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(HANSARD)

Monday, September 15, 2014

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 15, 2014

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

• (1100)

[English]

BILL C-479, AN ACT TO BRING FAIRNESS FOR THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House of an administrative error that occurred with regard to Bill C-479, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (fairness for victims).

[Translation]

Members may recall that the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security made a series of amendments to the bill, which were presented to the House in the committee's second report on March 5, 2014. The committee also ordered that the bill, as amended, be reprinted for the use of the House at report stage.

[English]

On May 7, 2014, the House concurred in the bill as amended at report stage with a further amendment, and later adopted the bill at third reading.

[Translation]

As is the usual practice following passage at third reading, House officials prepared a parchment version of the bill and transmitted this parchment to the Senate. Due to an administrative error, the version of the bill that was transmitted to the other place did not reflect the amendment adopted by the House at report stage, but was instead a reflection of the bill as it had been reported back from committee. Unfortunately, this error was not detected until after both houses had adjourned for the summer.

[English]

I wish to reassure the House that this error was strictly administrative in nature and occurred after third reading was given to Bill C-479. The proceedings which took place in this House and the decisions made by the House with respect to Bill C-479 remain entirely valid. The records of the House relating to this bill are clear and complete.

[Translation]

However, the documents relating to Bill C-479 that were sent to the other place were not an accurate reflection of the House's decisions.

[English]

My predecessor, Speaker Milliken, addressed a similar situation in a ruling given on November 22, 2001, and found on page 7455 of *Debates*. Guided by this precedent, similar steps have been undertaken in this case. First, once this discrepancy was detected, House officials immediately communicated with their counterparts in the Senate to set about resolving it. Next, I have instructed the Acting Clerk and his officials to take the necessary steps to rectify this error and to ensure that the other place has a corrected copy of Bill C-479 which reflects the proceedings which occurred in this House. Thus, a revised version of the bill will be transmitted to the other place through the usual administrative procedures of Parliament. Finally, I have asked that the "as passed at third reading" version of the bill be reprinted.

The Senate will of course make its own determination as to how it proceeds with Bill C-479 in light of this situation.

I wish to reassure members that steps have been taken to ensure that similar errors, rare though they may be, do not reoccur.

I thank hon. members for their attention.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SUPPORTING NON-PARTISAN AGENTS OF PARLIAMENT ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-520, An Act supporting non-partisan agents of Parliament, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

* * *

• (1105)

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: There are 11 motions and amendments standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-520.

Motions Nos. 1 to 11 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 11 to the House.

[English]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 1.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 3.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

[Translation]

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-520, in Clause 8, be amended by replacing, in the English version, lines 39 to 41 on page 4 with the following:

“responsibilities of the position in the office of the agent of Parliament, conduct”

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-520 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great honour to rise in this House and represent the people of Timmins—James Bay and to have the first speech in what might be the final session of this Parliament.

The debate we are having today is very telling. We in this House represent our partisan interests. We are a party-based system, so we are expected to come in wearing our partisan interests.

However, all of us, regardless of what party we are in, have a larger responsibility, in that we are parliamentarians. We are part of a system of democratic accountability that has been worked out in the Westminster tradition through centuries. Each one of the precedents that have been established in the various Westminster systems establishes a code of conduct that we are all supposed to be part of, which is that the overall obligation of Parliament is to represent the interests of the Canadian people in an accountable and fair manner.

However, what we have seen with the current government is a steady attack on the basic institutions that hold this Parliament to account. We are now moving to the stage where this Parliament has become very much a Potemkin democracy. Certainly we have

debates and we have votes, but it is becoming more and more of a charade in which the powers of decision-making are being moved into the executive around the Prime Minister's Office through cabinet secretaries without accountability, and Canadians are left watching a spectacle in this House that is often a degradation of the very notion of parliamentary accountability.

We see that what has happened in this Parliament under the current majority government is a steady attack on the officers of Parliament. People back home need to understand that the role of the officers in Parliament is of non-partisan experts whose job is to hold parliamentarians, bureaucrats, and cabinet ministers to account. However, that runs counter to the Conservative notion of accountability, which is hold their enemies to account and use the levers and powers of government to go after their straw men and their perceived enemies.

All parliamentarians have to be engaged in ensuring that our parliamentary officers have the powers they need to ensure a functioning democracy. These officers include the ethics commissioner, the lobbying commissioner, the Privacy Commissioner, the access to information commissioner, Elections Canada, and official languages. As well, we have recently brought in a parliamentary budget office.

Let us look at the pattern under the current government before we get to this rather ridiculous bill that we are debating today.

Everyone remembers the absolutely vicious trashing of the former parliamentary budget officer, Kevin Page, whose credibility probably ranks him as one of the most respected public servants I have met in my public career and who was relentlessly attacked because he was not a toady for the Prime Minister's Office.

We see the attack on Elections Canada and the attempt to change the electoral laws to make it illegal for the Elections Canada officer to speak out about the basic rights Canadians have in a voting democracy. Certainly they had to pull back some of those amendments because they were so far over the line, but the attack from the Prime Minister's spokesman on the credibility of Elections Canada is once again moving us much further across this moral Rubicon that the Conservatives crossed many years ago.

We saw the gutting of the Conflict of Interest Act when they brought in recommendations that not a single witness supported or even talked about because they were so ridiculous. The gutting of the Conflict of Interest Act is so ridiculous that the Conservatives would now hold 250,000 civil servants to the same account as a parliamentary secretary. People working in a Service Canada call centre in Moose Jaw would now be under the ethics commissioner in the same way as a parliamentary secretary who is receiving money from lobbyists for fundraisers. They would be held to the same account. The Conservatives have watered down the act to make it virtually useless.

We see their use of government resources against charities, again their perceived enemies, by using the Income Tax Act to go after Oxfam and tell Oxfam, an internationally respected organization, that in the country of Canada it cannot declare that it is out to fight poverty.

Private Members' Business

• (1110)

We see the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, who always has a light bulb burning half bright with some of the motions that she has brought forward. She has now brought forward this motion that NGOs, which are health organizations and international groups, will have to announce what kind of international money and connections are backing them. This is not about going after backroom lobbyists or bureaucrats; it is about going after charities and NGOs.

I was looking at the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke's bill. The only bills similar to it anywhere in the world are in Belarus, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China. There is not a credible western democracy that would use its levers of government to go after NGOs, except the current government. We see with Bill C-520, which was rightly called a government witch hunt, that there is no legislation anywhere in the world that is even close to what is proposed here.

This is a fascinating bill, because it was so badly thought out and such an overreach that the Conservatives could not bring any witnesses to back it up. Even right-wing ideologues with tinfoil hats would not come forward to defend this ugly baby. The government did not want any witnesses, so it had to strip its own bill because the bill was so odious. Under this bill, a parliamentary secretary under investigation for receiving all kinds of money for lobbyists could demand an investigation of the lobbying commissioner. Again, the people who are supposed to be investigated are the ones who have the power to do the investigating.

This bill, which was called a witch hunt, is an attack on the credibility of independent parliamentary officers so that now they have to make declarations. There is not much left in this bill. This bill was so odious that, my God, the poor Conservatives had come in and squeeze all the ugly guts out. They were pale when having to deal with it because it was such a dumbed-down bill, but what they left in it was the obligation that if someone is working in the ethics office or wants to work for the Privacy Commissioner, that person has to make a declaration of all his or her political activity going back 10 years.

An hon. member: And forward.

Mr. Charlie Angus: And forward.

This is about the Conservatives searching out the hidden Liberals underneath the bedcovers. This is about attacking the fundamental merit-based system that we have for approving the officers of Parliament.

One would think that there is some kind of problem that they were responding to, but no. Other than Conservative smears against the Elections Canada office, there has never been a case that has ever shown that the people who work in the access to information commission or the privacy commission, the officers of Parliament, have ever done this in a partisan manner that needed investigation. In fact, they are already covered under part 7 of the Public Service Employment Act, the Political Activities Regulations, and the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector. We are talking about some of the most qualified and highly credible people in our system, but the government is saying we cannot trust them.

Therefore, we have a situation in which a bill is being brought forward that allows the Conservatives, when they are under investigation, to say that nine years ago a secretary in someone's office was on a riding association and there must be some kind of political skulduggery, because she also had a sign on her lawn.

This is about undermining a credible system that is in place.

Viewers back home should always remember this: the role of government is to be accountable to the Canadian people, and there are institutions that hold government to account. The Conservative government believes that it is accountable to no one and can undermine the basic rules of parliamentary process so that they can hold the people who are supposed to be investigating them to account.

We have sat through the discussion on this bill. The Conservatives have brought forward no witnesses. We have seen nothing credible. They have absolutely no basis for this bill. It has been called a despicable witch hunt, which it is, and now it is just a non-credible witch hunt. The fact is that the government had to basically strip its own bill down to nothing.

