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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, June 18, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 18, 2015

The House met at 10:05 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: I have the honour, pursuant to section 48 of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, to lay upon the table the report of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015. This report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table the 2014-15 annual reports on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act from the Office of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

These documents are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

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[*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 responses to six petitions.

* * *

CANADA-QUEBEC GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE PETROLEUM RESOURCES ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Christian Paradis (for the Minister of Natural Resources) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-74, An Act to implement the accord between the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec for the joint management of petroleum resources in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of reports to table today.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to this House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association respecting its election observation mission to Exeter, Glasgow East, Watford, and Wirral West, United Kingdom, from May 2 to 10, 2015.

Pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I also have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association regarding its participation at the workshop on parliamentary codes of conduct, held in Melbourne, Australia, from April 8 to 10, 2015.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the reports of: the Canadian delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the 60th annual session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, The Hague, Netherlands, November 21 to 24, 2014; the Parliamentary Transatlantic Forum in Washington, D.C., United States of America, December 8 to 9, 2014; the joint meeting of the defence and security, economics and security, and political committees and officers of the committee on the civil dimensions of security and the science and technology committee, in Brussels, Belgium, February 14 to 16, 2015; and the meeting of the standing committee in London, United Kingdom, March 20 to 21, 2015.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled “North America: Giving the Continent the Attention it Deserves”, and the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled “Beyond Survival: Protecting and Empowering Children and Youth”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive report in response to both of these reports.

Routine Proceedings

While I have the floor, I just want to mention on behalf of our committee the great, non-partisan work that the clerks and the researchers do. They work late as we get close to the end of the session here. I want to recognize Caroline Massicotte, Joann Garbig, Allison Goody, and Brian Hermon, for the outstanding work they have done all year in our committee. I want to wish them well as we move forward into next year.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled, “Chapter 4, Access to Health Services for Remote First Nations Communities, of the Spring 2015 report of the Auditor General of Canada”.

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

I also extend thanks to all the members of the committee, all the staff, and the Auditor General, who does an amazing job for us.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources entitled “The Transformation of Canada’s Forest Sector”.

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

I want to thank all current members of the committee and past members for the great co-operation and hard work on this committee. Over the eight years I have chaired the committee, it has been a very well functioning committee, and I am certainly very appreciative of that. I also want to thank all of the staff, because they have done great work over the years.

I want to wish all of my colleagues in the House all the best in the years ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I have the honour to present the official opposition’s supplementary opinion on the future of forestry. Over the course of 10 or 11 very full meetings, we heard some high-quality testimony that showed us how important the forestry industry is and shed light on the obstacles the industry will have to overcome to achieve greater success. Although the report does reflect the quality of the testimony, I have to say that we were disappointed in the committee’s recommendations. The testimony is included in the report; that is why we supported it. However, in response to that testimony, we are pleased to present 39 official opposition recommendations about the future of forestry.

I will close by wishing the committee chair, the member for Vegreville—Wainwright, all the best because he will not be running again. The committee was run well and functioned very efficiently. I would like to thank him for his work and wish him good luck in his retirement.

● (1010)

FINANCE

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, entitled “Terrorist Financing in Canada and Abroad: Needed Federal Actions”.

[*English*]

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

As this is the last report I will present to this House, I want to thank all present and past members for their outstanding work and their collaboration with me in operating this committee since 2008.

I want to thank our analysts, Adriane Yong in this report, and especially Mark Mahabir, who has been with us the same amount of time and done an outstanding job. June Dewetering, whom many of us know in this House, has done just an outstanding job as well over the years.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank our clerk, Christine Lafrance.

[*English*]

She insisted I use my French here today. I want to thank her for her outstanding work as well.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs in relation to the study of a continuum of transition services.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

I, too, would like to thank all the members of the committee for their thorough and non-partisan work. I particularly want to signal the work of the hon. members for Edmonton Centre and Guelph, who are not only leaving the committee but leaving this House. I want to thank them for their wisdom and for their passion for this issue.

I would also like to thank the hon. member for Sackville—Eastern Shore for the grace he has shown me in chairing the meetings.

* * *

PUBLIC ACCESS TO SCIENCE ACT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP), seconded by Mr. Rathgeber, moved for leave to introduce Bill C-699, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act (scientific research).

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a real honour. I want to thank my colleague from Edmonton—St. Albert for seconding the bill.

This is a bill that deals with an issue that has been very much of concern to Canadians, that scientific research conducted within the Government of Canada has not been as accessible as it used to be.

The act to amend the Access to Information Act for scientific research, the short title of which will be the public access to science act, references that access and the pursuit of scientific knowledge and information is a pillar of a healthy democracy, that public policy, as developed within this house and throughout the Government of Canada must rest on evidence, and that evidence comes through scientific research.

The effect of the bill would be very straightforward. With the passage of the bill, all publicly funded science in Canada must be made public, must be made public expeditiously, and must be accessible to all Canadians.

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

* * *

• (1015)

[Translation]

NATIONAL PERINATAL BEREAVEMENT AWARENESS DAY ACT

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-700, An Act to Establish National Perinatal Bereavement Awareness Day.

She said: Mr. Speaker, every year, thousands of families are affected by perinatal bereavement. This kind of loss is considered one of the hardest things anyone could ever go through in their adult life, and it can cause physical and psychological suffering for the parents and the extended family. These parents often isolate themselves, since it is such a difficult experience to go through.

I therefore ask my fellow parliamentarians to recognize the importance of raising awareness about perinatal bereavement. That is why I want October 15 to be declared national perinatal bereavement awareness day.

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

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 39th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented to the House on Thursday, June 11, be concurred in.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today and hope for unanimous consent to table only those

Routine Proceedings

portions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report that have been fully translated into both official languages. This includes calls to action and the testimony of survivors.

We have had the important work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission accepted at Rideau Hall by the Governor General; and in this place seven years ago, the Prime Minister made a really significant and historically meaningful apology for the residential school legacy.

It is an important move, as we close this Parliament, to accept those portions of the report that have been fully translated so that the matter of truth and reconciliation is taken up in the House of Commons, accepting the documents, though not necessarily endorsing the recommendations.

I ask for unanimous consent.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PETITIONS

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present this morning.

Two of them are asking Citizenship and Immigration Canada to expedite the recognition of Seyamak Naderi as a convention refugee.

In the third petition, petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to assist the current humanitarian crisis by accepting a group of Rohingya people as government-assisted refugees.

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by dozens of people in my riding from Alban, Sturgeon Falls, Garson and Blezard Valley. They are calling on the Government of Canada to work actively with the Province of Ontario to maintain and strengthen the public health care system for northerners, specifically through the following measures: investments in better long-term and palliative home care programs in northern Ontario and the creation of a mental health and suicide prevention strategy.

• (1020)

[English]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions.

The first petition is signed by hundreds of residents in my riding regarding the proposal to expand and put jets at the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. The Liberal Party and others are committed not to reopen the tripartite agreement that governs that airport, and in doing so, we protect the waterfront. Therefore, the petition compels the House to act on that position.

Routine Proceedings

HOUSING

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on an equally important issue in the city of Toronto, which is the expiration of the social housing agreements with CMHC, particularly around co-op housing.

Hundreds of residents of the communities surrounding these wonderful places to live have signed a petition asking the government not to allow those agreements to expire and to protect public housing as the housing crisis in this country deepens, as we work towards resurrecting a national housing program. I submit these petitions on behalf of the residents of Trinity—Spadina.

[*Translation*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition signed by people from my riding who are calling for the creation of an ombudsman position that will really have some authority when it comes to Canadian mining companies operating abroad.

This problem is tarnishing the image that many people have of Canada. Fixing this situation would be the right thing to do.

[*English*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition signed by many incredible women, strong feminists from Newfoundland, who are calling on the government to enact a national action plan to end violence against women. The petitioners are showing their support for a motion that I put forward, Motion No. 444. They do not want to stop at the defeat of that motion, but push for action to end violence against women in Canada today.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I present six petitions regarding our most pressing environmental issue and perhaps the defining issue of our generation: climate change.

One petition deals with the science of climate change and five others deal with a few of the projected impacts of climate change, including economic impacts, extreme weather events and rising food prices.

The petitioners call upon the government to accept the science of climate change, adopt a comprehensive climate change plan and help Canadians adapt.

Mr. Speaker, I wish a happy summer to everybody.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table a petition demanding that Parliament pass legislation to remove all flavours from all tobacco products since they are marketed to youth and create addiction.

DEFENCE OF CANADA MEDAL

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to table two petitions.

The first petition is regarding the creation of the defence of Canada medal.

As members know, many men and women gave countless hours of service to their country as they trained and prepared for an attack on Canadian soil during the Cold War era. The petitioners recognize that these individuals who served in the regular and reserve forces, police forces, emergency measures organizations and civil organizations worked to protect Canada. The petitioners are asking that the House support Bill C-354, which would create a defence of Canada medal in honour of these veterans of the Cold War.

ALGOMA CENTRAL RAILWAY

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition pertains to the Algoma Central Railway. These petitioners signed the petition before the government finally came to its senses and provided the additional dollars that were needed to keep the ACR going. I know there is still some concern about that, and therefore, this petition is still relevant as we need to make sure that the ACR is protected in the long run.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present three separate petitions today.

The first is a petition on behalf of Canadians who are calling on the Government of Canada and members of Parliament to take note of the human rights violations perpetrated in Venezuela by the government of President Nicolás Maduro, including the criminalization of dissent, the shuttering of independent media and the imprisonment of opposition leaders.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to further study the human rights situation in Venezuela, including a mission to conduct first-hand evaluations of the situation there.

This is a particularly timely petition as opposition leader Leopoldo López and former San Cristobal mayor Daniel Ceballos have embarked upon a hunger strike to protest their imprisonment and that of other opponents of the regime.

● (1025)

Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on behalf of Canadians who wish the government to apologize to Dr. David Shugar for the human and civil rights violations he suffered, including serious damage to his reputation and loss of employment as a result of false accusations that he was a Communist spy in 1946.

The petitioners call on the government to submit a letter of apology to Dr. Shugar who, as a result of these civil rights abuses, and despite being exonerated of all the accusations against him, was summarily dismissed from his position with the federal Department of National Health and Welfare, unable to secure employment and forced to emigrate to Poland where he resides today. He is close to 100 years of age.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the third petition is signed by Canadians who are concerned about the situation of Seyamak Naderi, an Iranian citizen and former political prisoner and resident of camps Ashraf and Liberty, currently living as a refugee claimant in Albania and who is in urgent need of medical care.

The petitioners are concerned about the grave dangers he would suffer if returned to his native Iran. His sister Saeideh, the only member of his family who can provide the needed ongoing care that he requires, is a Canadian citizen seeking his reunification with her here in Canada.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to do everything in their power to expedite the recognition of Seyamak Naderi as a refugee and reunite him with his sister here in Canada as soon as possible.

[*Translation*]

VIA RAIL

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by hundreds of my constituents. They are very concerned about the quality of transportation in our region. They are calling specifically for the return of VIA Rail service, which would make our region far less isolated. There is no doubt that our region is quite remote.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present three petitions, all of which are from constituents within Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The first petition calls for an aggressive climate strategy. The petitioners have set out the goals that were once accepted in a piece of legislation passed under the name of my colleague, the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, calling for a reduction by 2050 of 80% of carbon dioxide levels below those of 1990.

The second petition, Mr. Speaker, calls upon the Government of Canada to act on the issue of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. The petitioners compel the oil and gas companies to disclose all the chemicals that they are currently using and to conduct a comprehensive environmental review, among other measures.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition is very timely given that the Supreme Court of Canada has given one year's notice to deal with the issue of end-of-life decisions.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to respect the will of Canadians and enact legislation with clear guidelines to physicians to allow competent, fully informed and terminally ill patients the option of physician-assisted death.

CANADA POST

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I rise today to table yet another

Routine Proceedings

petition regarding the devastating cuts to service and the huge price increases at Canada Post.

I am pleased to table this petition on behalf of concerned Canadians in St. Catharines, Ontario, who are suffering the effects of these changes.

I look forward to the government's response.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today.

The first is in support of a pan-Canadian food strategy. The signatories point out that Canada is notable among its industrialized comparators in its absence of a comprehensive food policy.

The signatories to this petition call upon the Government of Canada to implement a pan-Canadian food strategy to support farmers, improve access to healthy and local food, and to market Canadian food at home and abroad.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with the federal lands in Durham region.

The signatories to this petition point out that the federal lands in Durham region encompass class 1 Ontario greenbelt farmland and the vital watersheds of the Oak Ridges Moraine, but that this land is designated for an airport and economic development and not agriculture.

The signatories call on the House of Commons to rescind all plans for an airport and non-agricultural uses on the federal lands in Durham region and to act instead to preserve the watersheds and the agricultural land of this irreplaceable natural resource for the long-term benefit of all Canadians.

● (1030)

[*Translation*]

BURUNDI

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by Canadians from across Quebec and Ontario who are calling on the Government of Canada to pressure the Government of Burundi to comply with its constitution, end the violence and abide by the Arusha accord of 2000, which prohibits the president from seeking a third term. The violence is due to the fact that the president is doing just that. The petitioners are also calling on the Government of Canada to temporarily suspend financial aid to Burundi until a legitimate election is held and to suspend the deportation of Burundian citizens to Burundi so as not to expose them to the violence.

However, I must obtain the unanimous consent of the House because this petition was not certified. I am therefore seeking unanimous consent to table this petition.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of Parliament to table the petition?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

[English]

CANADA POST

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's decision to allow Canada Post to end door-to-door delivery has upset a great number of Canadians. As such, Canadians from every region of the country have been signing petitions. I present yet another petition in opposition to the ending of door-to-door mail delivery. People are upset with the number of people who will be fired from Canada Post and with the increase in postal rates.

The petitioners are calling on the government to restore door-to-door delivery and to cut out the hidden agenda against Canada Post. They believe the Government of Canada should support Canada Post.

* * *

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 Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE IN REGULATIONS ACT

Hon. John Duncan (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act and to make consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about Bill S-2, the incorporation by reference in regulations act. Yes, this is riveting. While it may not be the subject of headlines, it is actually very important.

Bill S-2 has been studied by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and has been reported without amendment back to the House. Before that, the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs also reported the bill, without amendment, to the House for consideration.

This bill deals with a regulatory drafting technique. Essentially, the bill clarifies when federal regulators can or cannot use the technique of incorporation by reference.

The technique of incorporation by reference is currently used in a wide range of federal regulations. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a regulated area in which incorporation by reference is not used to some degree.

Bill S-2 is about securing the government's access to a drafting technique that has already become essential to the way governments regulate. It is also about leading the way internationally in the modernization of regulations. However, more directly, Bill S-2 responds to concerns expressed by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations about when incorporation by reference can be used. This bill would create the legal clarification that is needed so that regulators and the committee can ensure that there is no uncertainty in the process of incorporation by reference.

Incorporation by reference has already become an essential tool that is widely relied upon to achieve the objectives of the government. Both committees have heard that it is also an effective way to achieve many of the current goals of the cabinet directive on regulatory management, which are cabinet's instructions on how to ensure effective and responsive regulations. For example, regulations that use this technique are effective in facilitating intergovernmental co-operation and harmonization, a key objective of the Regulatory Cooperation Council established by the Prime Minister and President Obama. By incorporating the legislation of other jurisdictions with which harmonization is desired, or by incorporating standards developed internationally, regulations can minimize duplication. This is an important objective of the Red Tape Reduction Commission. The result of Bill S-2 would be that regulators would have the option of using this drafting technique in regulations aimed at achieving these objectives.

Incorporation by reference is also an important tool for the government to help Canada comply with its international obligations. Referencing material that is internationally accepted, rather than attempting to reproduce the same rules in the regulations, also reduces technical differences that create barriers to trade and is, in fact, something Canada is required to do under the World Trade Organization's Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.

Incorporation by reference is also an effective way to take advantage of the use of the expertise of standards writing bodies in Canada. Canada has a national standards system that is recognized all over the world. Incorporation of standards, whether developed in Canada or internationally, allows the best science and the most accepted approach in areas that affect people on a day-to-day basis to be used in regulations. Indeed, reliance on this expertise is essential to ensuring access to technical knowledge across the country and around the world.

Testimony by witnesses from the Standards Council of Canada before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs made it clear how Canada already relies extensively on international and national standards. Ensuring that regulators continue to have the ability to use ambulatory incorporation by reference in their regulations, meaning the ability to incorporate by reference a document as it is amended from time to time rather than just in its fixed or static version, means that Canadians can be assured that they are protected by the most up-to-date technology.

Incorporation by reference allows the expertise of the Canadian national standards system and the international standards system to form a meaningful part of the regulatory tool box.

Government Orders

Another important aspect of Bill S-2 is that it allows for the incorporation by reference of rates and indices, such as the Consumer Price Index or the Bank of Canada rates, which are important elements in many regulations.

For these reasons and more, ambulatory incorporation by reference is an important instrument available to regulators when they are designing their regulatory initiatives. However, Bill S-2 also strikes an important balance in respect of what may be incorporated by reference by limiting the types of documents that can be incorporated when they are produced by the regulation maker. Also, only the version of such documents as they exist on a particular day can be incorporated when the documents are produced by the regulation maker only. This is an important safeguard against circumvention of the regulatory process.

Although there was some testimony at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights that suggested that the bill should go even further to allow more types of documents to be incorporated by reference, including documents produced by the regulation maker, we believe that Bill S-2 strikes the right balance, and where further authority is needed, Parliament can and has authorized incorporation by reference of additional material.

•(1035)

Parliament's ability to control the delegation of regulation-making powers continues, as does the oversight of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. We expect that the standing joint committee will continue its work in respect of the scrutiny of regulations that use incorporation by reference. The standing joint committee will indeed play an important role in ensuring that the use of this technique continues to be exercised in a way that Parliament has authorized.

One of the most important aspects of this bill relates to accessibility. Bill S-2 would not only provide a solid legal basis for the use of this regulatory drafting technique but would also expressly impose in legislation an obligation on all regulators to ensure that the documents they incorporate are accessible. While this has always been something the common law required, this bill clearly enshrines this obligation in legislation.

There is no doubt that accessibility should be part of this bill. It is essential that documents that are incorporated by reference be accessible to all those who are required to comply with them. This is an important and significant step forward in this legislation.

The general approach to accessibility found in Bill S-2 will provide flexibility to regulatory bodies to take whatever steps might be necessary to make sure that the diverse types of material from various sources are in fact accessible. In general, material that is incorporated by reference is already accessible. As a result, in some cases, no further action on the part of the regulation-making authority will be necessary. An example is provincial legislation, which is already generally accessible. Federal regulations that incorporate provincial legislation will undoubtedly allow the regulator to meet the requirement to ensure that the material is accessible.

Sometimes accessing the document through the standards organization itself will be appropriate. It will be clear that the

proposed legislation will ensure that the regulated community will have access to the incorporated material, with a reasonable effort on their part. It is also important to note that standards organizations, such as the Canadian Standards Association, understand the need to provide access to incorporated standards. By recognizing the changing landscape of the Internet, this bill creates a meaningful obligation for regulators to ensure accessibility while still allowing for innovation, flexibility, and creativity.

Bill S-2 is intended to solidify the government's access to a regulatory drafting technique that is essential to modern and responsive regulation. It also recognizes the corresponding obligations regulators must meet when using this tool. The bill strikes an important balance that reflects the reality of modern regulation while ensuring that appropriate protections are enshrined in law. No person can suffer a penalty or sanction if the relevant material is not accessible to them.

This proposal is consistent with the position the government has long taken on the question of when regulations can and cannot use the technique of incorporation by reference. It will provide express legislative authority for the use of this technique in the future and will confirm the validity of existing regulations incorporating documents in a manner that is consistent with that authority.

We have many years of successful experience with the use ambulatory and static incorporation by reference in legislation at the federal level, and this knowledge will be useful in providing guidance in the future.

To conclude, the enactment of this legislation is the logical and necessary next step to securing access in a responsible manner to incorporation by reference in regulations. I would invite all members to support this legislative proposal and recognize the important steps forward it contains.

•(1040)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the parliamentary secretary spoke a lot about accessibility. However, there are no guidelines in the bill that would help determine the definition of accessibility. I therefore have the following questions. First, in the parliamentary secretary's view, what would be the definition of an accessible document? Second, does he believe that a document that the department charges Canadians for is an accessible document or not?

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, the first point is that currently there is no requirement at all that documents incorporated by reference be accessible. This bill is actually enshrining that in law for the first time. That is very important.

With respect to accessibility, it really depends on what kind of information is being incorporated by reference. Obviously, some of this information is very technical and could go on for hundreds of thousands of pages. I am thinking of transport standards, aviation safety standards, and electrical standards as set out by the national standards organizations of Canada.

Government Orders

In each case, I think the regulators, when they incorporate by reference, need to state where that would be. I would imagine that in this day and age it is going to be on the Internet. It is going to be available in both official languages. When it is used in a regulation, they will indicate where it can be found.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we often hear that things can best be found in the details. When I think of Bill S-2, I cannot help but look at this as a bill that provides a great deal of detail.

My question is with respect to the idea of international standards and the impact they have on different departments in terms of their responsibility to make sure that there are high standards. To what degree does Ottawa work with nations in dealing with trade agreements, as an example? To what degree has the Government of Canada worked with the EU or Ukraine, for example, to finalize agreements for which we would have regulations that would be more in sync?

• (1045)

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada incorporates many international standards and laws of different states by reference in regulations. A really good example would be the North American Free Trade Agreement. To harmonize trade between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, there are many pieces of legislation and international standards that are incorporated by reference in the regulations to the North American Free Trade Agreement.

He raises the question of the European Union comprehensive economic trade agreement. Those regulations are not yet drafted. That will come in time.

He also raises the question of a trade agreement with Ukraine, which is something our government is very interested in. I think it would be beneficial to both Canadians and the people of Ukraine.

On international standards, such as air transport and safety regulations, Canada is most famously home to the International Civil Aviation Organization, in Montreal, which is a UN body that sets civil aviation safety standards. Those standards are incorporated by reference into Department of Transport regulations, which regulate air safety in Canada.

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his speech and for his work as a parliamentary secretary. He does a fantastic job for this government and also for his riding.

What I would like to ask him is actually further to what the previous member asked about: trade.

I believe that Canadians are fair and practical people. We want to see Canadian businesses succeed, not just here in Canada but abroad. I think many of those businesses would benefit by knowing that when we sign free trade agreements and see tariff-free access and see our services being able to go to those countries, and vice versa, there would not be gaps on the regulatory side. He mentioned international shipping issues and whatnot. Canadians know that, first, we can compete abroad, but if we do not have harmonization, those kinds of irritants will hinder Canadians from getting out and trading, and I think Bill S-2 would help set some guidelines for that.

Would the member please further explain in terms of trade and harmonization?

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, that is actually a very good question. In any trade agreement, access to thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of products is open through the agreement. If the legislation of both countries, or multiple countries, in that trade agreement is not harmonized in the way they regulate technology and the way they regulate food, for example, that could actually end up causing an unnecessary barrier to trade, a technical barrier to trade.

Incorporation by reference allows legislators in each country to incorporate each other's legislation, which means that all of those products that are meant to be traded without tariffs would be able to be done that way.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations. It was already a concern to see the department legislate more and more by way of regulations without respecting the spirit of the law. It is said that all Canadians should know the law. Here, we are talking about open incorporation by reference and laws that exist elsewhere. The members opposite talked about free trade agreements. That can change over time. If one day a ruling is needed on a case, which law will the ruling be based on? Where do we begin to assign fault to someone who did not obey the law if the law itself is not defined and it is always being added to and evolving?

I find that the analysis of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations is being ignored. I would like the member opposite to comment on that.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, I think the member will find that the legislation clearly states that all regulations are subject to the review of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. Parliament authorizes, in any trade agreement, the harmonization and adoption by reference of legislation from another country, and then it is the job of the committee that she sits on and her colleagues on that committee to review those regulations and make sure that they are as intended by Parliament.

Of course, that can be reviewed from time to time, as regulations might change, but the purpose of trade agreements is to harmonize the agreement between Canada and the other country so that the business people in both countries can trade their goods and services without tariff to the benefit of consumers in both countries.

• (1050)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition trade critic, I am most interested in this discussion. There are some very good points being made on both sides of the House.

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Obviously, trading jurisdictions have a shared interest in making sure that goods and services can flow as freely as possible across borders. However, I am wondering about some of the difficulties that could come up in that regard. As an example, the United States allows hormones in its milk, whereas Canada does not. When there are different sensitivities and sensibilities of populations over something that may involve public health or different views on things like that, there could be difficulty determining which jurisdiction is going to prevail in that regard.

I am wondering if the hon. member has any comments on that type of issue and how he sees the ability of each country or jurisdiction to maintain democratic control over their standards. How does that play into the bill?

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no concern in that regard. First of all, governments have been drafting legislation and regulation incorporating documents by reference from other countries for decades. There have been no guidelines on how it should be done. Now there will be. That is what Bill S-2 would do.

Second, in situations such as the one the member describes, hormones in milk are not acceptable in Canada. It would be contrary to Canadian regulations. Parliament has oversight over that, so that would not change, and if there were a change in regulations in the other country's legislation, that would actually put the agreement out of sync. It would not be harmonized in that case.

As I said, Parliament can review it. The government, through the Department of International Trade, would review it, and it would also be reviewed by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to this extremely problematic bill. I will provide more details in my speech.

This bill stems from the tabling of the 80th report of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations in December 2007. The committee found that:

...the incorporation by reference of external material into regulations "as amended from time to time" should, in the absence of clear authority, be seen to be [inappropriate and] illegal.

In fact, the parliamentary secretary just confirmed that incorporation by reference is a long-standing practice in the departments. However, we have a report here that says that without a clear law to that effect, these incorporations should be considered inappropriate and illegal. I will read the last clause of the bill:

18.7 The validity of an incorporation by reference that conforms with section 18.1 and that was made before the day on which that section comes into force is confirmed.

I will explain to those watching today—I know many people are—what this government has just done and what the parliamentary secretary has just confirmed to us. The parliamentary secretary just acknowledged that incorporation by reference is currently illegal, but now he is making it legal. Material was incorporated by reference without enabling power and without enabling legislation, which means that, unfortunately, we could have hundreds of thousands of incorporations by reference. I do not know exactly how many.

Thousands of incorporations by reference may have been done without legislative authority. That is a problem.

One has to wonder what the purpose of such a bill is. We know that the Conservatives' budget contained a small provision—hidden in a large budget that is hundreds of pages long—that legalized an illegal act committed by the RCMP. Here, the Conservatives are legalizing incorporations by reference that the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations would consider inappropriate and unlawful. I have here the findings of the report. The first thing that came to mind was the following question: how can we really vote for a bill that would make retroactive amendments to allow actions that were not allowed before Bill S-2 was passed? I would like to remind members that this bill has not yet passed. In accordance with this bill, incorporation by reference is unlawful and inappropriate right now. I would simply like to put that out there, and members will have to decide whether it is acceptable or not. However, in my opinion and in the opinion of the NDP, this sort of retroactive amendment cannot be allowed without a law that allows regulations to be incorporated by reference.

That is some of the background behind Bill S-2. The government said that there was a problem because it did not have regulatory power so it was going to pass a law that would give it this regulatory power to incorporate regulations by reference.

In his speech, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice said that this bill gives guidance and direction with regard to the various incorporation by reference mechanisms. I would like to remind him that I asked this question to a number of witnesses who appeared before the the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

• (1055)

These witnesses clearly told me that the bill unfortunately did not address their concerns and that it did not create rules and guidelines for making regulations and incorporations by reference. I have the minutes of the meeting. The witnesses clearly told me that Treasury Board and the government must adopt directives and guidelines as quickly as possible for making regulations and for incorporations by reference. There are currently none, and Bill S-2 does not change that. All it does is grant the general authority to make regulations by reference. It does not include directives or guidelines.

I will give a very quick overview of incorporation by reference. It is a technique for drafting laws or regulations that refer to another piece of legislation, in order to avoid having to recopy everything in the bills. I will concede that we save a lot of paper by doing this. This technique is used to incorporate legislative texts, for example, regulations, rates, texts from other jurisdictions—provincial or federal—or other legislative texts from other governments, meaning other states.

There are two types of incorporation by reference. There is static incorporation, which means that when a reference is made to a regulation, the reference is made to the regulation as it exists at the time the legislation is passed, without any amendments that are made in the future.

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There is also dynamic, or open, incorporation, which automatically incorporates changes to other incorporated regulations. This means that if we incorporate regulations from another country, like the United States—the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice mentioned international trade—and that country amends its regulations, ours will also be changed. Governments change and we have no way of knowing what kind of amendments a new government might make, but these amendments will automatically be made to Canadian laws.

This means that these amendments will never be reviewed by parliamentarians. That is a problem. Canadians, who are supposed to know the law, and parliamentarians, who are supposed to study it, will not be able to do so. They will not necessarily be aware of all of the changes made to the hundreds of thousands of regulations pertaining to legislation in other countries. In addition, incorporations by reference will not even have to be published in the *Canada Gazette*.

That is a big problem because all of the government's regulations must be published in the *Canada Gazette* before coming into effect, to prevent abuses. The problem is that clause 18.4 states that the requirements in the Statutory Instruments Act for registration and publication of regulations do not apply to documents incorporated by reference. That means they do not have to be published in the *Canada Gazette*. The government is creating an exception. Usually, as I said, all laws and regulations have to be published in the *Canada Gazette*. However, clause 18.4 confirms that documents incorporated by reference will not have to be published.

• (1100)

There is a double standard here. I can imagine what the Conservatives are thinking. They will say that this has already been published, but that is not the problem. Perhaps it has already been published as it stands, but it did not say that it would apply to another law or another regulation. The problem is not that the regulations have already been published. What matters is knowing that the application of the regulation to another regulation will never be published. How, then, is anyone supposed to know what anything applies to, if it is not published in the *Canada Gazette*? That is very problematic.

If we cannot figure out what anything applies to, and it is not published in the *Canada Gazette*, what is the Conservatives' idea of accessibility? Do they think that everyone should just know how to find that information online? If so, I would remind them that the *Canada Gazette* website is usually where people look up which regulation applies to which law or which regulation by incorporation applies to which regulation.

If it is not published in the *Canada Gazette*, then where? Will it be posted on the department's website? If that is what they mean by accessibility criteria, then I hope there will be no fees involved because the *Canada Gazette* can be accessed for free. Will there be fees? Will it be translated in both official languages?

In any case, I sincerely hope so because the United States is not subject to bilingualism requirements. If we incorporate U.S. regulations by reference, I hope that the government will ensure that these regulations are translated into French and English for all Canadians.

A letter sent by the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations raises some concerns that I raised in committee and for which the government has not provided a response, unfortunately. Generally, ambulatory incorporation by reference of administrative documents produced internally by the federal government should not be allowed in federal regulations.

Why not? When documents are incorporated by reference by the regulatory authority itself, there is a risk of abuse and of creating a system where that authority has a free pass to incorporate by reference and make changes to the regulations without submitting the material for review by parliamentarians. That is very problematic.

Several thousand regulations could be incorporated by reference every year, without parliamentarians being notified and without these regulations being subject to review by a parliamentary committee. I find that very problematic. That shows that the Conservatives are not at all concerned about creating a parallel means of making regulations and opening the door to abuse by using incorporation by reference.

Only when this is deemed to be essential should it be permitted, and that should be clearly indicated in the enabling legislation, not in Bill S-2. This is general enabling legislation concerning the general authority to adopt measures by incorporation, not a specific power given to a department or departmental agency, for example.

It is no big deal for the Conservatives. They will just pass Bill S-2 and create a general power that applies to all departments and departmental agencies. That way, they will not have to include it in specific enabling legislation. That is what Bill S-2 does.

For example, the bill talks about the power to incorporate by reference rates, numbers and indices established by, for example, a body other than the regulation-making authority. However, we do not know what body is being referred to. The bill refers to persons or bodies other than the regulation-making authority. Could that be public servants or peace officers? I do not know.

When we pass a law we generally want it to be clear. What is a person or body other than the regulation-making authority?

• (1105)

This came up a number of times in the debates on Bill S-2 in the Senate. It was said that the bill was not clear enough and that guidelines were necessary. Unfortunately Bill S-2 will not fix that because it does not include guidelines as to who can use this new power or who or what is considered a person or body other than the regulation-making authority. As I already said, this came up a number of times during the Senate's studies.

Incorporation by reference of foreign legislation, as amended from time to time, is another problem. Once again, in the report and in the letter sent to the minister, the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations clearly stated that ambulatory incorporation by reference of foreign legislation should not generally be permitted.

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It goes on to explain that with ambulatory incorporation by reference of federal, provincial or foreign legislation, parliamentarians do not have the option of reviewing the amendments. I am not making this up. It was in a report and in a letter from the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations. The committee provides some examples, such as the fact that Ontario, Australia, New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have all prohibited the incorporation by reference of foreign legislation.

There are already some Commonwealth countries that say that foreign legislation should never be incorporated by reference, especially not as amended from time to time, because parliamentarians then do not have the opportunity to examine any amendments that may be made to the law. We cannot allow amendments to be incorporated into Canadian laws without debating them in the House of Commons. That is clear. Any amendments to regulations must be put before the House. That is clear. That is how a parliament works. It is a legislature.

The report of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations also talks about how such power should not necessarily be exercised without guidelines. For example, the report indicates that the regulation-maker who drafts the actual text of the regulations or who decides to incorporate material by reference must act within the clear limits of the authority bestowed upon him by law. The enactment of general provisions governing incorporation by reference could raise questions about whether those provisions constitute autonomous authority or whether they are subject to the conditions of the enabling legislation under which the regulation-maker makes a regulation by incorporating a document by reference.

It says here in the report that the passage of Bill S-2, which is a general authority for incorporation by reference, unfortunately may not meet the conditions and guidelines. Since no such conditions exist, that is a bit difficult. However, that could mean that this does not meet the conditions of the enabling legislation that falls within the purview of a department or agency.

That is very problematic. I think all members need to think about this before they allow hundreds of pages of regulations to evade parliamentary scrutiny. I am asking members to vote against this bill.

• (1110)

[English]

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, listening to my colleague from the justice committee, one would wonder if anyone in the New Democratic Party has ever read the North American Free Trade Agreement or any of the regulations thereto. If she had, she would know that for more than 20 years, these kinds of incorporation by reference have done this. Previously we had no guidelines for this. Now we have guidelines in Bill S-2.

If we had an NDP government, business would grind to a halt. This probably points out why the NDP is against every trade agreement in the world. Business could not be done if Parliament had to review every regulation. She knows that is not how it is done.

The bill would put some parameters, control and basic guidelines around what has been done in Canada, in the provinces and in every major nation in the world for decades.

The member would know that in any trade agreement, there are dispute resolution mechanisms. What does she think the civil servants of Canada do, the public servants at International Trade and Foreign Affairs or the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Transport. They review those regulations and the regulations of other countries, and ensure they fit within the laws of Canada and the authority given to them by Parliament. That is why we have public servants. If we did not have people doing that, we could not have these kinds of agreements, which make the international economy work. The things she is saying really do not make sense.

