not about domestic politics.

When will the government finally take climate change seriously?

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is working with our international partners to achieve a fair and effective climate agreement.

We are a founding member and major financial contributor to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. We are also addressing short-lived climate pollutants under the chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

We have fully delivered on our fast-start financing, which has helped more than 60 developing countries reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. We have recently announced more money for the Green Climate Fund.

We believe any international climate agreement must include meaningful and transparent commitments from all major emitters. We will do our part without a job-killing carbon tax.

\* \* \*

● (1435)

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians pay EI premiums so they have insurance if they lose their jobs, so they can still pay the bills and put food on their family's table.

Under the Conservatives, though, front-line services have been cut and waiting times have grown. This is not about hiring a few temps to help out for a few weeks; this is about finally fixing the backlog.

*Oral Questions*

What is the minister doing to cut down on these endless delays, once and for all?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister underscored, the NDP does not understand that we have an obligation to deliver public services efficiently.

We have done just that. We have reduced the costs for processing each EI application by 42% through automation and through smarter procedures. That is why the vast majority of EI applicants receive their benefits within the service standard of 28 days.

We are going to improve our service, because I am implementing many of the recommendations that I received from my hard-working parliamentary secretary from Nova Scotia. The NDP should be thanking us for that instead of criticizing us.

[Translation]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after getting rid of one out of every five employees in his department since 2010—probably more bureaucrats—the Minister of Employment has finally resigned himself to hiring not five, 10 or 15 but 400 temporary employees to deal with the unacceptable wait times for employment insurance.

This is such a huge mess that the number of complaints has skyrocketed by 40% compared to last year. It is not right to make unemployed workers wait, when there is already a two-week waiting period for employment insurance benefits.

Does the minister actually believe that hiring temporary workers is a real solution to the mess he has made?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it seems that the NDP has the same solution for every problem: hire tens of thousands of government union members.

We, on the other hand, believe that we need to deliver public services efficiently. That is why we have reduced the costs for processing each EI application by 42% through automation and other improvements. We are hiring more staff and we are continuing to speed up the process.

I would like to once again thank my parliamentary secretary for his recommendations on this file.

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[English]

**PENSIONS**

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, far too many Canadian seniors reach retirement and find they do not have enough savings to live comfortably.

Public pensions just have not kept pace with rising costs and changing workplaces, leaving seniors struggling to meet their most basic needs, and the situation is just getting worse, yet still the Conservatives refuse calls from the provinces and from millions of Canadians to boost the Canada pension plan.

Why is the minister still blocking action? Does he not agree that all Canadian seniors deserve to retire in dignity?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not want to pay higher taxes.

Ontarians should be aware that the Liberals' new mandatory deduction would force a family with two workers to pay as much as \$3,200 more each and every year. That is the opposition way. It consistently asks us to raise taxes. It consistently is looking for ways to take money out of the pockets of Canadians. We will not let that happen.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, more and more retirees are finding it difficult to make ends meet. People approaching retirement are realizing that the Canada pension plan has not kept pace with the cost of living. Canadians and some provinces are calling for better coverage. Our retirees deserve to live in dignity.

Why are the Conservatives refusing to co-operate with workers and the provinces to improve the Canada pension plan?

[English]

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we just answered the question. Again, we recognize on this side of the House that Canadians do not want to pay higher taxes. Payroll taxes, income taxes, whatever the taxes, Canadians do not need higher taxes or this Ontario new plan that would take up to \$3,200 from each family where there are two people working.

The Liberals and the New Democrats keep looking for new ways to tax. On this side of the House, we are going to keep looking for ways that we can keep money in the pockets of Canadians.

\* \* \*

● (1440)

[Translation]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, an OECD analysis confirms that reducing income inequality boosts economic growth. Government policies should focus on low-income families and lower-middle-class families. The OECD also noted that Canada is among the countries that have the largest income inequalities.

Does the Conservative government understand that its ideological policies are hampering our social and economic development?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since this government was elected in 2006, the number of low-income Canadian families has dropped considerably.

*Oral Questions*

In fact, we have lowered taxes for more than 800,000 families. With the Prime Minister's announcement last month, we are giving an additional \$1,200 a year to the average family. This will help low-income families in particular.

[English]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yet another report from the OECD highlights that Canada's wage gap is at an all-time high and warns of the negative impacts of growing income inequality. Liberals presided over a 94% increase in income inequality over the past 35 years, and the Conservatives accelerated the trend. At a time that our economy has been growing, more and more Canadians have fallen further behind. Why will the minister not take action to fight this trend by raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are proud that there are more than 1.4 million fewer Canadians living under the poverty line than when this government took office. The number of Canadians living below the low-income cut-off line, at 8.8%, is at its lowest level in Canadian history.

The best strategy to address income inequality and to help people in low-income situations is to ensure that they have good jobs, and that is exactly what this government is focused on; jobs that would be killed by the NDP's idea of a massive hike in the minimum wage. Instead, we are cutting people's taxes.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, such lefty bastions as the TD Bank, C.D. Howe Institute, and now the OECD have all shown not only that income inequality hurts the far too many Canadians who are left behind, but the growing gap is a direct threat to our fragile economy. We know the Minister of Finance is not so keen on doing any actual analysis of his programs, but rather than make things better, Conservatives invent new ways to make things worse and give more money to the wealthiest Canadians. Will the minister finally drop his \$3 billion income-splitting scheme that would do nothing for more than 85% of Canadians and help out poor people in this country, for once?

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is some analysis.

We have the lowest number of Canadians living in poverty in our country's history. There are 1.4 million fewer Canadians living in poverty than under the previous Liberal government. Canadians' wealth has increased dramatically, with the median net worth of our families increasing by 45% since this government took office and by almost 80% since 1999. Families benefit by an average of \$3,400 in tax cuts, which would be enhanced through the family tax cut that would give low-income families with two young kids \$3,800 a year just in the childcare benefit. Why does the NDP vote against these policies to help families?

\* \* \*

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Veterans Affairs has overseen the clawback of over \$1 billion that Parliament approved for veterans. He has cut front-line services that veterans desperately need. He has rewarded

staff with thousands of dollars for denying veterans access to mental health services.

Does the Prime Minister really believe that no one else in the Conservative caucus can do a better job than the current minister? What message is he sending to Canadians who elected the other Conservative MPs?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government has delivered, and today there are more services, more programs, more benefits, and more points of service for our veterans and their families.

Here are the facts. Opposition members voted against funeral and burial funding, they voted against career transition services, plus they voted against the children of deceased veterans education assistance program. On this side of the House, we stand up for our veterans, not for—

• (1445)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past three weeks, we have learned that Veterans Affairs Canada has clawed back over \$1 billion, that it has laid off one-quarter of its staff, that veterans are waiting for months or years for mental health services, that the minister misled us regarding the funding of \$200 million that is really going to be spread over 50 years, and that the so-called cuts to administrative services are really going to affect front-line services and employees.

When will the Prime Minister remove this incompetent and insensitive minister?

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for that gracious question.

We have brought, in fact, real services, meaningful programs for our veterans and will continue to do so. The reality is that they voted against the disability and death compensation, voted against the earnings loss and supplementary retirement benefits, and voted against the veterans independence program and a host of other programs and services.

On this side of the House, we deliver for our veterans.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after 10,000 complaints last year, HRSD is getting 400 new staff to deal with the mess it created, and ministerial staffers are up 21%. Meanwhile, Veterans Affairs cut nearly 1,000 jobs, most of them front-line service delivery, the kind identified by the Auditor General as causing delays in veterans receiving the help they need. Veterans' calls are not being answered and their benefits are delayed and denied.

Why do veterans always come last with these Conservatives?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since our government came into power, we have, in fact, increased substantially the benefits and services and programs available to veterans.

The short story, of course, is that while opposition members vote against certain issues, we are promoting veterans' programs and services flat out. We continue to do that. We are very focused and will continue to provide services and programs to our veterans on the front line, where they count, not in the backrooms.

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**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today the Assembly of First Nations honoured Rinelle Harper, a survivor of a horrific attack, who just a month ago was left for dead on a riverbank in Winnipeg. This courageous young woman shows strength and compassion by asking people to remember these words: love, kindness, respect, and forgiveness. She also asks for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Will the government honour Rinelle Harper and call an inquiry?

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what happened to Rinelle Harper was an appalling and horrific crime. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with this brave young woman, and her family, who shows tremendous courage today and, I am sure, will in the future. Thanks to this family's brave actions, working with police in the local Winnipeg area, they were able to apprehend her attackers. The police deserve significant recognition for what they did.

Now Canadians can count on this government to make sure that we take violent crime, including against women and girls, very seriously.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today Rinelle Harper courageously added her voice to those of the thousands of people calling for a national public inquiry into what happened to 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women. She stands with the victims' families, the provinces and civil society, which all understand that in order to move forward, we have to understand the underlying causes of this violence.

Will the government honour and listen to Rinelle Harper and thousands of others and launch a national inquiry?

• (1450)

[*English*]

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said several times in this House, our government has moved forward with actions that families have specifically asked for. Let me quote one of those families.

This Action Plan is something that our families have been waiting for. I would like to thank...the Government for their commitment to addressing this issue.... We've had numerous studies on this issue and the time for action is now. We can't stand idly by and talk about this without taking significant action. This Action Plan will have a direct impact on families and it will help keep our women and girls safe.

Now Bernadette Smith and her family are very focused on action, as are many across the country. Our government is taking that action.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, the High Commissioner for Refugees is organizing a meeting in Geneva to promote the relocation of 100,000 refugees of the Syrian civil war. The United Nations is calling on Canada to do its part. So far, only 163 refugees sponsored by private groups have arrived in Canada.

Why are the Conservatives refusing to heed the call of the United Nations? Why are they refusing to help the Syrian people?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with the resettlement of more than 22,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees over the past few years, Canada has done more than its share and will continue to do so.

As the Christmas season approaches, we still have a long way to go: there are more than 50 million refugees and displaced persons around the world, especially in the Middle East where several million people fled the brutality and violence of the Islamic State.

Why does the NDP oppose Canada's engagement in a military effort that might save the lives of millions?

[*English*]

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the worst humanitarian crisis the world has seen in decades, yet despite pleas from the United Nations, calls from Canadians, and warnings from groups like Amnesty International, and despite his own department telling him that Canada could do much more for many more Syrian refugees, the minister sits idly by and does nothing. This is unconscionable.

How can the minister justify his refusal to act when so many lives hang in the balance?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy that the NDP terms 22,000 Syrians and Iraqis resettled in this country in recent years as "doing nothing".

*Oral Questions*

Is he really going to stand up in this Christmas season and say to Canadians that they have done nothing by being more generous than any country in the world? Is he going to stand up, face 50 million plus refugees and the internally displaced millions who fled their homes to save their very lives in Iraq and Syria, and say that he and his party will do absolutely nothing to save them from ISIL's brutality, to work together with our allies against terrorism?

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign in my riding of Yellowhead, farmers came to me time and time again saying that they did not understand the policies of the Liberals and the NDP. They are stuck in the past holding on to antiquated ideas: grain monopolies that prohibit marketing freedom. I am proud to say to them that our government stands for the western Canadian grain sector.

Could the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food please tell this House the latest measures our government is taking to modernize the grain sector?

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and congratulate my colleague from Yellowhead for that question. He is absolutely right. No one in western Canada understands what these guys mean when they talk agriculture policy. They really do not have any.

Today our government took another step in modernizing Canada's grain industry with the introduction of Bill C-48. This legislation would enhance producer protections and improve grain quality and safety assurances to our customers around the world. It would also modernize the Canadian Grain Commission to make it more responsive to the needs of farmers in this great era of marketing freedom. Of course, the opposition's only policy would be to take that away.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period, the Prime Minister said that he would not regulate GHG emissions from the oil and gas sector.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that he is in fact breaking his promise to regulate the oil and gas sector?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been pursuing a sector by sector regulatory approach. We have integrated our regulations in the transport sector with the United States. In the electricity sector, we have been ahead of and gone much further than the United States.

I have been very clear in terms of regulating the oil and gas sector. It is something we would like to do but that we must do on an integrated basis in a continental economy.

Frankly, under the current circumstances of the oil and gas sector, it would be crazy economic policy to do unilateral penalties on that sector. We are clearly not going to do it.

● (1455)

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, back in 2007, the Prime Minister promised in the House to "...bring in a national system of regulations for the control of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution."

Now, as countries from around the world act, including the largest emitters act, such as China and the U.S., this Prime Minister and government are letting Canadians down.

Will the Prime Minister live up to his promise?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** In fact, Mr. Speaker, nobody in the world is regulating their oil and gas sector. I would be delighted if they did. Canada would be there with them. However, we will not impose unilateral penalties.

Let me be very clear on the difference with this side of the House. Our commitment to Canadians is that we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions while preserving, protecting, and growing Canadian jobs.

That is our commitment. That is what we will continue to do. We will not kill jobs and we will not impose the carbon tax the opposition wants to put on Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**VETERANS**

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cannot just leave \$1 billion on the table when our veterans do not even have access to the care and services they were promised. Nor should they close nine regional centres and fire 1,000 people who provide care and services to veterans while at the same time they give managers bonuses.

Will the Prime Minister finally realize that veterans have lost confidence in this minister, who refuses to admit his mistakes?

[English]

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in fact there are back office positions in almost every segment of Veterans Affairs Canada.

A few examples of the efficiencies that we have created include stopping asking veterans to show their receipts for all kinds of transactions that had to be processed. That saved 100 hundred positions. In the disability branch program, 12 photocopy and processing clerks were reduced when we moved to digitized records.

We make no apologies for the reductions in bureaucratic waste of taxpayers' dollars and turning those into benefits for veterans and their families.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when young men and women from Canada go off to war, they and their families need to know that their government and country will care for them in the event they become physically disabled, mentally challenged, or make the ultimate sacrifice.

Yesterday, I asked the Minister of Veterans Affairs, does the government have a sacred obligation to care for them? He would not answer it.

My question is directly for the Prime Minister of Canada. Does the Prime Minister of Canada believe that the government has a judicial, legal, moral, and social obligation to care for the heroes of our country?

**Hon. Julian Fantino (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our record shows that we care deeply about the welfare and well-being of our veterans and their families. Under the leadership of this Prime Minister, our government has made substantial improvements to the new veterans charter and the supports available for veterans.

The government does not comment on matters before the courts, except to say that this matter deals exclusively with something that all parties agreed to under the previous government.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we continue to ask but fail to receive answers from the Minister of Public Safety on why agencies under his authority are failing to act to protect Canadians from known terrorists who have returned home to Canada. The minister confirmed that they violated the law. This definitely is not about a lack of laws. It is about a lack of government resolve to enforce the law.

Why is the government failing to act to keep Canadians safe from such terrorists returning home to Canada?

• (1500)

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that has passed the Protection of Canada from Terrorists Act. I am proud to be sitting in the House with members who support more measures.

What will the opposition do? Will it be a part of this journey to fight terrorists, to fight those travelling fighters? Is the opposition ready to provide the tools to our law enforcement and national security agencies?

On this side of the House we are protecting Canadians.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Environment must be very pleased with herself. Yesterday, her own department contradicted her assertion that we are on target to meet our 2020 commitments. Last week, the senior diplomat in the world chastised Canada for its failure to show leadership on climate change. Today, we learned that Canada is 58th out of 61 countries on climate change progress.

Thank goodness for Saudi Arabia and Iran, otherwise we would be dead last.

If we are only 2% of the problem, why is it that we are only 0% of the solution?

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** That is ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

Under the Liberals, greenhouse gas emissions rose 30%. Our government is reducing emissions while supporting economic growth and job creation, and we are achieving this without damaging the economy like the Liberals and the NDP would do with their job-killing carbon tax.

In 2012, greenhouse gas emissions were 5.1% lower than in 2005, while the economy grew 10.6% during the same period. Canada's 2020 greenhouse gas emissions are projected to be 130 megatonnes lower than they would have been under the Liberals.