Let us save the member for York Centre further embarrassment. Let us kill this bill now and stop this spineless attack on the institutions that hold Parliament accountable.

• (1115)

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to welcome all of the members back from a long summer in their constituencies, and who serve the people who place their trust in us. Welcome back, to all of my colleagues.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide the government's response to Bill C-520, an act supporting non-partisan agents of Parliament. I am certain most would agree that non-partisanship is an essential element of both the professional public administration and responsible democratic government. A non-partisan public service is one where appointments are based on merit and are free of political influence, and where public servants perform their duties and are seen to perform their duties in a politically impartial manner. The government values this vital feature of our Westminster system of government and is committed to safeguarding the principle of political impartiality, which is why it is pleased to support the bill before us.

We are privileged in this country. We have one of the best public services in the world. Public servants are vital to the success of our country. No government, of any partisan stripe, can maintain and build a strong, united, and secure Canada without the assistance of a professional, capable public service that is committed to the public interest.

Private Members' Business

One has to only look at the public service awards of excellence to see how public servants make a difference in the lives of Canadians. From investigating and reporting on disasters, to improving access to data, to engaging Canadians across the country from space, public servants rise to the challenges presented to them daily and make us all proud. Public servants are dedicated people, who care about our country and want to contribute to making it a better place to live. It is public servants who welcome immigrants to start new lives here by deciding on cases of individual applicants. It is public servants who administer income support programs, such as the Canada pension plan and old age security, and provide approximately 200,000 Canadian seniors with their only source of income. An effective public service is key to getting things done for ordinary working Canadians and their families.

This is important. One of the keys to an effective public service is the principle of non-partisanship. In fact, one of the drivers behind the creation of a non-partisan public service some 100 years ago was the view that the public service had become inefficient and ineffective because it was largely staffed on a partisan basis. As a result, public servants often lacked the necessary qualifications for their positions. Furthermore, a century ago the appointment of public servants for partisan reasons was blamed for swelling the ranks of the public service. It is therefore essential to the success of the public service that its reputation and tradition of impartiality be maintained and protected, which is why this bill is so welcomed.

In budget 2013, the government committed to review and update public service processes and systems to ensure that the public service continues to serve all Canadians well. This bill is consistent with that commitment. It recognizes that while non-partisanship is expected of all public servants, agents of Parliament play a particularly important role in government oversight. Agents of Parliament carry out duties assigned by statute and report directly to Parliament. The individuals appointed to these offices perform work on behalf of Parliament and report to both chambers, usually through the Speakers.

Given the close relationship between parliamentarians, agents of Parliament, and their employees, it is vital that they carry out their duties free from political interference, and that they remain independent of all political affiliations.

Furthermore, given the high level of visibility of these offices, it is vital that their work be approached in a non-partisan way to maintain the confidence of parliamentarians and Canadians. To that end, this bill would require every person who applies for a position in an office of an agent of Parliament to make a declaration about their past engagements in politically partisan positions. This declaration would state whether in the last 10 years before applying for that position the person occupied certain specified politically partisan positions. The declarations would be posted on the website of the office of the relevant agent of Parliament. As well, the bill would require persons who work in these offices to provide a written undertaking that they will conduct themselves in a non-partisan manner in fulfilling the official duties and responsibilities of their positions.

• (1120)

I am pleased to report that the bill was subject to a thorough examination by the Standing Committee on Access to Information,

Privacy and Ethics. The committee heard from a number of witnesses and has recommended a number of amendments. In particular, I would like to highlight the following amendment, which is that agents of Parliament would no longer be required to conduct an examination of alleged partisan conduct and that they would therefore no longer be required to report to Parliament on such examinations.

In sum, the bill as it now stands provides enhanced accountability and transparency. It gives parliamentarians the confidence they need that the conduct of those who work in the offices of agents of Parliament is impartial. As stated in the bill itself, it would help to avoid potential conflicts that are likely to arise or be perceived to arise between partisan activities and the official duties and responsibilities of an agent of Parliament or any person who works in the office of an agent of Parliament.

I therefore call on all members to join me in supporting Bill C-520.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand and address Bill C-520 today. I have a few things that I would like to get on the record.

I would challenge the member and the Conservative Party as to why they have felt it necessary to bring forward the bill. As has been illustrated by the New Democratic speaker, the current government has not been a friend to our agents of Parliament, and I think we could come up with a number of examples which would clearly demonstrate that.

Canadians should be concerned regarding the general attitude that the Conservative Party majority has towards agents of Parliament. I think we have witnessed over the last few years an abuse of government power in using that majority to quite often override what our agents of Parliament have been trying to address in the best interest of Canadians.

There are a number of thoughts that come to mind, but first I will highlight what this particular bill is about.

The proposed legislation would do nothing to deal with the elaborate and partisan appointments of the current government. I think that is important to recognize because it is a real problem that the current Conservative government has.

Also, the legislation is an underhanded attack on the agents of Parliament and the people who work in the offices of the agents. The agents of Parliament are reputable individuals, and their personal work and life experiences are communicated and understood during the interview process. This is why I ask why we have the proposed legislation before us today. Is it necessary, given the important issues out there that we all have to face?

We just came back after a summer of being with our constituents. I am sure that members of Parliament worked very hard during the summer in trying to get a good sense of the issues that are impacting their constituents. However, I suspect that no one would have raised the issue that is before us in the bill. Therefore, I question the motivation that the member has in bringing forward the bill.

I have a great deal of respect for the role that our parliamentary officers play on many critically important issues.

A couple of years ago, our Parliamentary Budget Officer provided comment on the old age supplement. The Prime Minister was overseas at the time, when he dropped the bombshell that the government wanted to increase the age of retirement from 65 to 67, which is something that the Liberal Party has been very clearly opposed to.

We believe the government was wrong in changing the age of retirement for OAS from 65 to 67. It was a bad move. We had the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer in essence indicate that Canada could afford to continue on with the age of 65. However, if we listened to what the government was saying, we heard there was some sort of a crisis situation and if it was not increased to 67 from 65 our system would fall apart. We in the Liberal Party knew that was not the case, and we had our Parliamentary Budget Officer indicate that the Liberal Party was correct and that there was no crisis.

That was a couple of years ago, but just this last session members will remember the issue with the Chief Electoral Officer.

• (1125)

Elections Canada is an institution respected around the world as an organization of immense credibility that is not partisan.

I sat through hours of debate and public consultations, where time after time the Conservative government went against this institution, even when we had the Chief Electoral Officer and previous electoral officers before us saying that the actions taken within that legislation were wrong and that the government was making serious mistakes by forcing through the so-called Fair Elections Act, which is far from what that legislation is actually doing.

What did we have at the time? We had a verbal attack against one of our agents of Parliament, one of the offices that are highly apolitical because they do get engaged in partisanship. The government went after that agency. It went after the Chief Electoral Officer himself, imputing all sorts of motives in an attempt to get what it wanted.

Whether it is the Chief Electoral Officer, the Auditor General, the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Privacy Commissioner, the Information Commissioner, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, the Commissioner of Lobbying, or the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner, these are very important agents of our parliamentary system. They have a very important role to play in Canadian society. It is one of the ways in which all parliamentarians, whether they are on government benches or on opposition benches, are engaged.

We often turn to the Auditor General of Canada for clarification on important issues. How many times have we had the Auditor

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General of Canada get engaged with the F-35 contract, the hundreds of millions of tax dollars, actually billions of dollars, when it comes to the F-35 and the debacle that has taken place? We have turned to our Auditor General to try to get a better understanding of those important issues that need to be reported on in an apolitical fashion.

Every year we get reports that highlight inefficiencies and problems the government has not been able to address. Quite often there will be a series of recommendations brought forward, and not just from the Auditor General of Canada but from other agents of Parliament. They are there to improve the system and to ensure that there is more accountability and transparency. Liberal governments in the past acted on the many different recommendations brought forward from these independent agencies.

The government has received numerous reports, numerous recommendations, on everything from the F-35 to the fairness of elections, and it has really done very little, if anything. The government has failed to address those very important issues Canadians want it to address.

• (1130)

Instead, the government has brought forward the piece of legislation before us today, which calls its motivation into question. Why is it this, of all things? If we want to do something—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Resuming debate. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, I would like to welcome back all hon. members.

I want to take a moment to highlight some of the foolishness from the speaker we just heard. He talked about Canada. When we talk about Canada right now, we have to talk about a country that is leading the world in terms of job creation. We have to talk about a country that has reduced taxes to the average Canadian family by \$3,200. There is \$3,200 more in their pockets. We have economic growth that is leading the world.