I want to point out one other thing. She talked about regulation-making authority. Subclause 18.1(4) of Bill S-2 includes the definition of regulation-making authority, which includes the Governor-in-Council or the Treasury Board, the minister who recommends the making of regulation, the minister who is accountable to Parliament for the administration of the regulation, any person, other than Statistics Canada, for which either of those ministers is accountable to Parliament. In other words, the people who have the authority to write the regulations are accountable to Parliament.

• (1115)

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, every time I stand in the House and raise concerns, the only criticism my colleagues from the Conservative Party have against me is that I do not make sense. I do not know if that is unparliamentary, but those criticisms were not only raised by myself, but were raised by the parliamentary committee on regulations and by the Senate committee on regulations.

If the hon. member really thought I did not make sense, then he probably thinks the parliamentary committee on regulations and the Senate do not make sense, with which I totally agree. My speech was only based on the report from the hon. member's committee and the Senate. There are deep concerns that we let go of our privilege of studying law just because the Conservatives want to adopt Bill S-2, which is ridiculously large to implement right now, and it would ignore the study of regulations by the people who are elected by Canadians to study law.

If the hon. member thinks this does not make sense, then it is time for the government to go.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly would never mention to that colleague that she did not make sense. I find she makes very good sense.

I am very concerned by the incorporation of regulations by reference. It is fine for the Conservatives to say that it has been done in the past in other laws, but the increasing and sweeping use of incorporation of regulations by reference does reduce public accessibility. It reduces our knowledge of what is moving through the *Canada Gazette*. It reduces the opportunity for Canadians to know what regulations they have to meet. I have seen it referred to in the media as a “sleeper law”, something that appears so dry that it does not gain public attention, but which does have deeply anti-democratic implications.

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Would my hon. colleague like to expand on why she believes she continues to make sense?

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleagues's deep knowledge, as a lawyer, on this kind of legislation. She knows the implications of what a bill like this could have on Canadian legislation.

[*Translation*]

I will go on to say that, unfortunately, if the government's only excuse is that this has already been done in the past, that this has always been done and that, today, we must legalize everything that was done before without it being authorized by law, this clearly shows just how little concern the Conservatives have about creating a whole incorporation by reference system that would not be subject to scrutiny by officials or by Parliament. The way they see it, if something has been done since time immemorial and was not legal, then today it is all right to pass a bill that would legalize everything that was done in the past.

This is not how Canadians want their country to be governed. We need to make regulations that are legal and authorized by law. Today, what the Conservatives are telling us is that they have done this for years and we just need to pass a bill today to authorize them to act in that manner. I do not think this is a good reason to allow the creation of a whole parallel system for scrutinizing regulations just because there are things that have already been done in the past.

[*English*]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the member has the answer to this question or not, but the leader of the Green Party raised the question of gazetting. I was of the understanding that these regulations, handled this way, would still go through the scrutiny of regulations committee and would probably still have to be authorized by cabinet. I may be wrong on that, but do they have to be gazetted? That is an important aspect.

Does the member, who has studied this in a little more depth than I, have an answer to that question?

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, to answer the member's question, I refer to section 18.4 in the bill. The exact wording is as follows:

For greater certainty, a document, index, rate or number that is incorporated by reference in a regulation is not required to be transmitted for registration or published in the *Canada Gazette* by reason only that it is incorporated by reference.

This makes it clear in the law that the incorporation by reference of regulations, either those from other countries or other jurisdictions, will ensure that they will not have to be published. They will not even have to be transmitted for registration. This means that, at that time, the regulation-making authority will not even have to transmit for registration the incorporations that it makes. This is a huge problem.

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her analysis of this extremely technical bill. She painted a very good picture of the problems we might face if we pass this bill hastily, particularly since no amendments were agreed to in committee.

I would also like to point out that this bill will be retroactive. It seems to me that we are seeing things that we have never seen before. The government seems to be setting a precedent with Bill C-59, which retroactively authorizes the destruction of the gun registry so that it will not be subject to the Access to Information Act. I am very concerned about the fact that the government realized something was illegal and chose to fix things by retroactively amending legislation. Consider a criminal who commits an offence: he cannot go back in time and change the law to make what he did legal.

I would like the member to comment on that.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île has 50 seconds to answer the question.

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, 50 seconds is not enough time to answer the question, but I will do my best.

The problem here is that anything that has been incorporated by reference in the past, before the passage of Bill S-2, does not have to be published in the *Canada Gazette*. Those regulations will not be forwarded to be registered and will not necessarily be examined by Parliament.

Accordingly, even if changes have already been made to a regulation through incorporation by reference, passing Bill S-2 will not solve that problem. It will only make matters worse. It will be impossible for us to look at everything that was done in the past. Bill S-2 will not solve the problem that, in the past, that was illegal.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this place to add some thoughts on a particular issue. After reading the title of Bill S-2, many might think it is a somewhat dull bill, maybe a little boring to read, but as I asked in my question for the parliamentary secretary, the details are in fact very important.

My view of the structure under which our system operates is that we do not give enough attention to regulations. Canadians would be surprised at the degree to which our society is regulated. It does not happen just here in Ottawa; it also happens internationally, and it affects Canadians' lives. It happens at the national level, which is what we are primarily talking about this morning, and it also happens at the provincial and municipal levels. Regulations are a part of everyday life for all of us.

They are important and they have a very profound impact. Some forms of legislation that come to the House of Commons are pretty straightforward and very easy to comment on; on others, such as this one, we have to be somewhat more diligent as we examine them.

The Liberal Party has a great deal of concern with regard to Bill S-2. Overall, we are not in a position to support the bill, because we have a number of concerns.

Government Orders

It is important at the get-go to recognize that incorporation by reference enables the federal government or agencies to give legal effect to material that has been published elsewhere. We should all be concerned about that.

We have talked a great deal within the Liberal caucus and we have shared some different ideas and thoughts in two-way communications with Canadians. Time and time again, and in fact earlier this week, we talked about how Ottawa is broken and how we do not see the type of progress that is important.

This is one of the pieces of legislation that I would use to cite that. We have standing committees of the House. We have a standing committee that deals strictly with the issue of regulations. Its primary function is to get a better understanding of regulations. It is there to provide diligence. We in the House might spend relatively little time dealing with the regulations, but there are other ways in which members of the House of Commons deal with regulations, from their creation to their being passed in the House to their appearance in the *Canada Gazette*. We need to have a decent understanding of what happens today and what the bill is proposing to do.

A department I choose to follow quite closely with regard to regulation is the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. A number of pieces of law, many of them very targeted and not very positive, have been passed in this administration, but when the law is passed after hours and hours of debate at committee, let alone what takes place outside of committee, that law does not actually deal with the regulations per se, and it is the regulations that will provide the details to either complement or, in some cases, detract from a piece of legislation that has been passed.

● (1125)

Let me give a specific example. We pass legislation dealing with the issue of citizenship; then we pass regulation to support some of those decisions that were made. As an example, the government passes legislation with an objective of creating additional resources or properly resourcing citizenship in order to speed up the process of acquiring citizenship. Then a regulation that follows stipulates what it would now cost to have that citizenship. We have seen some pretty bizarre things occur in that area, such as the quadrupling of citizenship fees. That has upset not only a good number of my constituents but also a good number of Canadians across the board.

How does that actually happen? The legislation passes here, and then the regulation comes up. Typically, the minister who develops the regulation brings it forward to the full cabinet. The full cabinet ultimately passes it. Then it ends up in the *Canada Gazette*. All Canadians could then be familiar with what has actually taken place.

Through that process, even though all members of Parliament are not necessarily privy to the dialogue in cabinet, there are some eyes on it from parliamentarians. That is a very important aspect when we deal with regulation. That is because, at the end of the day, if something appears in the *Canada Gazette*, we should have a sense that there was a Canadian member of Parliament who had eyes on it. Perhaps it was a cabinet member, because the cabinet ultimately approves it prior to its appearance in the *Canada Gazette*. There is that direct link of accountability. The government is ultimately responsible.

Through this particular piece of legislation, we would change that somewhat. One could argue that incorporation by reference already exists. It does occur. However, this particular piece of legislation would enhance that. It would enable more of it to take place. Concerns have been raised in regard to the impact it would have on the *Canada Gazette*. Concerns have also been raised in regard to the impact it would have on the House of Commons and on the ability of members of Parliament to hold the government accountable for regulations that would increasingly be changing without any sort of real diligence from the House of Commons.

That is a concern that we should all have. It is something that has caused the Liberal caucus and the Liberal Party to express our concern, and it is the reason we will not be supporting Bill S-2.

Bill S-2 would reduce the oversight of federal regulations by allowing sub-delegation of regulation-making power that is already delegated by Parliament to the Governor in Council and other persons. The current government, as I cited, cannot be trusted to use this power responsibly. We have seen that time and time again. Its willingness to abuse oversight mechanisms through its omnibus legislation and its disregard for the Department of Justice's constitutional review procedure are but a couple of examples.

I have had the opportunity to talk about some of those specifics. We have talked about those massive budget bills into which the government incorporates numerous pieces of other legislation, attempting to pass legislation through the back door of the budget, attempting to avoid accountability, attempting to avoid the eyes of MPs, attempting to avoid scrutiny beyond that by many different stakeholders. It tries to sneak legislation through in these large budget bills.

● (1130)

In fact, when the Prime Minister was in opposition, I can recall him stating very clearly how wrong it was to be use budget bills as a back door to bring through legislative agendas. No government has done it more than the Conservative government.

I could check with my colleague, the member for Charlottetown, about the issue of oversight and the importance of that. The Liberal Party has advocated for parliamentary oversight with respect to CSIS and security related issues. We went through a fairly significant debate on Bill C-51. The Conservatives try to give the public the impression that there is a terrorist under every rock. Then the NDP in essence believes that there is no problem, that there is no need to be fearful. Those are two really different approaches.

The Liberals understand the importance of safety. We understand the importance of security. However, we also understand the importance of individual rights. We are the party that brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We talk about diligence and we look at the importance of our parliamentary committees in providing that kind of oversight. Through Bill S-2, there will be less parliamentary oversight on regulations. I believe the parliamentary secretary would recognize, or at the very least should recognize, that.

Government Orders

It would have been more encouraging to hear the parliamentary secretary talk about the importance of parliamentary oversight. He and the government are very enthusiastic about this legislation, but we do not hear whether the Government of Canada is prepared to give away a very important part of making regulations through the incorporation by reference. That will have a very important impact not only today but especially into the future, as Canada is becoming a bigger player in the global market. Therefore, parliamentary oversight is of critical importance.

Unfortunately, we lost that debate on Bill C-51, but we will correct that come fall if we are afforded the opportunity to do so.

What about parliamentary oversight on these issues, because these issues are important also? Once again, the government feels we do not need to worry about oversight. The government is wrong. Canadians have a higher expectation of what they want parliamentarians to do. Let me give members an example that is quite tangible.

We are all aware of the hundreds of thousands of tax dollars that the Prime Minister has used for the European trade deal photo ops. There are no lack of resources when it comes to taxpayer dollars to support photo ops on the EU agreement, which is not finalized. I believe Canada is the only signing officer to that agreement. We will have to wait until the next administration comes in to finalize it.

• (1135)

What about the details of the agreement? The parliamentary secretary acknowledged that a lot of work needed to be done on regulations once the EU agreement was finalized. We should all be concerned with that very important aspect. In part, those regulations play an important role in whether Canada will be on a level playing field.

Whether it is the leader of the Liberal Party or any other member of my caucus, we are very proud of our businesses in every region of our country. We know that if we put them on a level playing field, we will excel. We saw trade surpluses during Liberal administrations. We have confidence in our business community and we are there to support it in getting those new markets. Therefore, we should be concerned. When we talk about these agreements, the regulations will follow them.

To what degree does this legislation, for example, say that regulations related to certain aspects of trade agreements through incorporation by reference will not be determined by the House of Commons or that there will be no role for the House? We know that will occur. That is why I asked the member how things were going with respect to that as well as with Ukraine.

If I can just sidetrack for a bit, I have a personal favourite. I would love to see the Prime Minister forgo some of the photo ops, get down to work and get that agreement with Ukraine. The European Union already has done that. Why has Canada not dealt with Ukraine? The regulations would have followed. The Prime Minister needs to focus on how we can help the people of Ukraine in a more real and tangible way. At the same time, it also helps Canada.

With respect to those regulations, people need to recognize that the government has again been found wanting in explaining why it does not feel there is an enhanced role for members of Parliament to play. We are moving more and more into a global situation. MPs

need to play a stronger role of monitoring and providing that oversight. We have a standing committee of the House that is responsible for regulations. As we move toward a stronger role for incorporation by reference, given the international laws and more trade, and the importance of Canada to be engaged in that trade, why not include a stronger role for our standing committee for oversight in legislation?

The Liberals have a website called realchange.ca. I would encourage members to go to visit it. They will see opportunities that would allow for additional oversight. When it comes to regulations such as—

• (1140)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, as much as we would like to hear that member speak for another 60 minutes, and I am sure we will over the next few days, what the opposition members do not seem to understand or get is the state of the law today is that there is no restriction on incorporation by reference. That member is a member of a party that formed—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure, but I think the parliamentary secretary perhaps thought that I had called for questions and comments. I thought he was standing on a point of order.

I will go back to the member for Winnipeg North, who has about 30 to 35 seconds remaining.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is nice to know the parliamentary secretary is so eager to ask his question.

I was giving my sales pitch with respect to www.realchange.ca. On that website are all sorts of opportunities to get a better understanding of the importance of oversight, among many other things. I would encourage all members to tap in and feel free to steal some of those ideas. There are plenty of them there.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the state of the law today is that there are no restrictions on incorporation by reference.

That member is a member of a party that formed government from 1993 to 2006, during which time thousands upon thousands of things were incorporated by reference into regulations passed under his party's government with no oversight and no restriction whatsoever. Bill S-2 would put those restrictions and guidelines in place.

Obviously the member has not read subparagraph 18.1(4) of the bill, and I would encourage him to do so right now if he can. He will see there is a definition of regulation-making authority and every individual or body is accountable to Parliament. This legislation would make all of this accountable to Parliament, whether it is incorporation of a foreign statute or incorporation by technical standards.

Those members talk about putting technical standards in the *Canada Gazette*, which could be tens of thousands of pages of numbers and schematics. They have not really thought this through.

Government Orders

•(1145)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the parliamentary secretary. If members want to get a good sense of international regulations that have been put into effect, they can look at the previous Liberal administration under Jean Chrétien and some of the regulations that were done with regard to modernizing some of those international relations with respect to the automobile industry, which was of great benefit in particular for the production of vehicles. We are talking about literally thousands of jobs as a direct result. It is important. That is why I said the details of regulation do matter. It means everything from the safety of the food that we eat to the production of vehicles.

The member referred to legislation. I am not alone in my thinking that there needs to be more parliamentary oversight on a number of different issues. It is critically important, as we go more into the world economy, that incorporation by reference becomes an issue in the House. We should ensure there is that parliamentary oversight.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question, specifically regarding four amendments that I presented in committee, which were all rejected by the government.

One of the things I included was a definition of accessibility. Under my amendment, any incorporation by reference that requires fees could not be deemed accessible.

I would like him to explain whether he believes that it would be appropriate to charge fees for access to a legislative measure or he believes that access should be free. Furthermore, how would he define accessibility in the context of Bill S-2?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will provide an answer to the member, but if I may, I would first recognize that what we have seen with the government over the last four years is an absolute denial of any real attempt to improve legislation.

The member mentioned that she had attempted to bring amendments to the floor. The member's intention, no doubt, was to have some sort of discussion and debate on them. I was not there when she moved the amendments, but I feel fairly confident in saying that because she is a member of the opposition her amendments, no matter what they were, would not have been accepted.

The attitude of government is that it only accepts amendments from Conservative members. There might be the odd exception, but I can say that there are literally hundreds of amendments that have been introduced over the last four years of the Conservative-Reform majority government, and they consistently have been rejected. It is a terrible way to be running our committees. Realchange.ca sets out the reasons we should be reforming our standing committees.

In regard to access, it is absolutely critical that Canadians have access to the information that is important to them. I do not know the fee breakdown which the member is specifically referring to, but access is absolutely critical. If we could prevent having a fee, that would be a good thing.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member referred in his remarks to the regulations. From my point of view, one of the worrisome aspects is that we do get governments that would govern basically by regulation. Regulations do not have the same kind of scrutiny as legislation does in the House and cabinet directives in which the full regulations are laid out. There are people who do pay attention to the *Gazette* on an ongoing basis and they can raise concerns if there are regulations that they disagree with. There is a period in which to respond.

We know how far the government will already go when the PCO and the PMO encourage the RCMP to break the law. We cannot pick and choose what laws to support. I will have members on the government side know that the Access to Information Act is a law that applies to this House too, yet the Prime Minister encouraged the breaking of that law. Then it was covered up by way of a clause in a budget bill. The PMO encourages our national police force to break a law and then covers it up by way of legislation.

I ask the member, is he concerned about regulations—

•(1150)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member of Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate why the member raised that issue. I, too, am quite concerned.

We have laws in place and they are to be followed. If one is the prime minister or minister of justice, one has an obligation to follow the law as well. I suspect that we have not heard the end of that particular issue.

From what I understand, through the Prime Minister's Office there was information going to the RCMP encouraging it, in essence, to break the law. I do not think that is something we should just forget about. It is one of the reasons I made reference in my comments to the fact that we just cannot trust this particular government. It is beyond me in terms of some of the actions the Conservatives have taken. The member made reference to a very serious one. It is quite amazing, and I would suggest very undemocratic, particularly regarding the massive budget implementation bills that we have seen which have attempted to change laws through the back door. There are so many reasons that we should be concerned.

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my colleague's exchange with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, he indicated that he would repeal any dynamic incorporation by reference such as amended from time to time. The parliamentary secretary said that there were many incorporations by reference on the previous Liberal government's watch. Could he please tell us which of those dynamic incorporations by reference he would seek to repeal specifically that were done under the Liberal watch?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is an interesting question. I do not have a book in front of me that lists all of the regulations. However, the member raises an interesting point.

Government Orders

When I say the regulations have an impact on every Canadian, the regulations come in many different forms and at many levels, not only at the municipal level, but also at the provincial—I have already named some—national and international levels, and there are regulations that pass every day that have a fairly significant impact on all of us. The point is that as time evolves, we want to ensure that we have some sense of diligence when it comes to regulations. Especially in the last number of years, it has become more and more important that we ensure that we institute parliamentary oversight given the very behaviour of the majority government.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of Bill S-2, the incorporation by reference in regulations act.

I would like to start by addressing some of the comments that my colleague raised in debate with regard to our government's track record in supporting the will of Parliament. What the Liberal Party, the third party in the corner over there, intimated was that the government was wrong in repealing the long gun registry. However, Canadians spoke very loudly against the long gun registry and we had a mandate in which to do that. Then Parliament, and of course when we talk about sovereignty the will of Parliament is very important, decided to do that. Then, of course, a provincial court ruling upheld the decision to destroy this data. The member somehow intimated that the government was in the wrong here.

What is really at the core of this particular issue is the sovereignty of Parliament. That is at the core of some of the objections to this piece of legislation which have come up in debate. I would like to address those, but I would first of all like to provide some context about the legislation as well as why it is an important piece that Parliament should be seized with.

First of all, to contextualize some of the opposition to the bill, I would like to define what a regulation is. This is from the Treasury Board website:

A regulation is one of the many instruments that government uses to achieve policy objectives and improve the quality of life of Canadians.

A regulation, in its broadest sense, sets out principles, rules, or conditions that govern the behaviour of citizens and organizations. Governments use regulations in combination with other instruments to achieve public policy objectives. Regulations are a form of law—they have force of law and usually set out general rules and penalties rather than specific ones that are directed toward persons or situations.

Regulating is an extension of the power given to Parliament by the Constitution to make laws. It is through a delegation of authority from Parliament in an act—known as an “enabling authority”—that the Governor in Council (the Governor General, acting on the advice of the federal Cabinet), the Treasury Board, a minister, or another administrative agency is given the authority to make regulations. The regulation is thus referred to as “delegated” or “subordinate” legislation. Authority to make regulations must be expressly provided for in the enabling legislation. Regulations must be consistent with all provisions of the enabling act.

The Statutory Instruments Act provides a specific definition of the term “regulation.” The Drafting and Advisory Services Group of the Department of Justice...is responsible for ensuring that a proposed regulation is consistent with that definition.

Right in the definition of what a regulation is, it sets out the role of Parliament and the sovereignty of Parliament and being able to set out its force, et cetera.

Today the bill is seized with the concept of incorporation by reference. For those in the gallery who may not understand what

incorporation by reference is, the following is from the legislative summary of the bill:

Incorporation by reference, as explained by John Mark Keyes in *Executive Legislation*, “is a drafting technique for providing that a legislative text ... includes material (text, information or concepts) expressed elsewhere. The material is included without reproducing it within the legislative text.

Different types of materials may be incorporated by reference. For example, a legislative text may incorporate another provision from the same text, provisions from another legislative text enacted in the same jurisdiction, legislative texts of another jurisdiction, or non-legislative texts such as technical standards or international agreements.

Of course, this is very timely in the context of the over 43 trade agreements that our government has brought into force during our tenure. The legislative summary continues:

In addition, incorporation by reference can be either “open” or “closed.”

“Closed” or “static” incorporation by reference incorporates the document as it exists at the time into the regulation.

One of the advantages of incorporation by reference is that it can be used to avoid duplication so that regulation-making authority does not have to reproduce the incorporated material in its entirety.

The legislative summary also notes that incorporation by reference may promote harmonization. This is particularly important in terms of seeking interjurisdictional harmonization, for example, to facilitate transactions or activities across borders.

• (1155)

Why is the bill necessary? As was mentioned, our government has undertaken a very aggressive and substantive free trade agenda. We have free trade agreements with many different jurisdictions in the world. In fact, I would think that is one of the competitive advantages that Canada now has in economy, in that we are positioned to have free trade access into the European market, as well as into the Asian supply chain through the Canada-South Korea free trade agreement.

Therefore, when we are looking at some of the agreements or legalities associated with these trade agreements, standards might be one of the things we need to look at. Certainly, in terms of regulation drafting, where there is an overall established governing standard that might be useful to incorporate in by reference, we need to have the mechanisms in government to do that.

Canada is at the forefront of standards development. There are hundreds of standards developed in Canada as part of the national standards system in Canada and then incorporated into federal and provincial regulations, such as standards developed by organizations like the Canadian General Standards Board, which would most likely be recognized by the name the Canadian Standards Association.

Standards developed by these organizations have already become key to the way sectors are regulated in Canada. There are more than 250 different standards produced by the Canadian Standards Association that are referenced in federal regulations.

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We have this big free trade agenda and we are at the forefront of standards development. Also, standards development is very dynamic and fluid. Standards and regulations often follow, as we see advances and innovations in new ways of doing things, processes, and technologies. We need to be in a position as legislators to quickly and nimbly respond to these changes in the regulatory environment without causing undue duplication.

At this point, I would like to emphasize one of the great impacts of looking at regulatory review on an ongoing basis. The House is riveted with the extremely sexy topic of regulatory reform. I actually think it is. This is a very pertinent topic. The fact that our government, through this Parliament, brought in one-for-one regulation review signals to the business community that our government wants to ensure that Canadians have the highest level of health and safety, but also that we are not compounding an undue compliance burden on business.

One of the things that businesses often tell us when we consult with them is that they want no surprises. They want to comply with government regulations on health and safety, but a determinant to investment can be surprise or duplicative regulations or regulations that have a compliance burden that is unduly onerous. Therefore, it is up to us as parliamentarians to ensure we are achieving that regulatory outcome without an overly complex and undue burden in our regulatory system.

Regulation by incorporation as proposed in Bill S-2, and how that would happen, both simplify and allow nimbleness in our regulatory system, which is a competitive advantage for Canadian business.

What would the bill do? Everyone is so remarkably enchanted with it, but it is important to talk about it. I am going to quote from speeches given by my colleague the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, as well as the member for Kildonan—St. Paul:

This bill deals with the regulatory drafting technique.

What does that mean? That means the process by which we draft regulations in government.

Essentially, the bill is about when federal regulators can or cannot use the technique of incorporation by reference. The technique of incorporation by reference is currently used in a wide range of federal regulations. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a regulated area in which incorporation by reference is not used to some degree.

The bill is about securing the government's access to a drafting technique that has already become essential to the way government regulates. It is also about leading the way internationally in terms of modernization of regulations.

Again, this sends a signal to civil society and our business community that we are ensuring we have regulations that promote the health and safety of Canadians, but also are clear and accessible for businesses and folks to understand and to comply with.

More particularly, Bill S-2 responds to concerns expressed by the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations about when incorporation by reference can be used. The bill would create the legal clarification needed so that regulators and the committee could leave uncertainty behind.

● (1200)

What does this mean? This means that there are people within the government who draft regulations, and we have heard through committee study that there needs to be more clarity in which context and which circumstances incorporation by reference can be used. That is what the bill seeks to do.

I would point to some of the more significant changes that the bill addresses. In subsection 18.1(1), it states that:

...the power to make a regulation includes the power to incorporate in it by reference a document—or a part of a document—as it exists on a particular date or as it is amended from time to time.

This covers both the static and ambulatory incorporation by reference—and the differences in these two terms have been set out to a large degree by other speakers on this topic—and appears to apply regardless of the powers to make a regulation respecting or prescribing a matter or otherwise.

This power is subject, however, to the limitation in subsection 18.1(2), which relates to a document produced by the regulation-making authority, either alone or jointly with a person or body in the federal public administration.

In essence, a document provided by the regulation-making authority itself can be incorporated by reference into a regulation only if it does the following: it contains only elements that are incidental or elaborate on the rules set out in the regulation and is incorporated as it exists on a particular date; it is reproduced or translated from a document or part of a document produced by a person or body other than the regulation-making authority with any adaptations of form or reference that will facilitate in its incorporation regulation; or is a regulation.

The intent of the provisions set out in paragraph 18.1(2)(a) appears to be to ensure that the regulation-making authority cannot circumvent the regular procedure under the Statutory Instruments Act that I referenced earlier by making the substance of a regulation in a subsequent document, which it then incorporates by reference into its own regulation without the usual requirements of registration, publication, et cetera.

We have the context of what is a regulation, why it is important, how the regulatory process works in Canada right now, and then how the bill helps to augment and simplify that process.

With that context, I would like to address some of the key concerns that arose in debate on the bill when it was previously debated in the House. One of the questions was this: What are the standards that are currently incorporated by reference? There are many kinds of standards that are already incorporated by reference in federal regulations, including standards written by the International Organization for Standardization and other recognized international standards. A recent review of existing references in federal regulations revealed almost 400 references to these standards established by expert bodies.

My colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île, Quebec, who was here earlier today, wondered exactly who a person is other than the regulation body authority, given some of the language in the bill. She said there is nothing to define that. That is false because, if she logs onto the Treasury Board website, she can see all of the different decision-making bodies that are a part of the regulatory process in Canada, including Treasury Board and Parliament itself.

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This is a fitting discussion, given that we are close to the end of this Parliament, God willing. What is the issue of sovereignty and how does Canada maintain its sovereignty if we are going to incorporate by reference in regulations or standards that are international standards? How do we oversee and ensure that these regulations are up to snuff for Canadians?

At the end of this Parliament, we should be looking at the role of Parliament. It is in this place that we as legislators continually review legislation, review what is in the best interests of Canadians. In fact, we have had many debates in this session around new regulations. So when I hear that somehow there is no oversight, or somehow through incorporation by reference we would lose the ability to review this stuff, I completely disagree because it is in this place that opposition members can bring up and question the efficacy of regulations as we go forward.

• (1205)

There is something further to this that I want to point out, because this point has come up many times, and that is the role of the scrutiny of regulations committee. I pulled up part of the committee testimony that occurred in November 2004. This particular item was spoken to by the then joint chair, Senator Bryden. He spoke to the fact that the Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations actually had a pretty substantive mandate. He stated:

The Statutory Instruments Act provides for the “review and scrutiny” of statutory instruments by the SJC. This review is conducted in accordance with the criteria adopted by the SJC.... Although the terms of s. 19 of the Statutory Instruments Act do not preclude review of subordinate legislation on its merits, the criteria adopted by the SJC do not provide for the review of instruments on policy grounds.

What it does set out is a huge set of criteria by which this committee can review regulations. It says it can review “whether any regulation or other statutory instrument within its terms of reference, in the judgment of the committee”, and then it goes through all the points that were brought up here, such as whether it is in conformity with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That was brought up. How do we know if a regulation that has been brought in through incorporation by reference is not in alignment with the charter? The standing committee certainly has the role of reviewing that, and I would also point out that, as with any other piece of legislation, the Canadian public can challenge legislation through the court system. Of course, Parliament being sovereign in a lot of respects, it is our job as legislators to put forward regulations and legislation that come from the will of the people, which we believe are in the best interests of the people we represent.

With the end of Parliament near, I think that is what we have all sought to do here across party lines. Our ideologies might differ from time to time, sometimes vehemently. Even though we are sitting here on a Thursday near the end of session talking about scrutiny of regulations, we are talking about what is in the best interests of Canadians. My colleagues opposite might have a different view, but that is our job here. It is somehow implied, and often comes up in debate, that the Supreme Court said one thing or another, and we have to respect and work with the judiciary, but this place is where we debate and make legislation.

With that, in what I hope is my final speech in this Parliament, I would like to deeply thank my constituents in Calgary Centre-North for the privilege of being able to stand here and debate important

issues like this. On behalf of all my colleagues who stand in their places, I thank every Canadian who gave us the mandate to be here, to respect the will of Parliament and, I hope, to agree that Bill S-2 would simplify the regulatory process in Canada, would benefit business, and would continue to place Canada at the forefront of leading regulatory review around the world.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and wish her a good summer if this is in fact her last speech in the House.

A key point she raised in her speech had to do with one of the reasons why we should support incorporation by reference. She said that it would be useful because of the many international treaties that Canada signs. However, incorporation by reference could lead to making regulations that are not bilingual.

Could the minister tell us where she stands on this issue, which is of concern to many Canadians, given that Canada is a bilingual country?

Does she believe that incorporation by reference should be subject to the rules governing bilingualism in Canada?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question. My maiden name was Godin.

[*English*]

Actually, half my family is of Franco-Manitoban heritage. I personally think Canada's bilingual heritage is something, as we approach our sesquicentennial, that is very important to the country. Certainly this is why all of our government laws and all of our practices encourage and require translation and the availability of documentation in both official languages. Incorporation by reference, in part, would be part of a larger act of Parliament or other systems that would reflect those views.

It is also worth noting that when we are referring to international standard documents, often these are highly technical specific pieces of information.

When we are adopting standards or seeking to adopt standards, Canada often collaborates in the development of those standards. As I mentioned, this is something we are a world leader in.

In terms of the availability of information, I think our official languages requirement enshrines that in terms of how incorporation by reference would allow the accessibility of information. I think this has already proven to be useful, because it is already happening, in practice, in our legislative system.

• (1215)

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague finished off on a positive note. Yes, we are here to debate Bill S-2, in this case. We may have different views on things, but that is what we are here to do.

I would like clarification on a couple of things she said.

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Would she agree with me that the 28 countries that are part of the European Union have not signed the CETA agreement? In fact, I am concerned that they are moving away from that. Therefore, it is somewhat of an exaggeration to claim that we have signed a free trade agreement with 28 countries.

My second point is far more important. I believe I heard the member talk about the will of Parliament. I am referring, of course, to the destruction of registry documents by the RCMP, with the encouragement of the current government.

The will of Parliament is a very important thing, but would she not agree with me that it also includes respect for all the laws of this land, including the access to information law? In this particular case, this access to information law has actually been violated.

Would she agree with me that it is fine to talk about the will of Parliament but that one must, at the same time, respect all the laws that have been made in this House?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to debate the member in the House and occasionally to thank him for his previous service to our country.

With regard to the Canada-European Union free trade agreement, I would be remiss if I did not point out the stark contrast between our government and the previous Liberal government in terms of the capacity to enter into international trade agreements. I would even go so far as to say that the Liberal government was protectionist in comparison to our government's access to free trade.

Certainly the achievement of the terms that have been set out thus far in negotiating the free trade agreement with the European Union is a milestone. I think in 25 years we will look back and say that it was a moment when Canada came into its own. That happened under our tenure, our government. It is something, as I go forward this summer, I can take to my constituents and be quite proud of in terms of the opportunities that will come forward from that.

The second component he brought up was the legislation and debate on the long gun registry in this Parliament. Our government took the elimination and destruction of the long gun registry, the wasteful and inefficient long gun registry, to the Canadian public in 2011, and we received a majority mandate to remove that legislation. When we came into this House, we followed up on the will of law-abiding hunters, anglers, fishers, and farmers who work on the land, who use these weapons in accordance with the laws of the land. When we talk about respecting laws, we made a law here that respects Canadians.

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her speech. She is a big advocate for western Canada and for all Canada. I am glad to see that she has embraced incorporation by reference as much as she has western business.

The parliamentary secretary has already discussed the benefits of free trade and non-tariff access for Canadian manufacturers and Canadian businesses. Could she also discuss the importance of making sure that when Canadian businesses and enterprises, supported by her ministry, decide to go out into the world to compete, which they can, we harmonize in ways that serve everyone's best interests, both consumers in each country and

business interests, so that we can have Canadian products enjoyed right around this globe?

• (1220)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his tireless work on this file. This is a very technical piece of legislation and one he has learned inside out and contributed to in committee. I want to thank him for his contribution.

As Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, I have the great privilege of consulting with every different stakeholder group possible in western Canada. One of the things I hear about when I meet with chambers of commerce and small businesses, and certainly as referenced by the Canadian Federation for Independent Business in some of its reports, is the need to reduce red tape for small businesses. Why is that important? What does it mean? When we have a piece of government regulation, often there is an extra burden on small business, because the compliance load is shared among a smaller proportion of employees. When we look at productivity, any additional regulation often disproportionately influences small business.

We can look at some of the changes we have put in place with respect to both Bill S-2, to harmonize some of the regulations, including the adoption of standards, and legislation that previously passed in the House on one-for-one regulation review. I spoke to a group of utility heads in Washington last year and gave a rousing speech about this that excited those in the room. It is actually a huge competitive advantage for Canadian business, especially when we compare ourselves to other jurisdictions where they might not be as prone to ensuring a deep commitment to reducing the regulatory compliance burden.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): On the lighter side, Mr. Speaker, the member started off by asking her colleagues to pay attention to the wonderful speech she was going to give on this matter. I do not know if she has had the opportunity to sit on the scrutiny of regulations committee, which some members of this Parliament had to do. I have sat on that committee. To be honest, I would rather watch paint dry.