\* \* \*

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the premier of Newfoundland and Labrador is coming to Ottawa because the Conservatives are backing away from a promise they made to our province. The Conservatives committed to \$280 million in compensation after they bargained away our minimum processing requirements in CETA negotiations. They have since been trying to break that promise. What is the deal now? The fishery fund was announced more than two years ago with money that was to be spent on research and marketing.

Is the \$280 million on the table for Newfoundland and Labrador, yes or no?

**Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to working out the details of the MPR fund with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. This minimum processing requirement fund was to compensate for anticipated losses from the removal of minimum processing requirements. It was never intended as a blank cheque that would give Newfoundland and Labrador an unfair advantage over other maritime provinces.

We remain open to receiving proposals from our provincial counterparts on how to implement the minimum processing requirement fund.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, unlike the Liberals who said that at some point we needed to see what it is we are supporting, the NDP is taking the responsible approach of waiting for all the details, including promised compensation, before approving this deal.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

As our leader said, we support free trade agreements that reduce tariffs and eliminate obstacles to trade. However, even European investors are against the investor state dispute settlement mechanism. Furthermore, the European Union and the United States have already agreed to set aside this mechanism even before they begin negotiations.

In that case, why are the Conservatives going to so much trouble to impose such a mechanism?

[English]

**Hon. Ed Fast (Minister of International Trade, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as with all of our free trade agreements, in CETA we have arrived at a good balance, promoting Canada's interests on the world stage and opening up new markets for Canada's exporters and investors.

This trade agreement with the European Union is expected to create 80,000 new jobs in Canada. That is an additional \$12 billion worth of economic activity in our country.

We are standing up for Canadians. We will take no lessons from the NDP.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mrs. Pat Perkins (Whitby—Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, constituents in my riding of Whitby—Oshawa know that only our Conservative government will help Canadian families by putting their money back where it belongs—in their pockets.

Can the Minister of Employment please update the House on the various measures our government has put in place to help families from coast to coast to coast?

• (1505)

**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me join all of our colleagues in welcoming the hon. member for Whitby—Oshawa to the House of Commons. We know that the member was elected by the hard-working voters of Whitby—Oshawa in part to deliver the family tax cut, the tax cut that will benefit 100% of Canadian families with kids under the age of 18. Two-thirds of its benefits will go to low- and modest-income families.

In fact, did members know that a single parent making \$50,000 with two kids will see \$1,000 in relief and benefits, and families earning less than \$30,000 will see \$1,200 in benefits—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

\* \* \*

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today the United Nations asked countries to commit to taking 100,000 more refugees from Syria, not Iraq, and Canada's commitment was zero. Nothing at all beyond the pathetic 1,300 that we have already committed to.

My question is why has the government reneged on the long-standing commitment of Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments to provide refuge to the oppressed of the world?

**Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it says a lot about the hon. member and the party that he represents that he would turn the 22,000 Iraqi and Syrian refugees settled in recent years in this country pathetic.

Canada has done more than its part. Canada will continue to do more. What would save millions of more lives in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere is coordinated action with Arab and NATO allies to oppose ISIL terrorism, to make this winter safer for millions of people who had to leave their houses and are running to save their very lives. That is what this government has been prepared to do.

We still cannot understand why the Liberal Party—

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

\* \* \*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, although Canada claims to be a country that welcomes foreign students, the bank accounts of Iranian students who have done nothing wrong are being abruptly closed simply because they are from Iran. Economic sanctions against Iran were put in place to exert pressure on the Iranian government.

What is this government doing to ensure that Iranian students are not unfairly affected by these sanctions?

[English]

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, obviously, we are prepared to work to support young people all over the world, but this government makes no apologies for the tough sanctions regime it has put in place. However, we have real concerns about the human rights record of this regime. It has deteriorated.

Canadians can be very proud of the leadership of this Prime Minister, this government, and the important work that we do to press the case for human rights in this country.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Liberals' new mandatory payroll tax could force a two-worker family to pay up to \$3,200 more each year.

A recent study says small business owners believe that the Liberal payroll tax hike could be the greatest challenge they have ever faced. My constituents are alarmed and want the federal government to keep taxes low.

Can the Minister of State for Finance please update the House on Canada's low-tax plan?

*Royal Assent*

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely correct. We know that Canadians do not want to pay more money in payroll taxes, or in any other taxes. That is why we have lowered taxes in every way that we collect them.

We have also moved forward on new measures that would help Canadians save for retirement. We have brought forward measures like the tax-free savings account. We have introduced pension income splitting for seniors. We have brought forward the pooled registered pension plan and consulted over the target benefit pension plan.

Despite the opposition's reckless high tax plans, we continue to take action to put money into the pockets of—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Vancouver East.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to advertising, pharmaceutical companies appear to have free rein. Apparently, the minister believes that these companies should just regulate themselves.

A newly released study shows that Health Canada is failing on its regulatory responsibilities for advertising, and when Canadians complain about public safety risks, a private chat with a company is all that is required, according to the government.

Why does the minister refuse to enforce her own department's regulations?

• (1510)

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what was missed in the article the member is referring to and quoting from is that the law is now clear. Under the new law, which is Vanessa's law, tough new fines and jail time for companies that violate drug laws, including advertising, can be imposed.

Our laws for prescription drug advertising are far stronger than those in the U.S. and comparable to those in the EU, and the law is clear: advertising prescription drugs to consumers is prohibited.

Any complaints will be reviewed, and we will act.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**FIREARMS REGISTRY**

**Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, just because the government snubbed the ceremonies commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre does not mean that Quebecers have forgotten this despicable, misogynistic crime.

The Premier of Quebec committed to creating a new firearms registry. The bill is nearly ready and staff are in place. All that is missing is the data that the federal government stubbornly wants to destroy.

Why does the government not do the honourable thing, put an end to the costly legal proceedings and give Quebec what belongs to the province: the data its people have already paid for?

[*English*]

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we remember that these crimes that took place at the Polytechnique 25 years ago were atrocious crimes. These women were put in harm's way. These women were murdered simply because they were women. We will continue to support victims of these crimes and punish the criminals that perpetuate them.

Our government has been standing up for victims, so whether it is the creation of a DNA missing persons index or the victims bill of rights, we here are focused on making sure that victims of crime are supported and that we put criminals behind bars—unlike the opposition, which continues to vote against all of these issues.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

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

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE**

**The Speaker:** 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:

Bill C-8, An Act to amend the Copyright Act and the Trade-marks Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

**ROYAL ASSENT**

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received, which is as follows:

December 9th, 2014

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 9th day of December, 2014, at 4:00 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills of law.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Wallace

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 2**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-43, A Second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and speak to this important legislation, Bill C-43, which includes provisions that would support jobs, economic growth, families, and communities.

In addition to the measures making the tax system simpler and fairer for farming and fishing businesses, extending the existing tax credits, doubling the children's fitness tax credit, and much more, we are also bringing in changes to support our transportation system.

I would like turn the attention of the House to the amendments to the Canada Marine Act. Canadian port authorities operate Canada's 18 major ports. Canadian port authorities are considered key economic drivers and are vital to Canada's domestic and international trade objectives. Our government is committed to creating the right conditions to ensure that we have competitive ports to support our aggressive trade agenda. The proposed amendments to the Canada Marine Act are part of the plan to enable strong Canadian ports.

The proposed amendments would allow Canadian port authorities the ability to acquire surplus federal real property. This supports the federal government's ongoing divestiture of regional ports. To date, Transport Canada has divested or otherwise transferred 499 regional and remote ports that it owned, while 50 ports remain under federal ownership. Some Canadian port authorities have expressed an interest in acquiring Transport Canada-owned ports to expand their business opportunities. Canadian port authorities are well positioned to attract investments, increase traffic, and, importantly, create jobs.

The participation of Canadian port authorities is considered a key part of the ongoing divestiture strategy. However, provisions under the current Canada Marine Act do not allow Canadian port authorities the ability to acquire federal real property, thereby preventing these port authorities from participating in the divestiture program. The proposed amendments would enable Canadian port authorities to participate in the divestiture program after other interested stakeholders, such as municipalities, have been given the opportunity to acquire these surplus ports first.

There are also increased resource development projects on federal port lands stemming from Canada's potential to be a major player in the global energy economy. Our government is proposing amendments to ensure projects are undertaken in a safe manner while protecting the environment and Canadians. These amendments would provide the government with an option to develop regulations applying to any specific large-scale commercial or industrial projects on federal port lands. These proposed amendments would also permit these regulations to incorporate by reference any laws or documents to effectively regulate any potential projects on federal port lands.

As I noted at the start, many of our transportation initiatives relate to our country's trade agenda and help connect us to a global supply chain. This means we must ensure that our transportation system, including ports, has a robust legislative regime to support our trade agenda. The amendments to the Canada Marine Act would support economic growth and enable international trade.

Let me move on to another important measure in Bill C-43. We are making amendments to the Aeronautics Act that would provide the Minister of Transport with the authority and the necessary tools to effectively respond to an increasing number of aerodrome issues pertaining to development, location, land use, and consultation.

Canada's aviation system consists of 300 certified aerodromes, or airports, and approximately 7,000 aerodromes, which are defined as an area of land, water, or other supporting surface used for the arrival, departure, movement, or servicing of aircraft.

Over the last several years, Transport Canada has increasingly heard from provinces, municipalities, and Canadians concerning a number of complex issues related to the construction of new aerodromes and the operation of existing aerodromes, some of which were subsequently brought before the courts. As the situation now stands, current regulations do not require proponents to take part in consultation processes with local land use authorities and affected stakeholders or to notify Transport Canada or Nav Canada prior to developing an aerodrome. Transport Canada also does not have a formal engagement process in place whereby stakeholders or those involved may raise concerns regarding aerodrome development to that department.

● (1515)

In the absence of these tools, the department has been left in a reactive position and has been dealing with issues on an ad hoc basis, which has proven to be inefficient and resource-intensive and has not effectively responded to the concerns of constituents. It has also led to unnecessary and significant costs for aerodrome proponents.

In order to suitably carry out the department's aviation mandate, the minister requires the legal authority to promote aerodrome development when it enhances Canada's transportation system and supports economic prosperity, and also the authority to prohibit the development if it is not in the best interest of Canadians.

As such, the amendments would provide the minister with the authority to make an order to prohibit an aerodrome proponent from developing or expanding or making changes to the nature of operations if there was a risk to aviation safety or if it is not in the public interest. For example, this could include cases in which the operations of a new or existing aerodrome would result in greater air traffic congestion, which could introduce a risk to aviation safety.

*Government Orders*

This new authority would permit intervention by the minister to prohibit development at an early point, rather than after construction or during operations, in order to allow for the early identification and mitigation of safety issues.

The proposed amendment would also provide for regulation-making authority respecting the consultations to be carried out by the proponent of an aerodrome before development or the operator of an aerodrome before an expansion or change to its operations.

This initiative would provide the minister with flexibility to effectively respond to either existing or possibly unforeseen issues or trends and is an important first step in modernizing the department's aerodrome framework.

This amendment would also protect aerodrome proponents and operators from unnecessary costs associated with development and would provide an opportunity for affected Canadians to be engaged in the process.

We will continue to promote the freedom to fly safely in a rapidly growing sector while providing greater regulatory predictability and transparency for Canadians. We will also continue to address aviation safety and public interest concerns while encouraging the responsible development and operation of aerodromes in Canada.

Economic action plan 2014 no. 2 would create the right conditions for an efficient, competitive, and sustainable transportation system to move Canadian products. Such a system is vital to a strong economy.

• (1520)

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's speech. He talks about airports, yet Bill C-43 would centralize more ministerial power over the expansion and modification of airports, raising the risk that local consultation would not occur in the face of controversial proposals such as the Toronto Island airport expansion. We see a bill that would remove the opportunity for people to have proper input when it comes to airport modification. Over and over again, we see a government that continues to limit debates on bills as important as this one, bills that would create such a great amount of change.

Could my colleague talk specifically about the fact that the bill would actually raise the risk that consultation would not occur on this specific piece?

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, no; in fact, it would be quite the opposite. The changes proposed in this particular bill would create a regulation-making authority whereby we would now have a regulated process specifying how consultations would occur before a proponent seeking to build an aerodrome could build an aerodrome. We would actually formalize that process.

It would be the same thing for operators of an existing aerodrome who seek to expand it. That process would now be defined in regulations. There would be responsibilities upon stakeholders, and it would be fully incumbent upon them to carry them out.

That would be a step forward. It would guarantee that consultations, which in a large number of cases currently do not occur, would in fact occur through a formal process. That would be a step forward, and the member should support it.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important that we recognize the important role our airports play in all of our communities, both economically and socially. There are a great number of them where we have community involvement and where, ultimately, the communities try to provide good stewardship, ensuring that their own local airport is going in the right direction from the community's perspective. Again, I highlight both the economic and social importance of this.

The question I have for the member is this. To what degree did the government actually go out, prior to delivering this particular speech, and consult with the different stakeholders in regard to the need for the regulation and ultimate development of a process?

**Mr. Jeff Watson:** Mr. Speaker, the member says he supports the airline industry, and yet his leader campaigned aggressively in the province of Ontario in favour of a carbon tax on jet fuel. That is hardly the kind of support that members on this side believe in. In fact, through the Canadian Transportation Agency review, we are looking at ways that we can make the industry much more competitive on an economic basis.

However, today we are talking about the BIA no. 2 changes to the Aeronautics Act specifically, which would formalize a process for consultations, so we do not have any kind of a wild-west scenario with aerodromes cropping up all over the place. Instead, the public would know very clearly, when the regulations are complete, that they would have opportunities to be fully consulted to either expand or modify operations at an existing aerodrome or, before a new aerodrome is built, they would have the opportunity to weigh in. We think that is a major improvement. The member should support that.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to inform you that I will share my time with the member for Surrey North.

I rise today to speak to the Conservative government's budget implementation bill because it does not meet our expectations, nor does it meet the expectations of my constituents in Hochelaga.

This budget implementation bill is the second one this government has introduced since last February's budget. The Conservatives could have taken this opportunity to fix some of the flaws in the budget and to address the consequences the budget has for Canadian families. However, as usual, the government introduced another omnibus bill that has 400 clauses and is more than 460 pages long. It amends dozens of laws on subjects that were never mentioned in the 2014-15 budget speech.

The NDP does actually support some of the measures in this bill, which we have been asking for for quite some time, such as an end to pay-to-pay fees in the telecom and broadcasting industry and the creation of a DNA data bank to help in missing persons cases, which we have been calling for since 2007. We also support the measures to fix the mess the Conservatives created themselves when they introduced the Social Security Tribunal. That tribunal has been sloppily run and has delayed the review of several important cases for Canadian citizens.

It is too bad that this is such a mammoth bill, because I could have voted in favour of those measures that I do support. However, I have no choice but to vote against Bill C-43 as it stands, because it fails to correct several omissions and it attacks some of the most vulnerable people in our society or does nothing to help them.

Of course, as we all know, every Conservative minister likes to add a cookie-cutter phrase to their talking points at the end of all the so-called answers they give in question period, to remind us that we voted against the proposed measures.

Before anyone asks, I would like to give some of the reasons why I will be voting against this omnibus bill. First of all, the new Minister of Finance had an opportunity to correct the approach taken by his predecessor, who felt that the expiry of certain social housing agreements was an opportunity to save money and who planned to use that opportunity to balance his budget by creating a huge social and economic deficit for people who need government help.

When we show the government examples of how the expiry of these agreements affects certain individuals and families, they do not really seem to understand what we are talking about and just say that at the end of the agreement, the mortgage is paid off and the government's contribution is no longer necessary. Once again, I am forced to explain to the minister how these things work in the hope that in his next budget, he might consider those families that have a hard time making it to the end of the month, not just the small percentage of wealthy people who do not necessarily need any help from the government.

Long-term social housing agreements are two-pronged. Of course, they enable social housing projects to pay the mortgage, but they also enable low-income families to receive subsidies in the form of rent supplements. That means that they will not have to spend more than 30% of their income on housing. It also means that they will have at least a little bit of money for the family's other essential needs, such as food.