As parliamentarians, I, like many of my colleagues, have had the opportunity to travel. As I have travelled abroad to a number of places during my time in office, I have yet to have found one parliamentarian from another legislature who would not trade places with Canada's position right now. The hon. member might want to think about that.

One of the realities is that the government obviously does not do that alone. It does that with the co-operation of the professional public service.

The member talked about the respect his party has for institutions. The Liberal government was so corrupt when it was tossed out that the first thing our government and our Prime Minister brought in when we came to office was the Federal Accountability Act. It was actually this government and this Prime Minister that brought in the Accountability Act, that brought in the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that brought in the Commissioner of Lobbying, that brought in some of the institutions to address the years of corruption and inactivity and the lack of respect for our institutions that was brought on by the Liberals.

Private Members' Business

I want to commend the member for York Centre for bringing this legislation forward. He highlighted something he feels is an important mechanism to improve accountability and transparency in the system. As he highlighted, we have if not the best then one of the best public services in the entire world. When I look back at what we were able to achieve through Canada's economic action plan and the speed by which we were able to deliver that, I know that it was done with the assistance of our extraordinary public service. We could not have done that if we did not have one of the best public services in the world. What we have seen is that Canada has led the way in coming out of the global recession and has become a model that other nations look to when they look to bring forward stimulus packages to improve their economies.

The member for York Centre has brought forward a bill after consulting broadly and with a number of people in his riding. He has brought forward a bill that seeks to improve transparency in the public service.

Canada is a great place, in part because we have a non-partisan public service. It is a fundamental principle that has helped make Canada the great nation it is. However, we also know that there are a number of talented, extraordinary people within the public service who want to serve in a different capacity. Although they are happy and have done great things within the public service, they perhaps want to move into a different realm and perhaps participate by being elected to the House of Commons, provincial legislatures, or municipal councils. They choose to serve their nation or their provinces or communities in a different way. Having seen that and understanding the need for continuing to have a non-partisan, open, and transparent public service, the member brought forward a bill that would help to protect the officials who work in the offices of agents of Parliament.

As the member for Timmins—James Bay and the member for York Centre have said, we had this legislation in front of our committee. It was a model of how a committee should work when looking at a private member's bill. It was also a testament to the member for York Centre. After consulting and hearing the depositions in front of the committee, the member himself brought forward a number of reasoned amendments to reflect the fact that the point of the bill was to protect those people within the offices of agents of Parliament, to improve transparency, and to continue to build on what Canadians have come to regard as the best public service in the world. The member brought forward these amendments so that we could review them as a committee.

● (1135)

We spent a lot of time debating the amendments to the bill. Obviously we did not all agree. We did not all agree on either the bill or the amendments that were brought forward. A lot of time was spent debating them, and as members can see, there is some disagreement in the House with respect to the contents of the bill.

However, by and large, it worked as Canadians would expect it to work. A private member brought forward a bill that he thought was important that would improve the public service. He thought it was important to his constituents and that it would provide protection to those people in the public service who want to serve in different

capacities, either in this House or in provincial legislatures. He brought forward the bill to provide that protection.

When the member for York Centre heard from witnesses and they asked for amendments to be made to make the bill better, those amendments were brought forward and debated at committee. Ultimately, they were brought forward to the House, where we are debating them today.

I would ask the members, as they are reviewing this bill, to put it in context and for just a moment to put partisan rhetoric aside and look at what the bill seeks to accomplish.

When the Auditor General of Canada came before the committee, he laid on the table some of the areas he was very concerned about. He talked about investigations and reporting back to Parliament and the fact that he was uncomfortable with that. By and large, we heard that from some of the other agents of Parliament, too.

As the committee worked through it, and as it sought to investigate how this would work, it decided that it was probably not something that would be an effective tool for transparency in the public service. It was not being looked upon in the spirit in which it was brought forward, so the hon. member decided to withdraw that provision from the bill.

Just to sum up, this is a very good bill. It is aimed at protecting our public servants. It is aimed at giving them an opportunity to serve in different capacities. It would actually build on the legislation and the rules that are already in place in the broader public sector to ensure that we continue to have a non-partisan, effective public service.

I commend the member for York Centre not only for bringing forward this bill but for doing all the work that needed to be done to modify and amend the bill and to gain the support of individuals who had at one point come before the committee with a different opinion. I suspect now that when people look at this, they will be confident that what they see is the right approach and they will be confident that this bill will do what it is supposed to do, which is protect our public service while guaranteeing a non-partisan public service for many years to come.

Unlike my friends in the opposition, let me close by saying how proud of I am of this country. I have had the opportunity to serve since 2008. When it comes to where Canada has been and where it is going, I cannot tell members how excited I am about where Canada is going. When I look at our job creation and the economic opportunities Canadians have that they did not have before, and when I look at the leadership the Prime Minister is showing on the international stage, I know that Canada is safe. I know that Canada is secure. I know that the opportunities in the job market for our youth are expanding.

I, unlike the opposition, am very confident about where Canada is going and what we have done. I look forward to many more years of helping this great country become even better. Unlike the opposition, I do not look down on this country. I always look forward, and I hope that the opposition will finally join with us in helping to build a bigger, better, stronger, and safer Canada.

• (1140)

[Translation]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous privilege and honour for me to rise in the House and speak on behalf of the people of Pontiac, which is certainly one of the most beautiful ridings in the country.

Like my colleagues, I was fortunate enough to visit every part of my riding and to listen to my constituents. People everywhere, whether in Maniwaki, Rapides-des-Joachims, Masson-Angers or Buckingham, shared their views, which has re-energized me and given me the boost I needed to represent them here, an honour that I am quite happy to accept. Of course, they also shared their concerns with me.

Many active and retired public servants live in my riding. Given that it is not far from Ottawa, many people follow federal politics closely and have concerns about democracy. They have seen the government put more and more power into the hands of the executive branch in a partisan manner.

• (1145)

[English]

This is what is so ironic about the bill. It is a blind, really. It speaks about dealing with partisanship but it does the opposite. One thing we have to fundamentally recognize about the Westminster system is that it is a partisan system. The partisanship goes from the very base all the way to the top.

Therefore, I ask this fundamental question: Who is going to judge partisanship in the bill? The only logical answer to that question is the government. Therefore, we have to be careful with the very definition of partisanship. We are not talking about an arm's length judgment of the agents of Parliament or of the public service. We are talking about a government, which has proven itself highly partisan, giving itself the tools to basically go forward with a witch hunt across the public service.

This ill-conceived, badly written piece of legislation is actually redundant. Somehow, over there on those benches they forgot that there is an entire article in the Public Service Employment Act, part 7, which very clearly defines for the public service what a partisan activity is. That definition applies to employees of agents of Parliament and the public service at large. In fact, as a public servant before becoming an elected official, I myself had to abide by that article very closely. If they happened to take the time to read it and actually look at its details, they would have seen that the bill proposes redundancies.

One might think that we are being partisan in saying that, and that it is the NDP's opinion. In fact, it is an opinion shared by experts and by the commissioners themselves. It is important to put on record what the commissioners actually think about the bill.

The information commissioner said that it is:

Difficult to understand the need for the Bill; or what problem it is attempting to resolve

Although the stated purpose is to avoid conflicts related to "partisan activities" that term is not defined or mentioned in the Bill

Creates an environment that may hinder the independence and the execution of the mandate of the [Office of the Information Commissioner].

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I will continue with a quote from no less a person than the Auditor General, Mr. Ferguson. He said:

...I think the way it is drafted now, there are some irritants in it that really aren't necessary and wouldn't help our independence.

It won't affect the way we define these types of activities or the way we manage conflict of interest. But I think, as I've said before, it raises some [important] questions....

It does raise some important questions and I will give that to the government. The problem is that it does not answer them. When it does answer them, it answers in vagaries. Why would it not even define the term "partisanship" in the legislation? There is a clear definition of that in part 7 of the Public Service Employment Act, so why make it even more difficult to judge the partisanship of a public servant or partisan activities if it were not to open the door to what would be political interference?

I do not have to tell my colleagues on this side of the bench. We have seen that political interference time and time again. We saw it recently with an ATIP request. If the government truly believed in transparency and in non-partisanship in the public service, why did some of its staff get involved in an ATIP request? Access to information is one of the fundamental ways for our democracy to get access to information that is owned by Canadian citizens. Time and time again the government has used the cabinet confidentiality clause in order to get around revealing sensitive information to Canadians.

What I would also bring up is that only one session was given to the study of this bill, one session for something so fundamental it affects the independence of the agents of Parliament.

When it comes to the supposed independence of the public service, the government has also shown, in giving new guidelines for the use of social media by the public service, by the way it is dealing with sick leave in the pre-negotiations of the collective agreements, how it has hidden its intentions with regard to a number of matters when dealing with the public service, and not just the fundamental lack of respect that has been shown time and time again by the President of the Treasury Board to our public service. I can understand why Canadians are skeptical about the bill. I can understand why my own constituents are.