I want to recognize all of those members who sit on that very detailed committee, because it is not an easy committee. That is the only point I want to make. They did a tough job on that committee.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, in the dying hours of this Parliament, let us all give a rousing round of applause to everyone who sits on the scrutiny of regulations committee for their ongoing regulations reviews, both for or against, regardless of political ideology, to make Canadians healthier and safer. It is a very important committee. It is one that is very technical. My colleague has described some of our colleagues' reactions to it. However, it speaks to the importance of debate and participation in parliamentary committees in this place and the fact that anyone in this place can make a difference, regardless of what committee members are on and regardless of the place they take in this place.

It has been an honour serving with all of my colleagues in this Parliament, and I wish them a happy summer.

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[Translation]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after I was elected in 2011 by my constituents in Gatineau, to whom I am grateful for this immense honour, our then leader, the great Jack Layton, did me the honour of naming me co-chair of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations, a joint committee of the Senate and the House of Commons. I admit that I wondered what a committee like that was all about.

I heard the member for Malpeque say that he would rather watch paint dry than attend a meeting of that committee. In my opinion, members of that committee have to be passionate about the law and have an immense respect for our role as legislators.

What is more, that role is not just about creating laws and bringing them into effect. It is also about making the related regulations. The law is one thing, but that law often requires the creation of dozens of regulations for its implementation.

I want to thank the members of the committee, but especially all the experts who guide us in that committee. However, I no longer have the pleasure of being a member of that committee. It is true that I wondered what that committee was all about. In reality, I also wondered at first if I was being punished, but I realized that I was not. My leader at the time felt that my background as a lawyer with 30 years of experience, which I sadly admit in the House, made me a prime candidate to co-chair the committee.

I saw first-hand the thoroughness of the experts and of the departmental and House staff who provided support as we carried out this difficult work. Every week we had a foot-high pile of documents to examine during a two-hour committee meeting, and I am hardly exaggerating. One might have said it was challenging and rather dry, but it was necessary work nonetheless.

I would like to give a little background. Members forget that Bill S-2 was originally introduced in 2012 by the Conservative government in the form of Bill S-12.

At the time, as deputy justice critic for my colleague from St. John's East, our justice critic, and as a member of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations, I also had the great pleasure of being responsible for Bill S-12.

From the beginning I have been saying that this bill is a sleeper. I am pleased that we have another opportunity to debate it, although it is at third reading. We did not have much time to debate second reading and report stages, and there were not many meetings of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

My colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île continues the work on Bill S-2 that I had started on Bill S-12, and I thank her for that. She took this on during the study in committee and at all stages in the House.

I called this bill the sleeper of this legislature because this is a bill that could have a huge impact on the lives of Canadians. I do not get the impression that members on the Conservative benches have taken it as seriously as they should have. I said this when I spoke at report stage. It has not drawn much attention from the media, aside from journalist Tom Korski at *Blacklock's Reporter*. What he wrote in 2012 might have been what first tipped me off.

● (1225)

The title of the article was:

[English]

“Senate Quietly Ends 171 Years Of Scrutiny With Bill”.

[Translation]

The article said:

[English]

An obscure Senate bill will end 171 years of open scrutiny of regulations governing virtually every aspect of the economy and national life, critics say.

The government legislation...would permit the introduction of new rules without plain disclosure of all related laws—

It would end a practice that predates Confederation.

● (1230)

[Translation]

At the time, some senators expressed their opinions, including Senator Harb, who has since retired and is dealing with other problems.

[English]

He said:

“This is a big, big problem. There is little awareness of this bill. If regulated industries become aware of what is in this bill, there will be outrage.”

Senator Marjorie LeBreton, a senator that the Conservatives might be more inclined to listen to and the government leader in the Upper House at the time, refused an interview.

The government bill was introduced without fanfare in the Senate on October 17, 2012.

I find this next part interesting. It quotes Mac Harb:

In the House of Commons too many MPs ask questions. In the Senate there are many new senators who do not understand the history of these procedures. The Senate is a dull place. I think they are trying to force it through.

The article explains the practice. It states:

Under a practice that dates from 1841, all federal rules and decisions must be plainly published for public scrutiny to provide Canadians “their rightful access to the laws and regulations that govern their daily lives,” according to the Canada Gazette Directorate, the federal agency that prints all details of legislation.

Under bill S-12, An Act To Amend The Statutory Instruments Act [now Bill S-2], regulations could be delegated—

—and that is also important—

—from unpublished sources “as amended from time to time” in a little-known practice called “incorporation by reference”....

“This cuts down on the onerous amount of material that would have to be included in a number of regulations,” a bill supporter, Senator Linda Frum, told the Upper House.

Government Orders

That, I would say, is probably the main argument for the government—to really trim down and help out—because it is true that there are tens of thousands of pages per year. I do agree, but we have to do it in a correct fashion.

Still quoting Senator Frum, the article continues:

“If a regulation provides that hockey helmets must be manufactured in accordance with a particular Canadian Standards Association standard, the effect of that reference is to make that standard part of the regulation without actually reproducing the text of the standard in the regulation itself.”

That seems to make sense.

It continues:

In debate, Senator Harb called the bill “a blockbuster” that would permit the government to enact new regulations without public scrutiny or parliamentary approval.

As quoted in the article, Senator Harb said:

“Once we lose control, things may very well go off the rails.”

[*Translation*]

I will not read the rest of the article to the House. That was probably the first little thing that set off alarm bells with respect to the study of Bill S-12 at the time, which is now Bill S-2.

It may be the price the government opposite is paying for the lack of transparency, collaboration and co-operation on the part of the government and its senior members. That has been prevalent and we need only think of the 100 gag orders that have been imposed. How many times did we present reasonable amendments in committee in an attempt to improve bills? How many times did Conservative colleagues sitting on a committee tell us that it made sense? How many times did we move motions that committee members seemed to agree with, only to see that the members on Conservative benches had been told what to do by the Prime Minister's Office or the office of the minister concerned?

In the long run, it means that we will be a little more cautious in our analysis. As I have often said every time new Conservative justice bills were introduced, the devil is in the details. Often, it is just smoke and mirrors. However, sometimes, in a large bill with many pages that seems to make sense, a small provision destroys all the political capital that the government could have earned. When we were young and we did something wrong, our parents would tell us that we had lost their trust and that we would have to earn it back. The official opposition is finding it very difficult to trust this government because of what it has done. I am thinking of access to information, for example, the reports and the fact that people sometimes have to wait four or five years to obtain the information they requested. We are here for Canadians, but the Conservatives do not often seem to think so.

I will now move on to another extremely important aspect, which is the law itself. Bill S-2 contains a variety of problems. It amends the Statutory Instruments Act and makes consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations. I am not sure whether everyone has carefully read the act amended by Bill S-2 and before that by Bill S-12. However, subsection 3(1), which concerns the examination of proposed regulations, is extremely important. It is the key to why the House and the Senate created a joint committee on scrutiny of regulations. This stems from the very important responsibility of ensuring that our regulations are consistent. It

often felt quite trivial at the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations. The differences lay in the wording and the words used, involving either translation and bilingualism issues or errors in the French or the English versions. More often than not the errors were in the French version, because most legislation was developed in English and there were translation errors. We saw how long it took for the experts supporting us in committee to obtain information. I am sure that the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, if he is sincere, will admit how many good kicks, some of them hard, we had to give to the more resistant departments—I will not name the Department of the Environment or the Department of Transport—which took an inordinate amount of time to reply to our experts, who wrote to these departments on behalf of the committee for information on how they drafted their regulations. We need to remember the importance of regulations when we see a process that will bypass all that. With all due respect for my friends across the way, that is the impact this bill will have.

We need to remember the importance of regulations. We do not talk about it often in the House, and that may be why there is a kind of polite disdain. When I was trying to get a teeny tiny budget for the joint committee, a Conservative member told me in another committee that it was probably the most useless committee. That is what some Conservative members think of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations, and I am terribly worried about that. I still have not gotten over that comment. I know that many people share that opinion because the committee's work seems so boring. One has to really love the law, and one has to love reading regulatory texts. I know that the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board is like me: he adores that kind of work. It is essential work.

We will not have many more opportunities to talk about Bill S-2, which we will vote on later this afternoon. The bill number indicates that it is from the Senate. It has already gone through the Senate process before coming here. That is another problem I just cannot get over. I have already commented on this issue many times. If this bill is as important as they say it is, I do not see why it was brought in through the back door.

Section 3 of the Statutory Instruments Act states the following:

3. (1) Subject to any regulations made pursuant to paragraph 20(a), where a regulation-making authority proposes to make a regulation, it shall cause to be forwarded to the Clerk of the Privy Council three copies of the proposed regulation in both official languages.

(2) On receipt by the Clerk of the Privy Council of copies of a proposed regulation pursuant to subsection (1), the Clerk of the Privy Council, in consultation with the Deputy Minister of Justice, shall examine the proposed regulation to ensure that:

- (a) it is authorized by the statute pursuant to which it is to be made;
- (b) it does not constitute an unusual or unexpected use of the authority pursuant to which it is to be made;
- (c) it does not trespass unduly on existing rights and freedoms and is not, in any case, inconsistent with the purposes and provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights; and
- (d) the form and draftsmanship of the proposed regulation are in accordance with established standards.

Government Orders

It is therefore important that regulations respect the Constitution and the charter just as much as laws. I still have some concerns, because this government always passes bills after ignoring the views of experts who tell us repeatedly in committee that the bills have serious shortcomings in that they are unconstitutional or they are not consistent with the charter. The last thing I want to do is give this government a blank cheque when it comes to regulation by reference.

It is worth noting that incorporation by reference is not illegal. That is right; it is already happening. However, I think there have been 160 unauthorized delegations by reference in enabling legislation, and the legality of that procedure is still a subject of dispute between the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations and the government or specific departments.

The government did not take any chances, just as it did not take any chances when it destroyed the gun registry data. It introduced clause 18.7, what I call a pardon provision, which retroactively deems all incorporations by reference valid.

Incorporation by reference usually has to be authorized by enabling legislation. In other words, when parliamentarians pass such legislation, they are agreeing to give this power to the minister or the Governor in Council. However, it is still the law that governs incorporation by reference.

With the stroke of a pen, Bill S-2 blindly gives this power away without evaluating the need to proceed with incorporation by reference under certain laws. It is a way of neutralizing the power of members of Parliament to guarantee to their constituents that things are done properly. This bill gives the government carte blanche to do almost anything it wants. The Conservative government does not have a stellar record when it comes to that sort of thing, though. It is extremely worrisome.

I will not have the time to raise all my concerns, but, in short, I would say that the greatest flaw in Bill S-2 is the notion of accessibility in clause 18.6.

It still bothers me that the committee members rejected the amendments by my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île, which could have clarified some concepts and nuances concerning the issue of retroactivity. It disgusts me that something that was illegal is suddenly legal because the government revisited the past. That is the wrong thing to do.

There is also the matter of the documents, which my colleague spoke about earlier. It is a rather vague term that should have been more specific. With regard to bilingualism, I congratulate the government on its international treaties, but we all know that some of those regulations will find their way here and will not be in the language of our big, beautiful country's other founding people. I am extremely worried about the inherent rights of Canada's francophones.

● (1240)

We know full well that some treaties are very long, and I do not think that the regulations will be translated into French. I get the impression that taxpayers will pay the price for this.

There are thus some troubling aspects, and I would have liked it if we could have taken a little more time to examine this bill. I imagine that it will be up to the next government—and I hope with all my heart that it will be an NDP government—to do the work that this government refused to do. We were seeking to improve the bill with the amendments that we proposed in good faith.

I was going to say that this will be my last speech in the House, but it seems that the government is making me give another one this afternoon. I will therefore save all my thanks to the extraordinary people of Gatineau who have given me their unconditional support since 2011 until later this afternoon when I give my next speech. In the meantime, I am happy to answer any questions.

● (1245)

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for her speech.

[*English*]

I thank the member across for her kind comments. I believe the member cares about the work of the Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations as much as I do. However, I am disheartened to hear that she heard a comment that was lamentable, because that committee has a lot of importance, particularly in the regulatory state in which we live.

I would ask the member to square the following.

When she was the co-chair of that committee, under her chairship, we often wrote to ministers of the Crown asking for retroactive legislative validity on the concerns of the committee. She argued at that point, as the chair, that it was the appropriate thing to do because sometimes a government would come across a situation where the will of Parliament was not perfectly expressed and unaccounted for situations arise. Yet, the same member rails against legislative validity that was in legislation before the House just recently. How does she square the two? She says that it is not proper for a government to do one thing, but then, as a chair, she actually suggests the government do that very thing.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, no. The things I signed were to ask ministers to answer the questions that were asked. It was not to validate any type of retroactivity, but to maybe answer questions such as where they found the power to do so, where they found the right to do the so-called delegation.

Basically, in my short time as co-chair of that committee, we passed more time trying to convince directors of the departments to just answer plain questions than anything else, and if they were not complying, to have the minister do so.

[*Translation*]

I would say that it was while Senator Runciman and I were co-chairs that we began to be stricter with the departments about getting answers more quickly. Often, committees would set timeframes that allowed the departments to come back to us with completely useless answers. We would then send them another letter, and the cycle continued. We therefore began to be a bit stricter.

Government Orders

I do not know how things have been going since, but there is no doubt that the debate continued to rage between the joint committee and the various departmental representatives regarding whether incorporation by reference is allowed. This debate is still going on.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, as well as the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, for their diligent work.

I would like the member to inform the Conservatives, those listening and ourselves about accessibility concerns. She referred to them in her speech. I would also like her to speak a bit more about the concerns some people have about accessibility, as well as the possibility of having these documents in both official languages.

Could my colleague say more about these concerns that were raised?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sherbrooke for his question. We all know that there is a legal principle that applies to everyone equally, from the prime minister to a private citizen, which is that ignorance of the law is no excuse. In its broadest sense, the word “law” includes regulations and others.

When talking about incorporation by reference, certainly there are parts of the regulations that the public will not necessarily be aware of. I wish to draw to the attention of the House that if anyone is interested in these kinds of issues, simply look back over the last 10 years of Conservative government to look at the bills and the amount of power given to the minister or someone to whom this power is to be delegated, with respect to regulations.

This means that very often, once the initial regulations are passed, the subsequent regulations by reference will be completely unknown. As my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île rightly pointed out, section 18.4 clearly states that there will be no requirement for it to be published in the *Canada Gazette*, which is currently the tool of choice for determining what exists in terms of regulations. This will mean having to conduct more research.

Clause 18.6 tells us that a person is not liable to be found guilty unless the material incorporated by reference was accessible. We tried to get clarification as to what exactly the word “accessible” meant. Is it written down somewhere? It is not clear. The fact that the Conservatives refused to amend this clause to clarify it for the benefit of Canadian taxpayers suggests to me that they prefer it to be vague. It is worrisome when things are vague, because that allows the government to play little shell games.

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate my hon. colleague's answers and her thoughtfulness. I would like to make a quick reference to my previous question.

The representative from the NDP, the co-chair from Hamilton Mountain, recently asked for legislative remedies retroactively on behalf of the committee. That is because we believe, as a parliamentary joint standing committee, that there are certain times where the will of Parliament has not been properly anticipated and thus changes need to be introduced legislatively to allow that to happen. That is a very normal process. Again, why do the NDP

thinks one thing is appropriate at committee and another thing in this place?

The second point I would make is on the member's last point on section 18.6 about a person not being liable to be found guilty of an offence because of any contravention in not having accessibility to a particular regulation. There are no protections right now for people like that. Does she not agree that putting this protection in place will create a little more certainty for people when they are found in the situation that she cited earlier?

[Translation]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, on the first point, the concept of retroactivity exists, and that is not really the question. The problem is that the government has always claimed that it was entitled to use incorporation by reference virtually every time, without there being specific authorization in a law. The Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations said that, on the contrary, specific authorization was required.

Clearly, in Bill S-2 and clause 18.7, the government is trying to say that it wants to end the argument between the two sides and make sure it is done this way. The problem is not the concept of incorporation by reference itself; it is when incorporation by reference is done across the board. At present it is done with the express authorization of Parliament under a specific law that has been examined here in the House. That is where the problem lies.

That is why we say they are not accessible at present. There are regulations that are permitted by reference under an enabling act at present. However, the public knows what those laws are. If they know, they will be able to go and look at them. If it is only a few laws, here and there, it is less complicated. However, we know what kind of an administrative mess there can be and how taxpayers have to do never-ending searches. In addition, when the government refuses to define “accessible” and “document”, there is a problem somewhere that suggests that the reason the government does not want to clarify is that it wants this legal vagueness, which will allow it to do certain things. Unfortunately, the government is guilty of playing hide and seek in recent years with mammoth bills in which it hides a few provisions here and there. That is not what a government that promises people transparency does. We want to put a halt to that and tell people to watch out.

• (1255)

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and all your colleagues who have helped run this Parliament, as well as everyone who makes this place operate so well. We are very gifted to live in such a strong democracy, Canada. I love our country and I want a better life for all my kids, so it is an honour to stand in this place and join the debate on behalf of the people of Okanagan—Coquihalla.

I would like to talk about Bill S-2, the incorporation by reference in regulations act, which the government has put forward in order to create greater certainty. In my speech today, I would like to touch upon a few different things.

Government Orders

We have heard time and time again that incorporation by reference has had a very common, long-standing use by drafters to be more efficient in the drafting of regulations. Let us say there is a reference in a set of regulations to the Criminal Code. Rather than having to print out the entire code, a reference can simply be made to it, with the expectation that someone would be able to quickly open up the Criminal Code, find the relevant provision and therefore not have to reproduce the entire Criminal Code in a set of regulations. This is efficient for the drafters and legislators who have to look at these regulations, for example, the Joint Standing Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations, as well as preventing everyday citizens from having to read through things that are not relevant beyond a basic reference.

Let us take a step back and talk about why Bill S-2 is relevant today, why it is important and needed.

If we go back to the 1960s and 1970s, many of us probably grew up listening to members of Parliament. They stood in their places in this chamber and discussed what was important to them, such as wanting more oversight on consumer protection and more discussion about regulations that would allow better health and safety in workplace environments.

As democratically elected people do, they listened and put forward various rules, but as they did that, they found that by simply putting statutes into place, oftentimes there was not enough in the statutes to direct officials in the various ministries who were delegated the authority to act under those laws and, thus, the need for regulation. What we saw was the rise of the regulatory state, where it was no longer appropriate. In many people's perspective, there have always been two different schools on regulation making. One is that highly competent professionals are given the discretion to apply administrative rules, but, again, those are subject to issues of fairness because not everyone can agree on what is fair.

Therefore, the system went to being more of prescriptive administration, where certain key things were laid out. The reason regulations were so important was because oftentimes the law would give broad outlines of what was wanted and then the department that was delegated the authority, working with the minister and the justice department, would then draft administrative regulations to ensure that most, if not all, situations were anticipated.

As we grew in stature, as the economy and the population grew, as well as demands for better protections, whether we are talking about transportation or consumer protection, these regulations began to increase. Therefore, there were concerns about oversight, which I believe the justice minister of the day, John Turner, decided, at the beckoning of colleagues from all across this place, that there needed to be better oversight of these administrative regulations. Therefore, the Joint Standing Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations was created, an opportunity for parliamentarians from both chambers to ensure that what was being debated in both houses and passed into law was found in the regulations and that nothing contravened any of the obligations of government, such as the Bill of Rights, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that all official bilingualism was being kept.

• (1300)

Since then the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations has basically had the purview of every single directive

and regulation under the Statutory Instruments Act, and I have had the great honour of working with the council and the committee of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations. Peter Bernhardt and his team are very committed Canadians. They feel very strongly and work very hard for all of us, and as parliamentarians we need people like that to make good choices.

Oftentimes we hear, either in this place or in reports, that there is no consensus-building in Ottawa. I want to say just the opposite. The reason many people do not know about the Joint Standing Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations is that everything is done by consensus, or at least 99% of it.

That is because we have our debates here. The democratic vote is taken. The will of Parliament is expressed and becomes law. Then the laws are put into place by independent regulators or departmental regulators, and that is important. If issues come up, we have already had the debates and the will of Parliament has already been expressed. The only question is how we carry forth. Is there a drafting error? Is there an area where we need to make clarification?

The joint standing committee has done very good work over the years. It has a number of roles. It is an immensely powerful committee, and I am privileged to sit on it. I am privileged to learn a little bit more about the other place and have an opportunity to work with senators, because there are senators who care very deeply about the future of Canada, just as we do.

Over the years, the committee has made growing use of incorporation by reference. Why is that? It is because incorporation by reference is a long-standing drafting technique. As more regulations come into effect and our economy becomes more integrated with the world economy as well as with overlapping provincial regulation, it only makes sense that there needs to be a common understanding, and incorporation by reference makes it easier for everyone to be able to read what the law means under the regulations.

Bill S-2, the incorporation by reference in regulations act, is a response by government. It is a guidebook, so to speak, as to when and where incorporation by reference would be used, whether it be static, which is just a simple reference to a particular document as it was at that time, or dynamic, where there may be changes.

We have heard from a number of people, including myself in previous speeches, about Canada's enormous capacity in technical expertise. We lead the field in reaching international consensus because we have such strong standards at home and are able to share those standards while including other countries' standards.

I would like to take a step back and also point out that it is not just the rise of the regulatory state since the 1960s. Other things have also affected us. In the 1990s and early 2000s, there was globalization. Technology has changed the way businesses interact and the way we interact as people, and it happens on a daily basis.

Government Orders

When we talk about these things, we talk about Canada's place and standing in the world and how we are making sure that our great Canadian products have better access to markets.

The previous Liberal government's five international trade deals have been cited many times in this House. With this government, there are 43. That is important to note, because as we open up tariff-free access to Canadian products, we also have to make sure there are no barriers. One example of a non-tariff-based barrier to trade might be a standard in one country that is not accepted in the other. We may have the best widget, food product, or, in my case in Okanagan—Coquihalla, bottle of wine, but if it does not harmonize with that standard, we cannot send it there. This becomes a very real issue.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice mentioned earlier, a good example of that is the co-operation between President Obama and this government beyond the border in making sure that the interregulation trade councils are able to harmonize where it makes sense for everyone. I will reiterate: where it makes sense for everyone. We are sovereign nations, but it is sometimes in our enlightened best interests to work with others.

● (1305)

Again, we have the rise of the regulatory state. We have globalization. We have increases in technology. Everything is accelerating, so it only makes sense to start to clarify when these incorporation by references would happen. I will give the House a good example domestically of how this would help.

It is very easy for someone to use a smart phone find out what the current interest rates are. It is easy for someone to find out what the consumer price index is. However, if we were to fix that in regulations and make reference to the rate of interest as set by the Bank of Canada, it may be difficult to say in static reference what that is. Most people would just say that the rate is calculated for a certain tariff or certain fee with the consumer price index. Now they would be able to go online and find out what that current rate is. That makes it more certain and easy for people to access. That is a basic incorporation by reference that should be dynamic.

Should we be using this tool of dynamic incorporation by reference on everything? I would say no, but that is why we are having this debate here. We need to determine when it is appropriate. The scrutiny of regulations committee has raised concerns about it, and that is why we need to put in place a bill that would specify when to use it. This would empower us as legislators. It would clarify for government departments when it is not appropriate. It would clarify it for the justice department, which drafts many of the regulations. As I said, it would also make it easier for individuals and businesses locally to be able to determine what they would need to do.

I want to quickly go back to how this would benefit Canadian businesses internationally, because this is an important area for me. For example, Canadian marine manufacturers have said to me that when they are trying to sell their products abroad, their products need to be certified to international standards. It makes no sense for us to have regulations here in Canada that basically reproduce a whole international standard when we can simply make reference to it as that international standard changes, as it often does.

We are not alone in this world. We are a dynamic country, but we are still small in terms of size. We certainly punch above our weight, and I am going to continue to advocate for whatever we can do in that way.

The important thing here is that when we allow incorporation by reference, we are allowing Canadian businesses to succeed, and when Canadian businesses succeed, not only does it put food on the table because workers are able to draw income from good work, but it is also something we take great pride in.

While I am on the need to harmonize these regulations, I will mention that the hon. Minister of Industry met with his provincial colleagues about a week ago to discuss interprovincial trade barriers. Many of these barriers are regulatory, and they have a profound impact on wine producers in my province. We have the same situation at home, and I am thankful that the Minister of Industry has been able to create a consensus with all of his provincial colleagues that the status quo is no longer tenable. I applaud that. We also need to make sure we are doing the same thing here.

I have heard some criticisms and I am going to repeat some of them, although I am going to just incorporate them by reference. I am also going to give a little feedback that I hope will address some hon. members' concerns.

One concern has to do with official languages. Some people have said that the regulations will not be in English and French. That is absolutely false.

Everything that goes through the *Canada Gazette* process has to be done in both of Canada's official languages, and that will continue. That is important for people to know. Those regulations are produced by Canadian regulators, and they need to be in both official languages. All of us agree that it should be that way.

Second is accessibility. Some people have pointed out that accessibility means different things to different people. I will provide an example.

● (1310)

If I were to open a standards for Canadian electricians textbook and look through it, it would not matter if it was English or French. I would not be able to understand it, because I do not have that technical expertise. Many times these standards are in very specific industries. They have specific jargon and require specific expertise. The Government of Canada should work with those existing authorities and, through our technical committees, make them as clear as possible.

We could email the regulations to every single person in Canada, but most people would find them either irrelevant or else unreadable because they lacked the expertise or training to apply those standards.

Government Orders

It is important to note that the Internet is making things more accessible all the time. Many people utilize Google to go onto international websites of different languages. Suddenly they are able to read that website in very good English. Of course, as those algorithms continue and as the scope of the Internet's reach continues to enlarge and gather more data on how we speak and what we mean by certain things, that accessibility will only get better, so it is important to note that technology is, to a large extent, really making it easier for anyone to access information.

There have also been some issues raised about retroactivity. On the Standing Joint Committee for Scrutiny of Regulations, we ask ministers on a regular basis to consider legislation as a remedy for a situation that was not originally contemplated and needs to have the force of law behind it. This happens on a regular basis.

What we are mostly talking about here are references in regulations that basically say "as amended from time to time". That should not be controversial. It just means that when a new safety apparatus or standard has been put forward, that is the new standard. We are the ones who decide that. If we do not like it, as Parliament we can ask the government to change the standard. We do the choosing.

I also want to address the sovereignty issue. This House, combined with the Upper Chamber, decides what the law is in Canada. That is something I believe in.

I would like to give a good example of the rhetoric of the NDP. It sometimes does not always follow consistently from committee to here in the House. We had members of the NDP at the joint standing committee raise concerns around the convention on international trade in wild fauna and flora. It is an international convention that protects wildlife so that humanity can maintain our world heritage of these different endangered species. I think all of us would agree that it is an important thing. That is why we are part of it. However, New Democrats said they were upset that the government had not yet acted upon the latest convention, because it has to go through the regular gazetting process, and they were complaining about it. They were saying it was not appropriate.

Perhaps with the use of incorporation by reference, the moment Canada, along with anyone else, agrees with an international convention, it could become regulation automatically. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot have the benefits of the regulatory state without saying that things we all agree on should be done and put in place right away. It should not take years to put in place simple changes when they could be put in place quickly through incorporation once everyone on the international stage has been involved.

The NDP sends out these different messages. That approach does not create certainty and it does not always contribute to the public good. I do admit that there are some legitimate criticisms, but there are trade-offs in every policy, whether we are talking about trade or a new measure coming forward. The NDP only wants to see the negative side.

. We know our country was built on hard work and sacrifice. We know that Canadians are fair and practical people. We know that when Canadians compete, they can succeed. They need their

government to make sure they have access. Bill S-2 is a meaningful approach that would give certainty to the government, to Parliament, and our businesses and would create better outcomes. That is how this place should work.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. parliamentary secretary is going to provide me and the House with the quotations from my colleagues. I think he is claiming to have heard some of my colleagues objecting to the publication of certain regulations in the *Canada Gazette*. I hope he will be able to provide us with the definite sources. He should not claim, in the House, to have heard certain statements if he cannot solidly prove it and give us the source.

On that point, I would appreciate his comments concerning the letter that the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations wrote and signed and the report of that committee, which argued that open incorporation by reference of foreign legislation should generally not be permitted. The committee members explained that it is difficult to access such laws, that it is unlikely that they would be enacted in both official languages of Canada, and, unfortunately, that this approach would not allow Parliament and parliamentarians, or committees, to examine the legislation.

I would like him to tell me about that letter and the concerns that his committee raised with the minister, and tell me what he thinks about this today.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the viewpoints of the member opposite. She has legitimate viewpoints and we have ours. If the member would like to go to the transcripts of the standing joint committee and look up specifically the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora she would find that we encouraged the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development to work with Treasury Board on a process to go forward with dealing with the convention so that we were able to meet our commitments internationally. Her own colleague pointed out that she sits on that committee, so she can reference that.

When it comes to the terms of accessibility, right now incorporation by reference is happening. It happens because the regulatory state has grown. We need to find a process in order to say when it is legitimate for a government regulator or quasi-judicial regulator to utilize it. We are giving greater certainty.

Again, technology is addressing accessibility more and more. The business language most people accept is English. The language of diplomacy is French. I would imagine that many of the things, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, is widely available and I would suggest that the member read it because I think she would end up supporting that convention.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is clear in regard to Bill S-2 is that individuals will be at a personal disadvantage since there is no guarantee that the documents incorporated by reference will be meaningfully accessible, at least until accessibility is better defined in a court of law.

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In particular, the incorporated document will not have to be registered in the *Canada Gazette* and might even be protected by copyright. It will also become increasingly difficult for people to know whether their version of the incorporated document is up-to-date. In some cases they will have to pay to access copyright protected documents. The bill will weaken the rights of those governed by law to know the contents of the law.

Does the member not share any of those concerns?

• (1320)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, actually someone raised this very point at the standing joint committee and I simply addressed it with this. I have a friend, who has passed since then, who owned an electrical company and I asked him about this very specific thing. I said that apparently in Canada there is a charge for the most current electrical code. He pointed out that electrical codes are very technical, that they have to be ahead of the field because Canada has some of the highest requirements in the world and that electricians right across the country have no problem paying for something because it allows them to make sure that for whatever job they do, they are not liable. He showed me the codes. They are not easy to read unless one has the required training.

The member is simply fearmongering. The system of these standards has existed for a long time. Oftentimes it is industry itself that has created the process so that it has joint standards and is able to be regulated easily or to create a sense of certainty for Canadian consumers. That member is simply fearmongering.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech and his knowledge on this subject. I sat on the committee with him, and I understand this issue completely well. It is a lot like the Internet. It is all about links. For example, if we click on a link, it takes us to another place, and it can either be a relative reference, a static reference, or a dynamic reference based on the needs that Canada has.

Could the member speak to how much Canada is involved in most of these international organizations? We obviously have a say in most of these committees and so on.

Perhaps he could also speak to the efficiencies that this would create by making sure when something is updated on an international stage at some point in time it does not have to go through the onerous process that we have here just to update some minor technicality on a piece of codex or annex of some document somewhere.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for what he does for his constituents, and of course for his service on the scrutiny of regulations committee. Oftentimes we have complex files on a variety of issues. This gentleman has knowledge of wildlife, conservation efforts as well the environment, and in some cases, he is able to bring to us knowledge that the rest of us simply do not have, which speaks to the diversity of Parliament.

I would point out, as I mentioned at second reading, that we have so many different bodies that operate on an international level, such as NRCan, where we send people to join in on these international technical committees.

Canada punches above its weight. We want to see the best standards not just for Canadians but worldwide. We also want to make sure that our Canadian companies adhere to these standards and that there is harmonization in as many jurisdictions as we can get so that we have greater certainty for trade.

We have a great country. We are trying to maintain it as best we can and in fact improve upon it. The opposition can call Bill S-2 a sleeper if they want, but it would simply codify practices that are already ongoing which would make this country stronger.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary, the member for Okanagan—Coquihalla, for his very reasoned speech. We can see how well he represents his constituents in British Columbia and all Canadians. He has thought about this issue. He understands it. I appreciated his taking us through the history of regulation making, why it is important and why this issue is so important.

I wonder if the member could point out for us succinctly the benefits of Bill S-2 over the current state of the law in Canada.

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member allowing me to say one more time what an honour it is to serve in this place with everyone.

I would simply point out that what the government is attempting to do through this legislation is to create better certainty for everyone: for government, as to when incorporation by reference should be used when it is drafting regulation; for us as legislators, so we have a better understanding of when we delegate authority to a particular minister or the Governor in Council that we understand the language that can be used. Again, Parliament can be very specific in its law making of when it is not appropriate as well. There is nothing in Bill S-2 that is contrary to that. Last, it would give protections to individuals, such as in the cases I raised earlier on proposed section 18.6:

A person is not liable to be found guilty of an offence or subjected to an administrative sanction for any contravention in respect of which a document, index, rate or number—that is incorporated by reference in a regulation — is relevant unless, at the time of the alleged contravention, it was accessible as required by section 18.3 or it was otherwise accessible to that person.

This would protect Canadians.

[*Translation*]

That is the entire reason why the government of Canada exists.

[*English*]

It is why the Conservative Party, this Conservative government and our Prime Minister are seeking at every front to make Canada stronger, Canada fairer, Canada more free. That is what we do when we put forward bills like this one.

Government Orders

•(1325)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my speaking time with the excellent member for Chambly—Borduas. I have agreed to share my time with him so that he can speak on behalf of the people of Chambly—Borduas concerning Bill S-2.

In the next ten minutes, I will speak to the House about Bill S-2, An Act to Amend the Statutory Instruments Act and to make consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations, on behalf of the people of Sherbrooke. I am going to try to make it understandable and to talk about its potential consequences and the reason why we decided to oppose it at report stage in the House.

I would like to thank the people who have worked on this bill, including the members for La Pointe-de-l'Île and for Gatineau, who have both spoken today. I want to thank them for their work on this issue, which was also done in the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, where witnesses were heard.

As we always do, we worked constructively in committee to improve the bill and respond to the concerns voiced by some witnesses in their testimony. Unfortunately, once again, the government decided instead not to consider any of those concerns and not to amend the bill as it was drafted.

This is unfortunate, because the concerns raised by the witnesses are legitimate. These experts appear before committees to tell us about their concerns and the reasons why we should make changes to bills.

Unfortunately, the opposition amendments are rejected every time. It is a shame that we do not have an atmosphere of collaboration in committees. Nonetheless, I would still like to highlight the excellent work done by my colleagues and members who have worked on this issue.

As I said earlier, we are going to oppose this bill, because a number of flaws have been pointed out. I am going to try to list most of them. I must admit that I have limited experience when it comes to regulations, but I have in fact gone through a very specific recent experience, having worked on the designation of the Sherbrooke airport under the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Act.

Let us not forget that the 89 airports designated under the act were designated by regulation. The Governor in Council can decide at any time to add, remove or change, in any way, the regulation that designates Canada's 89 designated airports.

As the member for Sherbrooke, naturally I have undertaken to have the Sherbrooke airport added to the list of airports designated under the act. Unfortunately, the Governor in Council, the Minister of Transport, and his office, refused to add the Sherbrooke airport or any of the other airports seeking designation to the regulation. That is a shame.