What happens when these agreements come to an end? Two things. Since they were long-term agreements—over a period of 25, 30 or 50 years—some of the housing projects have deteriorated over the years and need renovations. My colleagues opposite own a residence, I am sure. They should be able to understand that. On the other hand, and this is probably the most pernicious effect of the expiry of these long-term agreements, eliminating the subsidies means that some families will have to pay as much as \$500 more a month for housing, sometimes even more.

Not understanding that \$500 a month for a single mother is a lot of money is like saying that the nutrition north program is effective because it reduces the cost of groceries by \$110 a month, even

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though it can cost as much as \$1,200 a week to feed a family in Canada's north. I have seen and heard it myself: a bag of apples can cost \$9 and a pumpkin can cost \$75.

● (1530)

Anyone saying that would have to be joking.

However, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development does not really make me laugh, and neither does the Minister of Finance or the Minister of State for Social Development.

Before anyone suggests that we are the only ones calling on the federal government to play a role in making housing more affordable in Canada, let us look some of the pre-budget requests that some major stakeholders have made.

The Canadian Housing & Renewal Association is asking that the government reinvest in social housing the money that was freed up when the long-term agreements expired. It is also asking the government to provide incentives for increasing the supply of rental housing in Canada.

The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada is asking that the government continue to provide financial assistance to low-income households living in co-operative housing when their agreement expires. It also wants the government to set targets for the construction of new affordable housing.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain are also calling for the monies reserved for long-term agreements to be renewed in order to address the housing crisis in a number of communities across the country.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association is calling for the creation of tax incentives to encourage the construction of rental housing and promote innovation in housing. By the way, innovation in this sector would be most welcome in the north.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the decision to stop investing in the construction of new social housing—a decision made by the Liberal government in power at the time—and the federal government's disengagement from anything to do with housing.

Since then, no new social housing has been built in Canada with the financial assistance of the federal government, except for when my former leader, Jack Layton, managed to get an agreement from Paul Martin's Liberals. It is time for that to change.

Let us now talk about the fight against homelessness. The minister could also have fixed his predecessor's mistakes. First of all, and at the very least, he could have restored the budget of the homelessness partnering strategy. The 2013-14 budget was cut from \$134.8 million to \$119 million, a \$15.8 million reduction.

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As well, he could have announced the indexing of funding for the fight against homelessness, which has never increased since it was established in the late 1990s, and covered the shortfalls of organizations that fund fewer and fewer services every year even though demand is increasing.

Furthermore, the Minister of Finance could have announced that the HPS would retain its general character and remain community-based, as a number of groups in Quebec and Montreal and the Government of Quebec have called for.

The Conservatives accuse us of not believing in the Housing First program, which was proven to be effective by the At Home/Chez soi initiative. To that, I would say that if the members opposite truly wanted to make housing a priority, they would renew the \$1.7 billion reserved for long-term social housing agreements and let the community groups continue their excellent work on the ground. They use a variety of approaches, in addition to providing housing.

We need new blood in government. We need measures that will help Canadian families, not just the wealthy and major corporations like the oil companies and banks, which already make huge profits and do not need government assistance to survive.

In 2015, the New Democratic Party will offer Canadians a viable alternative to this government and ways to make life more affordable for families.

In addition to fixing the mistakes that the Conservatives and the Liberals before them—they have been taking turns in office since Confederation—made when it comes to housing and combatting homelessness, the NDP will introduce a federal minimum wage of \$15 an hour so that families where both parents are working do not have to go to the food bank to feed their children.

What is more, we will implement a Canada-wide program to create child care spaces that cost less than \$15 a day. This type of program has proven to be effective in Quebec, where it has allowed more women to return to the labour force.

We will also change the retirement age back to 65, cancel the \$36 billion in cuts to provincial health transfers, and protect the employment insurance fund by prohibiting the government from taking money from it and essentially stealing EI contributions, as successive Liberal and Conservative governments have done.

• (1535)

All that is just the beginning. In 2015, for the first time in history, Canadians will have a real progressive, social democratic option.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated my colleague's speech because she spoke about affordable housing.

Today, I participated in a meeting at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. First nations are also saying that there is a shortage of housing. A June 2013 report by the Department of Indian Affairs indicated that \$8.2 billion was needed to help fund the needs of first nations.

It is important to understand that the annual budget for infrastructure on reserves is only \$1 billion. The \$8.2 billion

includes \$6 billion that is lacking for adequate housing and \$1.2 billion for safe drinking water.

In light of this, I would like my colleague to elaborate on the need for housing that is not only affordable but also adequate and talk about the cuts that the government has made to this department.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, it will be my pleasure to do so.

I went with my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou to visit his riding last September. We went to some Inuit villages and a Cree village, visiting some houses. I would like to thank the people living in those houses for allowing us to enter.

Some of the places I visited housed families of nine, 10 or 13 people. There was also an incredible amount of mould. In one bathroom in particular, walls that should have been white were actually black. There is a serious mould problem. The houses are not adapted to either the climate or aboriginal cultures.

Think about it. If you brought a deer home, where would you put it? Aboriginal houses, which are built like ours, are not adapted to their culture. There are all kinds of problems related to housing in the north. There is a shortage of adequate, safe housing.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think Conservatives ever get outside of the Ottawa bubble.

As a budget bill, one would think there would be something in there that Canadians would want to have implemented or addressed in the House. Members of my community of Surrey North certainly want to see jobs for them addressed. They certainly want to see health care addressed. They certainly want child care programs in their local communities addressed.

That is what I am hearing, but there is nothing in this budget implementation bill addressing those issues. What does the member hear from her constituents and is it included in this bill?

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to share what I heard from people I met while going door to door. They said that we need to get rid of the current government. For various reasons, the government is not listening to the people.

The members on this side of the House go to see people. We consult them. I did a tour about housing so that I could talk to people about their living conditions and determine what their needs are. We did the same thing for work and employment insurance and many other issues, including one bill that made no sense. I do not remember the name of it. We consult people beforehand and we listen to what they have to say. That does not seem to be the case on the other side of the House.

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For example, the minister decided he would change the name of the Canadian Museum of Civilization to the Canadian Museum of History. He said he had held consultations, but that was not the case. In reality, he asked people what they thought they would find in a museum if the name was changed from the Canadian Museum of Civilization to the Canadian Museum of History.

Were those really consultations? I think not.

[English]

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House on behalf of my constituents from Surrey North. Today I will speak to Bill C-43, the budget implementation act.

Given the track record of the Conservatives, it is no surprise to me that they again have moved time allocation on this bill. I am lucky enough to get a chance to speak on behalf of my constituents, however, I know many members from the NDP and Liberal side, and maybe the Conservative side, will not get the opportunity to represent their constituents.

There is no possible way that a 460-page bill, which contains more than 400 clauses, could be adequately studied, analyzed and debated under this type of time restriction. Is that a surprise? Well, I am not surprised at all. Under the government, omnibus bills that amend dozens of acts at a time and pushed through the House under time allocation are unfortunately becoming the norm. It is unfortunate that the government insists on following this anti-democratic process time and time again. However, after three and a half years, I have recognized that the Conservative government is not planning on changing its ways any time soon.

There is a laundry list of things in the bill before us. It talks about temporary foreign workers, pay-to-pay fees, airports, the Canadian Polar Commission and the EI job credit. The Conservatives are also beating up on refugees in the bill.

However, I want to talk about what is important to my constituents. When I go back to Surrey, I like talking to people and finding out what their issues are, but none of those issues have been addressed in the bill.

I often say when we are on the Hill, that Ottawa is like a little bubble. We need to get outside of the Hill and hear what Canadians want. However, I get the feeling that the Conservatives are still living in that bubble, because what Canadians are saying is not being addressed in the House by the government.

I come from Surrey North, which is a dynamic, vibrant and fast-growing city in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. I am extremely proud to represent a portion of such a diverse and interesting city. However, Surrey is facing many pressures and challenges that require action and assistance from the federal government to solve.

Surrey's challenges range from a lack of affordable housing, aging infrastructure, inadequate public transit and serious issues around crime and poverty. Federal funding and support is sorely needed to make inroads to address these challenges in my city.

I continue to hear from my constituents on the problem of public transit in Surrey, and I have to agree. Surrey is the second largest city

in British Columbia, soon to be the largest city in the upcoming years. It is growing at a rate of about 12,000 to 13,000 new residents annually. As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, and the fastest-growing city in metropolitan Vancouver, there is a clear need for infrastructure funding to support this growth. Public transportation is increasingly a problem for a such a fast-growing city. Although the population of Surrey continues to grow at an astounding rate, public transportation has not kept pace.

The SkyTrain is Surrey's most efficient public transit connection to other cities in the Lower Mainland, such as New Westminster, Burnaby and Vancouver. However, SkyTrain service in Surrey has not been expanded since 1994 when three new stations were put in—all in my riding—but nothing has been done since then.

Twenty years later, the face of Surrey has changed dramatically, and it is well past the time that the federal government commit to funding critical infrastructure, such as the expansion of public transit in Surrey. Residents in my community of Surrey North will tell members that the public transit system in Surrey is inadequate, and I hear that quite often. There are long wait times and convoluted routes to get from one point in the city to another.

The city of Surrey is currently working to secure funding for a light rail transit network that will connect different town centres in the city as well as connect Surrey to cities in our area, such as Langley. This is an important step forward for our city and a very important investment that is critical to ensuring Surrey remains a livable and connected city.

● (1545)

It disappoints me greatly to see that the budget does not allocate funding to important projects that are critical to continued growth and development of major cities, such as Surrey. Other cities across the country are facing similar pressures with regard to public transit. We hear from the FCM on a regular basis about the lack of funding for transit infrastructure development for the cities across this nation.

Just last week, my colleague, the member for Parkdale—High Park, pointed out the issues that Toronto had experienced with the transit system not keeping pace with the population growth. This is not an isolated issue. Investment in infrastructure is necessary to ensure that our cities continue to be some of the best and most livable in the world.

In terms of infrastructure, public transit is not the only issue facing my community of Surrey North. As I have mentioned many times in the House, the aging Pattullo Bridge is a major concern to my constituents. I have been very vocal in requesting that the federal government step in and play a role in regional infrastructure planning and development. The 76-year-old Pattullo Bridge, which was built for a 50-year lifespan, now poses a significant safety concern.

The Golden Ears Bridge and the Port Mann Bridge, which both feed either directly or indirectly into Surrey North, are the only toll bridges in western Canada and the only toll bridges coming into my riding.

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Many Surrey residents continue to commute across the Fraser River to go to work. The future of the Pattullo Bridge will have a significant impact on the residents of Surrey, especially on the residents of Surrey North, as it is the last non-toll bridge that feeds directly into our city.

I have been anxiously waiting for the federal government to commit to participating in infrastructure planning and development in the south Fraser River region. However, this budget proves that this is not a priority for the government.

Municipalities receive only 8% of the tax revenue, but are responsible for 60% of the development. This equation does not add up, and it is clear that the federal government has a responsibility to allocate funding to regional development and infrastructure in a reasonable manner that creates sustainable and livable cities.

This is not being done right now. It is not being addressed in this budget at all.

Finally, I hear concerns about crime in my community very frequently. Residents are concerned about the impact that crime is having on our community and what is being done to reduce the amount of crime.

Frankly, the tough-on-crime government has done nothing to help people in Surrey North. Instead, we have seen funding for policing downloaded to municipalities. Practical and cost-effective solutions such as prevention programs are not being utilized to reduce crime. For example, research shows that community-based programs focused on gang intervention, after-school mentoring and after-school recreation are promising at preventing crime.

Programs like this are practical, cost-effective and contribute to community building, as well as to the goal of reducing crime. My motion on youth gang prevention takes a similar approach by calling on the government to provide stable, long-term funding for youth gang crime prevention and intervention programs.

However, once again, I see no funding allocated to these types of common sense prevention programs that could help reduce the amount of crime in riding of Surrey North and communities across the country.

This approach of the Conservative government is very problematic. I am not surprised in the least that the budget is out of touch with the needs of everyday Canadians. This budget is an opportunity to truly address the needs of Canadians, however, the government has again failed Canadians.

I want to take this opportunity to wish all Canadians right across our country a very merry Christmas and a happy new year, and be safe.

• (1550)

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened diligently to my colleague across the way. It almost seems as if the New Democrats are a little confused as to their story. The opposition cannot seem to get its story straight. First, New Democrats accuse us of not consulting, then, when we do consult with the very association that represents small businesses, they refuse to listen.

Could the member opposite stand and agree with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which was consulted, that increased payroll taxes are not in the best interest of Canadian small businesses?

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, I was a small businessman before I became a member of Parliament, and I know the very issues that concern small businesses. It looks like the Conservatives never get outside the Ottawa bubble. This demonstrates their Ottawa bubble.

I will tell members what small businesses want. They want the Visa and MasterCard fees to be lowered. They are being gouged by those corporations. They want bank fees lowered for Interac and all of that. They want small business taxes reduced, and that is what New Democrats will bring to Ottawa in 2015 when we form the government.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the member's comments regarding infrastructure. This has been a significant issue. At a time when the government should be investing in infrastructure, there has been a significant cut in actual infrastructure expenditures this year. It has been in excess of 85%.

My question for the member is just to reaffirm that investing in infrastructure makes good economic sense and that the government is not spending and allowing for infrastructure growth to take place in this fiscal year. Conservatives might talk about a huge commitment to infrastructure, but that is well into the future. The money being spent and released is actually down by more than 85%. I would ask him to comment on that.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, I would have to agree with the member for Winnipeg North that the government talks about infrastructure and does not deliver. It has not delivered. Equally, the Liberals also talk about infrastructure funding but actually never deliver.

I have talked to many members in my community in the city of Surrey, to councillors in the city of Vancouver, and to the FCM. Across this country, there is a lack of funding for cities to improve infrastructure, whether it is building roads, improving transit, or other needs that are being downloaded to the municipalities. I can assure everyone that New Democrats will deliver in 2015 for cities and provinces across this country.

• (1555)

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate the fact that there are over 460 pages in this budget bill, with over 400 clauses, and there have been time limits on it as well. There are things New Democrats agree with and things we do not agree with, and that is why we cannot support this bill. If the Conservatives were willing to split the bill, we would be glad to discuss it in a little more detail.

There was a question across the way about small businesses. We know that the government is not connected to this. Maybe the member would like to comment on this specific quote. It was said by Mike Moffatt, of the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario. He stated:

...the proposed "Small Business Job Credit" has major structural flaws that, in many cases, give firms an incentive to fire workers and cut salaries....

The way this proposed system is designed is that the maximum benefit a company can receive from firing a worker and going under the \$15,000 threshold far exceeds the maximum benefit a small business can receive from hiring an additional worker...

I am wondering if the member could comment on that.

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu:** Mr. Speaker, I would agree with that quote. In fact, this is a wrongheaded approach. In the last federal election, we said that the only way to generate jobs is by supporting local small businesses, and that is what we will do. That is what generates jobs in this economy. The Conservatives have failed to do that.

**Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I would like to note that I will be splitting my time with my colleague and friend, the Chief Government Whip.

Since taking office in 2006, our Conservative government has been focused on what matters most to Canadians, and that is jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity.

We are on track to achieve balance by 2015, because we have been prudent. We cannot afford to risk the future of our country by engaging in reckless spending schemes and wild tax hikes. We will not lose focus.

Coming into government in 2006, the first thing our government did was fulfill some of our major campaign commitments. We cut the GST, created the universal child care benefit for families with children, and paid down the debt. In fact, we paid down about \$38 billion worth of federal debt, which put us in good stead when bad economic times hit in the last quarter of 2008. This latter decision proved to be one of the best decisions our government made, as we would find out later.

Our government also created our economic roadmap, advantage Canada. It was an economic plan designed to position Canada for future prosperity. The basic principles of advantage Canada remain as relevant today as when our government created it back in 2006: no reckless spending, and lower taxes.

When Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008, subprime mortgages in the United States caused a ripple effect through global economies and credit markets. Well, extraordinary times required extraordinary measures, and our government stepped up. When the dust began to settle, Canada was not only the last G7 country into the recession but the first G7 country out of the recession. Why? It was because our economic action plan worked. By paying down debt at the outset, we had more flexibility to take the necessary measures we did.

As a result of our economic performance, Canada has developed a great brand around the world. In fact, Tom Donohue, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, has said about our government's achievements: "The great Canadian miracle is something we should follow."

Notwithstanding the creation of 1.2 million net new jobs since the end of the recession, Bloomberg stating that Canada is the best place in the world to set up business, and our consistent AAA credit rating, we are not out of the woods yet. The Canadian economy still faces potential challenges from abroad. We must continue to take action where and when necessary. We must solidify our gains and take

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action now to mitigate against any potential dark economic clouds that may drift in from elsewhere.

Although the World Bank has ranked Canada's banking and financial sector as the world's best for six years in a row, our government has continuously been on the forefront to strengthen and bolster our financial sector so that it will remain number one.

As I noted, since the start of the global economic financial crisis, our government has implemented a number of measures to maintain Canada's financial sector's advantage and to reinforce stability for the sector. I want to highlight two of them contained within Bill C-43 that will continue to build on our strong foundation of stability within our financial system.

First are proposed changes to the Payment Clearing and Settlement Act. Second are proposed changes to the Canadian Payments Act. Both are key to maintaining Canada in the forefront of financial sector stability, otherwise known as the Canada brand.

The Payment Clearing and Settlement Act provides the Bank of Canada with the legislative authority and power to oversee clearing and settlement systems, also called financial market infrastructures, or FMIs, that may be operated in such a manner as to pose systematic risk to the Canadian financial system. Systematic risk arises when the inability of one participant to meet its obligations to the financial market infrastructure could cause other participants to be unable to meet their obligations.

The Payment Clearing and Settlement Act is the federal government's recognition of the essential role of major FMIs in the Canadian economy and the importance of regulatory oversight of these FMIs. The Payment Clearing and Settlement Act provides the Bank of Canada with two main oversight responsibilities: first, designating FMIs that have the potential to pose systematic risk as subject to bank oversight; and second, overseeing designated FMIs to ensure that they are adequately controlling systematic risk.

The amendments to the Payment Clearing and Settlement Act would expand and enhance the Bank of Canada's oversight of financial market infrastructures to ensure that risks to financial market infrastructures can be identified and addressed in a proactive and timely manner. These amendments would address the gaps in oversight identified in our government's review of the system undertaken in 2012. Addressing these gaps and the oversight of major clearing systems are critical to the efficient functioning of the Canadian financial system and the economy.

● (1600)

What are the gaps these changes seek to address? Under the current regime, the Bank of Canada's oversight is limited to clearing and settlement systems that pose systemic risk. It does not extend to non-systemically important systems for which a failure can have a serious impact on the economy and on general confidence in the payment system.

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In addition, some of the regulatory tools currently available to the Bank of Canada are insufficient for addressing certain types of risk in clearing and settlement systems. These proposed amendments would broaden the scope of oversight to prominent payment systems and would enhance some of the tools available to the Bank of Canada to respond to these risks. The proposed changes would also expand the definition of “systemic risk” to capture disruptive effects, not just on financial institutions but on financial markets and their participants. The changes would also better align the definition with international standards.

How would the changes impact the industry? In fulfilling its oversight role, the Bank of Canada uses a co-operative approach to ensure that owners and operators of clearing settlement systems are adequately controlling risk. The changes would ensure that the Bank of Canada would be able to backstop this co-operative approach should it need to respond to risks in clearing and settlement systems. These changes would allow the Bank of Canada to respond to potential risks in a more timely and proactive manner.

The second set of amendments would be to the Canadian Payments Act.

The Canadian Payments Association owns and operates national payments and clearing systems. These systems are used by financial institutions to transfer money among themselves. Types of payments cleared and settled through the CPA system include payroll, debit transactions, and wire payments.

Everyone is in agreement that the CPA is a capable owner and operator of these systems. These amendments would improve the CPA's governance by, first, introducing greater independent decision-making to its board of directors by establishing a majority independent board, led by an independent chair; second, improving the CPA's accountability to government and the public by requiring the CPA to submit a corporate plan and to publish an annual report; and third, expanding the power of the Minister of Finance to issue directives to the CPA. These measures would ensure that the CPA system was operated for the benefit of Canadian consumers, businesses, and the economy. They would also support competition and innovation in the payments industry.

Canadians make roughly 25 billion payments, worth more than \$44 trillion, each year. The payments system is vital to consumers and to the continued strength of the Canadian economy. Advances in information and communications technology are changing the way Canadians pay for goods and services.

While payments systems are evolving, they must always be safe and sound so that Canadians can have confidence in them. That is why we are seeking these changes. I look forward to the support of all members of this House for these amendments and for Bill C-43.

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### ROYAL ASSENT

•(1615)

[English]

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, it is the pleasure of His Excellency the Governor General that this honourable House attend him immediately in the Senate chamber.

Accordingly the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

*And being returned:*

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend His Excellency the Governor General in the Senate chamber His Excellency was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

C-3, An Act to enact the Aviation Industry Indemnity Act, to amend the Aeronautics Act, the Canada Marine Act, the Marine Liability Act and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts—Chapter 29.

S-213, An Act respecting Lincoln Alexander Day—Chapter 30.

C-13, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act—Chapter 31.

C-8, An Act to amend the Copyright Act and the Trade-marks Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts—Chapter 32.

S-1001, An Act to amend the Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada Act.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskas- ing, Aboriginal Affairs; the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier, Consumer Protection.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2014 ACT, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-43, A Second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 11, 2014 and other measures, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for the budget implementation act and to particularly highlight the fact that it moves the DNA missing persons index one step closer to reality.

I cannot imagine anything as heartbreaking as having a family member, particularly a child, go missing. That nightmare became a reality more than 20 years ago for Judy Peterson. Her daughter Lindsey disappeared on August 2, 1993, on her way to meet friends in Courtenay in the Comox Valley in British Columbia. Judy's life has never been the same.

*Government Orders*

For the parents of a missing child, the search never ends. Even when every lead has been followed and every tool has been used, there remains a determination and a hope, even when it is also tinged with fear. This was Judy's experience, and she pursued every avenue to try to bring certainty. Once inside the system, Judy realized that there were potentially useful tools that remained completely unavailable. She learned that, although DNA could be used for criminal justice purposes, it could not be used to compare missing persons to existing indices.

Canada had innovative, effective DNA technology, but it was simply not available to missing persons investigators. She also discovered that even in cases where unidentified human remains were found that the police wanted to check, there was no pre-existing database that could be used for missing persons. That meant that the family had to be contacted, permission sought, and samples taken each and every time. Members can imagine the toll this would take, as people would have to relive their loss, wonder about the outcome, and be left in turmoil when, once again, they are left with no certainty.

Even worse than getting these calls is not getting them. Without a national data bank, it is much more difficult to draw links between crime scenes and missing persons. Even where provinces have good cross-checking systems in place, these do not extend across provincial borders. Judy knew that this system did not serve either investigators or the families of missing persons. She knew that it could be better, that it had to be better. What followed was years of tireless advocacy for the creation of a national DNA-based missing persons index.

I first met Judy Peterson in August of 2013 in Comox in my riding when I attended the teddy bear picnic, which was sponsored by Judy and the Missing Children Society of Canada. This event was held to mark the passing of 20 years since Lindsey's disappearance. Judy Peterson moved away from the Comox Valley to Sidney near Victoria, and she had been campaigning for most of the intervening years without our paths ever crossing. When we finally did meet, I was completely touched by her story. I made a promise to Judy that day that I would fully commit to advocate for a missing persons DNA database. I knew that Judy was her own best spokesperson, so I did everything I could to open doors for her. I am happy to say that my cabinet colleagues were as touched by her story and her passion for change as I was. We were all genuinely moved by what we heard, and we agreed that the missing persons DNA database is an essential measure.

There were a number of pieces that had to fall into place, and the first was securing funding for the changes. Therefore, in his speech to the House on the introduction of budget 2014, then finance minister Jim Flaherty highlighted our government's commitment to create a DNA-based missing persons index. Judy Peterson was in the gallery that day, and seeing her there as Jim mentioned her by name and acknowledged all of the work she had done was the most memorable and emotional moment of my 20 years in Ottawa.

• (1620)

The 2014 economic action plan committed \$8.1 million over five years and \$1.3 million ongoing to fund a DNA-based missing persons index.

Jim Flaherty has such a great legacy of public service, and I see this initiative as part of that great legacy. His commitment to doing the right thing will help many families who are going through one of the most painful things a family can go through, the disappearance of a loved one.

Making the missing persons index a reality takes more than just money. The budget implementation bill we are debating today includes the legislative changes that are necessary to follow through on our commitments in the economic action plan, including the DNA-based missing persons index.

Specifically, it would amend the DNA Identification Act to establish a new humanitarian application to support investigations of missing persons and unidentified human remains and would allow the creation of new DNA-based indices. For this I am grateful to my colleagues, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Justice, who have both worked to create the necessary changes.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who has worked closely with Judy. The Green Party leader provided meaningful personal support to Judy and has been supportive of my actions as well. I know that, like me, every contributor to this process has been moved by Judy's story and motivated to help her and families like hers.

I am proud to stand here today to speak on behalf of the budget implementation act and what it means for families who are suffering. I am proud of the actions our government has taken to create a justice system that is sensitive to the needs of victims and that improves safety and security for all Canadians.

Our government is taking common sense steps to support economic growth, while continuing to support Canadian families and communities. We are continuing to build on our record of strong and consistent fiscal management. We have made the tough decisions that need to be made to return the budget to balance, while continuing to increase transfers to provinces, invest in infrastructure and skills training, and keep taxes low. It has not always been easy, but our work is paying off. We are almost there.

The global economy is still fragile, and as recent events confirmed, the world can be an uncertain place. However, we are meeting these challenges and continuing to provide steady leadership in difficult times.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the work the member has been doing in advocating for this missing persons DNA database, but I think, when we look at the amount of information that the Conservatives are putting in budget bills, we have to question why they are putting certain information in there when they could actually be debated in a better venue and get the proper support that they need.

*Government Orders*

Just to this point, because his speech was quite emotional with respect to the DNA database, but what about the missing and murdered indigenous women of this country? We still have so much work to do.

I am just wondering, because 1,181 cases of missing and murdered women have been reported between 1980 and 2012. Of these, 225 cases remain. When we look at the ongoing call, I am wondering why he will not support a national inquiry into the missing and murdered indigenous women.

• (1625)

**Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I read two questions into the statement from the member.

First, the budget implementation act is a necessary bill to bring portions of the budget to life that require statutory enabling legislation. When I talked with various people, including other members of Parliament who wished to promote the DNA missing persons index, across parties we saw the budget implementation act as a way to get it done. After 20 years, was this not a very good idea? Therefore, I do not take any criticism that this is an inappropriate vehicle for making this budgetary commitment a reality.

In terms of the missing and murdered aboriginal women, the database would actually help improve the solve rate. It would help investigations immensely, and it is one more thing that we in government are doing to make sure we are able to solve cases like this.

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his clearly heartfelt comments about the DNA database for missing persons.

One of the very few advantages of debating an omnibus bill is that we in the opposition can ask almost any question. In fact, I am sure I could ask a question about kitchen sinks, because there is probably something about kitchen sinks in the omnibus bill.

However, I would like to talk about income splitting. Clearly, the experts have said the \$50,000 transfer on income splitting is only going to benefit about 15% of Canadians, experts including the late Jim Flaherty, who said the same thing. The government was clearly aware of this, so it surrounded it with other tax benefits for children.

My question for my hon. colleague is this. Does he think it is fair to be giving \$2 billion to 15% of the population?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The Chair is not certain whether there is a reference to the kitchen sink in the budget implementation bill. I am also not sure that this measure was in the budget implementation, but we will go to the Chief Government Whip for a response.

**Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I know the Liberals have an issue with income splitting. I asked the question the other day of one of the Liberal members after his speech, as to why the Liberals, as government, would choose to reverse income splitting for seniors, which has been widely popular. I know they are trying to avoid talking about income splitting for seniors, which has been in place for quite some time. However, if they are coherent and consistent, then they would reverse that as well as the family income splitting.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to speak on this bill this afternoon. I have a number of thoughts that I would like to share with the House.

I will start by following some comments from the Conservative Chief Government Whip regarding the DNA data bank. It is tragic that well over 1,200 aboriginal women and girls have been murdered or have gone missing across Canada. There are stakeholders from virtually all regions and areas, including chiefs, municipalities, provincial premiers, and many other individuals.

Earlier today, the Assembly of First Nations met in Winnipeg. A brave young girl, Rinelle Harper, survived a horrific incident, and we give her full credit for having the courage and strength to survive what many would never have been able to. Left for dead after being sexually assaulted and beaten along the Assiniboine River, today she came out in a very bold way and asked for a national inquiry. The Prime Minister has been challenged on numerous occasions to call for that national inquiry. I am not aware of any stakeholder outside of the Prime Minister's Office who is against having a national inquiry. If we were to have a free vote on the issue of calling for a national inquiry, I suspect a number of Conservative members of Parliament would acknowledge the need for it.

The Chief Government Whip was correct at the beginning of his comments. I did not get it all written down, but he said in essence that it is heartbreaking when a child goes missing. What parent would ever want to hear those words from a police authority, or see day after day go by without not knowing where their child might be?

This is something that has happened far too often in our communities, particularly within the aboriginal community. There is a need for a public inquiry into the issue. It is more than just a crime. We have had two serious high-profile incidents in Manitoba, in Winnipeg. One was at the Red River, where a young girl was not as fortunate and was deceased when she was pulled out. Then we had Rinelle Harper.

I believe that the Prime Minister should be calling an inquiry, and there is no better time to do it than before the end of the year. I have heard appeals for an inquiry being initiated by individual provinces and two first nations, and I suspect that it even goes beyond that.

In my own riding of Winnipeg North, young girls and women have been murdered or have gone missing. By one count, I believe it was at 12 or 14 girls and women of all ages.

There is a need for us to have the inquiry. I appeal to the Prime Minister to recognize that need and to join with everyone else who seems to understand that it is more than just a crime that has taken place and that we need to get to the root of it. A public inquiry would go a long way in addressing a great number of the concerns that have been raised on this issue.

*Government Orders*

•(1630)

Today we are talking about a budget implementation bill that is very wide in its scope. I have listened to a lot of the speeches with respect to this particular piece of legislation. The speeches dealt with everything from tax credits to infrastructure to old age supplements. The discussion has been very wide and quite often very specific on certain aspects of the legislation. For example, an earlier speaker talked about the DNA data bank that would be created.

It is important that we recognize that this piece of legislation, like other budget implementation bills presented by the current majority Conservative government, goes far beyond a traditional budget implementation bill.

We have seen in the chamber that the attitude of the majority Conservative-Reform Party government towards governing has been very disrespectful to democracy. We have seen record numbers of time allocation. Is it any surprise that this bill is under time allocation? What do we mean by "time allocation"? It means that the government is invoking closure. Time allocation is a form of closure.

There is no doubt that in majority government situations, and even in minority situations, time allocation is sometimes necessary. However, never in the history of Canada have we witnessed a government incorporate time allocation as part of the normal process of passing legislation, nor have we witnessed a government that has used thousands of pages in a few budget implementation bills in order to pass entire legislative agendas.

The government, and the Prime Minister and his office, has been riding rough over individual members' abilities to have the dialogue and the debate that is important to take place inside this chamber.

In fairness to the government, I do recognize that the official opposition has also played fairly loose with respect to its positioning on the issue of time allocation. I was very disappointed by the New Democratic Party, as the official opposition, preventing standing committees from even meeting or being able to travel in situations when there was a need to travel. As an official opposition, the NDP has not recognized that.