Fundamentally, we have to ask ourselves before drafting legislation whether or not there are already existing rules in place that do the same job. This is an issue of sound management and as legislators it is just part of our homework. The fundamental homework on the bill was not done. Obviously, the question that one can ask is: why? I particularly have some doubts about whether or not this bill was cooked up in the PMO's office to deal with people who have an independent voice like Kevin Page and Marc Mayrand. The government has even taken on the Supreme Court, one of the highest, highly-respected, if not most respected institutions in our country.

As democrats and as Canadians, we have to worry when a government tries to slip in these types of rules through no less than a private member's bill. If the government really wants to muzzle our independent agents of Parliament, it should just come out and be honest about it and bring out its duct tape and ropes. Instead, time and time again, it smears their names. If the Parliamentary Budget Officer agrees with it, there is no problem.

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• (1150)

[Translation]

The accolades roll in.

[English]

However, the second that a parliamentary agent says something critical of the government, the entire Conservative machine and the entire media circus that is there to protect an ideology that wants to concentrate power in the hands of the PMO's office are there to dwindle the quality of our democracy.

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome all of the members here in the House back to Parliament. The New Democrats worked hard this summer. They met with their constituents and knocked on a lot of doors to find out about people's priorities. I myself am so glad that I know more about the issues and concerns that matter most to the people of Terrebonne—Blainville.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate Bill C-520. Since I am a member of the committee that studied this bill, I feel confident talking about just how bad it is.

I would like to begin by saying that the NDP will always seek to strengthen political impartiality and transparency in Parliament. The NDP believes that Parliament cannot function well without these values, which underpin its credibility and that of its institutions. My NDP colleagues and I fully embrace the principle of political neutrality and transparency.

I also believe that any bill whose purpose is to implement measures based on these principles must be drafted with great care and attention to detail. Unfortunately, that is not the case with Bill C-520. Not only is it badly written, it is also yet another sorry attempt by the government to cover up its own failures in terms of parliamentary accountability.

Other than the title—which, by the way, is a smokescreen—the content of Bill C-520 is useless, redundant and tinged with malice. Still, Canadians will not be taken in. They are well aware that the true purpose of this bill is to intimidate agents of Parliament, the very people whose mandate is to protect Canadians from the government's abuses.

This shows yet again that the Conservatives do not want to be accountable to anyone. They want to do what they want to do when they want to do it, and they could not care less about democracy. With a bill like Bill C-520, they are not even trying to hide the fact. This is another sorry example of the Conservatives' way of doing things: a witch hunt targeting those who would bring them into line.

The NDP strongly opposes this bill, which is rife with flaws, omissions and sinister motives. We are very proud of our work in committee. We worked hard to force the government to eliminate the worst parts of Bill C-520. Even so, this bill serves no purpose, and that is what I would like to demonstrate today.

When the hon. member for York Centre appeared before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to defend his bill, he described it as “imperative” and “critical”. Using

such an alarming tone suggests that the political neutrality of agents of Parliament is often threatened. That is what my colleague, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay, was trying to find out more about. He asked the member for York Centre whether he had any examples of partisan activities conducted by any of the nine offices of the agents of Parliament who are subject to his bill. Oddly, the hon. member for York Centre had no concrete examples to provide. Not one.

It is odd that Bill C-520 is meant to address a problem that does not exist. Even more strange, or more worrisome, I should say, is that during review in committee we found out that the hon. member for York Centre did not contact any of the nine offices of the agents of Parliament when his bill was being drafted, even though they will be directly affected by the proposed measures in the bill.

If the hon. member had bothered to take this more seriously and had held consultations, he would have soon realized that we already have a whole series of laws and codes of ethics governing the offices of agents of Parliament and that those laws and codes impose political neutrality on anyone employed by those offices. For example, most of the offices of agents of Parliament are already regulated by the Public Service Employment Act, the Political Activities Regulations and the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector.

Other laws are in place to ensure the political neutrality of offices that are not subject to the Public Service Employment Act, such as the office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, who is appointed under the Parliament of Canada Act. This statute takes political neutrality into account in the appointment process. What is more, the commissioner's office is governed by a code of values and standards of conduct that specifically and thoroughly addresses political activities and neutrality. A number of other agents of Parliament have their own code of conduct that complements the current legislative regime.

As hon. members can see, we already have a host of laws and public policies that ensure the political neutrality of agents of Parliament and their employees.

• (1155)

The three agents of Parliament who testified before the committee did not provide any examples of a conflict of interest or political partisanship. Their employees are professionals who carry out their official duties in a strictly non-partisan way.

Clearly, the current system is working. It is effective and, as a result, Bill C-520 is unnecessary and redundant. It is therefore not surprising that the member for York Centre was unable to provide any examples of partisan actions.

If the government was really serious about its approach and was actually acting in good faith, it would have consulted all of the agents of Parliament and invited all of the agents affected by Bill C-520 to testify in committee. However, it did not do so. In my opinion, that was the least the government could have done.

When I read Bill C-520 for the first time, I wondered what the real motives of the member for York Centre were. After all, this bill does not solve a problem; rather, it is a solution that is looking for a problem.

We have to ask ourselves why such a bill is being introduced since, in addition to duplicating systems and creating overlap, Bill C-520 is seriously flawed. Well, I got an answer this past June.

Everyone agrees that Bill C-520 is an unfair attack on the agents of Parliament whose duty it is to monitor the Conservatives. We learned from an article in the *National Post* that the member for York Centre, the sponsor of this bill, accepted inappropriate donations from lobbyists that he met as part of his work on the Standing Committee on Finance.

This type of solicitation violates the guidelines issued by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, which prohibit MPs from targeting any organizations or individuals with which they anticipate having official dealings.

This is not the first time that this type of thing has happened. Over the past few months, even Conservative ministers have had to pay back donations that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner deemed inappropriate.

Clearly, the current government does not want to be accountable any more than it wants to be monitored. The agents of Parliament are doing an excellent job of protecting us from government abuse, since the Conservatives are being caught with their hands in the cookie jar on a regular basis.

Rather than following the rules, the Conservatives are seeking to undermine the credibility of those who monitor them by unfairly attacking those individuals. That is what happened with the former parliamentary budget officer and, more recently, with the Chief Electoral Officer.

Bill C-520 is nothing more than a cynical attempt on the part of the Conservatives to make Parliament less accountable to Canadians. It is very worrisome.

Canadians deserve a government that respects parliamentary institutions, not one that tries to circumvent the rules and take advantage of the system.

I would like to speak to another aspect of this bill that is of great concern to me, namely the privacy rights of employees in the offices of agents of Parliament.

This bill requires anyone who applies for a position with or works in the office of an agent of Parliament to produce a written declaration indicating any partisan positions they have held in the past 10 years. The bill also requires that the declaration be posted on the office's website. In my opinion, these requirements are unnecessary and violate employees' privacy.

Everyone knows that the Conservatives do not care about Canadians' privacy. That is blatantly obvious in this case.

Forcing office employees to publicly divulge this type of information could have serious consequences because their work location and political affiliations would be made public. What is more, in 10 years, an employee could have changed affiliations or completely ceased any political involvement.

Those kinds of factors could cause employees keep quiet instead of disclosing this information. In addition, they may be concerned

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about the impact such declarations could have on their career and therefore may be reluctant to disclose anything.

Thanks to the NDP's hard work and effort, we avoided the worst. When this bill was studied in committee, we got the government to back down and forced it to withdraw the most dangerous provisions in the original bill.

Unfortunately, the concessions the Conservatives made do very little to assuage our concerns, which are shared by the agents of Parliament. Bill C-520 is still a set of useless provisions that will lead to confusion and make agents of Parliament less independent.

The NDP will continue to work to protect the agencies of parliamentary oversight.

Our country deserves better than a selfish, mean-spirited government.

● (1200)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre will only have two minutes before this stage of the debate ends.

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, even if it is only for two minutes, I am glad to join the debate on Bill C-520 because I have watched it with great interest since it was first introduced. My observation, after listening to the debate from my colleagues and observing the member for York Centre who sponsored the bill, is that the Conservatives' all too evident disrespect for Parliament seems to have made a quantum leap to an out-and-out contempt for Parliament. The bill personifies the attitude that they will systematically undermine and chip away at all of the things that make our Westminster parliamentary system function, and one of those is the independence of members of Parliament. They undermine and try to bring into disrepute the reputations of some of the most honourable people who uphold the integrity of our parliamentary system.

However, we cannot really blame the member for York Centre for this. We all know this is not a private member's bill. In fact, the Conservatives use their private members' bills in the cheapest way possible as a way to avoid the scrutiny and oversight that government bills actually receive.