That experience helped me to better understand how regulations work and how they are made, and to realize that they have to go through publication in the Gazette. Regulations are also subject to review by parliamentarians at the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations.

I would also like to highlight the work of the committee, which studied these issues and also expressed a number of reservations about certain aspects of the bill, reservations that the Conservatives simply ignored. The committee also did extraordinary work in that regard, but did not get support from the government and the majority members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. That is a shame.

•(1330)

That helped me better understand the importance of having clear regulations that ordinary citizens can easily understand and grasp the ramifications of.

In Canada, there are 3,000 regulations comprising 13,000 pages. Regulations are very common in our acts and regulations. Many acts give ministers and the Governor in Council the power to make or change regulations as needed. The advantage of a regulation is that it can be changed more easily than an act. It can be changed quickly. The legislator does not have to go before the House to change a regulation.

Thus, there are positive aspects, but there are also negative aspects, especially with respect to the information referenced in the regulations. We talked about incorporation by reference that will refer to other regulations or other information such as the rate, fee or other types of additional information in the law. This additional information that is referenced can also change. It could come from different sources. It could be trade agreements. In many situations, a regulation could refer to rates, figures or dimensions. For example, the automotive sector has the most regulations. The Department of Transport is one of the major regulation-making organizations. There are a lot of regulations and standards in that area. This information, which is not necessarily static and could change quickly, could be directly referenced in the law and in regulations.

Furthermore, the bill would allow for references to regulations or standards from other countries, which creates another serious problem: the accessibility of information. It can be a problem for a citizen if a reference is made to information that is difficult to access. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, and according to the rule of law, everyone is required to understand and know the laws, which include regulations. It is becoming increasingly hard for the people of Sherbrooke to keep up with the regulations and standards, especially when references are made to texts from other jurisdictions.

Accessibility is not simply a matter of being able to read the regulations. People also need to be able to read it in the language of their choice, in one of Canada's two official languages. That is another serious problem facing the people of Sherbrooke who want more information on a reference that is in another jurisdiction. If it is in the United States, for example, the reference would be in English, and some people may be okay, but in the case of references in other jurisdictions, in languages that are less common here in Canada, it would be harder for someone from Sherbrooke to access that information.

Accessibility is the biggest problem with this bill. I thank the committee members who tried several times to better define accessibility to ensure that the documents referred to are always easily accessible. There could be one single portal where someone could access everything: references, regulations and the relevant documents, in both official languages. We have not received any assurances that this will happen.

There are other problems that I did not have a chance to mention, which is why we oppose this bill at report stage, since it certainly did not reassure us.

I would be happy to take questions from my colleagues.

● (1335)

[English]

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am hearing a common theme from him and other members of the opposition. They say that they are not going to support the bill, because they think there should be restrictions on the way government regulators draft regulations and use incorporation by reference. However, as he knows, there are currently no restrictions on incorporation by reference.

I wonder if he could tell this House why he thinks it is better to have no restrictions than to have these guidelines, which would, for the very first time in Canadian law, put into place protections in terms of the accountability of Parliament for the protection of individual Canadians. The bill would make it very clear in the definitions of regulation-making authority that all those who are involved in the making of these regulations where there is incorporation by reference would be accountable to Parliamentary.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, the status quo is not necessarily any better, but we would have expected this proposed new guide to be a little more robust and to ease our concerns regarding accessibility to these documents and the information that will be incorporated by reference into laws and regulations. It would have been appropriate—and this is what we tried to do—to ensure that the guide governing the use of these references be very clear and precise, and that there be no grey areas, which will be the case if this bill passes as is.

That is the point I was trying to make. We need to ask the government why it did not want to create a clearer, more precise and more robust framework in order to reassure parliamentarians that they would always have the right to scrutinize these regulations at the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations. So far, the government has not reassured parliamentarians in that regard.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his last comment, the member indicated that parliamentarians have oversight. The problem, as I see it, is that it is not the case in incorporation by reference. Often there is no parliamentary oversight. As the world becomes smaller, especially with modern technology and the demand for increased world trade, the idea of incorporation by reference, I suspect, is going to become more prevalent. That means that there should be more parliamentary

Royal Assent

oversight to ensure that members of Parliament are aware of the laws being passed, because regulations are a form of law.

I wonder if the member might provide more input on how important it is that we have parliamentary oversight of regulations that are being passed.

● (1340)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that my colleague from Winnipeg North asked me that question, because it allows me to talk about a problem that I did not have time to address in my speech. I alluded to it somewhat in my previous answer regarding Parliament's ability to know what these references and the regulations they refer to are all about. These references can be found in other laws, which can also change over time.

For instance, if a reference is made to a foreign regulation and that regulation changes after being incorporated by reference in a Canadian regulation, parliamentarians will have no way of knowing it every time the regulation changes. It will also be impossible for Canadians to learn about these changes or to ensure that they are properly scrutinized in committee before they become law.

Ms. Paulina Ayala (Honoré-Mercier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague. I am a member of the Standing Joint Committee on Scrutiny of Regulations. Some files have been dragging on for 20 years because there is a problem with the translation from English to French.

Does my colleague think that this problem will only get worse with incorporation by reference, given that we are unable to resolve that type of issue now?

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Honoré-Mercier for her question.

It is a major problem. Ignorance of the law is not a defence. If we incorporate by reference foreign regulations written in foreign languages, we need to have the assurance, as parliamentarians and Canadian citizens, that these regulations and the incorporations by reference in Canadian regulations will be readily available in both official languages so that parliamentarians and Canadians can consult them.

ROYAL ASSENT

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

June 18th, 2015

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 18th day of June, 2015, 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**

[Translation]

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE IN REGULATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act and to make consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Sherbrooke for so generously sharing his time with me. I would particularly like to thank the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, who did an extraordinary job on a file that—let us be honest—is not the most exciting file that we could study in Parliament. We are talking about the issue of statutory instruments, which is nonetheless a cornerstone of democracy.

We vote on laws, but we sometimes forget that those laws affect all sorts of statutory instruments, which often come from third parties or other countries. Take for example free trade agreements. These are fundamental issues.

Such information can sometimes be extremely complicated and require a lot of work and study, even by MPs. This information is not always easily accessible to Canadians or easy for them to understand. That is why it is important that we debate Bill S-2 and that we oppose it.

First of all, I would like to point out that the trend continues. The government is still not accepting any amendments in committee and it keeps imposing time allocation and closure. This government managed to impose such measures to limit debate in the House a record number of 100 times. That is a shameful record.

Nonetheless, one would have thought that we could find some common ground on Bill S-2. We are talking about procedures that have existed for 174 years, since before Confederation, if I understood correctly what my colleague from Gatineau said in her speech. However, although very important changes are being made, the government is unwilling to agree to amendments to obtain the support of the opposition parties. That is unfortunate, and it is becoming an increasingly frequent occurrence.

We are nearing the end of the 41st Parliament, and this has been the trend throughout this Parliament, from beginning to end. Unfortunately, we cannot expect otherwise from this government.

Let us talk about the substance of the bill. It contains procedures for incorporating statutory instruments. The parliamentary secretaries of the Minister of Justice and the President of the Treasury Board have explained that the government intended to facilitate the incorporation by reference of statutory instruments.

One issue that keeps coming up is that facilitating trade transactions seems to be the focus of the government's efforts. There has been a lot of talk about streamlining regulations. There are legislative aspects to this, of course, but many things are based and rely on statutory instruments.

In talking about statutory instruments, we can also talk about legislation in other countries. For instance, when we sign a free trade

agreement, the other country's legislation affects the way in which we draft our legislation. However, then we have to determine the extent to which we commit to proceeding with these changes to the legislation.

For example, if we agree to sign a free trade agreement according to the provisions on labour protection in another country, the laws of that country may change in the meantime. If these changes are made, pursuant to Bill S-2, we would not be compelled to follow up, publish these changes in the Gazette and follow a process of heightened parliamentary oversight, as is done by the Standing Joint Committee on the Scrutiny of Regulations. This committee, composed as it is of members of the House of Commons and senators, brings together both Houses of Parliament.

When we look into this matter, we note that the government tends to put forward legislation that is poorly crafted in order to reduce paperwork and facilitate different types of transactions, especially trade transactions. This is a goal that is shared by all members and all parties in the House.

We certainly understand that it is important to reduce paperwork. In a digital era marked by heavy reliance on the Internet, we understand that improvements must be made in order to share this information more effectively with Canadians and to make certain changes to regulations and to statutory instruments as effectively as possible.

● (1345)

However, this should not be done to the detriment of either parliamentary oversight or the intent of legislation already in place. I will use an example from the past: the red tape reduction bill. This initiative was put forward by the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, Agriculture and the President of the Treasury Board. We were opposed to this bill, even though we supported its intent. We noted that the desire to reduce red tape also reduced protection for workers, for instance. In trying to reduce red tape in certain work environments, the government also reduced the obligations of some employers to ensure that they had protections in place for their workers and workplace protections. This is a good example of cases where the government's intention to make things easier for private enterprise took it in a legislative direction that was neither adequate nor appropriate.

The same problem faces us today with Bill S-2. As I said earlier, there may well be changes, and not only in other countries, but also in third-party codes. We as legislators do not necessarily have the power to legislate on these codes, but the legislation must take them into account. As parliamentarians' power is more limited in this respect, having a committee that oversees the regulatory process and regulations takes on even greater significance. However, the government appears to want to get these regulations through more easily, without their being published in the *Canada Gazette*, which is highly problematic.

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We only have to look at the readjustment of electoral boundaries to see the importance of the *Canada Gazette* in informing Canadians about regulatory changes, or changes that, without necessarily being legislative changes, affect our work and the way in which Canadians relate to their democracy. My riding was drastically changed in the initial proposal put forward by the federal electoral boundaries commissions. The process was very important and I took part in it. With my participation and the participation of other stakeholders, we managed to have changes made to the initial proposal. People were extremely concerned and became very involved in the electoral boundaries redistribution process. Articles in our local newspapers often mentioned that the final result would be published in the *Canada Gazette*. It was very interesting because it enabled people to know where they could find this information. The same philosophy applies here. Unfortunately, none of our amendments aimed at facilitating access to and transmitting information were accepted.

In conclusion, I would like to talk about official languages. When a trade agreement with another country or another legislature is under consideration, we must remember that not all countries are required to draft documents in English or French, our two official languages. It is therefore important to add requirements in this regard to the draft legislation.

In closing, as this is the last time I will rise in the 41st Parliament, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the constituents of Chambly—Borduas who put their trust in me in 2011. I would particularly like to thank the team around me: Francine, Cédric, Suzanne and Sébastien. They have given me a great deal of support over the past four years. I also want to thank my family and my friends, of course, who have always been there for me in my work, which has not always been easy. I hope I have been equal to the task. I think that we have accomplished a great deal together over the past four years. I hope to again win the confidence of the people of Chambly—Borduas, which is going to become Beloeil—Chambly in the next election, and to be able to continue this great adventure with them. I hope to continue representing the community where I grew up, the community I have the honour of representing here in Ottawa.

• (1350)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too hope that my colleague will be back. I would like to take a moment to thank all of my constituents for electing me. I hope to return to the House, and I wish them all a great summer.

This bill should have undergone close scrutiny during the committee study because it will have a very real impact on Canadians' day-to-day lives. Now that the study is over, we believe it is important to be prudent about the consequences of this bill, which are not yet well understood.

What we want is for the bill to achieve its goal and address the committee's concerns.

Several witnesses appeared, and one of them really talked about how important it was to make changes to the bill. John Walter said:

That's why we believe very strongly that there needs to be Treasury Board guidelines set up so that there are certain processes....Our position is let's modernize the system but let's make sure the rules are in place...

Does my colleague agree with his suggestion? Since several people wanted to see changes, why did the Conservatives decide against making those necessary changes?

• (1355)

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, to answer the last part of my colleague's question, this is an unfortunate trend we have seen in the last four years, in the 41st Parliament. The government dismisses the amendments proposed by the opposition parties and does not listen to the very qualified witnesses who appear before the committees. That has really reduced the power associated with the committee process, as this bill also does.

A good and very concrete example of how this bill could affect people in their everyday lives is the issue of concussions that I have been working on for several years. In looking at that issue, we have examined the regulations concerning the manufacture of hockey helmets, for example. These are the kinds of regulations affected by this bill that would be less accessible to the public. If we, as legislators, make changes to the standards proposed by the Canadian Standards Association, we will find that there will be information missing, particularly when it involves other jurisdictions, such as helmets that might be manufactured in another country. The bill has serious flaws that the government refuses to correct.

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very useful to have a truly concrete example of the kind of regulations that would be affected by this. The Conservatives talk to us about free trade and international trade agreements, but it is useful to see, for example, that there are regulations that apply to the manufacture of hockey helmets, just as there are for health and the environment.

In speaking about accessibility, he said it would be a shame if regulations were less accessible. The problem is that a company that did not comply with the regulations might use the flaws in this bill to say that they were not accessible and it could not be convicted of failing to comply with the regulations. We might then see that when a company violated the regulations about manufacturing hockey helmets, it might not be possible to convict and punish it if it made use of the flaws in the bill.

What does my colleague from Chambly—Borduas think about that possibility?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. Yes, this is something that could be very dangerous. This affects numerous regulations and statutory instruments. These are in fact matters that concern the safety of the public.

Statements by Members

I am going to talk about the example my colleague gave of a company that might say the information was not accessible enough. While I am not a lawyer, and I may be mistaken, my best understanding of the bill is that this shows there really is a concrete relationship between regulations and the laws that we examine and vote on, as parliamentarians. My understanding is that the bill seems to weaken that relationship in a relatively significant way, including by reducing parliamentarians' ability to exercise enhanced oversight of changes. I think there is a committee in place. Earlier, a question was put to my colleague from Sherbrooke by a Conservative member. He was asked whether there was not a need to improve what is already in place. We are not saying there are no problems to be solved; the problem is that the bill makes things worse.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 1:59 p.m., pursuant to an order made Wednesday, June 17, 2015, all questions necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill S-2 are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until later this day at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

MAGNA CARTA

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, this week is the 800th anniversary of the great charter. Magna Carta is on display at the Museum of History and will soon tour all of Canada. I encourage all Canadians to view it and I encourage all parliamentarians to contemplate its meaning.

Magna Carta's concept is that the Crown is bound by a contract with the people and that nobody is above the law.

Representative government and the rule of law became entrenched based on the principles contained in Magna Carta. Canada inherited its foundational government, its parliamentary executive, and judicial institutions from Magna Carta.

It is the rule of law and democracy that are at the core of Canadian values.

The deal struck at Runnymede resulted in the baronial council that evolved into Parliament as guarantor of freedom, property, and due process.

However, in this place, we frequently compromise our own purpose. Our core function is to constrain the executive and prevent it from seizing too much money or too much power. Holding government to account is the essential role of the parliamentarian.

For those who are seeking the honour to return to Parliament, I would ask them to please remember the lessons of Magna Carta and why their constituents sent them to this place.

● (1400)

MOHAWK LAKE

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mohawk Lake is Brantford's most untapped natural asset, an urban lake minutes from our downtown, bordering on historic parkland to the north and land that is primed for redevelopment to the south.

It is surrounded by history, including the site of Ontario's first ever hydro generating station and important first nations sites like the Mohawk Chapel and the Woodland Cultural Centre.

Sadly, today the lake sits polluted and abandoned.

However, our government supported local efforts to clean up the neighbouring polluted land, and when we have finished the job of cleaning up the liquid brownfield next door, the Greenwich-Mohawk lake district will become one of the most promising destinations for future development in our community.

The Mohawk Lake working group was formed as a community effort to finally restore the lake into an asset that everyone can enjoy, and by working together, I know we can achieve the goal of finally bringing yesterday back to tomorrow and unlocking the true potential of this ecological gem.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week in Burnaby, local residents from my riding rallied to bring attention to the lack of affordable rental housing in our community. They are calling on all levels of government to work together to address our urgent housing crisis.

The #Don'tHave1Million campaign is sounding the alarm that middle-class families just cannot afford B.C.'s skyrocketing real estate prices.

While successive Liberal and Conservative governments slash federal funding for subsidized housing, New Democrats are committed to making life more affordable for Canadians.

I am proud to say that last week our leader announced that an NDP government would sustain investments in crucial social housing agreements, including co-ops, and provide incentives for the construction of 10,000 low-cost rental units. This would help provide the relief Canadians need.

I am proud to be a part of this side of the House, and I look forward to being part of an NDP government.

* * *

KITCHENER MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weekend Kitchener will host our annual multicultural festival, a celebration of the customs that Canadians bring from all around the globe.

This is similar to the multi-faith prayer breakfast held every year in Waterloo region. In contrast to the recent court decision on prayer, Waterloo embraces pluralism, inviting each faith to offer its own prayer.

Statements by Members

When we approach our diversity most closely, we learn how much we are alike. When we learn not to fear our differences, we discover our common humanity.

As a free society, we let everyone live the way they choose, absent some compelling need. We do not tell people how to pray or what to eat or even how to dress, unless there is a strong reason to limit freedom.

If we disagree about limits to freedom, we disagree with respect and judicial process.

Let every parliamentarian join Kitchener-Waterloo in affirming these principles.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 10 years in power and the Conservatives have never been honest about climate change, instead dismantling environmental protection and cutting research.

In 2008, the Conservatives promised cap and trade. Now several provinces are on board, but the Conservatives are campaigning against it. In 2006, they pledged to regulate the oil and gas sector. In 2011, they said regulation was near. Ten years of Conservative rule, five environment ministers later, and we are still waiting.

The Conservatives blocked world climate negotiations. Canada earned five straight fossil of the year awards, withdrew from Kyoto, and was the only country to lower its emissions target prior to Copenhagen.

Canada placed dead last in the climate change performance index of industrialized nations and was censured by the UN for withdrawing “entirely from constructive international engagement”.

The Conservative government is a disgrace, and I will work to see that it is thrown out this fall.

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BALDUR REGALS

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise today and pay tribute to the Baldur Regals senior baseball team, which earlier this month was inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame.

As the member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris, I wish to congratulate all of the players, coaches, and supporters on being bestowed this worthy distinction.

The Baldur Regals have been on a tear and won the Border West Senior AA Baseball League championship in six consecutive seasons, from 2007 to 2012, and they recently captured three Manitoba provincial Senior AA crowns, and in 2009, they won the Western Canadian Senior AA championship.

As in many small rural communities, baseball is a rite of passage, and in Baldur, Manitoba, and indeed all of Westman, it is no different.

So it is with great pride that we are able to celebrate the players' accomplishments in the House of Commons and to wish them success as participants and hosts of the Western Canadian Senior AA Baseball League championships this August 21 to 23 in Baldur, Manitoba.

Westman is proud of them, and I know all members of this House wish them all the best in the years to come.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

NICOLE LAVIOLETTE

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to recognize the passing of my aunt, Nicole LaViolette, at the young age of 52. She passed away on May 22, 2015, surrounded by her family, including her partner, Lisa, after a long battle with cancer.

A law professor at the University of Ottawa, she won many awards and earned international recognition for her research on sexual minority refugees, which even inspired some of the work done by the United Nations Refugee Agency. She was also a founding member of the Capital Rainbow Refuge, an organization that sponsors and welcomes LGBT refugees in Ottawa.

I will always remember my aunt Nicole for her warm smile, her love of dogs and her passion for politics. She knew everything there was to know about the Hill, since she worked as a page here during university and later as a parliamentary assistant to Svend Robinson.

Like me, she was a staunch New Democrat, so we shared the same vision of a fairer, more united country and the same hope for a better world.

Nicole, you are an inspiration to me and to everyone who ever knew you. You will be sadly missed.

* * *

[English]

15TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE AVALANCHE

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next month, Clinton, British Columbia, will be on the world stage as the Mill Girl Follies represent Canada at the 15th Annual International Folklore Avalanche festival in Germany.

The Mill Girl Follies is a troupe of dancers that began in 2011 doing the cancan in celebration of the gold rush era that has contributed to the history and development of the Cariboo region. They have since expanded their repertoire to include other skits, songs, and dances, such as the Charleston. The troupe prides itself on its inclusivity, featuring dancers of all ages and talents, and has been a great source of fun and exercise for everyone involved.

From July 2 to 5, the troupe will be accompanied by 100 Mile House singer-songwriter Katie Kidwell in Germany. There they will join ensembles from 13 other countries in 3 days of performances in what festival organizers call a cheerful meeting of cultures.

Statements by Members

Special thanks for all those who contributed to their fundraising efforts. Congratulations to the Mill Girl Follies on the success so far, and we will all be backing them as they represent Clinton, and Canada, in Germany.

* * *

MEMBER FOR CARIBOO—PRINCE GEORGE

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is what we get when we leave this place, a nice hug from the minister.

After 7 elections and 22 years, all I can say is that it has been quite a ride and an experience that not every Canadian gets a chance to do, but those who do are very fortunate indeed.

I want to thank my wife Annie for her constant companionship throughout these many years. She is amazing.

I thank my constituents of Prince George—Bulkley Valley and Cariboo—Prince George for their support and those beautiful margins they always gave me.

I want to thank Jeanne, Theresa, Soraya, and Victoria. I call them my wonder women, and they made me look good, and even better when I could not be in the riding.

I thank my colleagues in the House, my Conservative colleagues and my colleagues across the way. I have just been accused of being a tiny bit partisan, but we know how this is played.

I thank the incredible House of Commons staff and all the friends I have made.

I head to Osoyoos, B.C., where the snow never falls, the sun always shines, and the golf season is 10 months long. I thank everyone very much.

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[*Translation*]**NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE WEEK**

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week we are celebrating National Public Service Week. After 10 years under the Conservative government, we can safely say that public servants do not feel like celebrating.

Instead of recognizing the exceptional work that public servants do, the government is disrespectful towards them, muzzles them, and refuses to negotiate their working conditions in good faith. It is time for that to change and that starts with rebuilding a relationship of trust.

That is why I am moving a motion today to force the government to review the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act. It is unacceptable that despite all the fine promises from the Conservatives and Liberals, whistleblowers still have to sacrifice their professional and personal lives. Through their courage, they are protecting the integrity of our public service. The least we can do is to protect them in return.

● (1410)

[*English*]**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, budgets balance themselves. Do members know who said that? It was the leader of the Liberal Party. We on this side of the House can assure the Liberal leader that balancing budgets requires sound economic stewardship and a focus on creating jobs and supporting economic growth.

Supporting every Canadian family is not fair. Do members know who said that? It was the leader of the Liberal Party. He wants to take away the family tax cut, take away the universal child care benefit, introduce new taxes, and raise payroll taxes. We on this side of the House know that raising taxes and raising spending is not fair to all Canadians. We are focused on putting more money back into the pockets of hard-working families.

Budgets do not balance themselves, and supporting all Canadians is indeed fair. The Liberal leader simply is just not ready.

* * *

MEMBER FOR SCARBOROUGH—ROUGE RIVER

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, as my first term draws to an end, I take this time to thank the constituents of Scarborough—Rouge River for giving me the honour of representing them in Parliament. They took a leap of faith in electing the first ever woman and person of colour to represent the constituency federally, Canada's first ever member of Parliament of Tamil heritage.

At this point, I would like to recognize the members of the Islamic faith who are observing Ramadan, a month dedicated to spiritual reflection; zakat, giving to those in need; and sawm, fasting during the Holy month.

In the face of many challenges over the four short years, I always strove to do my best in the interest of my constituents and all Canadians by working together with members of my community and parliamentarians alike. I have championed initiatives and conversations about the elimination of poverty, the promotion of women's rights, affordable housing, access to education, employment equity, and the preservation and celebration of our diverse cultures. I have worked tirelessly to improve the immigration system and the lives of our seniors and veterans as well as to increase youth engagement and opportunities for leadership.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank all of my staff and volunteers for everything they have done and continue to do, and I look forward to coming back here as the MP for Scarborough North, with an NDP government.

*Statements by Members***LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, being a prime minister is not an entry level job. It requires someone who is able to focus on what matters to Canadians: creating jobs, ensuring economic growth, and keeping communities safe. We already have the right guy for the job, and that is our Prime Minister.

The Liberal leader thinks budgets balance themselves and tax cuts that benefit every family are not what is fair. When given the opportunity to comment on world affairs, he blamed Putin's aggression toward Ukraine on a hockey game. That is not leadership. That is the Liberal leader showing time and time again that he is just not ready for the job.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Pope Francis has just released his encyclical on climate change.

Over the centuries, great prophets have denounced injustice and spoken truth to power, often at great personal risk. In more modern times, Wilberforce denounced the scourge of slavery in the British Empire. Bishop Desmond Tutu fearlessly led the fight against apartheid. Reverend Tommy Douglas denounced the injustice of tying health care to the size of one's bank account. Pope John Paul II is best remembered as the spiritual godfather of the demise of communism.

Into this prophetic role stepped Pope Francis this week. In a comprehensive, well-researched, and penetrating account of climate change, the Pope zeroed in on the injustice that allows the rich to get richer on the backs of those least able to adapt. Like the prophets of old, he denounced the cavalier indifference of the smug and the affluent.

If the Conservative government does not get the science and chooses to ignore the economics, surely it will listen to Pope Francis. To ignore faith, science, and economics is to define smug indifference.

* * *

TAXATION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's record in office speaks for itself: 1.2 million net new jobs since the end of the recession, overwhelmingly full-time, high-paying, and in the private sector, the best record in the G7 by a considerable stretch.

However, we should not expect the leader of the NDP to know his facts, because yesterday he was out there saying businesses need to pay higher taxes. When asked what the tax rate is exactly, he did not know and stated that it was three points lower than it is. That is typical of the NDP. It does not know what the taxes are. It just knows everyone's taxes have to be higher.

On this side of the House, we lower taxes, while the NDP and the Liberals are trying their best to raise them.

●(1415)

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, decades of Liberal and Conservative governments, decades of waste and unethical spending, millions squandered defending bad legislation, hundreds of millions more wasted on propaganda, and Liberals threw away almost \$1 billion before that.

Conservatives dingwalled taxpayers at the Mint, and more than 30 senators are now under police watch. Decades of a revolving door, with well-connected Liberal insiders trading places with well-connected Conservative insiders, a culture of entitlement.

However, the times they are a-changing. The NDP showed how to end 43 years of entitlement and brought real change to Alberta. Gather 'round people. Brimming with confidence and optimism, Canadians young and old are ready for change. Conservatives and Liberals,

...don't criticize
What you can't understand
Your sons and your daughters
Are beyond your command

Your old road is rapidly agin'...

...get out the new
one if you can't lend your hand

For come October, the times they are a-changing.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party's 32-point plan shows very clearly why he is just not ready to be Prime Minister. It really looks like a plan written on the back of a napkin, not one item of which corresponds to anything he or his party has ever done in the past on these or other issues.

On top of that, he accepted 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report without even reading them.

It is clear that the Liberal leader is just not ready to be Prime Minister.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today Pope Francis issued a wake-up call. Climate change is a threat, and the world's poorest people will suffer the most. This is not just an environmental issue; it is a moral issue. Canada must cut emissions and ensure that less-developed countries have the financing they need to tackle climate change. Only the NDP has a plan to tackle climate change and put a price on carbon.

Did the Prime Minister's short 10 minutes with the Pope make it obvious that nobody believes the current government's talking points?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are taking a leadership role on the international stage. We have helped more than 65 developing countries reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. Also, our party was the founding member of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. We are also doing our part by contributing to the green climate fund.

We are also addressing short-lived climate pollutants during Canada's Arctic Council chairmanship and will continue to do that and do our part to protect our environment while keeping our economy strong.

* * *

*[Translation]***NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all members of the House are condemning General Lawson's unacceptable remarks. However, just condemning these remarks is not enough for the countless victims of sexual assault and harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces. A change in culture is absolutely necessary.

When will this government show some leadership and ensure that Justice Deschamps' recommendations are implemented immediately?

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the comments by the CDS were offensive and totally inappropriate. General Lawson has retracted and apologized for these offensive comments. We expect the leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces to clearly and consistently convey a message of zero tolerance for sexual misconduct.

General Lawson has announced his retirement, and the wheels are in motion for a change of command.

* * *

• (1420)

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the facts are well known, and women across Canada live the reality of gender-

based violence every single day. However, indigenous women face the starkest reality. They are more than three times more likely to be victims of violence and seven times more likely to be murdered.

In order to end this violence, we need to come to grips with the factors that cause it. Why is the government refusing to listen to indigenous women who are calling for an inquiry to do just that?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, these are terrible crimes against innocent people, and the best way of dealing with these issues is to make sure that we are taking action. This has been studied many times over, but what aboriginal women have told me across this country is that we need action. That is why we tabled in this House an action plan in September 2014 to move forward on preventative projects to make sure that there is support for the victims of these terrible crimes as well as to make sure that they are protected.

I still do not understand why the opposition members refuse to support that action plan.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what indigenous peoples are saying and what we are saying is that it is time for the toxic current government to go.

[Translation]

The Aboriginal Economic Progress Report was released yesterday. We see that equality of aboriginal and non-aboriginal people will not be achieved even by 2022. First nations on reserve had the worst results for almost all indicators, including employment and education.

How does the minister explain such a disastrous record?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, we welcome this report and we thank the committee for its work.

Our government understands that economic development is essential to improving the living conditions of aboriginal peoples. Since the beginning of our mandate, we have taken steps to improve the living conditions of first nations by giving them the means to fully benefit from Canada's economic prosperity. We also created the first nations job fund and made investments to improve the education system, and we will continue in that vein.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question is this. When will the government step up and put an end to the third-world living conditions that first nations face across this country?

Today the Manitoba government is making a historic apology for the Sixties Scoop, a file that has been long ignored by the federal government. While Manitoba is demonstrating a commitment to reconciliation, the Conservative government still significantly underfunds child welfare services on reserve, and the results are devastating. In fact, there are more children in care today than there were at the height of the residential school system.

Oral Questions

The question is this: How in good conscience can the Conservative government continue to discriminate against first nations children?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we remain committed to the health, safety and well-being of first nation children. The hon. member ought to know that child welfare services are delivered throughout the country according to provincial law and standards. We will continue to take action to ensure that children and families have the support they need to lead healthy lives.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of grinding mediocrity under the Conservative government, Canadians are saddled with \$157 billion in new Conservative debt; \$4,400 in new debt for every man, woman and child in the country. The Conservatives have increased the net tax burden in five of its last six budgets; they have reported 53 monthly trade deficits, including the worst in Canadian history; and they have the worst economic growth record in eight decades.

If that is the best the Conservatives can do, why do they not just get out of the way?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly we do not want Canadians to be overextended. We are reducing taxes on the middle class and providing benefits directly to families so they can use them for their priorities, such as balancing their budgets or paying off debt. A typical two-earner family of four will save up to \$6,600 because of the measures of this government.

However, the Liberal Party wants to raise taxes on the middle class and take away those benefits. The Liberal policy is a \$1,000 tax increase that Canadians simply are saying “no” to.

• (1425)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are 200,000 more unemployed Canadians than before the recession. The numbers from the government are not getting any better. Even worse, the economy actually shrank through the first quarter of this year.

Growth for all of 2015 is projected at 1.5%. That is no better than Europe. At least 24 major economies are set to grow faster this year than will Canada's. That is the hard reality of 10 years under that broken government.

Why is its promise to Canadians just more of the same: more brokenness, more failure?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the strong leadership of our Conservative government has steered Canada out of the global recession and has helped created over 1.2 million net new jobs.

Budget 2015 continues to build upon that. It is a low-tax plan that helps create jobs by a number of measures, including reducing the small business tax rate to 9%, providing manufacturers with the accelerated capital cost allowance so they can invest back into their own businesses.

The Liberal Party's only plan is to raise taxes.

[Translation]

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when there are more unemployed Canadians than there were four years ago, when the cost of living is forcing people to go into more debt than four years ago, when it is harder to access employment insurance than it was four years ago, when roads, bridges and municipal infrastructure are in worse condition than they were four years ago, how can the minister claim that everything is fine?

Have the Conservatives gotten so out of touch with reality that they do not know the real problems Canadians are facing?

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what Canadians know. Canadians know that this government keeps its promises in putting more money in their pockets, in Canadian jobs, in giving seniors income splitting, in making this economy grow.

Canadians will have a choice in the next election. They will choose this party, this government, because we will continue to fulfill our promises such as balancing the budget. We know the opposition thinks that budgets balance themselves. We know budgets do not balance themselves. That is why when we made the promise to Canadians that we would balance it, we did it, while reducing taxes. Promises made by this government, promises kept.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, ignorance is bliss.

[Translation]

For years, the Conservative government has been telling us that its bills pass the constitutional test at the Department of Justice. The minister does not appear to be doing his job, since the government has spent about \$7 million of taxpayers' money on defending the constitutionality of 16 of its laws. Believe it or not, it has lost every single case.

How many millions of dollars do the Conservatives plan on spending to defend unconstitutional laws?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

[English]

The reality is that in fact a full 70% of the cases that are litigated in the country involving the federal government are won by the federal government, and 85% of those cases originate outside of the federal government.

With respect to their constitutionality, we have very talented people at the Department of Justice. I have full confidence in their assessments. We never bring bills before the House that do not meet that constitutional charter test.

Oral Questions

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): It would be so easy. I hate to say I told him so, Mr. Speaker, but everyone warned the minister that these bills were unconstitutional. However, instead of focusing on keeping Canadians safe, the Conservatives ram through bad bill after bad bill, ignoring experts and refusing to work with the opposition to fix them. What do Canadians get in return? A bill for around \$7 million in legal challenges.

Why did the Conservatives ignore the facts and left Canadians to pay the price?

• (1430)

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. lady is this. What does she have against facts and what does she have against keeping Canadians safe?

We have passed some 30 justice bills in the life of this Parliament and since we have taken office designed specifically to keep Canadians safe and to ensure that Canadians can have confidence in their justice system and security forces. Every step of the way, my hon. friend and her colleagues have chosen to oppose those efforts.

* * *

CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Veronica Park died in April while serving a three-year sentence at the Nova Institution for Women a few days after complaining of respiratory problems. Instead of helping her family understand how she died, Correctional Service officials deliberately ignored media questions in an effort to suppress coverage, and even told her family they had to file an access to information request to find out the cause of death.

This callous behaviour is shameful and totally disrespectful to her family. Will the minister apologize?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has continued to take concrete steps on the issue of mental health in prisons. Both access to treatment services for inmates and training for staff have improved as a result of the strong leadership of this Conservative government.

I would like to reiterate that the opposition party has not supported a single measure that we have done to improve health in prisons.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Conservative government is not too fond of the media, but it is a whole other story when Correctional Service Canada directs its employees to take the weekend off to avoid answering questions from journalists investigating the death of inmate Veronica Park.

This kind of attitude and these kinds of comments are completely unacceptable. Journalists and the family have a right to know what happened in our public institutions.

Will the minister denounce this situation?

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr.

Speaker, as I just said, our government is continuing to take concrete steps on the issue of mental health in prisons and the treatment of all persons in our institutions.