In the comments that have been provided by members on both sides of the House, what are the big issues that continue to come up? I have had opportunity, through questions and answers, to talk about it. The issue of the middle class is something that the leader of the Liberal Party has raised consistently ever since he became leader.

If we attempt searches with respect to that issue of trying to raise the profile and the importance of the middle class, we would find that the member for Papineau has made it a core issue, not only as an issue for today but as an issue that we are going to fight for.

Then we have this recent budget, as my colleague from Montreal pointed out, with the income-splitting program. We had a Conservative member stand and say that this is Mr. Flaherty's last real contribution in a tangible way, in the form of a budget implementation bill that would put into place his budget.

What did Mr. Flaherty actually have to say about the income split? We know that he opposed it, and he opposed it for good reason. Like the Liberal caucus, he recognized that the middle class of Canada

should not have to foot the \$2 billion bill as a result of 15% or less of Canadians receiving the tax benefit.

•(1635)

That is why Mr. Flaherty opposed it. We in the Liberal Party agreed with him. We believe it is not an appropriate way to provide more than \$2 billion in tax breaks, because there is a cost. Who is going to be paying that cost? It will be the middle-class taxpayer who will be footing the bill, and that is wrong.

I have heard numerous questions from the opposition to the government in regard to the EI program. The government talks a lot about the small business grant that it is issuing. It announced the tax break for small businesses back in September. What we have found out is that there was never any analysis done of it. We have no idea of the number of jobs it is going to create. In fact, in a very perverse way, some small businesses will be provided with an incentive to fire people, to reduce their payroll in order to be eligible for the grant.

It is not just Liberals who are saying that. Even editorial columnists and other stakeholders have said that. The Liberal Party responded to that.

**Wladyslaw Lizon:** Which is?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, good question. "Which is?" I could not have planted a better question than that.

Quite frankly, it is a very simple program, an EI program that would in fact generate tens of thousands of jobs in every region of our country. It is an EI premium break for every new hire that a small business takes on.

Again, independent sources outside of the Liberal Party and outside of the Liberal caucus have acknowledged that it is in fact a program that would make a difference and that thousands of jobs would be created as a direct result if the government incorporated the Liberal plan.

I am disappointed that the government did not recognize that, but I am not overly surprised. We see it in committee, where Liberals will often bring amendments to improve legislation and the government will turn them down, even if it means going to the Senate, where Conservatives will amend it in the way Liberals tried to amend it in committee. The Conservatives did not want to be embarrassed in House of Commons committees, so they had to let the Senate clean up their mess.

We shared a very good idea. Who would have benefited from the EI premium break? It would have been Canadians as a whole. As I said, tens of thousands of jobs would have been created in every region of our country had the government taken and followed the lead that was demonstrated by the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

Let us talk about infrastructure. Infrastructure is important to our economy and to our social fabric. Where is the government on infrastructure? It has gone missing. Conservatives talk about committing billions of dollars to infrastructure programs, but it is over 10 or 20 years. In reality today, it is an 85% cut at a time when we should be investing in infrastructure. It is an actual 85% cut, year over year, in terms of expenditures.

*Government Orders*

Members can think of the impact that is going to have on virtually every community in every region of our country once again. It is a big mistake. The Conservatives have the audacity to say that they are committed to infrastructure when nothing could be further from the truth.

Then we have trade. Again, we hear a lot of discussion about trade going back and forth. It is interesting. The Conservatives came up with the European trade agreement. The Liberal caucus has always been very supportive of the idea and the principle of trade. We have consistently been there to support that idea.

● (1640)

In fact, it was the Liberal Party that handed the current government a multi-billion dollar trade surplus.

**An hon. member:** Oh right.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, yes, right, it is true. That is the reality.

Now, what does the government do? It signs all these trade agreements. Great, it is nice to see some trade agreements signed. The trade agreement with Europe is something that we have indicated that, in principle, we support because we recognize its value.

I like the trade file, because it clearly shows the differences between all three political parties inside the House of Commons.

I was very disappointed by the leader of the official opposition, but it is not the first time. The member travelled overseas to France, and while there, he dumped on Canada, again. Members will remember that when he went down to Washington, he dumped on pipelines and talked about the Dutch disease, which he called an attack on western Canada, our prairies. Well, I have not forgotten that. However, in Paris, France, he starts criticizing Canada's trade and the trade agreement.

On the one hand, NDP members, at times, try to give the impression that they can be in favour of trade under certain situations. I have witnessed this, as many Canadians have. However, when it really comes down to it, we are starting to see the NDP move back to where they were. We are okay with that, because maybe they will come back into the corner over here. The NDP talks as if trade is bad for Canada, but that attitude will have a negative impact on Canada and our economy.

Canada is a trading nation. Liberals recognize that and support it. Our policy actions, whether in government or opposition, have been consistent on that file. We are the only party that has actually been consistent on the trade file, because we recognize just how important it is.

I only have two minutes, but eight or nine other points to make, so I will prioritize.

There has been a lot of discussion on the subject of veterans, and I know that it would please my colleague from Guelph and my leader if I spent a bit of time on the issue.

The government's underspending by hundreds of millions of dollars—I would suggest intentionally—has resulted in cuts to

services, including offices across Canada. There is even a failure to acknowledge the need to repair memorials and gravesites, as well as other cuts that have taken place in that area. The government has dropped the file on this.

As my colleague from Guelph pointed out, the Minister of Employment and Social Development came up with a few million dollars to hire some people to deal with EI issues. Where is the Minister of Veterans Affairs? He has gone missing in more ways than one, I must say. It is time that we replace the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Also, Canada Post made an announcement to cut door-to-door delivery, which was a wrong and bad decision. However, the Conservative government supports that bad decision. I believe it was most inappropriate for the government not to recognize how valuable the services are that Canada Post provides to Canadian, including door-to-door delivery and so forth. At the end of the day, it will come back to hurt the government politically, because it was a bad decision that is affecting our communities across this country.

● (1645)

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every day we hear the member for Winnipeg North, because he is constantly on his feet in the House on every topic, which is good. However, after listening to him today, I cannot help but comment.

The member for North Vancouver talked about the budget implementation bill and the DNA missing persons index for murdered and missing women. This DNA missing persons index is very important to our country and the many victims who have gone missing. Identifying missing persons brings resolution to many families after someone has gone missing.

Having said that, an inquiry is something that has been done over and over again. I would ask the member if he does not believe it is time to take action and solve the missing and murdered women issue in a concrete way, such as having round tables, but also to actually get the job done, instead of talking about it.

● (1650)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I respect the member opposite and her comments. Having said that, I am listening to what communities are telling us. I am not aware of a public inquiry being conducted on this particular issue.

I tried to explain the array of people, groups, and stakeholders that are calling for a national public inquiry. It is of the highest level. As I say, whether it is chiefs, premiers, different municipalities, individuals, or other non-profit groups, the call for a national inquiry has been absolutely overwhelming as people try to get a better understanding of what has happened to these 1,200-plus murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls.

It seems to me and to many outside the House of Commons that the government is not listening to the call for a public inquiry. I am not aware of others, independent of the Conservative caucus, saying that we do not require one. I have not seen a list. I suspect that if we were to canvass about it, the member might be surprised at just how overwhelming the call for a national inquiry really is.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech very carefully. He talked about the Liberal Party being consistent in a number of areas. I can say that the only thing it has been consistent about is inconsistency.

The member went on a rant about the CETA agreement. It was the Liberal leader who stood in the House, without even reading any detailed text of the official CETA agreement, and clapped and supported the Conservatives on this deal without seeing any details of it.

My question for the hon. member for Winnipeg North is this. The Liberals always talk about how consistent they are. They have been advocating a child care program for the last umpteen years. Will they support a child care program, when the NDP forms government in 2015?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Before I go to the hon. member for Winnipeg North, I would remind all hon. members that questions and comments and speeches should relate to the matter before the House. Granted, this bill is a budget implementation bill and there are many aspects to it, but at times this afternoon I feel that members have wandered—not just this member but several.

I will give the floor to the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, Ken Dryden, who was a Liberal member of Parliament and cabinet minister, actually had a child care plan in place.

• (1655)

**Mr. Frank Valeriote:** Implemented.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Implemented, Mr. Speaker.

The member needs to reflect on his former leader, Jack Layton, and the NDP who worked with the Conservative Party to kill the program. Therefore, it was the New Democratic Party working with its friends in the Conservative Party that ultimately killed the child care program.

The member might not like to hear the facts, but that is the reality. The NDP has to take responsibility for the way it voted.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but remark on the question by the member of the Conservative Party on the murdered and missing first nations women and girls. Frankly, I have never heard such callous disregard for our first nations, and that has been shown by the present Prime Minister, who choreographed an apology and then did nothing to help them. However, that is not my question.

My question is about infrastructure funding. In order for our infrastructure to be properly built, we have to partner with municipalities and provinces. One partner is absent, and that is the Prime Minister. He declared that there would be all this money and then cut it down to \$285 million in the first year, spread among all of the communities in Canada, which is not likely of much help.

Could the member for Winnipeg comment on the lack of leadership by the Prime Minister when it comes to infrastructure spending?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would highlight the fact that it is the Government of Canada that has the deepest pockets. The

Government of Canada is telling all of those municipalities and provinces that it is not prepared to invest in infrastructure. It is talking about \$200 million. More capital infrastructure dollars were spent on the Canada Line in Vancouver under Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin than the entire infrastructure budget of the present Conservative government. People familiar with the Canada Line from the Vancouver airport to downtown Vancouver realize the economic impact it has had, in terms of the hundreds of millions of dollars that have resulted directly from that infrastructure investment.

The Conservative government does not make the connection. It does not understand that by investing in infrastructure, we are building a nation. That is something we would put in the form of a challenge to the Prime Minister. Do not give up. It is getting pretty late at this stage in the game.

A Liberal government would invest in infrastructure because we believe in our nation.

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, 40 studies have been done on the murdered and missing women issue. Is it not time to take action instead of having another inquiry?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, we would have to agree to disagree.

Yes, there have been studies, but there has not been a national inquiry. I have to side with the victims. I have to side with the mayors and municipalities, the premiers, and the provinces, and the many chiefs. Everyone other than the Conservative government recognizes that we need a national inquiry on the issue of the missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. Everyone is calling for it. The Prime Minister's Office needs to get a better understanding of the need for an inquiry and call for one. It would be wonderful to see that take place before the end of the year.

**Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the last half hour has been interesting. As I sat here, I could only think back to the Liberal leader's comment that "we just didn't get the job done". I was reminded of this in the last half hour, and of so many areas where the Liberals completely failed the Canadian public.

The member talked about a child care program that had no children in it. He talked about how the Liberals saw themselves as supporting a trading nation, but they made no trade deals. The Liberals sent our military over to the Middle East in green uniforms, and then they talked about supporting veterans. He talked this afternoon about massive spending. They certainly oppose any tax reductions for which we would think Canadians would be looking. The Liberals have obviously a very distant connection to the middle class. I often think the closest their leader will ever get to the middle class is when he talks to the mechanic who fixes his Mercedes.

*Government Orders*

This afternoon, I want to discuss our government's budget implementation act, and I am glad to see the enthusiasm from across the way. It is good to see those members engaged in this, but they were probably expressing their failures and apologizing for them.

I want to take this opportunity to discuss our budget implementation bill and the importance that we place on it.

I spent several years as a parliamentary secretary for Natural Resources, and enjoyed it thoroughly. As a western Canadian MP, having oil and gas in my riding, and focused on energy, it was a real privilege to serve in that position.

Natural Resources deals with many different things. It includes forestry to energy, including mining to nuclear. Today I would like to talk about two of the significant initiatives in the bill that fall under the mandate of Natural Resources in Canada, and those are the two subjects of mining and nuclear.

I should acknowledge the tremendous work that the Minister of Natural Resources and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources have been doing. I know the minister had a great minister who preceded him, and certainly the current minister has done an excellent job of leading on this file.

Today I want to talk about the benefits of our government's plan in two areas. One is for the mandatory reporting of the Canadian extractive sector. The second is the restructuring of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

As all members know, all of the natural resources sectors play a key role in the Canadian economy. Natural resource based companies employ hundreds of thousands of Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and we as Canadians are very proud of this critical sector. Canada's extractive sector alone, through primarily mining, oil and natural gas, generated exports valued at \$124 billion in 2012, which is 28% of Canada's total exports.

Again, we can see the danger that would be placed on our country if the New Democrats, for example, were ever to get into power because they so totally oppose resource development. We can get an idea of the impact they would have on our country were they ever able to influence that.

In the past, we have seen that impact in Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, we had those NDP governments in place for a number of years, and they left us 30 or 40 years behind our counterparts in Alberta, which were willing to develop their resources while we sat on ours. Thankfully, over the last 10 years, we had a change in Saskatchewan and we have been developing our resources. The complete psychology of our province has changed and we now are able to lead. A lot of that has to do with the strength of the natural resource sector in Saskatchewan.

These resource sectors have an international reach as well. Canadian extractive sector companies account for almost half of the world's mining and mineral exploration activities. Our mining companies have interests in more than 8,000 properties around the globe in more than 100 countries. These companies support jobs, they develop communities and their influence is significant, particularly in resource-rich developing nations. We believe it is

very important that their operations and their activities must be above board at all times.

Our government believes that transparency in the extractive sector is important for both industry and for citizens, and that it is important both in Canada and globally. Raising global standards for transparency will help deter corruption. From the sector's perspective, it enhances the reputation and strength of our companies and of all companies that are involved.

• (1700)

That is why last month our Conservative government introduced the extractive sector transparency measures act. This new legislation would implement our 2013 commitment at the G8 leaders summit to establish reporting standards for Canada's extractive sector by 2015.

This new law will require extractive sector entities to publicly report payments of \$100,000 or more made to all governments at home and abroad and that relate to the commercial development of oil, natural gas or minerals. Canada is taking strong action, along with its G8 partners, to contribute to global efforts to put in place those transparency measures for payments made to governments for commercial development. In doing so, we are moving toward common global reporting standards.

As the globe gets smaller, it is important that those expectations are standardized around the world. These measures are being taken to support Canada's brand as a responsible developer of natural resources, and they will enhance Canada's already sound reputation and its ability to compete internationally.

This mandatory reporting initiative will help to ensure that our resource industries continue to lead. They will prosper around the world. They will continue to provide those economic benefits that are so fundamental to Canada's ability to create jobs to bring economic success and long-term prosperity to our own country.

Surely, this is something that all members in the House and all Canadians can support.

I want to turn the second major Natural Resources Canada initiative that is contained in the budget implementation act. We have always maintained a very strong commitment to Canada's nuclear industry, led by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, or AECL. The nuclear industry has played a significant role in Canada's economy for more than 50 years.

In 2007, our government launched a thorough review of AECL to determine how this crown corporation could best participate in the future in the global nuclear marketplace. In 2009, this review concluded that the interests of Canadian taxpayers and Canada's nuclear industry would best be served by restructuring AECL. Today, I am proud to say that our government is meeting that objective.

In 2011, the assets of the Candu reactor division were sold to Candu Energy Inc., which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Montreal based SNC-Lavalin. The privately owned Candu Energy Inc. is now seeking opportunities to sell and to service Candu technology around the world.

*Government Orders*

The first phase of the AECL restructuring was a big step forward, but additional work remains. In 2013, our government announced its decision to implement a government owned and contractor operated model at AECL's nuclear laboratories. This model will be similar to the one that already exists in the United States and in the United Kingdom. A competitive procurement process was launched to procure the services of a private sector contractor to manage and operate the laboratories.

This restructuring and procurement process, which includes the AECL laboratories in Chalk River, Ontario, and Whiteshell, Manitoba, is progressing well. A competitive process is currently under way to select a private sector company that will be responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of laboratories' missions.