We know that 25 out of 30 of the so-called crime bills put forward by the Conservative Party were put forward as private members' bills. The Prime Minister's Office writes them and finds a willing stooge within the Conservative caucus to sponsor these bills. That way they do not go through the same legislative and constitutionality checks to ensure these bills do not offend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They get all the media advantage without any of the scrutiny and oversight that are supposed to take place on bills.

Government Orders

I wish the member for York Centre had done one thing. He had a last opportunity in this second hour of debate to apologize to the officers of Parliament whose reputations he undermined and made accusations about. Somebody has to tell Conservatives that the truth does not have a liberal bias. Their xenophobia, their paranoia is that those people who make detrimental comments about anything they do are somehow now enemies of the state and they have the rug pulled out from under them and their reputations tarnished. That is offensive to me. The member for York Centre could have used this opportunity to apologize. This is one of the things that parties do to floor-crossers. They have given them a dog of a bill because they do not really trust them anyway.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1205)

[Translation]

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT

The House resumed from June 19 consideration of the motion that Bill C-21, An Act to control the administrative burden that regulations impose on businesses, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to share my time here today with my colleague from Don Valley West and particularly to have the opportunity to speak to this bill.

As members are aware, I had the opportunity to chair the Red Tape Reduction Commission several months ago. This bill enshrines in law a very important rule. Of course I am referring to the one-for-one rule, which entrepreneurs asked for in consultations.

What does this rule mean in terms of regulations?

It is quite simple: any time one of my cabinet colleagues wishes to introduce a new regulation that affects entrepreneurs and business people, he or she must remove or eliminate another. That is why it is called the one-for-one rule. This will ensure that the administrative burden on businesses does not increase from year to year.

This rule has already been in effect for a year here in the government. It is a pleasure for me to enshrine it in law to ensure that it is always followed and to fulfill our campaign commitment to Canadians.

When a minister has to repeal a regulation, he or she must remove a regulation with an administrative burden that is equal to that of the regulation to be implemented. This new regulation must therefore have the same cost of compliance for businesses.

Consequently, regulations are assessed so that when the minister wants to implement a new regulation, he or she removes a regulation that carries the same weight for small businesses.

This rule was instituted as a result of the consultations that we, the members of the commission, conducted. In all, 15 round tables were held in 13 different Canadian cities, and they were attended by 189 entrepreneurs or their representatives through their associations. We also received submissions through the Internet.

We concluded that business people want less government regulation and a more efficient government that does not treat people like children by holding their hands their whole life. They want a government that respects individuals' freedom and responsibility and that treats Canadians and entrepreneurs like free and responsible people. Canadians are responsible and they know that they must obey Canada's laws. However, we must eliminate redundant regulations that affect the profitability of businesses. That is why we have introduced the one-for-one rule.

People who appeared before the commission told us that government regulations have an impact on their companies' bottom line. We all know that time is money. In a small business with less than 10 employees, filling out a form required by the state means that they are not doing what they do best, that is, working for themselves, creating jobs and being more productive. That is why this rule is in the bill and will be enshrined in law so as to ensure that the administrative burden on businesses does not increase.

During our consultations, we identified more than 2,300 clear and specific irritants. I invite members and Canadians to have a look at the Red Tape Reduction Commission's report, which provides a list of irritants specific to various federal government departments. There were more than 2,300—

• (1210)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle on a point of order.

Mr. Marc-André Morin: Mr. Speaker, I do not see how this in any way relates to the bill we are discussing.

The Deputy Speaker: I think it is in order.

The minister of state may continue.

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that these 2,300 irritants identified by the commission, with the support and the vigilance of Canadians, have been eliminated. As I said earlier, this rule was put in place in April 2012. It will now be legislated.

I would also like to inform the House that as of June 16, 2014, the reduction in administration burden under the rule was valued at more than \$20 million. That is \$20 million in net savings for Canadian business owners. How did we manage these savings and ensure that Canadian business owners would benefit from them? We did so by reducing and abolishing 19 regulations at the federal level. We made the regulations much simpler and easier to understand, and we ensured that the rules were written in more accessible language.

I remind members that in budget 2007, we committed to reducing the overall paper burden on businesses by 20%. I have good news about that. Our government fulfilled this commitment in March 2009. We have eliminated some 80,000 regulatory requirements and obligations. The effect has been quite simple: business owners now have more time to focus on creating wealth and jobs in Canada.

One example of these unnecessary regulations that were imposed by departments and that we abolished came from the Canada Revenue Agency. The agency has many regulations, especially for entrepreneurs. We identified more than 8,000 obsolete forms, filings and obligations that the agency required from entrepreneurs and Canadians. We simply abolished them. Now we know that when the agency is dealing with Canadians, it is treating them the way it treats every other commercial enterprise. That is to say that when an individual sends a written request to the agency about the interpretation of a regulation or a law, that person will receive a written response from the agency. In that way, the agency is serving Canadians better. When entrepreneurs have a question about how to interpret a tax law or regulation, they can simply write to the agency and it will respond within a reasonable time frame.

It seems quite simple, but these are the sorts of things that were not done before at the agency and that are done now. It means that entrepreneurs can know in advance how the agency interprets a regulation so that they can legitimately comply with it.

We also ensured that companies can now submit more than 1,200 electronic records of employment at the same time. That was a request from the associations that represent the majority of Canada's entrepreneurs. We made it happen.

In the 2011 throne speech, we also committed to reducing red tape. That commitment is reflected in the fact that the agency is now listening to the public and entrepreneurs and is responding to requests from Canadians in a timely manner.

There are many other initiatives that we have taken within the government to reduce red tape. I would like to point out that Canadians can now obtain a passport that is valid for 10 years instead of only five. That, too, will reduce red tape.

I am proud to have been able to speak to this bill, since I worked with my government colleagues to develop the bill as it now stands. It addresses the concerns of entrepreneurs. I am pleased that the one-for-one rule will be enshrined in law.

• (1215)

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture's speech. I have also listened to a lot of merchants and small and medium-sized business owners in my riding. I really pay attention to the people in my riding who have something to say about small and medium-sized businesses. These people are not seeing a lot of encouraging signs from the government. The NDP put forward a number of proposals about the credit card fees imposed on small and medium-sized businesses.

Since the minister is here to answer my question, I would like to ask him why the Conservatives do not support measures to regulate credit card fees, particularly the fees that small merchants and small and medium-sized businesses have to pay.

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I have not been talking to the same business people. As the member for Beauce, I am lucky to be surrounded by SMEs. Many of the business people in Beauce are happy with our government's measures to foster freedom, which includes economic freedom and, of course, individual responsibility. When people are free to make their dreams

come true, they can create wealth. That is what is happening in Beauce and all over Canada.

That being said, there is certainly a very heavy administrative burden on small businesses, and that is because of the three levels of government: federal, provincial and municipal. Perhaps people in the member's riding have talked to her about provincial and municipal government regulations. The federal government, however, has done its part, and I urge my colleagues in other provinces to do the same and reduce the administrative burden they place on business people.

[English]

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this initiative began seven years ago, in 2007. In the time between then and now, could the minister inform the House whether there has been a deliberate and conscientious effort on the part of the government to remove existing redundant regulation?

The minister referred to a mass of unnecessary regulation and burden that was pre-existing in the system. Could he report to the House that all redundant and unnecessary regulation has now been effectively removed from the Canadian regulatory system?

• (1220)

[Translation]

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Mr. Speaker, I said earlier in my speech that 2,300 irritants that were affecting entrepreneurs have been eliminated, as these were measures that were no longer needed. This will give us a more effective regulatory framework.

Canada has been a country since 1867, and some legislation contains outdated regulations. We will continue to examine those outdated regulations and eliminate them. That is why we are studying this bill and the one-for-one rule here today. It is important to eliminate the outdated regulations as new ones are introduced.

Treasury Board does this kind of work every day, and we will continue to do it in order to ensure that Canada will always have an effective regulatory system in place, without any unnecessary regulations.

[English]

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism and the President of the Treasury Board for their hard work on this. I have been on the treasury board for five or six years now and I have seen first-hand that these ministers, and other colleagues, really have worked hard to get rid of red tape.

Could the minister explain why the red tape reduction is important and how it would fit into the government's overall plan to create jobs, wealth and prosperity for Canadians?

Government Orders

Hon. Maxime Bernier: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to sit with my colleague on Treasury Board. We are all working hard to ensure that entrepreneurs can do what they do best, which is create jobs and wealth in our country. As a government it is very simple: it is more economic freedom. If people are free to realize their dreams, they will be able to do what they want to do and, at the same time, create jobs and wealth in the country. It is not a big fat government that creates jobs; it is the entrepreneurs.