The member opposite has not supported a single measure that we have implemented to improve prisons through CBSA or through the federal correctional system itself. I find it very shameful that the opposition would bring this type of a question up in the House and try to play politics with this situation.

* * *

ETHICS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last night the magnitude of the scandal in the Senate tripled. The RCMP will now be investigating all 30 senators who have spending irregularities. The police just are not buying into the so-called appeal scheme the Prime Minister's hand-picked speaker devised to get him and his friends off the hook. It is taking its own look at the evidence.

Could the Prime Minister explain why it is the police, and not him, that has been left to clean up the Senate mess?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that these cases are not under investigation. However, I would like to read something for the members from a House administration report. It states:

Can you confirm where these employees will be working? The employment forms indicate that they all live in the Montreal area but they will be working in the Ottawa office?

The response from the leadership of the NDP was that they would be working in Ottawa. The problem with that statement is that it was false and made liars out of 68 members of the NDP caucus.

I have to believe that there are some members in the NDP caucus who do not want to go into the summer break owing their constituents thousands of dollars, and I hope—

The Speaker: The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is just not acceptable for that member to be making things up. He should hang his head in shame.

As well, here is a government that ran on a triple E Senate. Remember that? The only thing that has tripled under the Conservatives' watch is the number of senators under police investigation. Canadians are tired of the daily barrage of waste and scandal from the other chamber. They want answers.

Why did the Prime Minister allow senators to hide from accountability by devising their own get out jail free card?

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I did not hear anything in that question that brought it back to the administration of government. I see the hon. parliamentary secretary rising. He can answer it if he likes, but I did not hear anything that tied it back to government.

• (1435)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Again, Mr. Speaker, the facts are in black and white from the office of the Leader of the Opposition. The NDP said that these people would be working in Ottawa. They actually worked in an illegal, partisan office in Montreal.

Now I have to believe that not all 68 members of the NDP want to go into the summer break owing \$2.7 million to their constituents. I hope there are a few of them who will at least do the right thing and pay back the money they owe constituents, immediately.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, bring it on, anytime.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister's Office is embroiled and involved in the scandals surrounding Senator Mike Duffy. Yesterday, an RCMP expert explained how the PMO arranged to repay Senator Duffy's \$90,000 in expenses. It was a scheme, a scam, a ploy to try to cover up an affair that the government was determined to hide from Canadians, and taxpayers are disgusted with it.

The Prime Minister appointed Duffy, Brazeau, Wallin and 56 other senators. How can they think that all of these shenanigans could go on under his nose without his knowledge? Is that the rule—

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, bring it on? Bring on the fact that the party across the aisle owes taxpayers \$2.7 million. As of July 1, the taxpayer will be bringing it on by garnishing their wages and ensuring we get the money back. What the NDP members could have done is the right thing and paid it back on their own.

I will tell the members what \$2.7 million means. It means a church in my riding, the Lemonville United Church, could have gotten an elevator for seniors. It means thousands of disadvantaged kids could have gone to summer camp. It means thousands of hours of English as a second language.

Instead, those members used it for partisan purposes against the rules. The should pay it back.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am quite confident that the taxpayer will trust an honest government, an NDP government. That is real change, and it is coming.

[Translation]

Ten years ago, the Prime Minister told everyone that he would clean House in Ottawa after the Liberal scandal, but now he is even worse than the Liberals. He said he would reform the Senate—he talked about a triple-E Senate. The only thing that has tripled in the

last 10 years is the number of senators being investigated by the RCMP.

Why did the Prime Minister appoint corrupt individuals? Why is he defending the status quo? Why is he defending this waste of public funds? He has some explaining to do.

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that member owes the taxpayer \$122,000, and refuses to pay it back. Now it is probably because he does not have enough cheques in his chequebook, because he has been writing cheques to Québec solidaire. However, he has a problem. Now that there is another Québec separatist party, the Bloc Québécois, he does not know to whom he will write his cheques. Will it be Québec solidaire or the Bloc Québécois?

What the member can do is write one cheque to the Receiver General of Canada for \$122,000, and do the right thing.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only is the Senate plagued with major ethical problems, it has delayed and derailed legislation that was passed twice by the democratically elected House. Bill C-279 would have guaranteed equal rights and protections for transgender and gender variant Canadians.

Given that the Senate is still blocking equality for transgender Canadians, will the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness respect the will of the House, and act now to protect the safety of transgender people? Will he immediately issue guidelines to guarantee equal and respectful treatment for transgender people at our borders and in our corrections system?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman will know, the Canadian Human Rights Act and several of its provincial counterparts, as well as the Criminal Code itself already recognize that discrimination on the basis of transsexualism, gender identity or expression is a form of sex discrimination. Section 718 of the Criminal Code specifically provides a non-exhaustive list of aggravating factors used to increase sentences, which includes sex, sexual orientation and/or any other similar factors.

Therefore, sufficient protection exists, as it should. I respect what the hon. member is attempting to do, but the reality is that the protections are there now.

* * *

• (1440)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is simply unbelievable that in this day and age, the Chief of the Defence Staff would excuse sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces as “biological wiring”. What is even more shocking is that the Prime Minister refuses to fire him. The Prime Minister cynically claims outrage but then refuses to take any action.

Oral Questions

I have a simple question. When will the Prime Minister do the right thing in the interest of all who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces and fire the Chief of the Defence Staff immediately?

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think that everyone is disgusted by the comments that were made by the CDS. He has apologized for those comments. He has also announced his retirement and his replacement has been named in General Vance.

There is going to be a change in command very shortly and I just ask that the member be patient.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's report of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board confirmed that under the Conservative government, gaps between aboriginal people and the rest of Canada are getting worse.

Underfunding education, inaction on overcrowded housing, crumbling water systems and inferior health care are not only morally reprehensible, but economic incompetence.

When will the government make the concrete investments necessary to ensure the equality of opportunity that first nations, Inuit, and Métis deserve?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we welcome the report of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board and we thank the board for its work.

We agree that economic development is key to improving the living conditions of aboriginal peoples everywhere in Canada. That is why since coming to office we have taken measures to improve first nations' well-being by enabling them to take full advantage of Canada's prosperity. We will continue to work with willing partners to continue in that vein.

* * *

[*Translation*]**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, 70% of the calls to the Canada Revenue Agency got a busy signal. That is 40 million calls. Things have gotten even worse: now it is 80%. The Conservatives have closed all of the service counters and cut the budget by 25%. That is disgusting, and that is why the Liberal Party leader decided to clean house and come up with a plan to give the agency back to Canadians.

How can the Conservatives tolerate the fact that 80% of Canadians' calls do not get answered?

[*English*]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians reach out to the CRA, we expect them to be provided with quality service and accurate information. We encourage anyone who believes that they may have received incorrect information from the CRA or has any complaint of that nature to make a formal complaint. That is what the CRA

taxpayers' ombudsman's office is for. It is a position that this government brought into place.

We do expect the CRA to continually improve its service and the quality and accuracy of those services. We have implemented several measures which are ongoing to do that.

* * *

[*Translation*]**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the employment insurance situation is going from bad to worse: 240,000 Canadians applied for employment insurance benefits in April, but the unemployed may have to wait for months to get help because Conservative cuts have caused a backlog of 253,000 files. The 400 employees who were hired have not changed anything, and an internal memo reveals that the Minister of Employment and Social Development knew that the cuts would have a devastating impact.

Why did the Conservatives ignore the warnings that could have prevented this disaster?

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's comment is absolutely false. There have been no cuts to Service Canada. In fact, we have added 400 extra staff to deal with the EI claims during seasonal times.

The department is meeting service standards. In fact, the majority of EI claimants are now paid within 28 days of making their claim.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for six straight months, the number of EI recipients has been rising in Alberta. This month the increase in beneficiaries was 10 times the national average. This is only the tip of the iceberg since many laid-off contract workers cannot even get EI.

Last month Albertans sent a wake-up call to the provincial Conservatives. Why has the federal Conservative government refused to invest in a more diversified and sustainable economy to avoid yet another boom and bust cycle?

● (1445)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, under our Conservative government, we have created 1.2 million net new jobs. The majority of those jobs are high paying, full time and in the private sector. We have done that because we reduced taxes on businesses. We have reduced taxes on those who are creating jobs.

We know what the NDP plan is. The NDP actually does not know what the business tax rate is, so we are going to let the people in Alberta know. The NDP does not know what the business tax rate is. All the NDP knows is it wants to increase it. That is going to kill jobs. That is going to kill opportunity. We are going to continue with balanced budgets and reduced taxes for job creators.

*Oral Questions***TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are neglecting key sectors of our economy, such as the tourism industry, which employs 600,000 people across the country. Because of this lack of leadership, Canada has fallen from 7th to 16th in the number of international visitors arriving here. This is hurting our regions and border towns that rely on tourism to support their local economies.

Why are the Conservatives failing to support our tourism industry? What is their goal: to take us out of the top 20?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think that the member was not at the meeting in Niagara Falls a month ago with all the representatives of the tourism industry in Canada. What did they say? They said that this year is the best year for the tourism industry. They were very happy with the investment from our government, \$30 million over three years, to invest in the U.S. to make sure Americans will travel to Canada to visit our great country.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this government has been cutting money for tourism for nine years. Now suddenly it has decided to adopt the NDP's proposal to invest more.

In Quebec City alone, 15,000 people work in hotels, restaurants and parks and as tour guides, all serving tourists. In the past two years, Canada has dropped from 17th place to 20th place in tourism revenue. This week I moved a motion setting out concrete measures to clean up the mess in our tourism industry.

Will the Conservatives support that motion, which lays the foundation for a real national tourism strategy?

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we support the hundreds and thousands of small business owners across Canada who work in tourism. We brought in a plan three years ago.

Now we are taking action for the tourism industry and doing everything we can to meet their needs. That is why, a few weeks ago in Niagara Falls, people from the tourism industry were so happy to hear our announcement of an additional \$30 million over three years for Destination Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in my riding do not understand why the absolute worst violent offenders would ever be let out of prison and back onto our streets, where they are a risk to our families and children. Meanwhile, the Liberals and the NDP tout Pierre Trudeau's faint hope clause that would give these offenders an escape route. The opposition even opposes tougher penalties for murderers who kill police, commit kidnappings and sexual assault.

Could the Minister of Justice please tell the public what our government is doing about it?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like my friend from Calgary, I have spoken to many victims and heard their concerns. It is why we have passed over 30 justice bills in this place, including the victims bill of rights. Our proposed bill would help ensure that the worst of the worst offenders, those who kill police officers, prison guards, who kill during a sexual assault, kidnapping or act of terrorism face severe consequences, including the potential of imprisonment for life without parole.

Only this Conservative government can be counted on to give victims a voice and to protect our families and communities from violent criminals.

To you, Mr. Speaker, and all of my colleagues, I say goodbye, Godspeed, and enjoy the summer.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, provincial ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie are meeting in Toronto this week to talk about francophone immigration. Immigration is a major issue for the future of Canada's francophone communities. The roadmap money is fine, but we need programs tailored to francophones.

Will the minister promise to work with the provinces and the communities to develop a real strategy for francophone immigration?

• (1450)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the progress made by this government in nine years with respect to creating an infrastructure to welcome thousands of francophone immigrants across the country. There are francophone immigration networks in every province and territory, including northern Ontario, where we are working with the Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario to attract more immigrants.

Thanks to the express entry program and all the enhancements we have made to our immigration programs, we expect to see a growing number of francophone immigrants in the years to come. That is important to us and to all regions of Canada.

* * *

CANADA POST

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning I found out that the residents of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield will be the next to stop receiving their mail at home. Canada Post is insisting on getting rid of a service that is essential to our seniors, our SMEs, our community groups and everyone else. We found out yesterday that some densely populated areas elsewhere in the country will be exempt while others will not. Canada Post is making things up as it goes along and being discriminatory.

Will the minister do the right thing and restore home delivery service?

Oral Questions

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2014, Canada Post delivered 1.4 billion fewer letters than in 2006. Canada Post has to balance its books without being a burden on Canadian taxpayers. In the meantime, the NDP and Liberal plans for Canada Post will cost taxpayers half a billion dollars a year, which means that the NDP and the Liberals will raise taxes on all Canadians. That is not what we on this side of the House are going to do. We are going to try to keep taxes low for all Canadians.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mrs. Sadia Groghé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Foreign Affairs likes to boast about Canadian sanctions against Russia. However, one of the most influential members of Russia's business elite, Vladimir Yakunin, boasts about not being on Canada's sanctions list, when he is on the U.S. sanctions list.

How does the minister justify the fact that, unlike the United States, our sanctions still do not target the individuals and entities that would be most affected?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP may have missed this, but we are leading the way with the toughest sanction regime in the world. We have more individuals and entities, over 270, which is more than the United States and the European Union.

We need no lessons from the NDP when it comes to foreign affairs and doing the right thing internationally.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is about quality not quantity.

Members will not believe who the Conservatives are going along to get along with.

Yesterday, we learned that the Conservatives have most conveniently left off most of the most powerful Russian tycoons from their sanctions list. The Americans had no problem blacklisting people like Vladimir Yakunin. Yakunin is so delighted by the Conservative government's protection that he even boasted about it.

I would like to ask the minister, who has a lot of huff and puff, why the Conservatives are going along to get along with Russian tycoons who are tied to Mr. Putin. What do you have with Mr. Putin? Why are—

The Speaker: I will take this opportunity, this far into this Parliament, to remind the hon. member to direct his comments to the Chair and not directly to his colleagues. As the member knows, I certainly am no friend of Mr. Putin's.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while they talk, we actually do. That is the difference between our two parties.

We are doing the right thing for Ukraine, just as we are throughout the world. We do the right thing for Israel, for Ukraine, for the people in Iraq. We are consistent with that.

That is what we are going to take to the Canadian people. They know where we stand. We know where they stand, and the Canadian people stand with us.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Pope Francis unequivocally agrees with those who believe that human activity is contributing to climate change. In other words, he agrees with scientists and politicians who are calling for urgent action.

He also evoked the moral obligation to act, the obligation to respect the environment and ensure that the least fortunate, who are paying the price for global warming, can live in dignity.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit that there is a problem and commit to ensuring that Canada takes its place among the countries that are taking climate change seriously?

● (1455)

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, Canada has supported over 65 developing countries in a number of areas. In fact, our contributions, our financing has supported various initiatives on climate change in developing countries. A portion of the financing is going toward construction, operation and maintenance of the first geothermal power facility in Indonesia, as an example. This will be the largest geothermal power project in the world.

Once completed, the geothermal power facility is expected to eliminate 1.3 megatonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year. This is an example of Canada's contribution to the elimination of greenhouse gas emissions.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Pope Francis issued a powerful encyclical about the ravages of climate change. He has decried the injustice of those who allow the rich to get richer on the backs of those least able to adapt to climate change. The Conservatives have smugly ignored the economics and science of climate change.

If the Conservative government does not get the science and refuses to ignore the economics, surely the Conservatives will listen to the clarion call of Pope Francis. To ignore faith, science and economics is to define smug ignorance. Will they at least listen to the Pope?

Oral Questions

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is another example of Canada's contribution in helping 65 countries in the world. A portion of the financing that we have invested is supporting two of the first commercial scale wind farm initiatives in Peru. Once completed, this wind farm is expected to displace 440,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. These wind farms are also expected to supply Peru's national grid with 130 megawatts of renewable energy capacity. This is another example of Canada's contribution to the global community in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, gang violence in my community is in a state of crisis. There have been over 36 shootings in Surrey since March. The Conservatives have to be pushed every step of the way, and yet fail to take action. They have resisted supplying more RCMP officers and critical investment in youth gang crime prevention programs.

Now the Minister of Public Safety says 20 new RCMP officers are on the ground, but reports say this is not true. Have the additional RCMP officers made it to Surrey yet, yes or no?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for that question, yet again. Our Conservative government has taken strong action in keeping all Canadians safe, including those in British Columbia and in the member's riding of Surrey North. As we have stated in the House previously and on several other occasions during late shows, we are pleased to confirm and reconfirm that the deployment of the first 20 members committed to Surrey is under way and that there are boots already on the ground.

However, let me speak about the record of that member and the NDP when it comes to protecting the constituents of Surrey North. Members of the NDP have voted against literally every single measure to keep Canadians safe.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the promised boots are already on the ground to fight gang violence in Surrey, but the truth is there are no new RCMP officers on the ground in Surrey. The current complement of RCMP officers is 703, exactly what it was more than two months ago. The minister misled the public. The people of Surrey deserve better.

Will the Conservatives stop playing games with my community's safety and tell us exactly when the 100 new RCMP officers they promised will actually be deployed?

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased yet again to say to the member that we have accepted the request of 100 new RCMP officers. The deployment of the first 20 members committed to Surrey is under way and boots are already on the ground.

However, let me talk about some of the things that the member and the member for Surrey North have actually voted against. We have passed legislation to get tough on the crime of drive-by shootings, measures to protect children from sexual offences, measures that we have implemented for crime prevention. That member and the New Democratic Party have voted against absolutely everything, including against terrorism in Bill C-51. Shame on the New Democratic Party.

* * *

● (1500)

TAXATION

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Oakville want low taxes and the freedom to make their own financial decisions, but the Liberals and the New Democrats would rather force a tax hike on every Canadian worker and small business through a higher mandatory payroll tax.

Could the Minister of State for Finance give the House an update on our government's position on a higher mandatory payroll tax?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hard-working member for Oakville for the question. Our Conservative government has a strong record of reducing taxes for all Canadians. We brought in pension income splitting and tax-free savings accounts. We lowered taxes to the tune of \$6,600 this year for a typical two-earner family of four.

However, the Liberal leader has pledged to impose a \$1,000 tax hike. Now is not the time for risky, high-tax schemes and untested leadership.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just returned from a trip to Europe, but what were the results?

He did not help Ukraine by signing a free trade deal with it, as our EU allies did. He did not work with our European partners to lead the way in combatting climate change, unless we count watering down the commitment. He certainly did not seal the CETA free trade deal. He did not ask the Pope to apologize for residential schools.

Could the Prime Minister explain why he spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars on nothing but glorified vanity photo ops?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, the Prime Minister distinguished himself on the international stage and specifically with respect to Ukraine. We have the toughest sanctions in the world. We are advising the Ukrainians with loans. We are helping their small businesses and the humanitarian cause within Ukraine.

Oral Questions

The people in the Government of Ukraine know we stand with them and under this government, this leadership and this Prime Minister, that is going to continue.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is another fuel spill in Vancouver's harbour. This time, 5,000 litres of diesel spilled into False Creek. It took over five hours for response teams to arrive. This, on top of another bunker fuel spill in April, shows just how much the Conservatives' cuts have hurt the Coast Guard's capacity to respond to spills. The economic and environmental impacts of a major oil spill in Vancouver would be devastating.

When will the Conservatives reverse their reckless cuts and open the Kitsilano Coast Guard station?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's priority is to ensure the safety of mariners and the protection of British Columbia's coast. Kitsilano was a search and rescue facility. It was in no way, shape or form intended to be an environmental response station.

The member can talk about support for the Coast Guard. Our government provided a 27% increase in investment in the Canadian Coast Guard, and that party voted against it.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I met with officials from the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces to bring forward concerns that were passed on to me by members of Canada's reserve force. Our reservists proudly serve, as well as have robust careers, and compose approximately 25% of all missions. They have brought honour to Canada through their service. Their concern was about the processing times of reserve pensions.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence please give this House an update on the reserve force pension plan?

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Etobicoke Centre is a proud veteran and was a commanding officer with the Lincoln and Welland Regiment. I thank him for his excellent work on this file.

We recognize the invaluable contributions of our brave men and women in the reserve force. That is why our government implemented the reserve force pension plan in 2007, the first new plan in over 40 years. Thousands of reservists are now benefiting, and processing times are going down. In fact, the pension team is now processing five times more applications each month than they receive.

Our men and women in uniform stand on guard for Canada, and we stand with them.

● (1505)

[Translation]

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, FD): Mr. Speaker, in today's edition of *Le Droit*, once again we have evidence of Ottawa's disdain for the most vulnerable.

With outrageous wait times, the federal government is showing that it is unable to deal compassionately with seniors who apply for the guaranteed income supplement and unemployed workers who depend on employment insurance to feed their families. Some have to wait up to eight months, eight long months, to receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

Will the government act with respect, treat people humanely and allow them to live with dignity without having to fight their own government for legitimate benefits?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is mistaken. Our government provides assistance and support to vulnerable Canadians.

[English]

We support vulnerable Canadians through services and benefits.

We have increased staffing at different service centres. We will continue to help Canadians when they lose their jobs or when they need help in times of vulnerability.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it has been referenced a few times in the House during question period that His Holiness Pope Francis has issued an extraordinarily powerful encyclical, a rare event from the Vatican, and I want to quote in part what he said:

We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — especially coal... — needs to be progressively replaced without delay.

Given the Prime Minister's acceptance of the G7 language for decarbonization, he appears to agree, except for the part "without delay".

Given that the Prime Minister believes this can happen in 85 years, can the minister tell us if it can happen by mid-century?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada was the first country in the world to ban traditional coal-fired electricity.

I want to share with hon. members an example of what we are doing to support the global community in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. One financing project that is under way is the solar plant in Uruguay. Once completed, the solar plant is expected to eliminate approximately 18,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. The solar plant is also expected to supply the Uruguay national grid with an average of 96,000 megawatts per year.

This is another example of our support for the global community in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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-52, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Jim Hillyer (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope I heard wrongly, but while the member for Calgary Centre was asking her question, I overheard the member for Wascana say that she was a pathetic creature. I hope I am mistaken, but if that is correct, I ask him to apologize.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the sensibilities across the way have been offended, I am happy to apologize. That still does not sanction the quality of the question.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

DIGITAL PRIVACY ACT

The House resumed from June 17 consideration of the motion that Bill S-4, An Act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the third time and passed, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Wednesday, June 17, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Victoria on the motion at third reading of Bill S-4.

Call in the members.

● (1515)

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

(Division No. 465)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Brahmi
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Choquette
Côté
Crowder
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dewar
Donnelly
Dubé

Ashton
Aubin
Bélangier
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Christopherson
Cotler
Cuzner
Day
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubourg

Government Orders

Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Foote
Freeman
Garrison
Giguère
Goodale
Groguhé
Hsu
Jones
Kellway
Lapointe
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Liu
Mai
Martin
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Nash
Papillon
Pilon
Rafferty
Rathgeber
Raynault
Sandhu
Scott
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valeriotte — 105

Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Eyking
Fortin
Gameau
Genest
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Julian
Lamoureux
Latendresse
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nantel
Nunez-Melo
Pécler
Quach
Rankin
Ravignat
Regan
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Turnel

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anderson
Ashfield
Barlow
Benoit
Bernier
Blaney
Boughen
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Chisu
Clarke
Crockatt
Davidson
Devolin
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Egliniski
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Galipeau
Gill
Goldring
Gosal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kerr
Lake
Leaf
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McColeman

Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Anders
Armstrong
Aspin
Bateman
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chong
Clement
Daniel
Dechert
Dreeshen
Dykstra
Falk
Fast
Fletcher
Gallant
Glover
Goodyear
Grewal
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kent
Kram (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lauzon
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunnay
MacKenzie
Mayes
McLeod

Government Orders

Menegakis
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Nicholson
 Obhrai
 O'Neill Gordon
 Paradis
 Perkins
 Preston
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Tilson
 Trost
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
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 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
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 Zimmer— 141

Miller
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 Opitz
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Sweet
 Toet
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

Kerr
 Lake
 Leaf
 Lemieux
 Lizon
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Nicholson
 Obhrai
 O'Neill Gordon
 Paradis
 Perkins
 Preston
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sorenson
 Storseth
 Tilson
 Trost
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
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Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 Opitz
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Rajotte
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Sweet
 Toet
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

• (1520)

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

(Division No. 466)

YEAS

Members

Abлонczy
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anderson
 Ashfield
 Barlow
 Benoit
 Bernier
 Blaney
 Boughen
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chisu
 Clarke
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Eglinski
 Fantino
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Galipeau
 Gill
 Goldring
 Gosal
 Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
 Hayes
 Hillyer
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)

Adler
 Albas
 Alexander
 Allison
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Aspin
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
 Calandra
 Cannan
 Carrie
 Chong
 Clement
 Daniel
 Dechert
 Dreeschen
 Dykstra
 Falk
 Fast
 Fletcher
 Gallant
 Glover
 Goodyear
 Grewal
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kent

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bennett
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Brahmi
 Byrne
 Casey
 Charlton
 Choquette
 Côté
 Crowder
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Dewar
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Easter
 Foote
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Groguhé
 Hsu
 Jones
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
 Nash

Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Benskin
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Christopherson
 Cotler
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Eyking
 Fortin
 Garneau
 Genest
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hughes
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Latendresse
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Mathysen
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo

Government Orders

Papillon
 Pilon
 Rafferty
 Rathgeber
 Raynault
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Sullivan
 Tremblay
 Valerioté — 105

Péclet
 Quach
 Rankin
 Ravignat
 Regan
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 St-Denis
 Stoffer
 Toone
 Turmel

Hiebert
 Holder
 Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
 Kent
 Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
 Lauzon
 Leitch
 Leung
 Lobb
 Lunney
 MacKenzie
 Mayes
 McLeod
 Miller
 Moore (Fundy Royal)
 Norlock
 O'Connor
 Opitz
 Payne
 Poilievre
 Rajotte
 Reid
 Richards
 Ritz
 Schellenberger
 Shea
 Shory
 Sorenson
 Storsteth
 Tilson
 Trost
 Valcourt
 Van Loan
 Wallace
 Warkentin
 Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
 Weston (Saint John)
 Wilks
 Wong
 Yelich
 Young (Vancouver South)
 Zimmer — 141

Hillyer
 James
 Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
 Kerr
 Lake
 Leef
 Lemieux
 Lizon
 Lukiwski
 MacKay (Central Nova)
 Maguire
 McColeman
 Menegakis
 Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
 Nicholson
 Ohrai
 O'Neill Gordon
 Paradis
 Perkins
 Preston
 Rathgeber
 Rempel
 Rickford
 Saxton
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Sopuck
 Stanton
 Sweet
 Toet
 Uppal
 Van Kesteren
 Vellacott
 Warawa
 Watson
 Williamson
 Woodworth
 Young (Oakville)
 Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

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

* * *

[Translation]

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE IN REGULATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act and to make consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations, be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred record division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill S-2.

• (1530)

[English]

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

(Division No. 467)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Eglski
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes

Allen (Welland)
 Atamanenko
 Ayala
 Bennett
 Bevington
 Blanchette-Lamothe
 Borg
 Brahmi
 Byrne
 Casey
 Charlton
 Choquette
 Côté
 Crowder
 Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
 Dewar
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Easter
 Foote
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Grogulé
 Hsu
 Jones
 Kellway
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McQuinty
 Michaud

NAYS

Members

Ashton
 Aubin
 Bélanger
 Benskin
 Blanchette
 Boivin
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Caron
 Cash
 Chicoine
 Christopherson
 Cotler
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dionne Labelle
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Eyking
 Fortin
 Garneau
 Genest
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (St. John's East)
 Hughes
 Julian
 Lamoureux
 Latendresse
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Mathysen
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)

Business of the House

Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Nantel
Nash	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Péclet
Pilon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
St-Denis	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Toone	Tremblay
Turmel	Valerioté — 104

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

The Speaker: Before we move on to the Thursday question, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all my dear friends and colleagues for the support you have placed in me and the trust you have given me to be your Speaker in the 41st Parliament. It has been a great honour.

It is often said that there is no such thing as a bad seat in the House of Commons, but you have allowed me to sit in what I consider the best seat in the House of Commons, and I do sincerely appreciate that.

I want to sincerely thank the former member for Victoria, Denise Savoie, for her service to this Parliament, as well as the member for Windsor—Tecumseh, the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock and the member for Simcoe North for their service as well.

[Translation]

I hope that everyone will have a good summer. Although the debate here is sometimes heated, making my job a little more difficult, nobody can say that we have not gone through some historic moments together.

I want to wish everyone a good vacation, a good summer, good health and the best of luck.

[English]

I would also like to take this one last opportunity to invite all members to an informal reception in Room 216-N.

It being Thursday, what would a Thursday be without the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster's Thursday question?

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I start with my thanks, I would like to note that four months from tomorrow, Canadians will choose a new government. We can hardly wait.

I have thanks to give as well.

[Translation]

I really appreciate the work of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. He is so knowledgeable and energetic.

I would also like to thank the Liberal Party's House leader, the member for Beauséjour, who has so much experience as an MP and as the Liberal House leader.

I wish both of them a great summer, and of course I wish them luck in the election.

• (1535)

[English]

As my colleague from Hamilton Mountain did a few years back, I would also like to recognize all those who keep the House running. Canadians watching at home might not realize it, but there is a huge network of very talented and professional staff who work tirelessly to make this place run like clockwork.

First, there is you, Mr. Speaker, and your staff, along with the procedural experts in the offices of the clerks, the Table, the Journals Branch, the Committee Directorate staff, the Library of Parliament staff, and all our incredible pages who do a wonderful job. It is fair to say that the pages of the House of Commons rock, and they do a wonderful job.

We also saw first-hand last October the courage of our security agents, RCMP officials and the Sergeant-at-Arms. We salute them always for their bravery.

[Translation]

I would also like to thank everyone responsible for traffic operations, the people who drive our green buses, dispatch officers, mail room staff and messengers. I thank the cafeteria staff and the food services and catering team. I thank the maintenance staff and the tradespeople working in the parliamentary precinct, as well as those in charge of materiel management and room allocation.

[English]

There is everyone in Information Services, including telecom, ISSI, printing services, the broadcasting team, and the people who deal with human resources, finance, travel and pay and benefits.

Finally, there are the folks at *Hansard*, who transcribe and edit of all our words, and those who translate and interpret them from one official language to the other. Given that the NDP is a bilingual caucus, we appreciate all of the work that is done by the interpreters and translators.

The official opposition NDP wishes one and all a happy summer with lots of door knocking.

[Translation]

We will see each other again after the election, and we truly hope to have a new government, an NDP government.

[English]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the Standing Orders, this will be the last Thursday question of the spring. Therefore, I would like to first take some time to thank the people who have been busy behind the scenes.

Business of the House

The parliamentary pages have been hard at work all year, making our time in this place run more smoothly. They have supported all members in the House in their daily tasks that we may take for granted, but certainly supporting us with things we need. Outside of their important role here in Parliament, the pages have had to balance a full academic schedule. This being considered, their hard work, devotion and enthusiasm during busy question periods or late night debates are especially impressive.

As many members know, my wife was a page when she was a student, and she still talks about the experience that she enjoyed during her page year. Just to illustrate what an impact a year like that can have, next week, almost three decades later, she will be delivering the toast at the wedding of another fellow page. Joining her in giving that toast will be another page, who is now the chief of staff to the leader of the Liberal Party. They will not be the only former pages from that year in attendance at this event.

I am sure this year's pages have built similar friendships and fond memories of their times here. I know they have experienced what has been a particularly eventful year, and I wish them all the best in their future endeavours. I hope this will be a tremendous foundation for very successful lives ahead.

[*Translation*]

I also cannot forget to thank the clerks of the House of Commons, who work diligently with all of those who organize the debate and proceedings in this place. Their support is crucial to keeping things running smoothly.

Of course, there are many administrative and support staff that I have not mentioned who work every day to keep the House running and support all members and Parliament as a whole.

[*English*]

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for presiding over the House for the past four years. You have had quite a job to do, but you have shown a great deal of patience in your role. Back on the first day of this Parliament, you told the House:

It is an old maxim that one learns by doing and I have certainly learned a great deal with first-hand experience in the chair.

Some 505 sitting days later, you have proven a sound claim and then some, having cited that maxim.

Speaking of the Chair, I do want to note that your number two and number three in command, the hon. members for Windsor—Tecumseh and Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, will both be retiring from the House. Their service to the House has been truly appreciated. I want to thank them in particular. I would also like to thank your fourth in command, though I hope to see him here again after the next election.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

I also want to extend my thanks to my six counterparts during this Parliament—the honourable members for Outremont, Westmount—Ville Marie, Windsor—Tecumseh, Skeena—Bulkley Valley, Beau-séjour, and Burnaby—New Westminster—for their co-operative approach some days, and for making the job a lively one on the rest.

[*English*]

An immense debt of gratitude goes to my colleagues on the Conservative Party's House management team. I could not ask for a better team. It has done superb work, and I appreciate the tremendous support and our superb team atmosphere.

This week I heard an interview on the radio with a country singer. He was being asked about the difficulties of touring and the difficulties of the business and all the travails he goes through. His answer was interesting. He said, “You know, when I was helping my mother move recently, I found this picture of myself as a 12-year-old with a guitar, and if that 12-year-old heard me complaining about where I am today, he'd kick my ass.” I thought it was a worthy observation. Who among us would not face a similar admonition from a younger version of ourselves?

For all its challenges and difficulties, and there are many—this is a business that does take a very thick skin from time to time—this is an amazing place to be. It is a rare opportunity to serve and to make a difference. All of us are remarkably fortunate to be able to help people—to help our constituents as individuals, but to also help shape the greatest country in the world and help to deliver change for the better.

We have had ample opportunity to do that in this Parliament. During the course of this productive, orderly, and hard-working Parliament, all hon. members have participated in a lot of lively debates, by day and sometimes by night, in this chamber. All told, the 41st Parliament has been the most productive in terms of legislation for the last two decades. About 160 bills have become or will become law after the hard and diligent work of MPs. This is 20% greater productivity than the average Parliament since the Right Honourable John George Diefenbaker became prime minister. Of course, I was actually born around the time he was prime minister.

What stands out, though, amidst this productivity is the unprecedented number of private members' bills that have become law. More private members' bills have become law during the 41st Parliament than during any of the 40 Parliaments before it. In fact, the number of private members' bills to become law during this Parliament almost surpasses the total passed during the five previous Parliaments combined. Under our Prime Minister's leadership, at least three times as many substantive private members' bills have become law than under any other prime minister in history.

There are some—the pundits and the experts—who like to say that individual members of Parliament do not count, that they do not matter. It is a sentiment that has been around a long time, since one prime minister called backbenchers “nobodies”. Frankly, that is disrespectful. It is also ignorant, because it is wrong, and the statistics in this Parliament demonstrate that fact. Individual members of Parliament have made a huge difference to the future of this country and have rewritten the laws of this country.

Business of the House

[*Translation*]

It is not just the business on the floor of the House that keeps members busy. The sixth report of the Liaison Committee, tabled Monday—a document that has dominated the headlines all week—actually paints a picture of the House's committee landscape becoming increasingly one of hard-working, cost-effective, and productive groups of dedicated MPs.

The number of committee meetings is up. The number of substantive, thoughtful reports, too, is up. The number of meetings spent talking about inside politics is down—which means the amount of time focused on real issues of consequence to Canadians has, in turn, gone up.

What is more, all this committee productivity was achieved with the lowest expense in at least a dozen years, if not longer.