Our objective in both of these AECL challenges has been to reduce the cost and the risk for Canadian taxpayers, while leveraging AECL's facilities and assets to create value. In the meantime, the laboratories' operations and employees have been recognized into a wholly owned subsidiary of AECL, called Canadian Nuclear Laboratories, or CNL. Eventually, ownership of CNL will be transferred to the successful private sector bidder. Its employees will no longer be part of the public service or participants in the public service pension plan.

It is the pension aspect of this restructuring that we are addressing in this bill today. Our government is acting to provide early clarity to CNL employees and to all stakeholders during this time of change at AECL. The budget implementation act would offer transitional pension coverage for employees. We would extend the public pension coverage for three years, beginning the date that CNL would be transferred to the private sector. This would provide greater certainty for both employees and qualified respondents in the procurement process. It would also provide an adequate time period for a new pension plan to be established.

● (1705)

Such a transitional arrangement was offered to former AECL employees who were transferred to Candu Energy in 2011. We believe it is only fair to offer the same to CNL employees. Once restructuring of CNL is complete, all employee benefits, including pensions, will be the responsibility of the new private sector employer.

In addition, a second measure in the bill officially declares that CNL, while it is a wholly owned subsidiary of AECL, is a crown agent. CNL would no longer be a crown agent once it becomes a private sector company.

As members in the House can appreciate, the AECL restructuring has been a significant and complex undertaking. We have worked hard to ensure the process has been methodical, transparent and fair. I should point out that fairness is the one strong element that links both of our topics today, the AECL restructuring and the mandatory reporting.

The measures contained in the budget implementation act are transitional, one-time steps to support AECL workers during restructuring. These measures are fair to AECL, fair to the employees and fair to the taxpayers.

With both of these initiatives, Canada and Canadians will continue to be well served by competitive, leading edge industries. Both will be supported by standards that are second to none. Our industries are positioned to compete successfully with anyone, anywhere in the world. Therefore, I would point out that both of these initiatives represent important initiatives that will lead directly to significant benefits for Canadian taxpayers and for Canadian brands around the world.

As the government continues with its programs, it has had a direct impact on the Canadian economy. When we look at the numbers that have been given, we posted one of the strongest job creation records in the G7 over the recovery period. As everyone here is well aware, nearly 1.2 million jobs have been created since July, 2009. Our real gross domestic product is significantly above pre-recession levels, the best performance in the G7.

We heard our colleagues opposite criticize our trade agenda a little earlier. The reality is that as both the Minister of Trade, and the Minister of Agriculture in particular have moved ahead, we have seen significant improvement and an increase in trade around the world, and we will continue to see that. Those three dozen trade agreements we have signed, which the Liberals made no movement toward at all, are playing an important role in the recovery we are experiencing.

Both the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development expect that Canada will be among the strongest growing economies in the G7 over this year and the next. That is not an accident. That is happening because of good management. It is happening because we have made commitments that are different than the commitments made on the other side of the House. We have made commitments to reduce taxation for Canadians and Canadian businesses. We have made commitments to increase and expand trade around the world. Those things work together to ensure Canadians benefit consistently.

One of the places that has really impacted Canadians over the last few years is that personal income taxes have gone down, along with the other taxes we have lowered. They are now 10% lower with the tax relief we have provided since 2006. All of these things fit together to create an economy that is strong and moving ahead.

We heard our minister earlier today in question period talk about the fact that the average Canadian family is now saving close to \$3,400 that they would have been spending in taxes had the Liberals continued in power. Canadians can be very thankful that our government is in place and that we have done the kinds of things that make it work for them.

The Liberal Party has talked about the middle class and has suggested that what we have done does not work for the middle class. The reality is that it is working very well. I would assume that *The New York Times* would be unbiased in its analysis. It has found that after-tax middle-class incomes in Canada, which were substantially behind in 2000, now appear to be higher than in the United States. That is a direct impact of our government making decisions to let people keep their own money and make decisions about how they want to spend it.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1710)

With balanced budgets in sight, our first priority will be to continue to provide tax relief for hard-working Canadian families so that they can keep more of their hard-earned money and decide how to spend it. Just a couple of initiatives that are part of this budget implementation act that relate to that would be the small business job credit we would initiate through the bill and the children's fitness tax credit.

We have heard a lot about the universal child care benefit that has been brought in, but we should also be aware that the children's fitness tax credit is an important part of the bill as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the bill.

• (1715)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Thursday, December 4, 2014, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, November 25, 2014, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 10, 2014 at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

The Chief Government Whip is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that we see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT**

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-603, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act (vehicle side guards), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity today to speak in support of Bill C-603, a bill to make side guards on heavy trucks mandatory, a bill that has the potential to save the lives of Canadians and to make our roadways safer.

I want to thank the member for Brossard—La Prairie for bringing this important issue before this House. There have been far too many avoidable fatalities in recent memory associated with pedestrians and cyclists being overtaken by transport truck trailers. We need to take action now to prevent further loss of life.

We have all heard the tragic accounts of young men and women, pedestrians and cyclists, whose lives have been cut short by an accident that would clearly be avoidable and easily addressed through government action legislating side guards on heavy trucks.

The dangers represented by large trucks to pedestrians and cyclists are not a recent phenomenon. Ten years ago, a young daughter of a close friend of our family was killed while biking after she was caught under the wheels of a transport truck. Side guards would have prevented this tragedy. At 21 years old, she should have been able to use the roadway in safety. It is in her memory and the memory of so many others that I support this bill today.

From the evidence available to us, we know that mandatory side guards on heavy trucks would greatly reduce the risk and the number of fatalities and serious injuries on our roads each year. A recent study from the United Kingdom found that these side guards reduced the fatality rate by 61% in instances when a cyclist hit the side of a truck. This type of collision is by no means a rare occurrence. Evidence from the United States between 2005 and 2009 shows that more than half of all cyclist and 29% of pedestrian accidents involved the victim succumbing to the hazards of falling under the side of the truck.

To say this is exclusively a provincial matter is clearly an attempt by the government to shift responsibility from the current federal government to the provinces. The federal government knows it has a responsibility, through the Motor Vehicle Safety Act, to take action. The legislation's mandate is as follows:

...to regulate the manufacture and importation of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment to reduce the risk of death, injury and damage to property and the environment.

Enacting Bill C-603 is well within the federal government's mandate in this respect. Across Canada, municipalities are moving to install side guards on their trucks and heavy equipment. They recognize the clear and obvious need for these measures in the promotion of personal and vehicular safety.

The federal government has an obligation to participate in this discussion and the solution. This includes working with the provinces through Bill C-603 to enact positive change.

These side guards are mandatory in Japan. They are mandatory in the United Kingdom, and they are mandatory across the whole of Europe. Why does Canada always resist sound evidence and the positive experience of other countries?

I think Ontario's former chief coroner spoke for all of us when he said:

I don't know what more evidence is needed before one just moves forward to do something which is known to save lives.

Surveys show that two-thirds of Canadians have indicated a desire to cycle more, but they cite safety concerns as a significant obstacle to doing so. We want Canadians to get out and about and get healthier, and the federal government's refusal to act is not only preventing people from getting more active but is endangering those who do.

There would be significant economic, environmental, and health impacts from this policy. The economic benefit of these side guards is clear. Numerous studies have shown that they can decrease fuel consumption by as much as 20%, a result of the streamlining effect of these safety guards. Our own National Research Council estimates that the 230,000 truck trailers across our country would save over 400 million litres of gas annually. Those are very significant savings for Canadian businesses.

● (1720)

Enabling more cyclists to be on the road and ensuring their safety would also be part of a larger strategy to reduce the burden on Canadian commuters. Every year, cities experience increased traffic congestion. Any of us trying to get out of Ottawa to the airport or the many of us who travel in or across Toronto know how frustrating and wasteful sitting in traffic can be.

Municipalities and provincial governments struggle to provide adequate transportation infrastructure in the face of ever-rising costs. Keeping up with the demand for roadways is an impossible task. We must look to providing alternative means of transportation and encourage an increase in pedestrian and cyclist activity as part of a progressive strategy that would curtail our transportation and infrastructure costs from spiralling further out of control.

Canadian motorists make an average of 2,000 trips each year of less than three kilometres. Guaranteeing safety for pedestrians and cyclists would encourage many more to get out and bike instead of hopping in the car. However, it is tougher to ensure our safety and the safety of our loved ones when we hear tragic stories like those of Jenna Morrison and Mathilde Blais and the too many countless others who have needlessly lost their lives.

Encouraging cycling also contributes to reducing carbon emissions where it can reduce traffic congestion. If transportation accounts for nearly 50% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, and truck side guards are proven to reduce carbon emissions by 1.1 million metric tonnes annually, then ensuring the safety of cyclists has the added benefit of reducing Canada's environmental footprint.

### *Private Members' Business*

It is no secret that the current government has no desire to address the environmental issues facing Canadians, but even members on the government benches do not want to see carbon emissions increase further year after year.

Finally, let us consider the personal health benefits derived from biking and walking. Obesity continues to be a growing problem across our country. Encouraging physical activity impacts the quality of life Canadians experience, now and in the future. Better health outcomes would obviously reduce the strain on our health care system and would increase our quality of life.

The economic, environmental, and personal health benefits are all substantial and clear to many, if not most, Canadians, but when it comes down to it, I still think twice when my children and I go out on our bikes together or we bike alone. We cannot expect to get more Canadians to adopt alternative means of transportation if they do not feel safe. The House has before it a great opportunity to help create a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

The government fails to advance any reasonable or convincing argument for why we should not be acting on this right now. Simply, it is allowing ideology to restrict the advancement of vehicular and pedestrian safety that would also contribute to our health and to environmental sustainability and that would save taxpayer dollars.

Creating a safe environment on the roads needs to be part of the federal government's commitment to its citizens, yet by not supporting this bill, it is abandoning its key responsibility to ensure their safety. Canadians want action on this issue, and the bill before us presents some very good steps in that direction.

The government has a responsibility to act now, not in a few years, when it thinks a new technology may be available, especially when solutions are available now. The House has seen what can happen when parliamentarians work together to make meaningful change for Canadians, build on something, and create legislation and regulation that work in the best interests of our constituents.

Why does the government have an aversion to this bill going to committee, where all the evidence can be reviewed? What does it fear? I support sending this bill to committee, and I would suggest that members opposite do the same.

● (1725)

**Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this legislation put forward by my colleague from Brossard—La Prairie. I want to thank him for his excellent work on cycling safety. This is an issue near and dear to my heart.

Bill C-603 would make side guards mandatory for heavy trucks manufactured in Canada or imported into Canada. As my colleague from Guelph has said, it is about encouraging people to cycle and about encouraging better cycling safety.

Canada should be looking at greater cycling infrastructure, so that we are encouraging people to cycle. I put forward a motion calling on the government to have a national strategy to encourage cycling infrastructure in communities across Canada.

*Private Members' Business*

People have to know that they can cycle safely, and installing side guards on heavy trucks would make cycling safer. It would save lives. Too many tragic accidents have taken place in communities across the country. In 2011, there was a tragic case in my own community. A mom was on her way to pick up her five-year old son from school. She was expecting a second child. She was making a right hand turn at a corner in our neighbourhood and a truck clipped her as it was turning that same corner. She fell under the back wheels of the truck as it turned right and suffered massive head injuries as a result. Whenever there is a collision between a truck and a cyclist, the cyclist will never win. Jenna Morrison was killed that day. Obviously, it was a terrible tragedy for Jenna's family and for our entire community.

We have been calling for mandatory side guards on heavy trucks for many years now. Our former colleague Olivia Chow from Trinity—Spadina worked tirelessly on this issue. There was a similar case in her riding involving a young cyclist who was making a right hand turn at Dundas and Spadina. She was clipped by a truck and suffered massive injuries as she fell under the rear wheels.

Side guards would push the cyclist away from the truck rather than allowing the individual to fall into the truck and be crushed by the rear wheels. A cyclist might be injured falling on the street, falling on a sidewalk, or falling into a parked car but would not be crushed to death by falling under the rear wheels of a truck.

For years, other countries have heeded the call for mandatory side guards because they have seen the totally unnecessary deaths of cyclists and pedestrians by heavy trucks. A study in the United Kingdom found that side guards reduced the number of deaths in accidents where cyclists were hit by the side of a truck by 61%. Two-thirds of the cycling deaths were reduced.

The Chief Coroner for Ontario has reaffirmed a 1998 recommendation to install side guards on trucks, believing it would have a positive effect on cycling safety. The coroner for Quebec published a report in 2014, which showed that cyclists would be prevented from being killed by rear truck tires. A 2010 report by the National Research Council of Canada called for side guards to be mandatory on trucks. They are already mandatory in the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Japan, and they have been adopted by several regions and municipalities throughout Canada.

The question is why this is not done nationally. Why not ensure that Canadians, cyclists and pedestrians right across Canada, are protected?

• (1730)

Why would the government not want to do the best for pedestrians and cyclists everywhere in our country? I have not heard a good argument from the other side.

A ministry of transport report said that it was inconclusive, yet surely, when so many jurisdictions have brought in this measure and are saying, demonstrably, that this has reduced cycling and pedestrian deaths, why we would not do that here is frankly unbelievable.

It is the government's responsibility to set safety standards for vehicles manufactured in Canada, but it should also bring in this measure for vehicles that are imported as well.

We know there are many validators of this position for mandatory truck side guards.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has said that FCM would like to reiterate its concern and stress the importance of countermeasures, such as side guards, to improve the safety of vulnerable road users; that would include pedestrians and cyclists.

As I said, the Chief Coroner for Ontario said that side guards should be made mandatory for heavy trucks in Canada. That is pretty clear-cut.

The Quebec coroner said that a lateral safety barrier would have prevented the head of Mathilde Blais, a young cyclist, from coming under the truck's internal tire. The conclusion was that it was a preventable accidental death.

The United States National Transportation Safety Board has recommended that both newly manufactured truck trailers and old trailers be equipped with side under ride protection systems to better protect people from fatalities and serious injuries.

Seriously, I do not understand why the government would not bring this in. It is no cost to the federal government. It is actually a low-cost measure that trucking companies could bring in. It is a low-cost measure that would practically save lives. It is a basic responsibility of government to ensure that it brings in protective measures to ensure the lives of Canadians are protected.

We have been calling for this for over eight years. In that time, we have seen the lives of far too many cyclists and pedestrians taken. We think that should stop.

We have seen that the number of cyclists is rising across the country. I know in my city the expectation is that the number of people who will bike to work on a daily basis is likely to increase from 1.7% to 5% by 2016. It means a lot more cyclists will be on the roads. We need to have the safest measures possible to ensure they are protected.

When other jurisdictions have already taken this on, as it is a proven measure that saves lives, it frankly is unbelievable that we would not take action here. It is a no-cost measure for the government. We have seen a total of 19% of cycling fatalities across the country involving heavy trucks. We have also seen that a number of cycling deaths, probably 50% or 60%, would be prevented by heavy truck side guards.

I mentioned cost earlier. The cost would be between \$1,500 and \$3,000 per truck. If we look at the total cost of a truck, it is a pretty small amount of money that would save so many lives. We know that truck guards save lives. I call upon my colleagues to join with us and let us get the bill to committee.

I leave them with a question. How many cyclists and how many pedestrians have to lose their lives before the House is willing to take action?

*Private Members' Business*

• (1735)

**Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to participate in today's debate on Bill C-603.

At the outset, I would like to remind all Canadians that Transport Canada has a long history of working to improve road safety in Canada. Transport Canada is committed to the safety of the Canadian public.

A significant portion of the improvements to date can be attributed to Transport Canada's regulatory action in requiring vehicles manufactured in and imported into Canada to adhere to the highest possible safety standards. While this is impressive progress, we fully realize that there is more to do. Together with our safety partners, including the provinces, territories, and interested vehicle safety organizations, we have set a vision for Canada to achieve the safest roads in the world.