To allow entrepreneurs to do what they do best, this legislation is important. Now we will reduce the burden and abolish the red tape so entrepreneurs can do what they do best, and that is great news. That is the language of our free trade agenda, our low-tax agenda, and our red tape agenda.

I am very pleased today that we have the opportunity to vote on this excellent bill.

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand to speak on the importance of the government's one-for-one rule. I want to thank the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture for sharing his time with me on this important legislation, which we are seeking to enshrine in law through this bill today.

For anyone not familiar with it, the one-for-one rule places strict controls on the growth of regulatory red tape on businesses. The one-for-one rule is part of a package of system-wide reforms to Canada's federal regulatory system that we promised to implement when we released our action plan in October 2012. Actually, the one-for-one rule came into effect earlier than our action plan; it came into effect on April 1, 2012.

As the President of the Treasury Board said when announcing the one-for-one legislation, this rule is helping to create the conditions for economic growth by increasing Canadian competitiveness and reducing roadblocks to business innovation. I would add that the legislation before us will make these conditions the law of the land.

I will take a moment to describe how the one-for-one rule came about. As members may recall, in economic action plan 2010, our government committed to reducing regulatory red tape in order to improve the ability of businesses and entrepreneurs to respond to emerging growth opportunities and create jobs. To do this, we created the Red Tape Reduction Commission, which was chaired by the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture.

The commission's mandate was twofold. First, it was to identify irritants to business that stem from federal regulatory requirements and review how those requirements are administered to reduce the compliance burden on businesses, especially small business. The focus, incidentally, was to be on irritants that have a clear detrimental effect to growth, competitiveness, and innovation. Second, it was to recommend options that address the irritants, and control and reduce the compliance burden on a long-term basis.

The commission held consultations with businesses and Canadians, both in person and online, to hear their concerns with excessive red tape and how it was hampering their business. Their very consultations took place in ridings and constituencies across

this country, including one in my own constituency of Don Valley West.

As a result of these consultations, the commission recommended a combination of system-wide reforms and targeted actions. The one-for-one rule is one of the reforms that came out of that process. As I mentioned, it controls the cost of the administrative burden borne by businesses, particularly small businesses, and it does it in two ways. First, under the one-for-one rule, regulators have 24 months to offset any increase in the cost of the administrative burden resulting from a regulatory change with an equal cost reduction from existing regulations. Second, it requires that a regulation be taken off the books whenever a new regulation that adds an administrative burden cost is introduced. In this way, the rule controls both the cost of the administrative burden and the actual number of regulations that businesses have to deal with. It works.

During its first year of implementation, the one-for-one rule provided a successful system-wide control on regulatory red tape impacting businesses. What is more, as of June 16, 2014, under the one-for-one rule, the government had reduced administrative burden by over \$20 million and achieved a net reduction of 19 regulations. We are confident that that trend towards savings will continue, and in fact it must continue.

Let me give a real-life example of the one-for-one rule in action. Last January, we announced a proposal to change the Food and Drug Regulations to allow regulated pharmacy technicians to oversee the transfer of prescriptions from one pharmacy to another, a task formerly restricted to pharmacists alone, and to complete associated paperwork. Pharmacists can now spend more time providing advice to and serving customers, and less time at their desks doing paperwork.

● (1225)

As a result, pharmacies across Canada will start to reduce their administrative burdens this year, resulting in annual savings of some \$15 million by 2018.

Another reform we have made has lifted the threshold of corporations reporting financial and ownership information under the Corporations Returns Act. As a result, more than 32,000 businesses no longer need to file a complex government return. This change is expected to reduce the administrative burden by about \$1.2 million a year.

The one-for-one rule and our other red tape reduction efforts are bearing fruit. They are increasing Canadian competitiveness, freeing businesses to innovate, invest, grow, and create jobs, and enhancing Canada's reputation as one of the best places in the world in which to do business and to invest.

In fact, in Bloomberg's most recent ranking of the best countries in the world for doing business, Canada placed second, just behind Hong Kong and ahead of the United States. By following through on our action plan commitments, our government is doing the hard work required to cement this reputation.

Our top priority is to create economic growth and jobs in Canada, and one of the most important ways we can do this is by maintaining high productivity.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2004, gross domestic product per person in Canada was almost 300% higher than in 1961, with labour productivity accounting for 80% of that remarkable increase.

It is a key responsibility of government to set the conditions in which this productivity can continue to grow. Every effort must be made to increase the competitiveness of our firms and enable them to compete for markets. That is why reforming our federal regulatory system with measures like the one-for-one rule is crucial. It is the way to create the right climate for small businesses to grow and succeed in Canada, particularly in a time of global economic uncertainty. It is the way forward.

What is more, it comes on top of a series of measures we have taken to help businesses thrive. We have gone from one of the highest marginal effective tax rates on business to among the lowest. We have lowered taxes 150 times since taking office, reducing taxes for Canadian businesses from 22% in 2007, to 15% in 2012.

As a result, Canada today has the confidence of the world's investors. We intend to keep that confidence level high with measures like this one-for-one rule legislation, which shows Canada is serious about competing with the rest of the world.

Enshrining the one-for-one rule in law shows how much we believe in Canadians. We know our people can compete with the best in the world when they are not stifled with unnecessary bureaucratic red tape.

That is why we are showing our faith in Canadians by giving the one-for-one rule the force of law, and that is why I am asking the hon. members of this House to vote for this legislation and vote for Canadians.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his speech and I would like to welcome everyone back to the House. Personally, I am very happy to be back.

This debate shows, once again, that the Conservatives are all talk and no action. Over the past three and a half years that I have been here, I have had the opportunity to speak with many entrepreneurs and business leaders in various sectors. When it comes to red tape, bureaucracy and problems regarding what approach to take, the government's record is the exact opposite of what it advocates in this bill, which is evident in the employment insurance file.

There the government has definitely increased the burden, which is causing a lot of problems for small businesses.

Government Orders

How can my colleague justify supporting this bill, while showing such a laissez-faire attitude on other issues?

[English]

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome the member back as well. I hope everybody has had a wonderful summer and that we are ready to get back to work.

Clearly, this bill is good work for the House. We had good news on EI last week, and I hope the member was able to hear that news. More importantly, on this issue today, I want to read a quote that is relevant. It is by Laura Jones, who is the vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. She stated:

CFIB has always said, if it matters, measure it. The federal government continues to be a leader in fighting red tape, particularly when it comes to measuring, cutting, and publicly reporting on the burden being shouldered by small business.

I come from a business background, and I understand regulatory and bureaucratic red tape. I can confirm that by removing, on a one-for-one basis, burdensome regulation in favour of new, more refined, and more productive regulation, it is the right direction for this government to go. I look forward to the House supporting this later today.

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of economic growth into the future and how it could positively impact the middle class, one thing we need to recognize is the vital role that small businesses play. I would suggest it is the backbone of our economy. There are things we could be doing, and looking at ways to reduce red tape is a very strong positive.

I have a question for the member. To what degree does he believe that the government has any role in looking at ways to get rid of some of the red tape for other jurisdictions, such as federal regulations, provincial regulations, municipal regulations? Is there a role for the federal government, from his perspective?

Mr. John Carmichael: Mr. Speaker, clearly there is a role, but today we are talking about the one-for-one rule. The purpose of this legislation is to remove the burdensome regulation that is crowding small businesses in their ability to compete on the world stage. We support free trade and we look at the opportunities internationally. Regulations are required internally in this country, whether provincially or federally, and this government has a role to play in that.

Therefore we must absolutely play a role, but, more importantly, we must remove the hurdles that stifle small and medium-sized businesses in their ability to compete and secure business on the global stage. This legislation plays an important part in helping us to achieve that, and I hope the member will support it.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today. I want to welcome back my colleagues on all sides of the House. We have important work to get to and I am looking forward to starting that important work with our discussion today on Bill C-21.

Government Orders

As the NDP critic for small business, government imposed red tape and the paper burden faced by Canada's entrepreneurs remains one of the primary concerns raised with me by business owners as I continue to consult with them on how government can create the conditions for them to grow their businesses and create jobs from coast to coast to coast.

Whether it is the local bakery or the flower shop, small and medium-sized businesses are the heart of our local economies and the backbone of thriving, prosperous communities. It is these small business owners who create jobs, employ our neighbours, and support our charities. I can speak to that truthfully as I ran the United Way in Sudbury before I was elected in 2008. It was the small and medium-sized business owners who came out to support our charities and support the United Way, and so many of them across our communities. That is why it is so important that the government do all it can to support the growth of small businesses and why New Democrats support common sense solutions to reduce the paper burden and the compliance costs small businesses face when dealing with the government.

New Democrats believe in reducing the paper burden and implementing solutions that would have the potential to eliminate red tape for businesses. Young entrepreneurs and family businesses are key to a prosperous economic future for Canada. We need to ensure they are using their time as efficiently as possible. The goal of reducing the paper burden for job creators is laudable.