Now that you have indulged me that preamble, Mr. Speaker, let me say, with respect to the business of the House, we will take up Bill C-53, the life means life act, at second reading. Should additional time be available before we adjourn for the summer, we will tackle other bills on the order paper.

[*English*]

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I want to join in the words of my colleague House leaders, the government House leader and the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, in expressing to you, Mr. Speaker, our thanks for your firm and fair hand in guiding our debates. I thank you for your good humour both in the chair and in a number of more private meetings where we have had the privilege to work with you. I know I can speak on behalf of my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, Mr. Speaker, in saying that it has been a pleasure to work with you in this Parliament, and we wish you and your family health and happiness over the summer months.

• (1545)

[*Translation*]

I would also like to say a few words to my fellow House leaders, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and my colleague and friend from British Columbia, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Although at times we disagreed about bills and political issues, I believe that we managed to work together in a spirit of friendship. I have some extremely fond memories of my exchanges with my fellow House leaders, and I also wish them much health and happiness this summer. It is rather odd, but I want to say that I look forward to seeing them next fall.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I also want to join my colleagues in expressing our thanks and our respect to your colleague chair occupants who have indicated that they will not be seeking re-election in the next Parliament. All of you, you and your colleagues, who occupy that important function in our Parliament have done so with honour, fairness, and good humour. I know that my colleagues in the Liberal caucus have appreciated all of our colleagues who have served in this Parliament in that important chair.

My colleagues also mentioned the procedural clerks at the table, who provide invaluable advice to all parliamentarians in a fair, non-partisan, and professional way. I think we should also have a special moment of thought for Ms. Audrey O'Brien, who has faced a difficult health challenge. We wish her health and a full recovery this summer and we hope to see her back.

The person who replaced her during this time, Mr. Bosc, the acting clerk, has also, with his colleagues, done an extraordinary job. We thank him and all of his colleagues for their work in this House.

I will not repeat the list. My colleagues have correctly noted the staff in the Library of Parliament and the people who work on standing committees. As always, they have provided a very high quality of professional, competent, and efficient advice. I know my colleagues in the Liberal caucus have appreciated every exchange and every opportunity to work with this remarkably talented group of women and men.

[*Translation*]

We would like to especially acknowledge our friends the pages. Every year they arrive in the fall, and in this Parliament we have had four groups of pages. They are remarkable young Canadians who come from all over the country. They were leaders in their secondary schools, and they were carefully chosen to serve and help us carry out our parliamentary duties.

[*English*]

I hope the pages have had a successful and positive academic experience in their first year of university here in Ottawa. We hope that in the coming years we will have the privilege of seeing them in other capacities on Parliament Hill. I know that at some point many of them will seek elected office and join us in Parliament as elected parliamentarians. We wish all of them success and happiness in the coming years and thank them for their important service.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues rightly pointed out that the Parliament, House of Commons and Senate security officers, under the leadership of Mr. Vickers and now Mr. McDonnell, did a remarkable job a few months ago during events that we could not have imagined. I am obviously referring to the tragic events of October 22. However, before and after these difficult events, the security staff acted professionally and with competence every single day.

[*English*]

They assure our security and the security of the Canadians who work here. They assure the security of the thousands of Canadians who visit Parliament as well. They also deserve our thanks and our respect.

[*Translation*]

As I mentioned earlier, the list is long. There are those who work in food services, the interpreters, the messengers, the maintenance people and the technical help.

[English]

All of these people support the work we do in Parliament in a professional and thoughtful way, and we are very grateful.

I come finally to our colleagues in this Parliament, our fellow members. The government House leader and the member for Burnaby—New Westminster were talking about the camaraderie that we develop and the privilege we have to serve Canadians in this House of Commons. We saw that with the recent vote when those colleagues who announced that they will not be returning for the upcoming election were applauded by all sides for their service as they cast what will probably be their last vote in this Parliament.

I was also reminded that in the last four years, a number of our colleagues on all sides of the House have gone through difficult health challenges. I do not think it is widely known or understood by others who do not have the privilege of working in this place that there is a bond shared by people who are fortunate enough and privileged enough to have a seat in this Parliament. When a colleague on any side of the House has faced a difficult health challenge, as a number of our colleagues have and are still, I have been touched by the compassion and generosity that so many of us showed toward those people, who really deserve our support, our affection, and our respect. It reminds us of what we share, even though we come from different political parties.

• (1550)

[Translation]

In the end, we want the same things for our country, our constituents and our ridings. These moments reminded me of the personal friendships that we have developed with our elected colleagues. I wanted to mention that.

[English]

On behalf of the Liberal caucus, we wish all of our colleagues much health and happiness during the summer months. To those who have decided not to re-offer we wish good health and continued success in their personal and professional lives. To those who are re-offering, we wish you success this summer—

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: On division.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc: Mr. Speaker, my colleague for Cape Breton—Canso says “on division”, but regardless of who comes back to this Parliament after October, we look forward to seeing one another on other occasions and being reminded of the happy four years when we had the privilege of serving in this House.

The Speaker: I would sincerely like to thank the government House leader, the opposition House leader, and the member for Beauséjour for the very kind words offered to me and the rest of the Chairs and clerks.

The job of the Chair is often difficult, and I sometimes think that House leaders and whips think up new ways to make it difficult. However, we have been blessed with a very experienced team of clerks. I can tell members that when taking over the position of Speaker, I was immediately struck by their wisdom, experience, and the confidence that they gave me. In coming up with rulings and decisions, I felt very sure because of the very wise points of view and the wide experience that they all have.

Privilege

I too would like to add my thanks and best wishes to Audrey O'Brien. I wish her all the best and hope to see her back. Along those lines, I thank Marc Bosc for stepping in and providing an unbroken continuity of service to the House as well as for his professionalism.

I thank all the table officers and pages and all the people around the Hill who make the House of Commons the most wonderful place to work in the world.

[Translation]

I want to sincerely thank all those who work in the House for us, the members, and for Canadians, in order to ensure that our House is the best workplace in the world to serve Canadians.

[English]

On a point of order, the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations between the parties, and in the spirit of collegiality that is blossoming in this House, I hope you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: that the House note that July 6, 2015, will mark the 80th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama; recall the Dalai Lama's status as a Nobel Prize laureate and as one of only five honorary Canadian citizens; recognize the Dalai Lama's religious and personal leadership of the Tibetan people and Tibetan Buddhists worldwide; and acknowledge the Dalai Lama's championing of human rights and respect for all living creatures, his desire for Tibetans to live freely and peacefully and with autonomy within the People's Republic of China, and his advocacy of a middle-way approach to conflict resolution based on non-violence, compromise, and dialogue.

• (1555)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON THE ORDER PAPER NO. 1229

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege out of respect for the integrity of Parliament, as you yourself have put it, and I want to join in the commendation to you, your staff, and the clerks for all that has been done. I join in the referencing of that by my predecessor speakers.

I am rising, I must say, somewhat hesitantly because of the lateness of the period, but I am doing so in the hope, as even the House leader mentioned, of the enhancement of the democratic process. In particular, I rise today on a question of privilege related to the government's response to a question on the order paper, Question No. 1229, which became accessible online only on Tuesday. I gave notice to the chair yesterday, and thus I am raising this matter at the earliest opportunity and regret that it is close to the end of our proceedings.

Privilege

Mr. Speaker, I know that you and your predecessors have often made clear that the Chair is not empowered to adjudicate the quality or accuracy of responses to written questions. Indeed, that is not the issue I am raising, despite the fact that the government's response to Question No. 1229 all but ignored the question it purported to answer.

Indeed, the issue I raise is the violation of a Standing Order of the House, namely, Standing Order 39(1), which clearly states the following in reference to questions on the order paper:

...in putting any such question or in replying to the same no argument or opinion is to be offered, nor any facts stated, except so far as may be necessary to explain the same; and in answering any such question the matter to which the same refers shall not be debated.

This is a Standing Order to which you, Mr. Speaker, have yourself referred on previous occasions, such as on January 29, 2013, when you said, "as Speaker, I have a duty to remind the House that our written question process is intended to be free of argument and debate", and it is in that context that I rise on this question of privilege.

This point, indeed, is emphasized in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, which states, on page 522:

The guidelines that apply to the form and content of written questions are also applicable to the answers provided by the government. As such, no argument or opinion is to be given and only the information needed to respond to the question is to be provided in an effort to maintain the process of written questions as an exchange of information rather than an opportunity for debate.

Indeed, the only particular constraint placed by the Standing Orders on the content of responses to order paper questions is that they may not contain opinion or debate, yet the answer I received this week to Question No. 1229 was comprised almost exclusively of opinion and debate.

Hon. members rely on the written question system, and I have been pleased to be able to use it, to obtain the information we need to represent our constituents, to hold the government to account, and to engage subsequently in informed study of legislation and policy. Thus, the violation by the government of Standing Order 39(1), which has become a regrettable pattern, undermines the written question system and impedes the ability of hon. members to do our jobs.

On page 84 of O'Brien and Bosc, a list of instances found by the United Kingdom Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege to constitute contempt specifically includes, "acting in breach of any orders of the House". Thus, I am asking to regard the government's response to Question No. 1229 as constitutive of contempt of Parliament.

With Question No. 1229, I sought detailed information regarding the funding of programs that facilitate the reintegration of offenders into society after they have served their sentences. The government's response, which, as I say, hardly deals with the question at all, begins, "Mr. Speaker, the government believes". This construction necessarily leads to a statement of opinion, and the very inclusion of the government's beliefs in response to a written question contravenes the Standing Order. Therefore, the Standing Orders have been violated five words into the response.

The response goes on to make claims about the importance and efficiency of government measures, but regardless of the accuracy of those claims, they constitute debate and are thus not permitted in the context of an order paper question response.

As private members, if we include a statement of belief in the text of a written question, or if we engage in debate, we are quickly contacted by the private members' business office and instructed to amend the text and limit our inquiry to a request for factual information, which is, of course, the express purpose of the written question system.

● (1600)

In fact, as O'Brien and Bosc note on page 520 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, not only are members barred from including expressions of opinion in our questions, we are prohibited from requesting the government's opinion, and the Clerk of the House "has full authority" to ensure our compliance.

It is the Speaker, however, who is vested with the authority to ensure that the government complies with the Standing Orders when responding to questions, and in fact, if the government includes its opinion in its answer, it is providing material that members are specifically prohibited from seeking, again in violation of Standing Order 39(1).

Briefly, it is important to note that this use or misuse of the written question system is not so much a personal breach on the part, in this instance, of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, who provided the response to Question No. 1229 and for whom I have a great deal of respect, as it is a regrettable pattern on the part of the government in general.

For example, the government's recent response to Question No. 1093 includes the phrase, "The Government of Canada rejects the argument", and if one is rejecting an argument, one is, by definition, engaging in debate. The response to Question No. 773 again featured the construction, "The government believes", and the response to Question No. 721 references the government's lack of "desire" to reinstate a particular program.

While the government's desires and beliefs are undoubtedly a matter of interest to Canadians and to hon. members, they do not belong in responses to order paper questions, just as the desires and beliefs of us as private members do not belong in the written questions we pose.

As you noted in your ruling on January 29, 2013, Mr. Speaker:

it is expected under our practice that the integrity of the written question process be maintained by avoiding questions or answers that stray from the underlying principle of information exchange.

I know, and with this I close, that at this late date in the parliamentary calendar, there may not be time for a *prima facie* finding of contempt to be referred to committee and for such a referral to proceed according to usual practice.

However, I raise this matter, and admittedly regrettably so at this late date in Parliament, but without an option otherwise, because we only received the answers recently, out of concern for the health of our parliamentary process, out of respect for the Standing Orders of this House, and out of concern for, as you yourself have put it, “the integrity of the written question process”, which is an essential tool for us as parliamentarians.

I ask that you protect the integrity of this process by finding that the government's response to Question No. 1229 is in breach of Standing Order 39(1), and I hope that when the House returns in the fall, hon. members from all parties will work together to strengthen parliamentary processes, such as the written question system, which underpin the vitality of our democracy.

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we would like to reserve the right to respond for a very short time. As you know, right now we are torn between the royal assent procedure and process, so we will be responding today very shortly.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Mount Royal for raising this issue, and of course, we all look forward to the response from the government side.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 22 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

LIFE MEANS LIFE ACT

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC) moved that Bill C-53, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we are approaching the end of the session, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Mississauga—Erindale for the extraordinary privilege they have given me to represent them, since 2008, in this place. I hope to earn their trust again and return here in the fall. I look forward to seeing all of my colleagues here when I do.

I rise today to speak in support of Bill C-53, the life means life act. By eliminating parole eligibility for high treason and for the most heinous murders, the criminal law amendments in this bill would ensure that the worst offenders spend their entire lives in prison.

The reforms in Bill C-53 grew out of the commitment made by our government in last fall's Speech from the Throne to amend the sentencing laws to ensure that a life sentence means a sentence for life for the most dangerous criminals.

I predict that these proposals will be welcomed by the public as another important step by our government to protect Canadians from the most violent and incorrigible offenders. I also predict that they will be strongly welcomed by the families and loved ones of murder

Royal Assent

victims, who, under the laws that now stand, run the risk of being re-traumatized every time the offenders responsible for their losses apply for parole.

In that respect, I think of Sharon Rosenfeldt, the mother of one of Clifford Olson's victims, who, along with her family, had to go to parole hearings every two years, under the old faint hope clause regime, to hear Clifford Olson tell them why he should be released. They had to relive the trauma of losing their son every two years, time and time again.

In this respect, Bill C-53 would complement other victim-oriented measures sponsored by our government, such as Bill C-32, the Victims Bill of Rights Act. A key purpose of both Bill C-53 and Bill C-32 is to prevent those who have already been victimized by criminals from being re-victimized by the criminal justice system.

As I mentioned, the reforms set out in Bill C-53 target high treason and certain forms of murder. Both offences are currently subject to a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment, with the right to apply for parole after a set period of time in custody.

ROYAL ASSENT

• (1620)

[English]

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, His Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

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:

Bill C-247, An Act to expand the mandate of Service Canada in respect of the death of a Canadian citizen or Canadian resident—Chapter 15.

Bill C-452, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (exploitation and trafficking in persons)—Chapter 16.

Bill C-591, An Act to amend the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Act (pension and benefits)—Chapter 17.

Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act—Chapter 18.

Government Orders

Bill S-6, An Act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act—Chapter 19.

Bill C-51, An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts—Chapter 20.

Bill C-46, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act—Chapter 21.

Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act,—Chapter 22.

Bill C-26, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, to enact the High Risk Child Sex Offender Database Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts—Chapter 23.

Bill C-63, An Act to give effect to the Déline Final Self-Government Agreement and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts—Chapter 24.

Bill C-66, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016—Chapter 25.

Bill C-67, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016—Chapter 26.

Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Firearms Act and the Criminal Code and to make a related amendment and a consequential amendment to other Acts—Chapter 27.

Bill C-555, An Act respecting the Marine Mammal Regulations (seal fishery observation licence)—Chapter 28.

Bill S-7, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts—Chapter 29.

Bill C-12, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act—Chapter 30.

Bill C-52, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act—Chapter 31.

Bill S-4, An Act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act—Chapter 32.

Bill S-2, An Act to amend the Statutory Instruments Act and to make consequential amendments to the Statutory Instruments Regulations—Chapter 33.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1625)

[*English*]

LIFE MEANS LIFE ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-53, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC) Mr. Speaker, it is not every day one's speech gets interrupted by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, so I consider that just one of the many privileges of working in this place.

As I was saying, the seriousness of high treason speaks for itself. At present, anyone convicted of this offence must spend 25 years in custody before being able to apply for parole.

As for the offence of murder, hon. members may recall from past debates that murder is either in the first or the second degree, depending on the offender's level of moral blameworthiness in committing the crime. Murder in the first degree is the most morally blameworthy and has the most severe penalty. That penalty is currently life imprisonment with the requirement that the offender serve a minimum of 25 years in custody before being eligible to apply for parole.

The classic example of first degree murder is a premeditated or cold-blooded murder. Technically referred to in the Criminal Code as a "planned and deliberate" killing, this type of calculated homicide is treated more severely than impulsive and unplanned killings that may occur in the heat of the moment or under the influence of powerful emotions and that may be followed by feelings of remorse once the killer's passions have subsided.

These unplanned, impulsive murders are classified as being in the second degree and, while also punishable by life imprisonment, are subject to a 10-year mandatory minimum period during which the offender is barred from applying for parole.

Given the lower level of moral blameworthiness typically associated with second degree murder, it is not surprising that second degree murderers are more susceptible to rehabilitation and are paroled at a significantly higher rate than first degree murderers.

That being said, not all second degree murderers are the same. Some may exhibit a greater degree of moral blameworthiness, even up to the level of planned and deliberate first degree murderers. For this reason, courts have the discretion to increase the length of time during which a second degree murderer is barred from applying for parole from 10 years all the way up to 25 years.

Government Orders

In making such decisions, courts have to take into consideration the criteria set out in section 745.4 of the Criminal Code, namely, the character of the offender, the nature of the offence, the circumstances surrounding its commission, and the recommendation made by a jury. Courts are very familiar with these criteria and do not hesitate to extend the parole ineligibility period of second degree murderers where warranted.

A good example is offered by the case of Robert Pickton, who murdered several women on his British Columbia pig farm. In the absence of proof of planning and deliberation, he was convicted of second degree murder but subjected by the court to a 25-year parole ineligibility period under section 745.4.

However, some forms of second degree murder are so egregious that Parliament has seen fit to remove all discretion from the courts and to require that such murderers serve a mandatory minimum 25-year period of parole ineligibility.

There are two ways in which Parliament has chosen to do this. The first way is by deeming a number of abhorrent types of second degree murders to be in the first degree and therefore subject to a mandatory minimum period of parole ineligibility of 25 years.

The categories of second degree murders deemed to be in the first degree are listed in section 231 of the Criminal Code and include the murder of police, correctional officials, or someone working in a prison; murder in the course of a sexual assault or a kidnapping-related offence, including kidnapping, forcible confinement, hijacking, or hostage-taking; and murder in the course of carrying out a terrorist activity, which includes actions inspired by political, religious, or ideological causes.

The second way that Parliament has chosen to ensure an appropriate parole ineligibility period for egregious second degree murders is to stipulate that the mandatory minimum period is 25 years instead of 10 years. Section 745 of the Criminal Code makes explicit reference to two situations where Parliament has concluded that nothing short of 25 years would be appropriate. They are second degree murder where the murderer has been convicted on a prior occasion of murder, and second degree murder where the murderer has been convicted on a prior occasion of an intentional killing under the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act.

Subjecting these two categories of second degree murder to the penalty for first degree murder reflects the higher level of moral blameworthiness associated with repeat killing, genocide, and other war crimes.

Before I go on to describe the proposals in Bill C-53, I ask hon. members to bear in mind this brief overview of the current murder sentencing regime, as it will assist in understanding both the extent of the changes I am proposing as well as the philosophical basis for them.

I would be remiss if I did not also recall for hon. members the major amendments to the Criminal Code that our government has already brought about in order to bring greater transparency and greater proportionality to the murder sentencing regime.

● (1630)

In terms of transparency, hon. members will recall that in 2011 our government saw to it that the Criminal Code faint hope clause was effectively repealed by former Bill S-6, which came into force on December 2, 2011. I was on the justice committee at that time and, incredibly, I remember the Liberal justice critic of the day stating very clearly that the Liberal Party, if it were ever to form a government again, would bring back the faint hope clause. I certainly hope that is not the current policy of the Liberal Party, but I suspect it may still be the case.

Everyone who commits murder after that date will now have to serve the full parole ineligibility period stipulated by the Criminal Code instead of being able to seek early parole after serving only 15 years in custody. Importantly, former Bill S-6 also imposed stringent new conditions on already-convicted murderers who retain a continuing right to apply for faint hope.

In 2011, Parliament also passed former Bill C-48, the Protecting Canadians by Ending Sentence Discounts for Multiple Murders Act. This government bill amended the Criminal Code to allow courts to impose a sentence proportionate to the harm caused by multiple murderers by imposing periods of parole ineligibility, one for each of their victims, which must be served consecutively.

This helps to ensure that the time actually served in custody by multiple murderers corresponds to the heinous nature of their crimes. In such cases, courts are using criteria identical to those I mentioned earlier in the context of section 745.4 of the Criminal Code.

The provisions in former Bill C-48 were most recently applied in the case of Justin Bourque, the offender who was recently sentenced to life imprisonment with an overall parole ineligibility period of 75 years for the ambush murder of three RCMP officers in Moncton, New Brunswick. We just honoured their memory on the first anniversary of that date a few days ago.

The proposals in Bill C-53 are another step in the continuing efforts of our government to ensure the safety and security of Canadians. They also build on the earlier measures contained in former Bill S-6 and Bill C-48, by bringing greater transparency and proportionality to the sentencing regime for high treason and for murder.

If passed in law, the measures proposed in Bill C-53 would mean that for the worst of the worst offenders a life sentence of imprisonment would mean exactly that, life in prison as opposed to a life in the community under a grant of parole. In so doing, this sentence would constitute punishment that truly reflects the severity of the crimes.

Canadians are too often perplexed to discover that life sentences of imprisonment do not necessarily mean that the offender remains confined for life, nor is the public ready to accept the prospect that offenders convicted of the most shocking and monstrous crimes on the books may be released into the very communities in which they committed their crimes and where the families and loved ones of the victims may still reside.

Government Orders

In response to this concerns, we are proposing in Bill C-53 to amend the Criminal Code, the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, and a number of other statutes to authorize the mandatory and discretionary sentences of life imprisonment without parole as follows.

First, a sentence of life imprisonment without parole would be mandatory for both high treason and planned and deliberate first degree murder committed in either the course of a sexual assault, kidnapping-related, or terrorist offence, or where the victim is a police officer or correctional official; or where the murderer's behaviour is of such a brutal nature as to compel the conclusion that he or she is unlikely to be inhibited by normal standards of behavioural restraint in the future.

As hon. members can see, the proposals prescribe a mandatory sentence of life without parole for a fairly narrow class of what are truly heinous crimes. Who among us, for example, would argue that premeditated murder committed in a particularly brutal way or in the course of a kidnapping, sexual assault, or terrorist act are not among the most reprehensible of killings?

In this context, the Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed in a long line of decisions that, where murder is committed by individuals who are already abusing their power by illegally dominating another, the offenders' level of moral blameworthiness is extremely high and merits the most severe punishment under Canadian law.

Before I go on to discuss the proposals in Bill C-53 for discretionary sentences of life without parole, allow me to expand a bit on the requirement for conduct of a "brutal nature" as one of the criteria for imposing a mandatory sentence of life without parole.

• (1635)

This wording was carefully chosen. It is a test currently used in the Criminal Code dangerous offender regime to determine whether an offender who has committed a very serious offence should be sentenced to indefinite detention.

As hon. members may be aware, a sentence of indefinite detention under the dangerous offender provisions is similar to a sentence of life imprisonment; the essential difference being the shorter seven-year parole ineligibility period imposed on dangerous offenders.

Bill C-53 would propose to import the legal test of conduct of a brutal nature into the sentencing regime for heinous murders because it would provide an intelligible standard that is familiar to the courts and is currently used to predict an offender's prospects of becoming a law-abiding member of society in the future.

Let there be no doubt that all murders are terrible offences, deserving of life imprisonment. Nonetheless, I think we can all agree that some murders are carried out in ways that aggravate the already terrible nature of this crime and require a correspondingly more severe penalty.

Hon. members, these are stringent criteria to define the most dangerous criminals and to ensure the mandatory imposition of life without parole is proportionate to the harm caused by such offenders and to the need to protect Canadians from the danger they pose.

As I mentioned earlier, Bill C-53 also proposes to authorize the courts to use their discretion to impose a sentence of life without parole in other situations in which the level of moral blameworthiness of the offender may rise to a level that merits this penalty. Courts would be authorized to make this determination for the following three categories of murder: one, planned and deliberate first degree murder; two, second degree murder that has been deemed under section 231 of the Criminal Code to be in the first degree; and three, second degree murder under section 745 of the Criminal Code where the murderer was previously convicted of murder or of an intentional killing under the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act.

In exercising their discretion in these situations, courts would use criteria identical to those I mentioned earlier in the context of section 745.4 and the multiple murder provisions of the Criminal Code; namely, the character of the offender, the nature and circumstances of the murder, and any recommendation by the jurors.

Earlier, I asked hon. members to bear in mind the brief overview of the murder sentencing regime that I provided at the outset of my remarks. All three of the categories of murder that I just mentioned as being eligible for the discretionary imposition of life without parole under Bill C-53 are precisely the murder categories that Parliament has already recognized as exhibiting an elevated level of moral blameworthiness meriting the most severe penalty available under Canadian law.

Bill C-53 simply proposes to allow courts to exercise their discretion using criteria with which they are already familiar to ensure that the most dangerous among them are never released to endanger Canadians again.

Hon. members, from one perspective, Bill C-53 is a made-in-Canada proposal that would build upon the precedent of past sentencing initiatives that are now established features of the sentencing regime for high treason and murder.

However, from another perspective, it would also align Canada with other western democracies that have seen fit to include life sentences without parole as part of their sentencing regimes. Sentences of life without parole for murder are available in almost all states and territories in Australia, in New Zealand, in nine European countries, including England, and in nearly every jurisdiction in the United States.

In all these jurisdictions, release from lifelong incarceration is available through acts of executive clemency informed by their respective constitutional values. Bill C-53 proposes no less in the Canadian context.

Government Orders

Although my colleague the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness will no doubt have more to add on this subject, allow me to note that Bill C-53 contemplates the possibility of conditional release of offenders sentenced to life without parole on an exceptional basis after they have served at least 35 years in custody.

Although parole would not be available to such offenders, after 35 years in custody, they might apply to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, who would consider whether release could be justified on humanitarian or compassionate grounds or because the purpose and objectives of sentencing have been met.

The minister, who would be able to seek the expert advice of the Parole Board of Canada, would then forward the application to the Governor in Council with his or her recommendation. If released by the Governor in Council, the offender would be subject to stringent conditions, breach of which would lead to re-incarceration.

Allow me to close my remarks by noting that the measures proposed by Bill C-53 have been carefully crafted to identify the most dangerous and incorrigible offenders who have committed the most egregious crimes.

I urge all hon. members, therefore, to consider the merits of these fair and balanced reforms and to commit today to the people of Canada that they will see that this legislation is passed when Parliament resumes following the next election.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before continuing with questions and comments, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Environment; the hon. member for Charlottetown, Telecommunications.

Resuming questions and comments, the hon. member for Gatineau.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask my colleague two short questions, because the importance he attaches to Bill C-53 and the moment chosen to introduce it appear to be rather contradictory.

If the government thought this bill was so important in terms of public safety and its commitments toward certain groups of Canadian citizens, and not just in terms of politics pure and simple, why did it wait until possibly one of the last days to begin debate on it?

[*English*]

I seem to recall that back in 2001 the member for Central Nova, who is now the Minister of Justice, warned against putting these kinds of operational decisions into the hands of politicians. I am referring to the public safety minister of the day 35 years from now and probably more who would have to review somebody's case. That is why the expert non-partisan Parole Board was created in the first place, to make sure decisions were based on public safety, not politics.

Why is the government now proposing to go back in time and do exactly what its own justice minister advised against?

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, given that we are so close to the end of the session, to say that I have enjoyed working with the hon. member for the last two years on the justice committee. I think that we have done a lot of good things together for the Canadian people.

With respect to her first question, she will remember that earlier today during question period, the Minister of Justice mentioned that this government has passed over 30 justice bills. That is something to be aware of, to acknowledge, and to be proud of. I certainly am proud. I think we have rebalanced the criminal justice system between the rights of the accused and the rights of the victims and we are paying much more attention to the rights of the victims, which is as it should be. It is what my constituents wish us to do. When they see a heinous murderer, a murderer who kidnaps and sexually exploits and murders a small child, they want that person to be put away essentially for life. They want a life sentence to mean natural life. If that does not happen and they see that person back on the street, even if it is 25 years down the road, they lose faith in our justice system. With respect to the release, I think that the people of Canada want an individual who is accountable to them and to Parliament, such as the Minister of Public Safety, to make the decision on when to release those most heinous murderers who deserve a full life sentence.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is along the same vein. There are serious problems with this bill, but the most glaring one is the one which was just pointed out by the member for Gatineau, and that is the politicization of the question of release of the worst of the worst offenders.

The parliamentary secretary was there when we had representatives from the Parole Board testify in connection with a private member's bill that has the same objective as this piece of government legislation and he will recall the testimony from the representatives of the Parole Board.

What is it about these very serious crimes that make the Parole Board so uniquely unqualified to determine the parole eligibility and conditions of those who are charged with them, so uniquely unqualified that it must be placed in the hands of an elected official? Also, what is it about the education, training and experience of the Minister of Public Safety as a professional engineer that makes him so uniquely qualified to stand in judgment in these cases?

• (1645)

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and thank the hon. member for his work on the justice committee.

The answer to his question is simply that when Canadian people see these kinds of heinous murders committed, they want the individuals to get life sentences, meaning that these people will be in prison for life. These are dangerous people who should not be back on the street.

Government Orders

The Minister of Public Safety can always seek the advice of the Parole Board, but there have been cases where people have been released who Canadians think should have been kept incarcerated. We believe these people should be in prison for their natural lives, and in the one circumstance where, after 35 years, as a question of proportionality, they are allowed to seek release, that release should be in the hands of the elected official who is accountable to the people, just as it is, for example, in the United States with the clemency provisions that the President of the United States has.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the parliamentary secretary mentioned other democratic jurisdictions in which elected officials provide clemency and have oversight. I can think of governors in various states in the United States, et cetera. This is not a new precedent that we are creating.

We know that this law will be in the Criminal Code with regard to conditional release, et cetera, and we know there will be different public safety ministers. The member across the way may demean someone because the person is an engineer, but that person could even be a lawyer, a former police officer, a former doctor, whatever. It is necessary.

I have been doing some research on this. In one of Clifford Olson's chances at parole, shall we say, in his parole application, he wrote a letter to the mother of one of the victims describing in detail how he abused her son before he killed him. Is this not the kind of person that this law refers to?

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Northumberland—Quinte West very much for his long service in the House of Commons. I had the privilege of serving with him on the justice committee in two sessions of Parliament. I know he served very capably on the defence committee, the public safety committee, and many other committees. His experience as a police officer gave him first-hand knowledge of the things we discussed in the justice committee. His knowledge was invaluable to the deliberations of the justice committee on all of the bills that the government passed. I will very much miss his wise counsel in this place and I wish him the very best in his future endeavours. I think he is going to see a little more of his fishing rod over the next few months and years than he has over the last nine.

Having said that, my response to his question is that many jurisdictions in the world have this kind of a clemency system. It is actually quite common. It puts this very important decision in the hands of the individuals who are directly accountable to the people.

He referred to the family of one of the victims of Clifford Olson. I believe he was referring to Sharon Rosenfeldt. I heard her very heart-wrenching and gut-wrenching testimony about how this sneering, heinous criminal would ask to be released at his parole hearing every two years and then take the families of his victims through the awful murders he committed of their children. They had to go there every two years and go through that process over and over again. This is what this bill is aimed at reducing. It would give the families of victims some peace knowing that such individuals will stay behind bars and never harm another Canadian.

• (1650)

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there have been consultations among the parties and I hope you will find agreement on the following motion: That in the opinion of the House, the government should officially recognize October 10 as world mental health day in Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned that there was consultation. I was not necessarily aware of the consultation and I was just going to ask if he could indicate how the House was consulted. I was not the one who said no, but I still think it would have been courteous—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. members might want to have a side conversation and we will get on with the debate.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Gatineau.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think this will really be my last speech in the 41st Parliament. I thought my speech this morning would be the last one but, finally, this one will be.

Like everyone else, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the employees of the House. I am referring to the clerks, the pages, the security staff, the lobby service, the bus drivers, who enable us to be at the right place at the right time, and the cafeteria staff who allow us to eat so we do not wilt here in the House.

In my case, as I am starting to be known for what I call intelligent improvisation in my speeches, I have enormous respect for the interpreters, who have the thankless task of interpreting my words, even though they have absolutely no text in front of them. I congratulate them, because I also know that I am not someone who always speaks slowly. I have the greatest respect for them, and I thank them for what they do.

I would also like to thank the people at Hansard. Immediately after I have finished speaking, I receive the texts from them, and sometimes I find that they can convey my ideas even better than I express them myself. When I read over my speeches, I find that I have been really eloquent, but I know that I did not use those exact words. I thank them for improving the quality of my speeches. I appreciate it, and all the French speakers in Canada appreciate it, too.

I would like to thank my team, which does an extraordinary job: Roxane, Shirley, Aline, Alex, Yan and Elise. This year things have been really wild on the team for the member for Gatineau and official opposition justice critic, considering the number of bills we have had to handle and recommend, as the parliamentary secretary said. I received help from the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, whom I would also like to thank.

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This brings me to thank my leader, the leader of the official opposition and member for Outremont, who gave me his confidence to do this job, which has not been an easy ride.

Most of all, I thank my constituents in Gatineau. In 2011, they elected me with a real, strong and stable majority, the largest in Quebec. I am pleased to say that, because people who know me know that I have been in other elections with much closer results. Thus, to finish first in Quebec with 63% of the votes is what I call a strong and stable majority. We will try to do the same in 2015, in the next phase. I thank the people of Gatineau from the bottom of my heart; they have stood beside me in all I have done for the past four years, being active and sharing their comments with me.

When I was voting and some people asked me what that meant, I told them I was voting with my heart. I have never voted except out of a sense of conviction, listening to my heart and thinking of the people of Gatineau. That is why I have watched them. They are the people I think about every time. I may have missed one vote on an evening when we voted all night, but 99% of the time, I voted, thinking only of the people of Gatineau.

[English]

Now let me turn to Bill C-53.

•(1655)

The Ottawa criminal lawyer, Leo Russomano, said:

Let's just call it what it is, it's just an election year bill that makes no effort whatsoever to actually respond to a problem. This is a solution in search of a problem...

The fact of the matter is they are life sentences. Whether a person is released on parole or not, they are under sentence for the rest of their lives. It's sowing the seeds of mistrust with the administration of justice.

[Translation]

Other people told us that the parliamentary secretary also talked to them about Clifford Olson.

[English]

—the worst murderers—serial killers like Clifford Olsen—already die behind bars. She predicts others who face no chance to serve the rest of their “life sentence” under strict conditions with supervision in the community will become angry and desperate, a danger to themselves or others.

[Translation]

I will have more to say on that point.

[English]

Bill C-53 targets tougher sentences for those guilty of high treason.

[Translation]

The parliamentary secretary did say that.

[English]

The last offender convicted in Canada was Louis Riel.

[Translation]

Eventually, people have to stop laughing at other people. The offences listed in the bill are horrible crimes. No one in the House, wherever they sit, will applaud them or feel any compassion at all. Our sympathy is definitively with the victims.