Statistics from Transport Canada's national collision database, a database of information on Canadian vehicle collisions, shows that out of the approximately 2,000 fatalities on Canadian roads each year, there are an average of 13 cyclist casualties from collisions involving heavy trucks. However, few involve collisions with the sides of trucks. Transport Canada has reviewed the need for a mandatory requirement for side guards and has concluded that they would not be an effective means of further reducing cyclist fatalities.

In 2005, a U.K. study, which is commonly cited for the effectiveness of side guards, clearly stated that side guards are only partially effective in one type of collision, which occurs rarely in Canada. In Canada, most cyclist and pedestrian fatalities around heavy trucks occur at the front of the vehicle. One of the best means of protecting pedestrians and cyclists is to focus on avoiding this conflict from occurring in the first place. Effective solutions for preventing collisions are the first and best line of defence.

It has been shown that a significant factor in pedestrian and cyclist fatalities involving heavy trucks has been the result of reduced driver visibility. There are large blind spots around these heavy vehicles. Due to this, some truck drivers simply do not always see the cyclists and pedestrians. Thankfully, this is a fairly rare occurrence.

We believe that there is a potential to save more lives if we focus our efforts on improving the ability of truck drivers to detect cyclists and pedestrians around their trucks. Some emerging technologies now offer considerably more promise in reducing fatalities and injuries than side guards. Cameras can supplement mirrors to improve the field of view, and when placed in strategic places on trucks, can help enhance the driver's field of view by eliminating these blind spots. It is expected that in future, cameras will be able to provide drivers with a full 360° field of view around a vehicle.

Transport Canada has begun working with the National Research Council of Canada, NRC, to test the performance of camera systems on trucks. Its research shows that cameras have considerable promise but that the technology has yet to be sufficiently perfected for use exclusively in lieu of mirrors.

Transport Canada's collision investigations have shown that the majority of cyclist and pedestrian fatalities occur at the front of trucks or when trucks are turning, which are cases that would benefit from an improved field of view for truck drivers.

A 2013 study in the United Kingdom reviewed cases of cyclist fatalities when a heavy vehicle was turning. The study included simulations of cases and found that 79% of the fatalities could have been prevented with a collision avoidance system on the side of the truck. Transport Canada has been in contact with U.K. officials to learn more.

Camera and radar systems are being developed today to automatically identify pedestrians and cyclists and warn the driver when there is a risk of a collision. If the driver does not take action to avoid the crash, the vehicle will apply its brakes automatically. Several car manufacturers are currently installing these systems, and they are already available in Canada. It is expected that a similar technology will migrate to trucks once it has been further perfected and adapted for trucks. These cameras and sensors can also help detect pedestrians and cyclists in the blind spots beside a turning vehicle.

• (1740)

Ultrasonic sensors have been used effectively as parking aids for many years. Parking aids detect stationary obstacles using sensors, and they alert drivers with escalating audible warning and can also display the proximity of a hazard. While ultrasonic sensors do not have the range to reliably detect moving pedestrians and cyclists, there are radar sensors and laser scanners that can detect people. These sensors are already being successfully used on trucks to warn drivers about vehicles in their blind spots or obstacles ahead.

With full consideration, it is evident that the side guards are an unproven approach relative to the new safety technologies that are being developed and perfected for heavy vehicles. In addition, these same emerging technologies might prevent or reduce the severity of collisions between trucks and vehicles.

Forward collision warning systems sense when the vehicle ahead is slowing or stopped and alert the trailing driver of a potential collision. Dynamic brake support systems automatically supplement the application of brakes when information from forward-looking sensors determines that a crash is imminent and that the braking force applied by the driver is not sufficient to avoid the collision. Autonomous emergency braking systems automatically apply the brakes when the system determines that a crash is imminent but the driver makes no attempt to avoid the collision by braking or steering around the vehicle ahead.

Transport Canada is committed to studying these emerging technologies in the interest of improving road safety in Canada.

*Private Members' Business*

Any federal side guard regulations would have no effect on the hundreds of thousands of existing trucks on our roadways, as these do not fall under federal jurisdiction. However, individual provincial and territorial governments are able to require side guards on their existing locally registered fleets. We note that no provinces or territories have done so at the present time. In addition, upward of 25% of the trucks on Canadian roads are registered in the United States and are not subject to the regulations under the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Indeed, American federal regulations do not require trucks to be equipped with side guards.

Municipalities have a responsibility to ensure their infrastructure accommodates for the safe transportation of all road users. For example, it is up to municipalities where to design for bike lanes and wider streets where there is a demonstrated need.

While the side guards do not show the benefits that many people would expect, the emerging technologies that I have described have the potential to improve safety, not only for cyclists and pedestrians but also for other motorized vehicles. Transport Canada has demonstrated that it has not hesitated to regulate when there is a convincing argument and a clear safety benefit to mandate a new safety requirement. While we are not able to support a regulation for side guards today, we assure members that Transport Canada will continue to review the world's research and conduct Canadian research aimed at assessment of innovative technologies that will move us to our vision of achieving the safest roads in the world.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I unfortunately listened to the speech by my colleague with a great deal of fear and concern. I will nonetheless make my speech on Bill C-603, An Act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act (vehicle side guards).

I will support the bill introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie, who does excellent work on the transport file. What is more, he did a tour of Drummondville to talk to us about rail safety, something that is very important to Drummondville, since a train crosses through town. The train is part of our culture.

This bill on vehicle side guards is also very important to Drummondville, given the amount of car and truck traffic. Nonetheless, more and more people are interested in cycling, which is also quite popular in the greater Drummond area. There are many cycling enthusiasts who use their bikes to get to work or for recreation.

I want to take this opportunity to reiterate that this is a fine legislative initiative by my colleague. Cyclist and pedestrian safety is something the NDP has been interested in for quite some time. This is the third time in nine years that the NDP has introduced a similar bill calling for the installation of side guards.

My former colleague, Olivia Chow, introduced this very important bill in the past, because these protections not only help protect people's health and safety, but they also save lives. They have proven successful around the world. This bill is therefore very important.

Studies have already proven how effective side guards are in guaranteeing the safety of cyclists, pedestrians and even motorcy-

clists. In the United Kingdom, for example, with the introduction of side guards, the number of deaths in these categories dropped by 61%. That is significant. We can save more than 50% of people. We cannot ignore this kind of result.

Not only in Drummond, but across Quebec and Canada, people have been thinking about this problem for quite some time. People in Drummondville are aware of this problem and the municipality has begun taking action. I wanted to point that out to my colleague who said that the municipalities need to do something. Since the federal government is not doing its job, the municipalities are starting to do it.

In my riding of Drummond, people actually asked themselves what they could do while waiting for the federal government to become a responsible government and take action. The City of Drummondville decided to test side guards on a heavy vehicle it owns in order to protect the public.

I would like to thank and congratulate municipal councillor John Husk for initiating this project. He is an avid cyclist and rides his bike a lot both for recreation and to get around. I would like to congratulate him for the pilot project he started in Drummondville.

This project proves that side guards address the concerns of people who live in cities. In Drummondville, they have started using side guards. Only one truck is equipped for the time being, but the city plans to modify five other trucks by 2015. That is significant.

In fact, the City of Drummondville thinks that it is an inexpensive measure that can save lives. If we can save lives, we should not think of the cost. As members will hear later in my speech, side guards are quite inexpensive for a city like Drummondville.

• (1750)

The city wants its entire fleet of 22 heavy vehicles to have side guards in order to save lives in the greater Drummond area.

We are wondering what Canada is waiting for. We are asking ourselves this question because side guards have been mandatory in the United Kingdom and the European Union since 1989. That dates me somewhat because in 1989, I was still a young man. I realize that it is now 2014, almost 2015, and unfortunately, I am getting older. Time flies, but this government and the previous Liberal government did not do anything in all that time, even though, as I mentioned, side guards have been proven to be effective. As I was saying earlier, side guards have reduced fatalities by 61% in the United Kingdom.

A number of Canadian municipalities have begun thinking about adding side guards to their fleets of heavy trucks. Drummondville is currently in the process of doing so. I want emphasize that. It is good that our municipalities are taking the initiative and leading the way, but it is important to note how far behind the Conservatives are lagging on this issue. As I mentioned, the NDP has been calling for side guards on heavy vehicles for nine years now.

*Private Members' Business*

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is also very concerned that the Conservatives have not taken action on this. In 2009, the federation told the government that it supported making side guards mandatory on heavy vehicles. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is not a group of extremists. These are people who work with the provincial and federal governments. Every year I meet with representatives from the federation, and they do an excellent job. They make very reasonable recommendations to improve the well-being of our municipalities and keep Canadians safe. In 2012, they came back to see the transport minister—who was from Quebec—and let him know how urgent this situation was. Unfortunately, I was completely flabbergasted by what the Conservative member said earlier. He does not think this is a good measure. The Conservatives are passing the buck to the municipalities and saying that the municipalities need to sort this out on their own. However, as we know, transportation is a federal jurisdiction in Canada.

Many people have told us it is time to act. The Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario released a report in 2012 that said it would be a really good idea to put side guards on heavy trucks in Canada. The same goes for Quebec, where they are talking about installing side guards that would have prevented several people involved in accidents from being killed or seriously injured. Again on August 25, 2014, we heard about horrible accidents.

Look at it this way: if it can prevent the death of one person, we should do it. In this case, we are talking about keeping dozens of people alive and safe every year. This is really something not very costly that we should do right now.

Speaking of which, people have asked me how much this would cost. Some might expect the cost to run to millions and millions of dollars, which might prevent the government from taking action. However, the average cost of installing side guards on a vehicle is about \$1,500. That is really not very much. Even cities are starting to install side guards because they understand that this measure can really keep people safer.

I do not have a lot of time to get into this point, but I just want to mention that side guards pay for themselves. They make economic sense because they reduce the cost of fuel by making vehicles more efficient and, by extension, enable them to comply with environmental standards.

● (1755)

For all of these reasons, I urge the Conservative government to admit it was wrong, take action and vote in favour of a good bill introduced by my colleague from Brossard—La Prairie.

[English]

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this private member's bill, Bill C-603, an act to amend the Motor Vehicle Safety Act with regard to vehicle side guards.

The government considers the safety of Canadian road users to be of paramount importance. However, based on Transport Canada's extensive research on this file, the government cannot support this bill.

Transport Canada has committed to the safety of the Canadian public. Regulatory improvements made under the authority of the

Motor Vehicle Safety Act are a key reason that progressively fewer people are killed or injured on the roads each year, despite the ever-increasing number of motor vehicles being used. We are encouraged by the information we derive from our national crash data, which shows steady and impressive progress toward a vision of Canada having the safest roads in the world.

To reduce the risk of death and injury, our government, under the authority of the federal Motor Vehicle Safety Act, has the authority to regulate safety requirements, including side guards, for new trucks and trailers manufactured in Canada and for new and used trucks and trailers imported into Canada. I assure everyone that in the case of side guards, Transport Canada has not been sitting idle. Rather, it has been actively looking for solutions in a broader attempt to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians on our roads.

Transport Canada has reviewed a number of world studies, but these studies have not provided proof of the safety benefits of side guards and any mechanism of injury prevention. The safety justification behind the European regulation that came into force in the late 1980s is not available for assessment to see whether it would apply equally to Canada.

The National Research Council of Canada, or NRC, completed a study that analyzed the issue of side guards on heavy vehicles. The study investigated current heavy vehicle side guard use worldwide, reviewed their effectiveness, and assessed the feasibility of their mandatory installation in Canada. The NRC study concluded that while the European study showed a reduction in fatalities after side guards were made mandatory, the studies could not connect the reduction in fatalities directly to the use of side guards.

Multi-year trends in road user casualties are usually influenced by several variables. These include improved vehicle, road, and infrastructure design; a reduction in impaired driving; improved law enforcement; and increased use of dedicated pedestrian and cyclist paths. Therefore, it is not possible to definitively conclude that any reduction in European fatalities was due to a single factor, such as side guards.

As I have noted previously, road fatalities have declined steadily over the past decades in Canada as well. This is also the case in Europe. It is not a valid conclusion to attribute such trends to a single factor.

The NRC report also raised important issues regarding the extent to which the European experience would be applicable to Canada. One point that merits consideration is that the number of cyclist fatalities per year as a percentage of overall road fatalities is 4.7% in Europe, which is more than double the 2% rate seen here in Canada. Other significant differences between Canada and Europe, including road infrastructure, user behaviour, and road user type composition, make it impossible to make a valid statistical comparison between the two regions.

*Private Members' Business*

Transport Canada has also assessed national collision statistics and investigated a number of collisions between cyclists and pedestrians and heavy trucks and trailers dating back to 2003. Transport Canada's National Collision Database indicates that relatively few cyclist and pedestrian collisions in Canada involve heavy trucks. Cyclist and pedestrian injuries occur 98% of the time in collisions involving small vehicles—that is, cars, SUVs, et cetera—rather than heavy trucks. Moreover, more than 80% of fatalities involving cyclists and heavy trucks occur in collisions with the front of the vehicle, where side guards would have absolutely no effect.

Based on an analysis of fatal collisions in Canada, there were an average of two cyclist and approximately four pedestrian fatalities per year that occurred in collisions involving the sides of large trucks and trailers. While any such loss of life is tragic, this represents fewer than 4% of the total number of cyclist fatalities and less than 1% of the total number of pedestrian fatalities involving motor vehicle collisions over that time period.

Some serious collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists with buses demonstrate that side guards may not be a reliable solution. Due to their design, bus bodies sit much lower to the ground than would side guards attached to heavy trucks and trailers. Despite this design characteristic of buses, there are still cyclist and pedestrian fatalities and injuries in collisions involving the sides of buses in Canada, including city buses.

● (1800)

Due to vehicle design and the variety of commercial applications, side guards could not be installed on all vehicles. Vehicle statistics in the United Kingdom estimate that 20% of heavy vehicles are exempt from side guards due to their design or operation, such as dump trucks, garbage trucks, and vehicles that require access along the side for their operation.

Any federal side guard regulation would have no effect on the hundreds of thousands of existing trucks on our roadways, as these do not fall under federal jurisdiction. However, individual provincial and territorial governments are able to require side guards on their existing locally registered fleets. We note that no provinces or territories have done so at the present time.

In addition, upwards of 25% of the trucks on Canadian roads are registered in the United States and are not subject to regulations under the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Indeed, American federal regulations do not require that trucks be equipped with side guards.

Municipalities also have the responsibility to ensure their infrastructure accommodates for the safe transportation of all road users. For example, it is up to municipalities where to design for bike lanes and wider streets where there is a demonstrated need.

We ensure that any regulatory action we take is effective and achieves its intended objectives. We simply do not have the evidence that any side guard regulation in Canada would be effective. However, there are alternative ways of improving safety by preventing collisions.

Collision investigations have shown that a significant factor in pedestrian and cyclist fatalities involving heavy trucks has been poor driver visibility. There are blind spots around these heavy vehicles,

and due to this, truck drivers sometimes simply do not see these cyclists and pedestrians.

There are alternative technologies with the potential to improve driver visibility, which are currently being researched in North America and abroad. Mirrorless commercial vehicle systems are under development, which are designed to provide the driver with improved indirect visibility by using side view cameras and proximity sensors.

It is anticipated that these systems could provide benefits in a broader range of collision types, including collisions where the large truck is turning and where side guards have shown no measurable benefit. Transport Canada is committed to studying these promising new technologies in the interest of improving road safety in Canada.

While side guards do not show the benefits that some would expect, the alternative technologies that Transport Canada is looking into have the potential to improve safety around heavy trucks not only for cyclists and pedestrians but also for motorists.

New technology could provide greater benefits than side guard regulation could achieve. Transport Canada continues to study these promising technologies for potential future regulation. We will continue our strong record of taking action to save lives and prevent injuries.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Davenport. I will advise the member that he will not have his full ten minutes; he will have about seven to eight minutes.