According to a report by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, various forms of regulatory requirements spread across all levels of government cost business owners an estimated \$30 billion a year in time and money. This particularly concerns small and medium-sized businesses because the annual cost of regulation per employee is highest for enterprises with less than five employees. I think of all of the businesses in my riding, many of them are what we call the businesses on Main Street. These businesses are doing great work. They start at seven o'clock in the morning and finish at nine or ten o'clock at night. They have five or less employees. However, these businesses lack the financial capacity to hire someone dedicated to regulatory compliance. Therefore, these costs often are internalized as lost opportunity costs because it is the small business owners themselves who are faced with the daunting task of filling out the piles of paperwork that a business is obligated to file.

With that being said, while we are happy to work with Canada's entrepreneurs to make their interaction with government as simple and cost-effective as possible, New Democrats also believe regulations that are in the public interest should be maintained. It is not just a question of managing the number of regulations on the books but of determining which regulations are working for Canadians and which are not. It seems like common sense.

Most importantly, government regulations that protect health, safety, and the environment of Canadians should be a priority. Unfortunately, the bill only pays lip service to that obligation. In fact, only in the preamble to the bill does it state that the enactment would not apply to regulations that protect the health and safety of Canadians. Even more worrisome, there is no mention of the word "environment". The preamble states, "Whereas the one-for-one rule must not compromise public health, public safety or the Canadian

economy". There is absolutely no mention in the bill of the environment.

An hon. member: That speaks volumes.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: It does, Mr. Speaker.

New Democrats are not alone in expressing our concerns about this impact. As I said, it is worrisome that there is no mention of the word "environment". It is also reprehensible. New Democrats will specifically seek to address this in an amendment during the committee stage of the bill's proceedings.

We have some validators on this. Robyn Benson, president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, has underscored the importance of ensuring the proper enforcement of health and safety regulations, stating that "Regulations, and their proper enforcement, can literally save lives. But sometimes only a horrific mishap will make the point." Unfortunately, we recently had a very stark reminder of what can happen when deregulation runs amok with the tragic incident at Lac-Mégantic last summer.

● (1240)

The labour movement is not alone in underscoring the importance of regulations that protect the health, safety, and environment of Canadians within the context of the bill. In the lead-up to the introduction of Bill C-21, Laura Jones, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who has been quoted numerous times by the other side, stated that rules that are necessary to protect health, promote safety, and protect the environment are important and should not be classified under the definition of red tape.

What is most concerning about this sloganistic approach to easing the paper burden on small business is that the Conservative and Liberal track records from the past when it comes to safeguarding regulations and standards that protect the health and safety of Canadians have been abysmal.

As I mentioned earlier, the tragedy in Quebec has put rail safety in Canada back in the spotlight after decades of deregulation by the Liberals and then Conservatives. Largely, this descent into deregulation can be traced back to 1999 when the Liberals further deregulated rail safety by continuing to implement the safety management systems approach adopted by Mulroney's Conservative government. This approach has allowed rail companies to self-regulate rather than requiring them to adhere to operational safety standards jointly established by government and the industry. Unfortunately, we have seen a shocking example of how unchecked deregulation can cut short the lives of dozens of individuals and reek havoc on an entire town in what seemed like the blink of an eye but was really the result of a slow march toward a dangerous self-regulatory approach.

Further, with its October 2014 budget implementation act, Bill C-4, the Conservatives introduced changes to the labour code that will significantly restrict the powers of health and safety officers in federal workplaces. This is yet again an attack on Canadian workers that could have serious consequences for individuals in the workplace.

Let me speak briefly as to why the issue of health and safety regulations is so important and why New Democrats believe they should be exempted from the mandate of Bill C-21. In Canada, over 1,000 people fall victim to workplace accidents every year, while a growing number of Canadians are losing their lives or suffering from work-related illnesses. Regrettably, this number has been going up for the past 15 years.

I think we can all agree in the House that any injury, any death in the workplace, is one too many. Unfortunately, all too often families are left to pick up the pieces when loved ones are suddenly taken away while on the job. No one should ever have to leave their home in the morning wondering whether today is the day they die at work. In our country, three people are killed on the job every working day. Left behind are families and friends devastated by the loss of their loved ones.

Given the sad reality of how tenuous health and safety conditions continue to be for many of Canada's workers, it begs the question: If the Conservatives are really serious about the health and safety of Canadians, why not explicitly exclude regulations that protect health, safety, and the environment from the application of the bill?

New Democrats need more than the government's word or the preamble of a bill, which is subject to interpretation. We want assurances that the one-for-one rule would not apply to regulations that impact the health, safety, and environment of Canadians.

Canada's entrepreneurs are resourceful and innovative by nature. They are well positioned to succeed in the 21st century economy. However, to help them create the jobs we need in Canada, we need to make sure government is providing new entrepreneurs with the services and the supports they need to succeed. For instance, there are a variety of government services to assist businesses, but as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has pointed out, they are offered by many different governments, different agencies, and different departments. Finding and applying for the right service can also be time consuming, and many small business owners are forced to hire expensive consultants to navigate that bureaucracy. That needs to change. However, Bill C-21 does nothing to address this growing concern.

● (1245)

One aspect of this issue, which often gets lost in the conversation around the need to reduce the paper burden, is that dramatic cuts to the public service represent an additional layer of red tape for small business owners as they are forced to wait longer for the answers they need to maintain and grow their businesses.

New Democrats were staunch opponents to the cuts made by the Conservative government, cuts that have had a major impact not just on our most vulnerable citizens but also on business owners who are placed on hold in what can seem like a never-ending queue. While the Conservatives like to brand themselves as the party that is open

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for business, their cuts to front-line public services has left a closed sign hanging in the window of government service delivery during precisely the time when small business owners need a leg-up because of the economic downturn. This has left entrepreneurs out in the cold, not to mention the impact it has had on job recovery in our country.

That is why the bill is such a misnomer. On the one hand, the government is using a sloganistic approach to improving the efficiency of government in responding to the needs of our job creators. Then, on the other hand, it has undermined the ability of the government to deliver services and respond to inquiries from those very same job creators with its reckless public sector cuts. New Democrats believe the government should be focusing on real measures to help small business owners grow their businesses and not just half measures through a self-promotional bill.

If the Conservatives truly wanted to help small businesses they would not be dragging their feet when it comes to taking real action to curtail the excessive fees credit card issuers charge merchants. Small businesses are being gouged every day. On average, they must pay about \$200 or more in fees for every \$10,000 processed. Despite dismissing a recent case against Visa and Mastercard, in a rare move the Competition Tribunal called for a regulatory framework to deal with anti-competitive practices. So far, the Conservatives are really only paying lip service to the plight of small merchants by finally admitting that action is needed to lower merchant fees.

I could talk about the time when I went to the great riding of Winnipeg Centre. My colleague from that great riding and I went out to talk to small business owners in the Forks, which I think is the name of that great little place that is around there. We had business owners trying to track us down to talk to us about their concerns with respect to how much they are having to spend every year, some of them talking about tens of thousands of dollars, just to be able to accept credit cards, and the credit card fees that they have to pay. Some of them have even said they have had to stop taking them, which is having an effect on their businesses. They said they were not hiring people. They were not expanding their businesses because of these fees they were having to pay.

● (1250)

Unlike the Conservatives, the New Democrats have common-sense proposals to help merchants, such as creating an independent government body to crack down on the anti-competitive merchant fees that stifle small businesses.

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As well, training is important. As a party, we New Democrats know that smaller businesses do not necessarily have the resources to hire human resources managers to identify training opportunities and programs for staff let alone expertise to apply for government training programs. Training new employees costs time and money, and we sympathize with business owners who do not want to pony up the money to train employees only to have their competitors poach them and reap the rewards of their investment. Canadian business owners need to have the opportunity to have their workforce improved, because we have seen it fall by almost 40% since 1993.

We have also called for a youth hiring and training tax credit of up to about \$4,000 to reward small and medium-sized enterprises that would give our youth their first chances to have well-paying jobs. Eligible businesses hiring Canadians between ages 18 and 25 could get up to about \$1,000 for hiring a young employee and another \$1,000 to match funds for the training of said employee. This tax credit would double in regions of the country where youth unemployment is highest, up to about \$2,000 for each component. That is \$4,000.

In tough regions in the north, such as my riding of Sudbury, we have higher unemployment. I have been talking to many of the small-business owners in my riding, and many are saying that something like this would be a benefit for them. We have three great post-secondary institutions in my riding putting out great graduates: Collège Boréal, Cambrian College, and Laurentian University. This would actually help those graduates get those great-paying jobs.