The things I have deplored about the Conservatives since they took office in 2006 are things I am passionate about. I have been a lawyer for a long time. Justice, particularly social justice, but really all justice with a capital J, is what stirs me and commands my interest. That is one reason I decided to get into politics. The Conservatives speak about the number of bills they have introduced, but quantity is never the same as quality. It is all very well to have 150 bills, but if those 150 bills—some of them now acts—are meaningless or will one day be tested in court and overthrown, there is a problem somewhere. That is not really the issue because sometimes we have differences of opinion. In those cases, I can respect the issue being debated.

Nevertheless, it is extremely arrogant, at the end of a mandate, to make surprise substitutions of bills, as the government did last night, in order to put this one on the order paper, to at least give the impression it is being discussed, even though the Conservatives have promised it and given press conferences about it for a long time. Not everyone may have seen it, but one national English-language media outlet said that, despite all the emphasis by the Conservatives on Bill C-53, there had not been even one hour of debate about it. What a surprise; after that article appeared, here is the hour of debate. I hope everyone who is watching knows, as you and I know Mr. Speaker, that what we are doing here and now is just saying some words. Those words signify absolutely nothing.

The parliamentary secretary talked about it; in committee we examined Bill C-587, which proposed possible parole, to be determined by the Parole Board of Canada, of up to 40 years for the same kind of crime as seen in Bill C-53. I asked questions during the committee's study of the bill. Even the Conservative member who introduced the bill asked to suspend our consideration for some time because there appeared to be a serious conflict with the more showy introduction of Bill C-53. I have often said one thing to the Conservatives and I am going to repeat it, although it is sad that these will be my last words in this Parliament: I think the Conservatives have unfortunately exploited victims to express outrageous principles, concepts or phrases at huge media events that really, in the end, are destined to disappoint. They will disappoint the victims because, as I said when we were debating the victims bill of rights, they are nothing but beautiful intentions and hollow promises. The official opposition, on the other hand, has suggested amendments to these rights and has insisted that the right to information is essential, but these amendments were defeated by the Conservatives.

I am not bitter, because I am a positive kind of girl. I fit right in to the NDP where we are optimistic and positive. Thus, I still have hope that this is not over and that one day we will be able to repair much of the damage that this government has done to the justice system.

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● (1700)

That brings me to my main point about what I have lived through in the past two years, very personally, as the official opposition justice critic. That is the fact that, in all its bills, the government, with its outrageous short titles, is harming the concept of justice and giving the impression that the system acts poorly for most ordinary people in Canada, the ones who are watching us and who are interested in the issue. The government is giving people the impression that the system is broken because the Parole Board of Canada is not doing its job, because judges are too soft, because the opposition is pro-terrorist, and so on and so forth.

We are talking about justice, and we fundamentally believe in justice. We can mention the Olson case. He never got out of prison and he died there, or we can mention Bernardo, another case relevant to this discussion, someone who will never get out of prison. We can talk about the fact that families are forced to periodically go before the Parole Board of Canada. Bills have been introduced to ensure that hearings are not held before a certain period of time has passed so that families are not forced to attend them so often. There are even simpler solutions. When simple solutions are presented for an existing problem that everyone recognizes, it is not as exciting as holding a big press conference in front of a bunch of flags and saying shocking things that should never come out of the mouths of people who are supposed to be leaders in our society.

When we considered Bill C-587 introduced by the Conservative member, I said that the Parole Board of Canada was already using other approaches in a number of cases. It is not true that people are constantly being called to come before the board. Why? Because the authorities already tend not to let the individual out. People are not bothered, but rather informed. It probably makes some people relive certain things. As I said to one of the victims who appeared one time before the committee, even if someone is put away for 60 years, this is something that will never be erased from one's heart.

My younger sister died during this Parliament. Does anyone think I will forget her in 5, 10 or 15 years? Her death was not even the result of a crime. These are things we never forget.

We could make it easier for families and tell them these people are dangerous criminals who will never get out of jail. There are all kinds of tools that exist. In introducing Bill C-53, the government is trying to make people believe that it is solving a huge problem. As I said earlier, we can forget about the crime of high treason. There are not many cases like that of Louis Riel in Canada. We can move on to something else. In terms of the other crimes mentioned, like those of Bernardo and Olson, the government is unable to give the names of people who might be wandering the streets and who have committed crimes like those mentioned in Bill C-53. It does not have any names, because this does not happen. However, if the government says it and repeats it often enough, it will make people believe that this happens. It is frightening people.

I remember an interview that I did with a wonderful Quebec City radio station, which could not wait for me to arrive, because the interview was about the dangerous sex offender registry. They were waiting for me, saying they were going to be interviewing some softies from the NDP. Before putting me on the air, they recounted the case of a guy who was walking around as free as a bird in

Quebec City. They were anxious to have the registry set up. I stopped them after half a second, saying I was surprised that they were talking about a registry to solve the problem of the person who was in their city, when the real question was why he was out on the street.

● (1705)

We need to stop mixing everything up and creating situations that make people believe things that do not exist.

In this Parliament, in this democratic institution, it is the duty of everyone, both on the government side and on the opposition side, not to mislead the House, to work to support our pillars of democracy and not to impede the executive, legislative and judicial pillars.

Unfortunately, this government has done nothing but cast doubt on the quality and transparency of our Supreme Court justices, including the chief justice. When a decision is handed down, they say the court is like this and like that, and so on. If we do not say the same things the government representatives do, we are pro-criminals and pro-terrorists. It is very sad.

We may not have the same agendas, but I think that all the members of the House want as few crimes as possible to be committed, to protect the safety of our fellow Canadians. Let us do so properly.

The Conservatives have no statistics. They have never been able to present the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights with any statistics of any kind in support of the bills they put forward.

The minister introduced his bill on sexual predators, and yet he boasted that there have never been as many laws as the Conservative government has passed to make sentences even tougher. He presented us with an admission of failure by showing us that these offences had risen in the last two years, in spite of the tougher laws. There is a problem somewhere.

The real bottom line when it comes to crime and the justice system is that the Conservatives' statements are not borne out by the statistics. The statistics show us that the number of crimes committed is going down. It is very possible that the numbers of certain types of crimes have risen, but let us focus on those problems instead of playing petty politics just to make a show for the media by parading victims about for their own purposes.

However, in numerous conversations I had with victims at various times during this Parliament, I was pleased to find that their eyes were increasingly open and they were starting to realize that they were puppets being manipulated by the government, and that makes me extremely sad.

I would like to talk about the provision that allows the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to act. Because it will not be the current minister, I will not even talk about the kind of expertise he has. Even if the most qualified person held the position of Minister of Public Safety, it would still be indecent. It is indecent to politicize the issue in a free and democratic society that is subject to a constitution, laws and a charter of rights. This is not how we do things.

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Once again, this is a negative statement about the Parole Board of Canada, whose members are appointed by the government. There is a problem somewhere. Either they are good enough to do their job or they are not, and if not, then let us change things without delay.

However, let us not start giving this kind of power to a person who holds high political office and is going to wait to see what the person on the street has to say first. We know that we are all the same when a terrible crime is committed: we all have a tendency to want to do the worst. That is why an independent body that is capable of analyzing and examining the case is necessary.

Let us stop mixing apples and oranges and stop doing damage to the justice system as a whole. Let us repair it and fix the problems, but let us not throw out the baby with the bathwater, as if it were any old system at all.

The legal system, overall, serves Canadians well. Crown counsel, defence counsel, judges and all the other participants in the system are people who do what they have to do in circumstances that are not always easy, given government cutbacks.

This being the case, let us stop attacking the system from all sides and introducing bills that will not last beyond the end of the day or that may live to see another hour tomorrow.

• (1710)

It is absolutely insulting and indecent to introduce something that is as important as this, knowing full well that it will last no longer than the speeches that people are going to hear now.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned a number of things that she would do to change the justice legislation our government has passed.

She mentioned victims. I do not know what justice committee hearings she was at, but the ones I was at had victims rights organizations from every province of Canada saying that they needed the legislation the government had been passing over the last several, that they needed the victims bill of rights.

The member talked earlier about the government bill that would reduce the number of parole hearings, hearings that the families of victims would attend over and over again every two years and constantly relive the horror of the loss of their family member. Her party voted against it. What she is putting out there is a virtue, and I thank her for that, but when she had the opportunity to stand up for her constituents, she voted against it.

What is she going to tell her constituents the day that a heinous murderer of a child is released after 25 years? That day will happen and she will be held to account. What is she going to tell her constituents that day?

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, first, when one votes against something, one is looking at the ensemble of the legislation. The member makes it look like this was a little piece, but, no, there were many dispositions in the bill. Every expert who testified made a point of saying that it would not do what it was supposed to, and that there were other ways to correct this.

What would I say to a victim?

I am not surprised that the parliamentary secretary still is unable to mention one person based on those crimes who is either in jail or out on the street. Where are these people actually walking down our streets? There is zero. There are none. That is my point.

If somebody lost a child because of that evil person, then, as I said, justice will follow its course. This person will be prosecuted to the fullest weight of the law. Usually people depend on that, and that is where they defer with us.

I trust the system. I trust the court. I trust the jury system, even in some of these cases, to do exactly what we expect of those people. I expect the system, once the sentence is imposed, to do what it is supposed to do.

However, if the point in the House is to say that people will stay in jail, all of them, for the rest of their lives with no rehabilitation, I would ask the parliamentary secretary if he remembers what Mr. Sapers, the Correctional Investigator of Canada, said about the danger of that. Those people will have no hope in hell to improve.

Therefore, we have to be a bit more thorough than to just throw that type of garbage out, like the member did, just to try to imply things that do not happen.

• (1715)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as always, my colleague from the justice committee, the member for Gatineau, gave us a very comprehensive review and critique of the legislation. Over here, we find ourselves in agreement with virtually all of the points she made, and that is indeed quite a common occurrence at committee, I am pleased to say.

There are two particular questions that I wish to pose.

The first is that one of the stated goals of this legislation is to minimize the trauma to victims of having to constantly go back to parole hearings when someone who has committed a terrible crime is eligible or is up for eligibility consideration. Surely the member would agree that this is a legitimate goal. I think we can concede that. However, are there other modes of minimizing the stress on the families of victims other than this one, that she could propose?

Also, unless I missed it, I do not think she spent much time talking about the constitutionality of the legislation. It is obviously constitutionally suspect, as we have seen over and over again, with millions of dollars wasted on legal fees trying to defend charter violations. Her comments with respect to the constitutional validity of the legislation would also be of some value.

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[*Translation*]

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I did not speak at length about the bill's constitutionality, because it will not go any further than the speeches that will be given in the House for a couple of hours. Thank God that this bill will not be passed as written. Otherwise, it is clear that, constitutionally speaking, the issue of cruel and unusual punishment under section 12 of the charter would have certainly been brought up during the first trial where sentencing would have fallen under Bill C-53.

I also did not have the opportunity to talk about the fact that one of the officials—I think it was Commissioner Head—told us in committee that this kind of case comes up perhaps no more than five or six times a year. Again, he does not include in his statistics the possibility that there were agreements between the Crown and the defence to avoid the impact and application of Bill C-53. Would we even see cases prosecuted on that basis? We need to remember the real question with respect to constitutionality.

[*English*]

It would be whether leaving prisoners without hope of release at least by a neutral decision-making body would meet Canadian standards of human treatment.

[*Translation*]

Again it comes back to leaving the matter in the hands of the public safety minister. I believe that the government would have preferred to not even include the 35-year provision. Let us remember the title of the bill.

[*English*]

Life means life, except if the minister thinks this or that, so on and so forth. The Conservatives just give themselves a little hope that the court will say it is constitutionally sound. There are so many ways to minimize this. I have always said that the families should go before the commission only and solely if the commission intends to release the criminal who has committed this type of crime. If they have, for some weird reason that I cannot foresee because I have not seen any case of the kind, then we remove the trauma because they will never even be asked to go. As the commission said to us, it knows those guys will not go out. Why bother bringing the victims to relive the trauma? That is all they have to do.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Gatineau for her remarks. I also thank her for kindly acting as my mentor during the months I spent on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. It was very enlightening and I learned a lot from her.

The Conservatives have mastered the art of breaking down open doors. We have said it repeatedly and furthermore, they heard many first-hand witnesses who said that the situation they were trying to address in this bill had never come up.

The other argument they are using to try to convince us—and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice referred to it—is to follow the example of other democracies that have fallen into the same ruts and made the same kind of mistake. We should point out

that the United States, a country that has gone a long way down this road, condemning dangerous criminals to prison with no hope of parole, is now reviewing this practice, because it has a lot of awful consequences. They did not mention the three countries—France, Germany and Italy—where provisions of this kind were declared unconstitutional.

I would like my colleague to tell us about the lessons we can learn from other countries that have tried this unfortunate experiment, which our government wants to impose on us.

Ms. Françoise Boivin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It gives me an opportunity to make some remarks I did not have a chance to make earlier.

While I was studying the bill in order to make my recommendations to the official opposition caucus, I had a letter from the Canadian Prison Law Association. These people wrote to me in March 2015. They thought the bill was on the fast track. That was the impression the government was giving. In the end, though, the Conservatives were asleep at the switch until nearly the last day of the parliamentary session.

The association recommended that I go talk to people who had worked in the prison system, the justice system, including the American justice system, and people from the other countries the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice is so fond of mentioning.

A distinction must be made, because their system is not exactly the same as ours. They do not necessarily have our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I know that some Conservatives would rather the charter not exist, but it does. As long as the Conservatives do not use the notwithstanding clause, they can try every trick in the book to undermine the charter, but the Supreme Court will always have to remind them that we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, because that is the role of the court. The Conservatives must therefore ensure that the bills they introduce are in line with the charter and the Constitution.

We need to be careful with comparisons before making such unequivocal statements, as the parliamentary secretary does, in light of the fact that others do not have the same laws as us.

[*English*]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-53, the lock-them-up-and-throw-away-the-key act. It is the life means life act. This bill would eliminate the possibility of parole for many of the most serious crimes, including many forms of first degree murder and high treason.

The stated purpose of the bill is to reduce trauma to victims' families by avoiding unnecessary and repeated parole hearings. That is a worthy objective, and the Liberals supported legislation to further that goal just a few weeks ago with Bill C-587, the respecting families of murdered and brutalized persons act. As members will recall, that bill would extend parole ineligibility to 40 years from 25 years for a limited class of particularly brutal crimes.

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However, while we agree with the objective of reducing trauma to victims and the approach taken by Bill C-587, we will not support the life means life act. Liberals are open to exploring additional ways of reducing trauma to victims. For example, we would consider extending parole ineligibility to longer than 25 years for some of the crimes covered by Bill C-53, just as we supported consecutive periods of parole ineligibility for multiple murders. As members know, that change resulted in Travis Baumgartner receiving 40 years of parole ineligibility for murdering three of his coworkers at an armoured car company. It also resulted in Justin Bourque receiving 75 years of parole ineligibility for murdering three RCMP officers in Moncton.

The crimes covered by Bill C-53 are terrible. That is why they are punished harshly under Canadian law. However, the primary reason we will not support this bill is that it would replace the Parole Board with the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. Ministers are inherently concerned with making political decisions. That is a step backward and an affront to the rule of law. It is also probably unconstitutional. I will explain why that is the case later on.

First let us go over the contents of the life means life act.

Bill C-53 would amend the Criminal Code to require imprisonment for life without eligibility for parole for specific types of murder convictions, as well for high treason, provided that the offender is 18 or older. The types of murder convictions that require such a sentence must be planned and deliberate murders in which the victim is a law enforcement officer, a member of correctional staff, or a person working in a prison; the accused caused the death while committing or attempting to commit aircraft hijacking, various types of sexual assault, kidnapping, forcible confinement, or hostage taking; the accused caused the death while committing or attempting to commit a terrorist act; or the accused's behaviour associated with the offence was of such a brutal nature as to compel the conclusion that the accused's behaviour in the future is unlikely to be inhibited by normal standards of behavioural constraint.

Under Bill C-53, a conviction for high treason would also require the imposition of a life sentence without eligibility for parole. High treason comprises attacking the Queen, waging war against Canada, or assisting an enemy engaged in hostilities with the Canadian Forces.

Bill C-53 would also create a discretionary judicial power to order imprisonment for life without eligibility for parole for three types of offenders.

First are persons convicted of second degree murder who have previously been convicted of murder. Second are persons convicted of second degree murder who have previously been convicted of genocide, a crime against humanity, or a war crime. Third are any persons convicted of first degree murder.

The use of this discretionary judicial power would require a prosecutorial application and consideration of the offender's age and character, the nature of the offence and its circumstances, and the jury's recommendation on parole eligibility.

In addition, Bill C-53 would amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to allow offenders serving life without eligibility for parole to apply to the Minister of Public Safety and

Emergency Preparedness for executive release by the Governor in Council after serving 35 years of their sentence. Offenders may reapply after five years if their application is unsuccessful. Offenders granted executive release would become subject to the Parole Board's authority, including termination or revocation of the release and the imposition of conditions.

● (1725)

As I said, Liberals are amenable to 35 or 40 years of ineligibility for the crimes covered in this bill, as we indicated in our support for Bill C-587. That increase could make a meaningful difference for victims' families. However, we take issue with who the government proposes should be making decisions after that time period.

In addition to the changes I have already noted, Bill C-53 would amend the National Defence Act to require imprisonment for life without eligibility for parole for the following offences: traitorous misconduct by a commanding officer in the presence of an enemy; traitorous misconduct by any person in the presence of an enemy; traitorous compromise of security; high treason; and murder of the same types captured in the Criminal Code amendments.

This bill would also create military judicial discretion to impose imprisonment without eligibility for parole in the same circumstances as in the civilian domain. As well, Bill C-53 would amend the International Transfer of Offenders Act to allow imprisonment for life without eligibility for parole when, in the opinion of the Minister of Public Safety, documents supplied by a foreign entity show that the offender would have been convicted of a murder offence listed in the first paragraph, with the exception of the brutal nature provision.

I want to flag this last change as being particularly problematic, since it would allow the Minister of Public Safety to impose life sentences without parole eligibility based on evidence supplied by foreign entities. That would allow potentially tainted or fabricated evidence to produce life sentences without parole eligibility in Canada. States with some of the worst justice systems in the world could provide admissible evidence.

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It is important to understand how all of the changes in Bill C-53 would alter the status quo. Currently all murder convictions carry mandatory life sentences in Canada. All of the specific types of murder that require parole ineligibility for life under Bill C-53 support convictions for first degree murder, which carry 25 years of parole ineligibility. A conviction for high treason would also carry a mandatory life sentence with 25 years of parole ineligibility.

For an offender serving a life sentence, day parole would become a possibility after 22 years and full parole would become possible after 25 years. On application, the Parole Board must review unsuccessful day parole applications every year and unsuccessful full parole applications every two years.

Of relevance, under a 2011 law that Liberals supported, offenders can now receive consecutive periods of parole ineligibility for multiple murders. As I mentioned, two offenders have been sentenced under that law to 40 years and 75 years of parole ineligibility respectively.

Under the current law, offenders may also be designated as dangerous offenders, meaning they may receive indeterminate sentences, subject to periodic review.

I want to focus in on the fact that this bill would grant the Minister of Public Safety, an elected politician, the discretion to release prisoners, a function currently carried out by the Parole Board. Any minister of public safety would be subject to self-interest and political pressure from constituents, the party, and especially the Prime Minister. This conflict of interest could unduly affect decisions on prisoner release and act contrary to the interests of justice.

When Canadians reflect on the matter, I do not think they would support the idea of the Prime Minister personally deciding on which prisoners to release. That is rightly the job of the Parole Board. Political considerations should not enter into these sorts of decisions. That, of course, is the reason we do not elect judges in Canada.

I am not sure why the government views the Parole Board as not being up to doing its job. When evidence was given on Bill C-587, I had a chance to ask Ms. Suzanne Brisebois of the Parole Board about its functioning. I asked her, "To whom is the Parole Board of Canada accountable?" Her response was as follows:

Our board is an independent administrative tribunal. There's a very rigorous competitive process that prospective board members have to go through...

We're responsible to the Canadian public. Again, the protection of the public is our paramount consideration. It's part of our mandate.

• (1730)

I also asked Ms. Brisebois:

Is the board less well-equipped to deal with the most serious cases than the rest? Could you comment on whether they're particularly poorly equipped for the most serious cases?

Her response was:

Our board members undergo rigorous training as part of their induction, both at national office and in the regions. They're trained on various aspects of the legislation, our policies, our procedures, risk assessment, and the various actuarial tools, so they undergo a very rigorous training period.

The Parole Board should be allowed to do its job. Replacing the Parole Board with political decisions from the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness is a step backwards.

Liberals supported Bill C-587's increase to 40 years of parole ineligibility as well as the 2011 change for allowing consecutive periods of parole ineligibility. Crucially, both of these changes preserved judicial discretion in criminal sentencing under the charter. While allowing for more severe penalties, they safeguarded a judge's ability to tailor specific sentences to be proportional to specific crimes.

In contrast with Bill C-587, this bill would fetter judicial discretion in a way that would invite charter scrutiny. As I said, we are open to increasing the period of ineligibility, provided that it is the Parole Board that takes any decision once the years have passed. That approach would preserve judicial discretion, allowing sentences to pass constitutional muster.

On that note, I want to say a few words about the current government's disrespect for the Constitution, especially the charter.

This week Amy Minsky of *Global News* reported that the Conservatives have wasted almost \$7 million of taxpayers' money in unsuccessfully trying to defend legislation and executive actions that violate Canadians' rights. That included over \$1 million spent in trying to take away health care from refugees, almost \$350,000 in trying to put a federal judge on Quebec's Supreme Court seat, and over \$425,000 in trying to shut down a safe injection site.

Last week I learned from an order paper question that the Conservative government has spent \$257,825.17 and counting in the Ishaq case, trying to ensure a woman cannot take the citizenship oath while wearing a niqab. I say "and counting" because that appeal is ongoing—not because it has a reasonable prospect for success, but because the current government wants to fearmonger and divide Canadians for political reasons. I am going to repeat the number in the Ishaq case: it spent over \$257,000 to make sure a woman cannot wear a niqab in a citizenship oath. That is a stunning misuse of taxpayer money.

As Canadians know, the current government is one that has little respect for the courts and less for the charter. We all recall the disgraceful defaming of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice. As a lawyer, I was shocked. As a Canadian, I was deeply disappointed.

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Members in this chamber will also recall the revelation that the current government disregards the constitutional advice of its own lawyers. As members are aware, Department of Justice lawyer Edgar Schmidt has revealed to Canadians that the current government proceeds with legislation even if it has a 5% or less chance of being charter-compliant.

As the Liberal justice critic, I have often criticized the current government for constantly amending the Criminal Code while failing to invest the necessary resources to prevent crimes from occurring. As a general rule, the government's approach is doomed to be ineffective because its policies are not responsive to evidence.

As I said when speaking to Bill C-587, I think in particular of the government's recent cuts to Circles of Support and Accountability, a community-based reintegration group that holds sex offenders accountable for the harm they have caused while assisting with their re-entry into society at the end of their sentences. COSA has been proven to reduce recidivism among sex offenders by 70% to 83%. That is an astonishing number.

• (1735)

According to the government's own study, it has saved \$4.60 for society for every dollar invested. Over five years it has prevented 240 sexual crimes, yet the government cut that program, which was incredibly irresponsible. That cut poses a real and ongoing threat to public safety.

Returning to Bill C-53, the life means life act, I want to reiterate that Liberals strongly support the objective of reducing repeated and unnecessary trauma to victims' families. I recall from the Bill C-587 hearings the moving testimony of two family members of victims. That testimony was the reason we supported Bill C-587. However, the goal of reducing trauma to victims can and should be achieved with changes other than those contained in Bill C-53.

The primary reason we will not support this bill is that it would replace the Parole Board with politically driven decisions from the Minister of Public Safety. That is a step backward and an affront to the rule of law. Also, it is probably unconstitutional.

I wonder if these considerations explain why the government has brought this legislation forward so late in the calendar when it has no chance of becoming law.

• (1740)

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member. He is a newer member, like myself. We will be going back to our communities soon to seek a mandate. I wish him the best, but I wish our candidate better.

Getting back to the issue, I always appreciate the member and I work well with him. The member has raised concerns about whether, under the proposed legislation, the Minister of Public Safety is qualified enough to make an expert decision on whether or not to effectively give someone clemency in extraordinary circumstances. He has questioned whether that is something the minister is capable of. How does he square that with the current practice where the Minister of Public Safety receives a request under our international prisoner exchange to move a person from a particular country's

prison system to a Canadian prison to serve the rest of his or her sentence?

The minister works very well on an ongoing basis with public safety officials to ensure one thing more than anything else, that public safety is looked after. How does the member square that in one area, the minister is perfectly qualified and does these transfers on a regular basis, or not, based on the expertise that he has acquired along with his officials? How does the member square the two positions?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, first, my colleague from the Okanagan wished me well in the upcoming election, but the Conservative candidate better. If he could tell me who it is, that might help. That individual has not yet been identified.

With respect to the specific question, there is a real concern here with the politicization of prisoner release, the politicalization of the role that previously was reserved for the Parole Board.

While he makes a valid point that there are certain powers that reside with the Minister of Public Safety right now with respect to international prisoners and those types of transfers, any encroachment on the expert role that is presently played by the Parole Board is one that is unwise, unwarranted and potentially dangerous.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Charlottetown for his speech. It is a rather worrisome debate. My colleague, the member for Gatineau, pointed out how this is a very election-minded bill. I would like to get back to the facts and to the problems experienced in some countries. Obviously, our neighbours to the south, the Americans, are stuck managing a huge problem with violence in their prison system. I want to share a quote from the U.S. Attorney General, Eric Holder. He said:

Statistics have shown—and all of us have seen—that high incarceration rates and longer-than-necessary prison terms have not played a significant role in materially improving public safety, reducing crime or strengthening communities.

It is quite clear that the United States is currently trying to backtrack on these exceptionally long and harsh sentences because they do not fix the problem and they create a lot of social problems. That is not to mention the high cost of the prison system and the American justice system.

Could my colleague give us other examples from around the world, or even more American examples, of bad measures that the Conservatives are trying to force on us?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

He is right. It is clear that this government has adopted many measures that are quite similar to those adopted in some U.S. states.

However, we are always 10 or 20 years behind. Many of the measures adopted in the United States no longer work. There is a movement around the world, not just in the United States, to change the mindset about crime and sentencing. In fact, the hon. member's statistics confirm that.

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There is another aspect of this issue that I want to address, and that is the safety of those who work in prisons. There are measures in Bill C-53 that are going to cause real problems because those who are incarcerated and will be affected by these measures will lose hope and have no reason to behave in a civilized manner. When inmates lose hope, that can create a very dangerous situation in our prisons for those who work there. In my opinion, that is an important aspect of this debate.

• (1745)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up on one of the comments my colleague made in regard to the timing of the legislation itself. Here we are in what are the dying days of the government as we anticipate at some point in the next day or two, we will see the session wind down. Yet we have this bill which no doubt has been given an interesting title, which likely came right from the Prime Minister's Office.

The concern I have is in regard to the number of issues related to crime and safety in the different communities across Canada. If I were to focus on my own constituency of Winnipeg North, there is a great deal of concern that the government is not doing enough to prevent young people from joining gangs, as an example, and that the federal government should be investing more into activities and programs that would assist as alternatives to youth participating in gangs. The idea is to prevent crimes from taking place.

I wonder if my colleague would provide some comments in terms of the government's priorities in the dying days of a session when it decided to debate this particular bill rather than other important issues.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of aspects to that question that I will try to address.

First of all, clearly, the timing of the bill is purely political. It is not just a solution in search of a problem; it is a solution in search of a fundraising letter. If the government were seriously committed to a measure like this, the government would have brought it in much earlier in the mandate.

We have also heard absolutely no evidence of the magnitude of the problem that this addresses. The member for Gatineau very ably pointed out the number of individuals who will be affected. There is absolutely no evidence that this is a rampant issue that people who commit genocide, treason and multiple murders are out walking the streets. They are not granted parole under our present system.

The other comment was with respect to prevention. With the current government, any complex social problem can apparently be solved by an amendment to the Criminal Code. These problems are much more complex than that and require much more innovative solutions. When the only thing one has in the tool kit is a sledgehammer, everything looks like a rock, and that is where we are.

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to advise you that I will be splitting my time.

Mr. Speaker, I say goodbye to this place wanting to thank everyone who makes our life better, everyone from yourself, to the table officers, to the people who make us feel safe, the security

personnel around Parliament Hill, to the pages, to the folks upstairs who feed us, and to the folks who clean our offices. Everyone here has made my life better over the last nine years and has allowed me to do my job.

Now to the business of politics and why I am standing to speak to this bill. I had a speech, but it is too long; there is not enough time. However, I credit the Canadian people with seeing past all of the accusations that are being made with respect to this bill. As a government, we have accomplished a lot with the economy, a lot with social justice issues, which is what we are talking about here today.

We heard the other side say that it is a political stunt. This whole place is full of politicians and that is what we do.

In 2011, we had an election. In that election this party promised this piece of legislation, but we also promised other pieces of legislation. There comes a time when we have to put our money where our mouth is and we have to set priorities, something the third party's leader had trouble doing. We hear the opposition talking about all of the negativity. Canadians voted for a strong, majority Conservative government because of things like this bill, because Canadians were promised this legislation and that life would mean life. We heard the members across the way say that it does not meet the constitutional challenge. When we brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, we opened a Pandora's box of challenges to the Constitution. Before that occurred, we had very few challenges to our Constitution. Now we have all of these challenges. Every Canadian knows that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been challenged from day one, from the beginning of it. Therefore, that is a rather spurious argument to say that it has to be charter-proof. There is no such thing in this country as charter-proof. There will always be someone who will challenge it.

We are delivering what we said we would deliver. We said we would bring in this piece of legislation, and we have. The opposition may be cynical in saying that it is in the dying days of the session. We are earning our keep here. We are doing the business of this country. We are doing things that we promised to do. That is why I leave this place a very proud member of Parliament, a very proud Conservative member of Parliament, because we have lived up to the things we have promised. I know my confreres leave this place knowing that what they said they would do they will do, and that will come true on October 19 also.

• (1750)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I regret having to interrupt the member, but it being 5:52 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***FACILITATING THE TRANSFER OF FAMILY FARM OR FISHING CORPORATIONS ACT**

The House resumed from May 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-661, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (transfer of family farm or fishing corporation), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am truly honoured to rise and speak on this piece of legislation that is before us in the form of a private member's bill.

I want to thank my colleague from Northumberland—Quinte West for his camaraderie and friendship. He is a kindred spirit to me. We are both former law enforcement officers, although he has much more experience than I do. We are both hunters and fishermen who love the great outdoors. I can only commend him for the excellent work he has done on the hunting and angling caucus and in passing a bill in this place that recognizes those historical traditions in our country. I want to thank him deeply for his service, and I wish him all the best, good health, and a long and healthy retirement catching all the fish and hunting all the game that is out there and available for him over the years to come.

I thank this House for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-661 and to discuss how our low-tax plan is providing all Canadians with tax relief and to talk about our strong record of helping farming and fishing businesses succeed.

As the member opposite may know, our government holds an impressive record on tax relief. In fact, since 2006, the government has introduced over 180 tax relief measures, and the overall federal tax burden is now at its lowest level in more than 50 years. I have been proud to stand in this place over the last almost nine and a half years and vote in favour of all of these tax reductions.

Canadian families and individuals have benefited from significant tax reductions that have given them the flexibility to make the choices that are right for them and their families. Canadians at all income levels are benefiting from the tax relief introduced by the government, with low and middle-income Canadians receiving proportionally the most relief.

Our government knows a thing or two about tax relief. In fact, many of these farming or fishing businesses the member is raising awareness of through the proposed legislation are in fact small businesses. Our government believes that small businesses should spend their time growing their businesses and creating jobs, not choking on stifling high taxes. Cutting taxes and reducing red tape is the way to create prosperity for these business people.

We cut the small business tax rate to 11%. I actually know that number, unlike the leader of the NDP. We also increased the amount of annual income eligible for this lower rate from \$300,000 to \$400,000 in 2007 and to \$500,000 in 2009, creating more wealth for job creators.

We cut the general corporate income tax rate to 15% in 2012, which is the number the leader from the NDP does not seem to

know, from 22.12% in 2007. This benefits successful small businesses on their way to becoming big businesses, when their income exceeds \$500,000.

We also reduced small businesses' EI premiums by introducing the small business job credit. This credit is expected to save small businesses more than \$550 million over 2015 and 2016.

To encourage further small business growth, economic action plan 2015 proposes to reduce the small business tax rate to 9% by 2019, which in effect will be the largest tax rate cut for small businesses in more than 25 years.

Let me present a few numbers to illustrate the impact of the tax reductions introduced since 2006. For example, take a small business with taxable income of \$500,000. The amount of federal tax paid by that business in 2019 will be 46% lower than it would have been in 2006. This represents an annual tax reduction of up to \$38,600 for that business. That is enough to create a job.

These changes, among others, will help enhance the ability of small businesses across Canada to retain capital, grow their businesses, and create jobs.

If the hon. member who introduced the bill is looking for an example of a tax relief measure that benefits a number of farming or fishing business owners, she need look no further than the lifetime capital gains exemption, which this government has enhanced.

The lifetime capital gains exemption for farming or fishing property provides an incentive to invest in the development of productive farming or fishing businesses and helps farming or fishing business owners accumulate capital for retirement. This is already a measure that provides real value to these businesses, but in economic action plan 2015, we are proposing to make it even better. Economic action plan 2015 proposes to increase the lifetime capital gains exemption applicable to capital gains realized on the disposition of qualified farm or fishing property on or after April 21, 2015 to a whopping \$1 million.

● (1755)

It is estimated that this measure will reduce capital gains taxes on owners of farming and fishing businesses by about \$50 million over the 2015-16 to 2019-20 period. This is money that farmers and fishermen have invested in their businesses. They have grown their businesses. They are now able, when they dispose of these assets, to keep that hard-earned money in their pockets, money that they have invested over the years to grow their businesses. Clearly this measure would provide much more significant tax relief than Bill C-661 from my colleague across the way ever could

Before I wrap up, I want to touch on the measures our government is taking to help Canadian farmers. Through the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, our government runs several programs to help farming and fishing businesses succeed.

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Under growing forward 2, which is a \$3 billion dollar investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments and the foundation for government agricultural programs and services, farmers have access to a suite of business risk management programs, including agri-invest, agri-stability, agri-insurance, and agri-recovery, which help farmers in managing risk due to severe market volatility and disaster situations. These initiatives also help the industry in its efforts to research, develop and implement new agricultural risk management tools.

In addition, the federal agri-marketing program under growing forward 2 helps farmers and food processors compete in markets at home and around the world. It supports the agriculture industry by creating and maintaining access to markets and taking advantage of market opportunities. Economic action plan 2015 has provided \$12 million over two years, starting in 2016-17, to expand the agri-marketing program.