● (1805)

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, those who are listening to this debate may be surprised to see the government doubting the research, the evidence, and the very credible voices speaking out in favour of side guards. It is just as it was when the members of the current government denied the existence of climate change for many years, and have only recently awakened to that fact. This is a government that does not like evidence and hard facts. The way the Conservatives have spun their opposition to this balanced and reasoned private member's bill by my friend, the member of Parliament for Brossard—La Prairie, is to say that there is emerging technology that might be better. Therefore, they will not save lives now but rather wait for research to happen with respect to emerging technologies and groovy new mirrorless transportation systems.

It is the role of those of us in this place as parliamentarians to protect the lives of Canadians. When we come across a simple solution that would save some lives, the government refers it to the municipalities. It beats up the municipalities and hectors the provinces instead of standing up and taking responsibility for the areas it has responsibility for. That is one of the reasons this bill is so important and the government's opposition to it is so incredibly galling.

*Private Members' Business*

I am a little emotional about this because Jenna Morrison was killed in November of 2011 when she was pulled under a heavy truck on the border between my riding and the riding of Parkdale—High Park. She was killed at a turn that I often make on my bicycle. Jenna Morrison was the exact same age as my own wife, who just had a child a month ago. As we all know, Jenna Morrison was also with child at the time she was killed. For me it is also a very real reminder that we have cyclists and heavy trucks sharing the road.

It is true that we need better, stronger and more comprehensive transportation thoroughways for cyclists. I will remind those listening that many members of the government are quite friendly with the former mayor of Toronto who spent \$300,000 in taxpayer dollars to paint over a bicycle lane after he announced that the war on the car was over. Apparently there was a war but no one knew it. What I am getting at here is that the government cannot help but play politics with even the most simple solutions to some very important problems.

When I think about Jenna Morrison's young son and her partner whom she left behind and the way in which their lives have been turned upside down, and others' lives too right across the country, I think it is incumbent on us to take the matter seriously and not to try to dodge the issue. We know that side guards are mandatory on many heavy trucks in the United Kingdom. Japan and the European Union are other examples. It is not as though this was an idea that came out of the ether. This is something that we know works. Instead, the government is saying that we should find some other technology. Maybe we need to check the logs of the lobby registry to see how often the trucking industry has lobbied the government to oppose this bill. In cities like Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, St. John's, and Halifax, in fact in cities right across the country, we have built roads for cars but we have more and more cyclists on the roads.

●(1810)

We absolutely need to deal with that change in road use. We have had a colossal battle over the last several years in Toronto to start to deal with it. They are complex issues and they are going to take a significant amount of political will.

However, I want to ask the members opposite how much political will we need to require mandatory side guards. It amazes me that we could not have all party support for the bill. I listened very carefully to the members opposite who said there were only a couple of deaths in the country, so it is not that big a deal. I think most members here would agree that if we in this place can save even one life by implementing safeguards and standards that are not going to cost the treasury a dime, it is incumbent upon us to take the issue seriously and pass this piece of legislation.

I would like to congratulate my hon. friend for tabling a bill that was initially put forward by our good friend Olivia Chow. I am honoured to stand here on behalf of the good people in the riding of Davenport, in the great city of Toronto, to support the bill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and yet somewhat disappointed to be speaking today.

I am pleased because this is a private member's bill. When it was my turn to decide which bill I would introduce, I asked myself what change we could actually make. Clearly, we are talking about a bill that can save lives.

I listened closely to all of the speeches. I would like to thank my colleagues on this side of the House, both the Liberals and the NDP. They gave speeches that really touched me, that got to the heart of the matter and that expressed much of what I was feeling.

I am disappointed today because I also listened to the Conservative government during the first hour of debate. From the outset, the government opposed the bill. I found it unfortunate and difficult to witness such an ideological attitude. However, this is not just about ideology. The members are being whipped by their government and cabinet, which are telling them to vote a certain way and spout the same lines. Everything I heard from the other side was the same.

If the members truly believe that they are lacking information, they should support the bill at second reading and we will study it in committee. We will look at the facts.

[*English*]

According to them, the studies are inconclusive. I plead with my colleagues opposite to actually read some of the reports.

There is one report that came from the chief coroner of Ontario. It is dated June 2012, so it is a new report that came out not too long ago. It looked at what happened between January 2006 and December 31, 2010. It looked at the fatalities. It looked at the accidents involving trucks and cyclists. The recommendation that came from the coroner is outlined in number 13. It is a recommendation to Transport Canada that states, "Side-guards should be made mandatory for heavy trucks in Canada."

Therefore, if my colleagues do not want to listen to us in the opposition and are saying the studies are not conclusive, they should at least look at the reports that came from the coroner. If they believe that what we have here is not sufficient, let us study it at committee. Let us look at what we have in terms of reports and studies and let us make a decision.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favour of the bill at second reading. Then, if they are not satisfied with what we do at committee, that is fine.

●(1815)

[*Translation*]

In Europe, vehicle side guards have been mandatory for the past 25 years. They are mandatory in Japan and Great Britain. In Canada, there have been so many deaths that I cannot name all the victims. One death in particular had a real impact on me because I met the victim's mother. Jessica was killed by a vehicle. She wanted to save her brother and she fell under the vehicle.

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Westmount, the City of Montreal and Ville Saint-Laurent reacted by equipping their vehicles with side guards. If anyone thinks that the municipalities are wasting their money, they can think again. The government is saying that the municipalities and the provinces can make other regulations themselves. That is true, but we also have a responsibility. We must show leadership.

[English]

All my colleagues were going to vote against the bill at second reading. We should ask ourselves next time when there is a death. It happened two weeks ago. There was a death in Montreal, and the first thing that was said was that maybe side guards would have saved the person.

When Mathilde Blais was killed earlier this year, we said that maybe side guards would have saved her. What did the coroner report say? It said they could have saved her. Please think about it next time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It being 6:17 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, November 25, 2014, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 10, 2014, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to accept that in the 10 years since Amnesty International Canada released a major report documenting the violence against this country's indigenous women, there still has not been a strong federal response on this issue. There has been opportunity for both Liberal and Conservative governments, but a full decade later, we are so mired in the problem that the only reasonable response is a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

That said, the current government refuses to budge, despite overwhelming and ever-growing support for an inquiry. Instead of recognizing the benefits that the process would have, it has managed to plug its ears and claim that these are all just crimes that are being dealt with by the police. All the while, the statistics keep mounting, and a direct line that runs from the brutal murder of Helen Betty Osborne to the discovery of Tina Fontaine's body in the Red River this past summer is being dismissed as nothing more than a number of unconnected crimes.

The real crime, however, is inaction and indifference, as well as viewing these women and girls in the worst light far too often. Disappearances are too quickly dismissed as runaways or substance abusers, which is supposed to excuse a lacklustre effort to find missing people. In addition, when these instances are seen as nothing more than simple crimes to be dealt with by police, we are dismissing the fact that these women are almost seven times more likely to be the victims of violence than any other societal group in Canada.

Too often, we have heard members of the governing party wonder what good an inquiry would do. My colleague from Timmins—James Bay did a great job of explaining that. He said that, among many other things, an inquiry would allow us to see what makes these women so vulnerable and how they can be taken without police investigations. It would let us talk about how children and young women can be taken from their homes because the federal government will not allow therapy and in-house support for their families. We would hear how they get put into foster care and so often end up on the street. Most importantly, an inquiry would send the message that these women were people who were loved and should be respected, and that our Canadian society is ashamed that so many people could be allowed to disappear or die.

An inquiry is about a commitment to make societal change, like the change that came to the OPP because of the Ipperwash inquiry. That showed us that an inquiry process can and does work.

With all this in mind, I ask the government if it will reconsider and call an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

• (1820)

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is a country where those who break the law are punished, where penalties match the severity of the crimes, and where the rights of victims are recognized. That is why the Government of Canada has made it very clear that abhorrent acts of violence against aboriginal women and girls will not be tolerated in our society.

We also believe in taking action. For example, economic action plan 2014 committed to a new investment of \$25 million over five years to continue our government's efforts in reducing violence against aboriginal women. As a result of this commitment, the Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women released the Government of Canada's action plan to address family violence and violent crimes against aboriginal women and girls on September 15.

One of the most important aspects of this action plan is that it responds in a very real way to the call for action from families and communities, while also addressing the recommendations of the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women. There are three main areas in which our government is taking action.

First, the Government of Canada is taking action to prevent violence against aboriginal women and girls. Specific actions set out in the action plan include the development of more community safety plans across Canada, including in regions that the RCMP's analysis has identified as having a high incidence of violent crime perpetrated against women and girls; projects to break intergenerational cycles of violence and abuse by raising awareness and building healthy relationships; and projects to engage men and boys and empower aboriginal women and girls to denounce and prevent violence.

Second, the Government of Canada is taking action to assist and support victims of violence. Specifically, the action plan supports family-police liaison positions to ensure that family members have access to timely information about cases, specialized assistance for victims and families, and positive relationships and the sharing of information between families and criminal justice professionals.

Third, the Government of Canada is taking action to protect aboriginal women and girls. Specifically, the action plan includes initiatives such as funding shelters on reserve on an ongoing basis, supporting the creation of a DNA-based missing persons index, and continuing to support police investigations through the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains. The Government of Canada will also continue to work closely with provinces and territories, police services, and the justice system, as well as aboriginal families, communities, and organizations to address violence against aboriginal women and girls.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, repeating announcements of old money is not getting the job done. There are a lot of communities that do not have crisis centres for these people to go to. There is a lack of funding from the government.

Year after year, indigenous women face more violence than other groups in Canadian society. This is not about solving crimes. It is about showing respect and changing the cultural view of what is acceptable. Part of showing respect is allowing the families of the victims to be heard, which is what an inquiry would actually do.

If we look at what we learned from Ipperwash, it was that it is possible to make big changes when we have big societal conversations. The appetite for that discussion only grows all through Canada, with one notable exception: the Conservative government here in Ottawa.

Will the government listen to the growing chorus of calls from groups such as the Canadian Public Health Association for a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women?

• (1825)

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, our government's investments to address violence against aboriginal women and girls are significant. Measures in the action plan released by the Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women on September 15 represent a total investment of nearly \$200 million over five years. This includes new

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

funding of \$25 million over five years beginning in 2015-16. There is also ongoing funding of \$158.7 million over five years, beginning in 2015, for shelters and family violence prevention activities. Starting in April 2015, there will be dedicated resources of \$5 million over five years through Status of Women Canada to improve the economic security of aboriginal women and to promote their participation in leadership and decision-making.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on November 17, I asked a question of the Minister of Industry, and I was a little surprised and disappointed with his answer. That is why I chose to take the opportunity that is offered tonight in adjournment debate to raise this matter.

I want to explain the question first. I started it by saying, "Canadian consumers believe in and benefit from a fair and open competitive marketplace."

Previous to November 17, I attended a presentation at the Ottawa Economic Club luncheon, where the CEO of Club Coffee, John Pigott, explained the situation consumers are facing in terms of single-serve coffee pods, which is a fairly significant market. He told us that in 2012, sales were about \$204 million; in 2013, they were \$367 million; and in 2014, they were almost half a billion dollars. Over one billion of these things are sold in Canada alone, and 10 or 13 billion in North America.

What was being raised was that his company had started competing in 2012, when the foreign company that had the largest single share of the market, almost a monopoly, because of patents that were coming to term at that point, started selling. The average cost was 52¢ a pod versus 73¢ a pod for the larger company. Their market share from coffee was increasing, and it was being alleged that the larger company was now trying to do things that would reassert its monopoly, so to speak. They lodged a complaint with the Competition Bureau.

My question for the minister, asked in an absolutely non-partisan manner, was whether the government would respond as to whether there would be an inquiry initiated by the Competition Bureau in a timely manner. I also mentioned that five other independent companies in Canada also supported the complaint. I mentioned one of the companies that happened to be in the minister's region of the country.

I was surprised by the response, because it was a little flippant. He said that if this was the most serious question coming from the opposition, then we were doing great in Canada.

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Over 70% of Canadian adults consume coffee. If we are looking at that kind of price differential, then we are talking about tens of millions of dollars. That is why a fair marketplace is important. I just wanted to make sure the minister was aware of it, and he did confirm that he was. After I asked the question, he told me he had talked to the company I had mentioned, the Granville Island Coffee Company.

All I am saying tonight is that we ought to treat parliamentarians with respect. When we raise questions that are of significance to millions of Canadians on a daily basis, then we ought not to be flippant in our answers. That is why I thought this evening I would raise this matter, and hopefully I will get a response from the parliamentary secretary that is not flippant and not partisan in any way, shape, or form.

• (1830)

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that I respect him and I know the Minister of Industry does as well.

The minister made clear in his answer in the House that we did not direct the Competition Bureau in its investigations of conduct under the Competition Act. The Competition Bureau is an independent law enforcement agency and, as such, conducts its investigations confidentially and independently.

I can assure the House, however, that the Competition Bureau is working for consumers every day, and our government introduced major reforms to the Competition Act in 2009 to give the Competition Bureau better tools to do just that. The bureau has been using these added tools to ensure fair competition and better outcomes for consumers.

The Competition Act provides the commissioner with the authority to investigate anti-competitive behaviour. The act contains both civil and criminal provisions and covers conduct such as bid-rigging, false or misleading representations, price-fixing, or abuse of a dominant market position, among other things. The act also grants the commissioner the authority to make representations to promote competition in various sectors. It does all of this work to advance an efficient, competitive and open marketplace for the benefit of the economy, businesses and, most important, Canadian consumers.

Where there is evidence of conduct in violation of the act, the bureau will not hesitate to take appropriate action. Whenever price-fixing or collusion is suspected, the Competition Bureau investigates. In fact, the last fiscal year has been a record year for the bureau. The Competition Bureau has saved Canadians over \$500 million in the past year and issued more than \$54 million in fines.

More recent, the bureau made a decision relating to anti-competitive return policies and procedures by water heater providers in Ontario that prevented consumers from switching to another provider. This resolution included an administrative monetary penalty of \$5 million and required the companies to make changes that would protect Canadian consumers in the future.

We know that the Competition bureau will not hesitate to take enforcement action, where appropriate.

Let me assure the House that our government is standing up for consumers in numerous areas to ensure they benefit from a fair and open competitive marketplace.

Canadians know that more competition will serve them and their families well through better services and lower prices. The 2013 Speech from the Throne signalled that the government would continue its commitment to consumers, and budget 2014 expanded upon the government's consumer-focused measures to improve the bottom line for Canadian families and ensure they would get value for their hard-earned dollars.

Our government committed to promoting competition in the telecommunications sector so Canadian families would benefit from cutting-edge technologies and services at affordable prices. We set aside wireless spectrum for new entrants to create more choice in the market and to increase competition, reduced barriers to foreign investment, extended mandatory rules for tower sharing and roaming, and established spectrum auction rules to ensure new wireless entrants and regional providers would have access to prime spectrum. Since 2008, prices have fallen by almost 22%.

Canadian families work hard for their money and our government has demonstrated that we are committed to putting consumers first.

**Hon. Mauril Bélanger:** Mr. Speaker, this response was a little more respectful and less flippant, so I appreciate that.

I am not expecting the government to direct the Competition Bureau. I understand it is an arm's-length agency. However, I hope it will pay attention to this significant issue.

A campaign was launched, [freethebeans.ca](http://freethebeans.ca). Many Canadian consumers have written both to the minister and to the Competition Bureau hoping they will indeed take a look at this to prevent behaviour that is not appropriate. I am not suggesting that is the case; that is not my job to do. However, I would hope we would see this happen so this market niche, which is now in the competitive environment, remains in the competitive environment and no one uses a dominant position to drive out the competitors. I think if that is done, then Canadians who drink coffee using the single server pod will all benefit from this.

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, our government has taken decisive action to put Canadian consumers first. We have cut taxes nearly 180 times, saving Canadian families nearly \$3,400. Canadians work hard for their money and every dollar counts, including the money they might use to purchase coffee pods.

As I said before, the Competition Bureau is an independent law enforcement agency. It will conduct those investigations confidentially and independently. We trust it will do that in this case or in any others that are brought to its attention.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

•(1835)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands

adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:35 p.m.)

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