I will go back to the bill. What is so confusing about this one is the irony of the NDP's position on this. We know that Bill C-661 would allow siblings to benefit from the exception to the existing anti-avoidance rule, which is presently only available for spouses and children. This would effectively enable siblings to exit the farming or fishing business, while deferring capital gains tax. This is no small matter. This would be a special tax concession not available to others in similar circumstances, and it is inconsistent with the general scheme of the tax rules, which for the most part limits tax deferred asset transfers to spouses and in some cases their children.

I recall another debate that the House had recently, and that is in regard to the family tax cut. Our Government is proposing that a married couple is a single economic unit, that two spouses should be considered an economic unit. The NDP members have rejected that definition and have been opposed to this tax fairness from the very beginning. However, now they are in fact proposing to expand the definition of a single economic unit to a brother and sister or any combination of siblings. That is complete and utter hypocrisy.

Therefore, the New Democrats do not think spouses are an economic unit, but they do think that siblings somehow are. It simply does not make sense. Either they support tax fairness or they do not. Clearly this hypocritical bill put forward by the NDP suggests that it does not truly understand tax fairness either way.

In closing, allow me to reiterate that Bill C-661 would offer limited benefits for a handful of people, and would loosen the application of the anti-avoidance rule, and as such, I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Going forward, our Government will continue to work diligently toward making life more affordable for hard-working Canadians and helping Canadian farmers and fishermen who are the backbone of our country. We will continue to build on our impressive tax relief record with measures that make a difference on the bottom lines of Canadians, and implementing measures that will help create jobs, growth and long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

In the time I have left, I just want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and everybody who occupies the chair and all of the staff at the table as well as everybody who does wonderful work in this place.

I have been a member of Parliament for almost 10 years. I tell the pages that there are 308 MPs during a four-year term and there are only 160 pages. It is harder to become a page in the House of Commons than it is to become a member of Parliament. I thank them for the diligent work they do.

I thank all of the staff and all the people who support us. I especially thank Constable Franchi for the excellent work he did on October 22. He has become a good friend of mine. He came into the room and calmed us all down on the day we were all deeply affected. I want to thank all of the House of Commons and Senate security guards, the RCMP officers who are here and keep us safe, not only on Parliament Hill, but all across the country. They do an absolutely excellent job. I thank all of those who serve here to empower me to do the best I can for my constituents in Wetaskiwin.

● (1800)

This is the end of the constituency of Wetaskiwin. I will be the last member of Parliament for the federal riding of Wetaskiwin, which because of the growth in Alberta is going to see new seats. I just want to say to everyone who volunteered, encouraged me, supported me, or voted for me that I could not have been more proud to be their representative for these last nine and a half years, and I look forward to running in the new riding of Red Deer—Lacombe.

From the bottom of my heart, I just want to thank everybody in the constituency of Wetaskiwin for allowing me the privilege and honour of being their member of Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The Chair regrets he was not paying attention to the hon. member from Wetaskiwin as closely as he ought to have been. There are a lot of farewells taking place in this place today.

At this point, we are going to resume debate. The hon. member for Sydney—Victoria.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise today to speak on Bill C-661, introduced by the member for Joliette.

I must first state that the Conservatives were speaking about how much they were supporting agriculture, but what we have seen over the last few months is pretty bad.

Two things that they have done are pretty bad. First, we have seen members from that party speaking against supply management, which is one of the pillars for agriculture in this country. Second, there are big cuts in the budget to business risk management, the tools that farmers need when they have bad years. That has been cut by hundreds of millions of dollars. It is very disappointing to see the Conservative government do that.

In speaking on this bill, I will be basing my remarks on my personal experience as a farmer and on the importance of maintaining family businesses. In the context of this bill, the main objective is to treat siblings like any other family members by exempting them from the anti-tax avoidance measures by amending the Income Tax Act. We are supporting that.

The reality is that even if farmers have the opportunity to give part of their farm value to their children or grandchildren without income tax consequences under the Income Tax Act of Canada, they still need to maintain sufficient investment income to ensure a healthy retirement. This is also necessary if a farmer wants to provide for their other children who are not actively involved in the operation, and the same goes for fishing families on the east coast, the west coast, and in central Canada.

Even though Canadian agriculture has changed so much, the family business is the cornerstone of the industry. Canada's agri-food sector accounts for 7% of Canada's GDP and over two million jobs. That is one job in eight. While primary agriculture accounts for a small share of the total economy, about 2%, it is at the heart of the agriculture and agri-food system and has grown over 1.5% per year since 1997.

Agriculture and fishing have drastically changed, and we need to make sure that legislation governing these industries is able to keep up with the rapid pace. In 1991, there were 280,000 farms in Canada. In 2011, that number had fallen to 206,000. However, the average size of Canadian farms has grown tremendously, from an average of 200 acres to 800 acres. In that same time period, the average age of a Canadian farm operator has risen quite dramatically, going from 48 years of age to 54. It varies across the country, but that is the average.

Urbanization, an aging population, globalization of the economy, and consolidation throughout the agri-food chain have brought fundamental structural changes at the farm level. More specifically, the need to develop new markets and to comply with consumer demands has required an adaptation of production structure and practices within the agriculture sector. Although this adaptation creates new opportunities, it poses many challenges to our young farmers and fishers.

Over the next decade, we are going to be seeing a lot of these family businesses being passed down from one generation to the next. Given the extremely harsh economic context, this bill being debated today is crucial to helping ease those transfers to other family members. Between 1991 and 2011, the number of farmers under the age of 55 fell 42%, from 265,000 to 150,000. In that time, the number of older operators increased, as I said before.

Quite simply, the Canadian farming and fishing population is aging. That does not mean there are not a lot of young people who want to get into it, but the road map there is very difficult. There are now fewer and fewer young people to replace these retiring farmers and fishers. This situation is worrisome, as young farmers guarantee the future of agriculture and play a key role in rural economic development. Many other activities in rural communities depend on the agricultural sector, including fishing, milling, hardware, processing products, and even transporting. Many of the people we see driving down the highways every day are people involved in the whole agri-food sector.

• (1805)

The federal government has an important obligation to improve its programs and policies to keep young farmers in the industry. By supporting the bill, we are trying to ensure that the Income Tax Act

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does not discourage the best-qualified person in the family from taking over the business because of tax implications.

Agriculture is more and more capital intensive. Producers have to invest in buildings, machinery, and other equipment to become more efficient and to satisfy consumer demand for low produce prices. We also see many times that in many farming operations it is not just for maintaining prices but is for food safety.

I have been travelling across the country visiting farms over the last year. It is amazing how modern these farms are, how they have HAACP in place and cleanliness and tracking of everything they are doing on the farm. This all costs money.

Market conditions also contribute to increasing the value of assets, such as land and quotas. This can cause some challenges for young farmers, as the rise in asset values are not always covered by sufficient income. It is one of the lowest returns when we look at the amount of capital spent on a farm. Many times these young farmers are operating an enterprise to put food on the table with a fairly low return.

Some agriculture sectors are doing a little better, especially with supply management, which the Liberals brought in many years ago and which we are going to stand behind 150%.

Thanks to the supply management policy governing agriculture production in Canada, farmers enjoy an environment of stable and predictable milk prices and poultry prices with the formula they have in place. The supply-managed industries collectively generate \$25 billion in GDP, \$5 billion in tax revenues, and over 300,000 jobs. That is just in supply management alone.

Despite these favourable conditions, under this system inter-generational transfer is difficult. When there is a need to plan for succession, numerous cases have been reported of farmers not being able to find the right arrangement to meet the expectations of the exiting farmers or of the new entrants.

I think if there was a return, a lot of people would probably think it was a good occupation and an interesting occupation and would be inclined to pursue it.

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The best way to keep young farmers in the industry is to make it profitable. Farming is a lifestyle, not just an occupation, but at the end of the day, farmers still need to make money. We do not expect our health professionals and many other people in our society to work for free, and we cannot expect the producers of our food to do so either. Young farmers are not going to invest millions of dollars in something if they do not know if it is going to produce a return. Supply management provides that to them and gives them stability. As I mentioned before, business risk management is very important.

I think we can all agree that there seems to be a growing disconnect between the general population and agriculture.

Young farmers also know perfectly well that agriculture faces numerous challenges related to the increasing cost of products, as I mentioned before, reduced margins, trade and marketing issues, et cetera.

I commend groups such as the Canadian Young Farmers' Forum and the Canadian 4-H Council for their efforts to educate, energize, and empower the next generation of Canadian farmers and agriculture leaders. However, these groups need a comprehensive federal policy targeting young or new farmers to make it feasible.

That is not to say that this shift in the agricultural sector should diminish the importance of maintaining smaller operations. There are also many small successful farms, and the government should be doing more to help those operations as well. Small operations as well as big ones can contribute and can work together.

I am very much in favour of the motion. It would be another tool in the tool box to help farmers get through. For those farmers who work so hard and put so much into their farms, many of them 60 and 70 years old, the only return they can get will be through the implementation of this bill.

This is the last half a minute of what is probably my last speech in the House. I am glad I am doing it on agriculture. I am a farmer from Cape Breton, and our family has a farming business.

I would like to thank all my colleagues, and I wish them well through the summer and in their future endeavours. I thank all the staff here who have done so much for us and have kept the place going, the staff in our whip's office, who keep us here all the time, and of course, my colleagues here tonight who stayed with us for the last shift.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak in support of the bill introduced by my colleague from Joliette. I want to commend her on this excellent initiative and on all the good work she has done over the past four years. I really enjoyed working with her and I thank her. I also thank her for truly being a strong voice for farmers in Quebec and for standing up for our regions. I am proud not only to support this bill, but also to have worked with her.

The NDP believes that it is important to support our family farms in Quebec and Canada given that we recognize how important they are to our regions and to the Canadian economy as a whole.

Bill C-661 is a step in the right direction for family farms. It makes a small change to the Income Tax Act. It is a small change, but a logical one that will have a big impact. This change is needed to remedy a situation that can create serious problems for farmers. Transfers of family farms are often very complicated. I doubt that any MP in this House believes that that is good for the economy. We want to make it easier for farmers to get down to work, pursue their passion and be able to transfer these farms to family members who want to take them over. We want to ensure that they put all their time, money and energy into this very important work.

Under existing laws, brothers and sisters are not considered to be family and are therefore penalized if they want to buy, sell or transfer land to each other. This can make it even more difficult for them to manage their family farm, especially when they are looking for someone to take over, which may sometimes be a brother or sister. This makes the situation more difficult. We all know that farmers need a government they can count on to make these transfers easier so that they can get back to their work, which is so important to our economy and to all Canadians. We want to be able to eat food grown in Quebec and to take advantage of it.

In my riding of Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, agriculture is an extremely important part of the economy. There is a huge amount of diversity in the agriculture, in the type of agriculture and in the changes taking place across my riding, whether it is in Argenteuil, Papineau, Mirabel, the Deux-Montagnes region or even Les Pays-d'en-Haut. It is incredible to see all of the microclimates that exist. This means that different crops can be grown in these locations. It is very important to note that families put their hearts and souls into their passion in order to be able to feed Canadians and Quebecers. Agriculture is therefore an important economic reality in the region. They are all family farms. Eastern Canada is at a real risk of losing its family farms. We must do everything we can to reverse that trend. Since the Conservatives came to power, thousands of family farms have had to shut down. That is unacceptable. This government has not been able to protect struggling local communities and farmers.

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We must also realize that when the agricultural sector is under pressure, the whole rural community feels the effects. We are referring to all the people who make their seasonal contributions and all the small businesses that depend on farmers' investments. Therefore it is very important to ensure stability and investment in this industry. A small change like this will have a huge impact because, as I said, it will eliminate a lot of stress and problems surrounding transfers, rather than creating more paperwork and wasting time, energy and money. We truly must encourage the new generation.

● (1815)

Let us remember a few facts. Canada once had a world-class agricultural infrastructure, and family farms and rural communities were the heart and soul of the industry. Today, however, Canadian agriculture faces the problem of land takeovers, with farmland being purchased and concentrated in the hands of huge businesses. The family farm and the small agricultural business are definitely endangered.

In order to combat this phenomenon and the decrease in the number of farm owners in Canada, the NDP knows that we must lend a hand to family farms and facilitate the transfer of assets between family members.

We simply want to make it possible to recognize the family ties between brothers and sisters in an agricultural operation, in order to make intergenerational transfers and division of assets more flexible and encourage new blood, a new generation of farmers who will be able to carry the torch and invest in their business as their family has done.

I wish to reiterate my wholehearted support for this bill, and I thank my colleague for introducing it. It is extremely important that we have a chance to debate it, and I am pleased we are able to do that this evening.

Since we are at second reading, I hope we will be able to pass this bill, because this is important legislation. My constituents in Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel believe this bill is necessary and is a step in the right direction.

To conclude, because I think this will be my last speech in this Parliament before we leave and the election is held, I would like to thank all my constituents in Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel for a wonderful four years.

I have learned so much from the day I was elected, at the age of 22, to today, when I am 26 years old. I feel that I have grown up here, in a way, and that is thanks to the support of all these fantastic people: my colleagues, my constituents, my team and everyone who works in Parliament every day. I have enjoyed my experience tremendously, and I would like to thank them, because they are what have made it so wonderful.

I am very eager to come back in the fall. I hope to see many of the faces I see today again. To those who are retiring, my thanks and my best wishes for their retirement. I wish everyone a lovely summer. Thank you once again.

● (1820)

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House to speak.

I listened to the speech by my colleague from Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, who has done an excellent job in her constituency and here in the House of Commons. She has been a strong voice for the status of women, among other things. I am very pleased. She talked about how important this bill is.

I would also like to congratulate my colleague from Joliette for introducing Bill C-661, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (transfer of family farm or fishing corporation). She has done excellent work with the agricultural community. She has worked very hard, visiting farms and doing a number of tours around her constituency, to get to know the municipalities and the rural communities. She has worked with people in agriculture, and that is where this bill originates: from a broad consultation in her community that has enabled her to introduce a bill in answer to what the agricultural community has asked for.

This is what is at issue in this bill. Bill C-661 makes a small change to the Income Tax Act, but the change is one that is completely necessary and logical. Farmers all across Canada know they can count on the NDP to make more intergenerational transfers possible in family farm or fishing corporations.

For many years, in fact nearly a half-century now, the NDP has been part of the agricultural community. That community is truly important to us. One thing that is essential is to ensure that our family farms and our agricultural community do not just survive, they prosper, and that they thrive and are effective and dynamic. That is why introducing this bill is important.

We support an economy in which farmers are entrepreneurs, not wage workers. In a majority of cases, the ideal situation is to have entrepreneurial farmers. To combat land grabbing and the galloping decline in the number of farm owners in Canada, we have to be prepared to lend our farm families a hand, and that is precisely what we want to do, by facilitating transfers between members of the same family. That is what this bill proposes.

Bill C-661 will facilitate intergenerational transfer in the case of a farm co-owned by a brother and a sister, for example, where the farm could be passed down only by one of the co-owners. The owner not leaving an inheritance could then withdraw without an insurmountable impact on operations, and the co-owner passing the farm on to the next generation could proceed with an orderly handover.

This is in fact a minor change. However, it will provide considerable help to family farms. It is important to remember that family farms have gone through some tough times in recent years. Here are a few statistics to support my case. For instance, in Quebec, the value of land has jumped 600% over the past 23 years. Obviously, the stakeholders in these transactions are motivated by reasons other than farm development. These transactions are often speculative in nature. This hampers our ability to save family farms. As well, we have seen family farms really running out of steam in recent years. Between 2007 and 2012, 22,235 farms ceased operations. Over 22,000 family farms have disappeared. That is a drop of close to 13.6%.

Privilege

●(1825)

The disappearance of small and medium-sized family farms throughout Canada and in the greater Drummond area is of great concern.

I mentioned the excellent work done by my colleague from Joliette, in whose footsteps I followed. In fact, since I was elected in 2011, I have made a number of tours. Every year, I do what I call the municipality tour, the main goal of which is to tour the rural areas. I have had an opportunity to visit a number of businesses, including many family farms. I will name some of them to demonstrate the agricultural wealth and vitality in Drummond.

The Entreprises G.M. Benoit farm is an excellent dairy farm that belongs to the Benoit family in Sainte-Brigitte-des-Saults. Stéphanie, Andréane and Yanick do an excellent job and have won prizes for their high-quality products.

There is also a farm in Saint-Cyrille-de-Wendover that belongs to the Jutras family, called “Les cultures de chez nous”. This is the kind of farm found throughout Quebec, and it is a source of great pride. The family produces leeks, and the leeks from our farms are renowned throughout the region. They also produce berries and asparagus.

I would also like to mention the Claumond chicken farm in Saint-Edmond-de-Grantham.

We also have the Ferme Bel Alpaga et Bon Autruche in Saint-Bonaventure, which is owned by Claude Petit and Mélanie Boucher. As the name of the farm says, they are specialists in raising alpacas and ostriches. They also produce excellent meat that is sold in our region.

Another one is the Valnico farm in Sainte-Brigitte-des-Saults. This farm belongs to Mr. Jutras and Ms. Ross, who own dairy cows and do wonderful work. It is another family farm that has come down through the generations.

I must also mention the Canneberges Drummond farm, as there are a lot of cranberries in the region, especially in the municipality of Saint-Lucien. The Gardner family is doing a wonderful job of allowing family farms to survive.

All these descriptions are meant to show the wealth that family farms and agriculture represent in Drummond. I could name dozens more. I wanted to give these examples to show the importance of having a thorough knowledge of our rural community. In addition, it was because she understands our rural community that the member for Joliette introduced this bill.

Now let us come back to the bill. Joint ownership by the children of one family will be increasingly common over the next 10 years. We must therefore give them greater flexibility so that they can buy and sell their operation within the same family, including between brothers and sisters.

The NDP has been committed for a long time now to promoting family farms. We have a food strategy that aims at tackling farm accessibility issues, facilitating farm succession, because it is very important to have access to the capital and the land necessary for food production, providing support for planning the succession

arrangements for family farms and revising the tax code to facilitate the takeover of farm businesses.

In short, this bill is extremely important, because it is a first step in encouraging our family farms. It encourages not only their survival, but also their vitality, so that family farms in the greater Drummond area, in central Quebec, in Joliette, in the province of Quebec and throughout Canada will be able to prosper. This is what is important, and this is why we are doing this work.

* * *

●(1830)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON THE ORDER PAPER NO. 1229

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did not really want to interrupt, but there was a question of privilege raised earlier today. We reserved the right to respond to it, and I will provide a brief response. This was the question of privilege raised by the member for Mount Royal.

His question of privilege related to order paper Question No. 1229. At its essence, the hon. member really seemed to be raising a point of order, claiming that Standing Order 39(1) had been breached. The rule states in part:

...no argument or opinion is to be offered, nor any facts stated, except so far as may be necessary to explain the same...

The public safety minister's answer on the question that we are dealing with, he claims, is opinion. However, my view is that the answer is responsive to the question and the issues raised in his question. In view of the nature of the questions he raised, it would be impossible for the government to respond with anything other than the kind of response that was received.

The learned professor's question is expressed in some 819 words, I should point out, so I will only offer the Chair portions in order to save time. On five different occasions he asked, with regard to the program, “what was its objective”. Another five times, he asked “what was its outcome”. Twice, we can read in the question the following “what objectives was the government seeking to achieve”. Likewise, there were two requests for “how will the objectives...be achieved”. We also see in his question the phrase “based on what factors did the government decide”.

All of these read very much to me like questions probing for value-oriented facts.

To combine the opening words—or the chapeau, as it would technically be known—two of these questions ask:

With regard to funding for programs that facilitate the reintegration of offenders into communities following incarceration...what objectives was the government seeking to achieve...?

Why should it surprise the hon. member that the public safety minister answered, “...the government believes that dangerous sex offenders belong behind bars”? He is objecting that he got that kind of answer, but that is the very objective that the government is seeking to achieve, which he asked for in his question.

Private Members' Business

The hon. member for Mount Royal seeks value-based answers and he has been given in reply an answer setting out the government's perspective and policies. The perspective and that policy are facts. That is the government's position.

The answer continues, "That is why the government...", and it goes on. It is quite clear that the opening of the answer is both responsive to his request for value-based answers but is also, with respect to the continuation of the answer, "necessary to explain the same", to quote Standing Order 39(1).

The hon. member for Mount Royal might well dislike the government's policies and views on taking a strong line on sex offenders, criminals whose offences frequently turn on the abuse of vulnerable persons, but that does not mean he can start claiming that this statement of fact about the government's views is a violation of his parliamentary privilege.

In any event, other than establishing that I think that the statement has gone some distance to actually answer the question, the things he is complaining about are the very things he asked for.

I would go on to note that it is a commonly cited maxim here that Speakers do not have authority under our rules to judge the content or quality of responses to questions. What is more, it should not be a burden that we try to place upon them.

Pages 522 and 523 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* are often cited in the chamber for this proposition. They say:

There are no provisions in the rules for the Speaker to review government responses to questions. Nonetheless, on several occasions, Members have raised questions of privilege in the House...; in none of these cases was the matter found to be a *prima facie* breach of privilege.

The hon. member for Mount Royal is effectively—and creatively, I might say—attempting to invent some new approach for you, Mr. Speaker, to do what you traditionally do not do, and I encourage you not to go there. Otherwise, this will be forever a rabbit hole, in which we are asking the Speaker to evaluate every aspect of every question. It will involve research into the programs, in a case like this, to find whether the programs really have these objectives, and whether he agrees with that or not.

He asked for these answers and he got them.

Another saying around here is that we are not to do indirectly what may not be done directly. That is, of course, what the member for Mount Royal is seeking to do with his point of privilege. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think that you are on a very sound footing to simply dismiss the hon. member's complaint about the answer to Question No. 1229.

•(1835)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The Chair thanks the government House leader for his intervention. As always, it will be taken into consideration when this matter is evaluated.

[Translation]

FACILITATING THE TRANSFER OF FAMILY FARM OR FISHING CORPORATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-661, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (transfer of family farm or fishing corporation), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues who have spoken to this bill.

In recent weeks, I had the opportunity to present my bill to farmers with the UPA. As my colleague from Drummond just said, in 2013 I toured the farms around the riding of Joliette. We had a chance to talk about Bill C-661, as well as other issues surrounding young farmers and the transfer of family farms.

I came away enriched by these discussions, which confirmed that Bill C-661 is truly a step in the right direction, if not a miraculous solution. It is a small change, but as we have said again and again, it is an important one.

Members will recall that Bill C-661 amends the Income Tax Act in order to provide that, in the case of the shares of the capital stock of a family farm or fishing corporation, siblings are deemed not to be operating at arm's length and to be related. Currently, section 55 of the Income Tax Act is the only one that does not acknowledge that brothers and sisters do not operate at arm's length. This is an inconsistency that affects family farms held by siblings, depriving them of the flexibility they need at this time.

I should point out that land grabs have inflated the value of farms to the point where it is now unthinkable that a farm belonging to brothers and sisters might survive if one of the owners leaves. In fact, the income tax alone on the value owned by one of the partners could destroy the farm's profitability. In Quebec, for example, the value of land has increased by 600% over the past 23 years.

Still in Quebec, the number of transactions has increased by 67% in the past year alone, and the value of those transactions has climbed by 84%. The main players in these transactions have no interest in agriculture, and their actions are primarily speculative. It is the same throughout Canada, so much so that Saskatchewan recently passed legislation prohibiting purchases of farmland by pension plans.

This state of affairs is of great concern to me and, as a former farmer, I can clearly see the risk that it poses to the future of farming in Canada. It is dangerous. Unfortunately, I am afraid that we are encouraging an industry of paid farmers rather than entrepreneurial farmers.

Frankly, it has become impossible for a young family to get into farming if the family members do not have any relatives who are farmers, and even if they do, it is not easy to transfer ownership. In fact, the current situation is still conducive to selling to a large investment company that is outside of the family. This puts our food sovereignty into jeopardy.

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Society has made this choice, but is it our choice? I do not think so. We have the ability to turn back the tide. There is still much to be done to help the next generation of farmers, but Bill C-661 is a step in the right direction. This bill is a clear solution to a glaring problem.

Over the next few years, the aging of the population will affect farming as it will everything else, and we will see more and more brothers and sisters becoming owners of a farm. We have to give them the flexibility they need to embark on this adventure confidently.

Once again, I think that the NDP has found a concrete solution for our family farms, and we will continue defending them staunchly. I hope that all my colleagues on the government side will vote in favour of this wonderful bill.

• (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those in favour of the motion 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:

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 23, 2015, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, what a surprising honour it is for me at this moment to realize that I am one of the last speakers you will hear from that chair. I am not supposed to address the Speaker and I am sure it will be removed from *Hansard*, but I extend my best wishes for your future and for your big move.

I raised this question some time ago in relation to the question of climate targets. The question was asked in May, before the hon. Minister of the Environment tabled the targets, which at that point had been overdue.

In the UN negotiating process in the Conference of the Parties for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, it was determined at the 2012 negotiations in Warsaw, where I was present, that in order to ensure that all countries were prepared to commit to a binding, comprehensive climate treaty at this December's meeting in 2014, all countries would submit their targets within the first quarter of 2015. That was repeated again in Lima in 2014. At the time I asked the question, we had not seen Canada's targets.

Subsequently the targets were tabled. They happened to be the weakest in the G7. The target that was announced by our hon. Minister of the Environment on the Friday afternoon of a long May weekend was that Canada would commit to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. That target was substantially weaker than those of all other countries. In Copenhagen, of course, we had tied our target to that of the U.S., but since the U.S. has met the target that it selected in 2009 in Copenhagen, Canada has fallen off that level of ambition and is even weaker now.

The response I received from the hon. minister included a claim that is repeated so often and I thought I would like to try to lay it to rest in this late show this evening. It is this. She said: "Our Conservative government is the first government in Canadian history that has reduced greenhouse gas emissions."

It is true that during the time that the Prime Minister has been in office, greenhouse gas levels did drop. They dropped for one reason only. They dropped between 2008 and 2009 because of the global financial collapse. I do not believe the current Prime Minister wishes to take credit for personally engineering a global financial collapse, nor do I think anyone would believe him if he tried to claim credit for it, but that is the one and only reason our greenhouse gas levels dropped. They dropped from a level of around 724 or 725 megatonnes to about 692 or 693, if memory serves. That is when they dropped.

Ever since our economy began to recover after 2009, because of the complete and abject failure of the Prime Minister to put in place any plan to achieve emission reductions, emissions—and this can be checked on the Environment Canada website—emissions have continued to rise. Continuing to rise year on year, by 2020 they are now slated to be slightly below what they were in 2005. They would be above that if it were not for provincial action. The decision by the Province of Ontario to close its coal-fired power plants was important. Unfortunately, the growth in the oil sands overwhelmed the cuts that were made by various provincial governments.

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It comes to this in the 30 seconds I have left. We are now a mere month from the negotiations that must achieve a global binding treaty to reduce greenhouse gases. We have been told by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the International Energy Agency, and now the Vatican that the world must act, and act with more ambition. Canada is now viewed globally as a laggard, and the only way that we will have the kind of treaty the world needs is if Canada once again becomes a leader, which means that in the next few months we must have a new Prime Minister.

• (1845)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too want to take this opportunity to thank you for your incredible service in the House. We were both elected back in 2004 and it is a honour to have served with you in Parliament.

Because it is probably my last chance to speak in this 41st Parliament, I want to take this opportunity to also thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands. I am going to miss our plethora of late shows. We get to spend a lot of time with each other. I always joke that I spend more time with her than my wife. I have gotten to know her. We worked together on her private member's bill, the Federal Framework on Lyme Disease Act, and I want to thank her very much for working with me on that and accomplishing something very useful in this Parliament.

I also want to say that we share a mutual friend in the Hon. Pauline Browes, and it is nice to work with her as well. I very much respect her commitment, not only to the environment but also to her constituents.

In response to her question, on May 15, our government announced its intended nationally determined contribution, the INDC, under the new international climate change agreement, ahead of the G7 meeting in June. Canada has a fair and ambitious target that is in line with other major industrialized countries. It reflects our national circumstances, including Canada's position as a world leader in clean electricity generation. We will continue to take a responsible and balanced approach.

Canada has stated that it intends to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. In addition to announcing Canada's 2030 target, the Minister of the Environment announced our government's intent to develop new regulatory measures to reduce emissions. These measures would build on actions taken to date under our government's responsible sector-by-sector approach. These new regulatory measures would reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector, regulate the production of chemicals and nitrogen fertilizers, and regulate emissions from natural gas-fired electricity generation.

Our government's record is clear. We have reduced emissions, while growing the economy and creating good, well-paying jobs for Canadians. Canada will continue to take co-operative action with its continental trading partners, particularly the United States, in areas where our economies are closely integrated, and we will work toward further action in integrated sectors of the economy, including energy and transportation. We will work co-operatively with the provinces and territories on these goals, while respecting their jurisdictions.

Once again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and all the best to your lovely wife and kids, and your future.

• (1850)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to going to COP21 in Paris with a Canadian delegation that will include members of all parties in this place. Perhaps I will be fortunate enough that my friend, the parliamentary secretary, will be on that delegation.

I have now realized, as he has reminded us, that I am down to about 30 seconds in the 41st Parliament to speak in the chamber, where I am honoured to serve the extraordinary constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands. I am deeply grateful to them.

I also want to express how grateful I am to my colleagues in the House on all sides of the chamber, dear friends who also work hard for their constituents. I want to particularly let my friend, the hon. parliamentary secretary, know how much I appreciated his help, when he was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, on the Lyme disease bill, which is now law. It would not have happened without my hon. colleague across the way.

God bless everyone, best of luck and best wishes over the coming months. I hope I will be fortunate enough to be back in the chamber in the near future.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very generous comments.

Our budget outlines the actions we are taking to address climate change and protect our environment. We have invested significantly to support initiatives that reduce emissions and improve air quality for Canadians, and we will be investing \$1 billion into transit annually. Our government has reduced emissions, lowered taxes for middle-class families and balanced our budget.

I come to work everyday and have to pinch myself to realize that I am part of this wonderful chamber that very few Canadians have the opportunity to share. I very much thank my colleagues.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pursue a question that I raised first on May 11, which was answered by the Minister of State for Science and Technology. Subsequently, on June 5, I asked a similar question, which was answered by the government House leader.

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The issue is this. There was a secret deal made between a cellphone provider and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans which owns a range light structure in a residential area of Charlottetown 250 metres from an elementary school to erect an antenna on that range light structure. I say it was a secret deal because the residents found out when they saw survey crews around this range light in this residential area. That is how they were notified. There was some sort of a negotiation or a deal struck between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the cellphone company without the input of the residents. The residents are understandably concerned about property values. They are understandably concerned about the health and safety of their kids. They are understandably concerned about having this in the middle of their residential neighbourhood.

I raised the question initially in May with the Minister of State for Science and Technology. He said, "Canadians across this country deserve a say in how their cellphone tower locations are identified in communities all across the country, including in Prince Edward Island", but they were not consulted.

I raised the question again on June 5, and the government House leader said that they have changed the rules affecting the location of cellphone towers in such a fashion that there is heavy reliance on the community, and he closed his answer with, "We work together with and co-operate with communities.", but they did not. The full extent of the consultation with the community was after the secret deal was done and it was somebody sitting in Halifax and responding to emails. There has not been a public meeting and that antenna was erected yesterday.

The cellphone company did apply for a building permit, but because there was no variance sought, there was no public meeting in that instance either.

The minister did respond to one of my constituents by email saying that he would get in contact with the company to ensure that local residents are given the opportunity to provide their feedback on the antenna proposed for installation along Queen Elizabeth Drive. That antenna is up and that consultation has not happened.

I have three questions that I wish to have addressed arising out of this. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is the regional minister for Prince Edward Island. It would not be that difficult for her to engage her fellow islanders in the lead-up to this process. Why did she not and what is she going to do about it? Will the government change the rules that allowed this to happen without any involvement of the community? The rules provide an exemption where an antenna is being put on an existing structure. That is the problem here. Will the government now take measures to rectify this problem, which is a very serious problem in a residential neighbourhood in my riding?

• (1855)

Hon. Mike Lake (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like my hon. colleagues before me, I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your years of service to our country. I know you are moving on, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours and wish all the best to your family too. It has been a pleasure to serve with you over the last almost decade I have been here.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the pages and table officers. I know that has been done by many before me today, but it is such a pleasure to serve with these folks who come in here and help us day after day to do the work we do here.

I am happy to respond to comments made earlier by the hon. member for Charlottetown regarding cell towers.

Our government recognizes the central role local governments play in identifying potential locations for new antenna towers in their communities by working with the wireless industry. That is why our government changed the rules to ensure that homeowners and municipalities are consulted throughout the tower placement process.

Cities, municipalities, and land-use authorities must also ensure that local residents are at the centre of the process that will help determine the location of a new tower in their communities. It is also incumbent on the wireless industry to ensure that local concerns are taken into consideration.

Canadians deserve a say in how new cell tower locations are identified in their communities. That is why our government changed the rules to ensure that homeowners and municipalities are consulted throughout the process. Companies are required to consult on all towers, regardless of height, to ensure that residents are well informed of all consultation processes and are required to build new towers within three years of consultation. As part of the process, land-use authorities are encouraged to develop their own antenna tower siting procedures to further strengthen local input.

It is also important to point out that Industry Canada requires radio communications installations to comply at all times with Health Canada's Safety Code 6 guidelines for the protection of the general public against radio frequency emissions. The code recommends limits for safe human exposure to radio frequency energy and includes a 50-times safety margin. Industry Canada conducts regular audits to ensure that antenna installations and wireless devices and equipment on the market are compliant. Furthermore, should Industry Canada become aware of an installation where the exposure levels exceed Safety Code 6 limits, we will take immediate action to protect the general public.

In this case, Industry Canada contacted Eastlink, and the company consulted homeowners near the site. Industry Canada regulators have also confirmed that the proposed Brighton Beach Range Light installation will be in full compliance with the guidelines and poses no risk to the community.

In conclusion, as we approach the end of the session, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues, particularly my colleague across the way.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, that is extremely disappointing. The member opposite just said that the cell company involved here, Eastlink, consulted with the local residents. However, it made a secret deal with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans did not care enough to talk to the neighbours.

After the deal was done, and after this matter was raised in the House of Commons, the company sent out a flyer. There has never been a public meeting. There has never been anyone from Eastlink come into the affected neighbourhood to answer questions. When DFO signed that deal to allow Eastlink to erect this antenna, it did not insist upon it. It could very easily have been accommodated.

There is an exemption within the Industry Canada guidelines that allows for no consultation to happen when an antenna is being put on an existing structure and does not increase its height by 25%. They relied on that loophole, and the residents in that area are justifiably enraged.

What the member just said simply is not the case.

• (1900)

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts. The facts are that Eastlink has followed the protocol for the agent of the City

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of Charlottetown Canadian Radiocommunications Information and Notification Service.

Industry Canada requested that Eastlink reach out to the local public so that they could take any feedback into consideration. Eastlink provided an information package to local residents on May 28. Finally, Industry Canada reviewed the technical details of the proposed installation. It will be in full compliance with Health Canada's Safety Code 6 guidelines and thus poses no risk to the public.

These are the facts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The motion to adjourn the House has now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:01 p.m.)

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