Again, noting that this bill, in our opinion, is sloganistic, we really need to find other programs that would work to really help small businesses. It is small businesses, as I mentioned earlier in my speech, that are the economic drivers and the heart of our economy. It is the small and medium-sized enterprises.

We need access to financing to help small-business owners grow their businesses. We have a strong start-up culture here in Canada, but entrepreneurs find it hard to access the funds they need to grow their business. New Democrats hear every day from experts and business observers that Canada needs a stronger venture capital market and access to more investors to help entrepreneurs grow their innovative ventures into real successes. Unfortunately, too many promising Canadian start-ups are sold off to U.S. investors before they can reach full maturity, because their owners just cannot access the financing to bring them to the next level. Budget 2013 increased taxes on small-business-friendly credit unions by over \$200 million. That is money the credit unions could be using to continue to invest in our small businesses.

The Conservatives are also planning on phasing out their discounted tax treatment for labour-sponsored venture capital funds, which provide a critical source of investment for business owners, especially in Quebec.

Looking back at all the things we have been talking about that could be done right now to help small business, we have not seen any action by the current government. What the Conservatives have done is bring forward this bill that talks about reducing some of the red tape and the paper burden.

To conclude, regulations that are in the public interest should be maintained. It is not just a question of managing the number of regulations on the books but of determining which regulations are working for Canadians and which regulations are not working. This is a sound approach. What I am talking about is public administration.

By not even mentioning the word “environment” in the preamble and in this bill causes us great concern on this side of the House. While of course it is important to protect the Canadian economy and important to ensure that there is health and safety, we cannot have any of those three items without protections for the environment. It talks about the air we breathe and the water we drink and the places we reside. We need to ensure that those protections are put in place.

While we agree that we want to reduce the administrative burden on small businesses, we really do not have faith that the current Conservative government would do just that. It has a history of deregulation with no regard for the health and safety of Canadians. As I talked about earlier, there has been example after example of that.

• (1255)

One of the other things we could do right now is help businesses plan for the next generation in retirement. Entrepreneurs of the baby boomer generation are approaching retirement, and many are unsure of how they will dispose of the businesses they have spent a lifetime building. New Democrats know that entrepreneurs find it difficult to properly value the worth of a business they have poured their hearts and souls into and that finding a buyer who can raise funds to pay the right price can be challenging. A lifetime capital gains exemption protects business owners when they sell their businesses from paying taxes on capital gains of up to \$800,000. These earnings will often be the source of retirement funding for many business owners.

Unfortunately, rules in the tax code can make it cost more for business owners to sell their businesses to members of their own families. Talk about red tape. New Democrats think we should make it easier, not harder, for family business owners to pass on their businesses to their kids. We support examining the tax code to make sure that a business passed from one family member to another has access to the same lifetime capital gains exemption of \$800,000 as any other business that is sold. In talking about reducing red tape, we also need to ensure that we are looking at the tax code, something the government has not been talking about.

I am very pleased to stand and speak to this issue that is very important to our party. As I mentioned, my party knows that small businesses and medium-sized enterprises are the heart of our economy and are the job creators in this country. If we can find ways of reducing red tape while protecting our economy, our health and safety, and the environment, that is what New Democrats would propose.

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Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, welcome back, and welcome to everyone in this place.

I want to thank the member opposite for his speech today. Obviously he spent some time discussing small business with his constituents and hopefully with others, which is a good thing. What I question is whether he has studied the bill. This is about administrative compliance: the time, the planning, the effort it takes to demonstrate compliance with government regulation. There is nothing in the one-for-one rule or in this piece of legislation that would compromise health, safety, or the environment for Canadians.

It is a curious pattern. The NDP continue to advocate that it is behind small business, but when we brought in temporary hiring credits for small business, its members opposed them. When we brought forward lifetime capital gains, which the member spoke about, we increased it, and they opposed it. When we indexed it last year, they opposed it.

As to introducing measures such as a mandatory minimum wage, federally, of \$15, I wonder if the member has consulted with his constituents and small business across this country, because it sounds to me like the bromides he tries to pass in this place and onto others seem to be far divorced from reality.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for the question and welcome him back to Parliament as well. I find it very interesting that I am talking about the preamble of the bill, where there is mention of protecting the Canadian economy and that we must not compromise public health or public safety, but there is no mention of the environment. There is concern among a majority of Canadians. When we are talking about reality, the Conservatives and my hon. colleague need to speak to Canadians about the importance they place on the environment. When there is nothing in the bill to make sure that we are going to protect the environment, that is very concerning.

The member also talked about the hiring credit and the EI change they announced last week. It was the New Democratic party that took the government to task for cancelling it. All of a sudden, the Conservatives realized that by cancelling it they had made a huge mistake, which impacted small businesses, and then they scrambled to reintroduce something. It is the New Democratic Party that continues to talk to small businesses. It is this party that listens to small businesses and makes sure that we are talking about policies that will actually help them continue to grow.

• (1300)

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the more I listen to this debate, the more I come to the conclusion that the NDP is probably the only real friend small businesses have in this country. People should be judged by what they do, not by what they say.

I am proud to say that in my province of Manitoba, we are in our fourth majority government. The small business tax in my province, when we took over in 1999, was 11%. Every year thereafter, we lowered the small business tax by 1% to 10%, 9%, 8%, 7%, and 6%, until now. Now the small business tax in the socialist paradise of Manitoba is 0%. That is putting our money where our mouth is.

If the Conservatives really believe that they want to stimulate small businesses, why are they hitting them with these punitive taxes? The Conservatives cut corporate tax rates religiously every chance they get, to where it is well below the OECD average, but they leave the small business tax at a punitive 11%.

The two things the Conservatives have announced recently, including a cutback in EI premiums, are not out of their wallet. They do not put one cent into the EI fund. The EI fund is entirely made up of contributions from employers and employees. Not one penny comes from the federal government. When it gives a few nickels of that back to small businesses, it is hardly coming out of its pocket.

This regulatory proposal the Conservatives are making is not a cost factor either. If they want to put their money where their mouth is, come to us with a dramatic reduction in taxes for small businesses. That is something the NDP has already demonstrated. We support it, and we do it.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not sure there was a question in there, but the member for Sudbury has the opportunity to comment.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, I heard many questions in there.

I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his comments, and I am happy to respond to them. I have been able to work with my hon. colleague for the last six years on many files. Of course, small business is one we have always talked about, especially when it relates to the credit card file.

There are so many small businesses in my hon. colleague's riding that he has been very vocal with me about on numerous occasions, because they go to him. He then comes to me, and we work to try to find ways of helping them resolve the issue of the fees they have to pay.

I will not be specific, but when a small-business owner, a restaurant owner, from my colleague's riding comes up to me and says that the business is spending \$20,000 a year on fees to credit card companies—

Mr. Pat Martin: Good grief.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, exactly. Good grief.

As that person said, they do not expand the business. They do not hire other people, because they have to pay those fees.

We have brought this issue to the government numerous times, and what has it come up with? It has come up with a voluntary code of conduct that is full of loopholes. It is absolutely full of loopholes. The government refuses to address it.

The Competition Tribunal went through the whole process and punted it back to this place. It said that we, as parliamentarians, need to make a decision on this. Do members know when that was? That was in July 2013. We have waited over a year, and we still do not see any action.

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What we see today is that we are going to start looking at one-for-one and we are going to start looking at reducing red tape. We can all agree on that. Really what we need to agree on is making sure that we are not taking away regulations that are protecting Canadians' health and safety, the economy, and the environment.

The Conservatives continue to make cuts to the public service and say that now they have a problem with small business owners, because they keep calling and have to wait in line. Stop cutting the public service so that we can deliver the services that businesses and Canadians need.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the small business critic, for his speech. I found it quite interesting that 20 minutes was not enough time for him to talk about all the NDP's proposals, when it took the Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture only 10 minutes to talk about the government's file on small businesses. I think that is absolutely appalling.

I am the critic for co-operatives. Co-operatives are businesses. Over the past few years, this government has eliminated any assistance that was available to these small co-operatives, including start-up programs. One of the problems small businesses are facing is that the government is not there to ensure they have the right measures and conditions they need to become medium-sized businesses and create even more jobs, prosperity and wealth for Canada.

I would like my colleague to say a few words about the government's rather gloomy record when it comes to co-operatives, which are businesses, and also about how difficult it is for small businesses to become medium-sized and large businesses in Canada.

• (1305)

[English]

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity as the small business critic to meet with many of the co-operative organizations across the country that want to be more engaged by the government. They want to be active participants. They are active participants in the economy, but they are not perceived or seen by the Conservative government as contributors.

When we talk about proposals for small businesses, such as the youth hiring tax credit, the elimination and reduction of a lot of the merchant fees, ensuring that people can transfer their businesses from family member to family member without having to go through all of the taxes that come with that, the government refuses to listen. We are proposing ideas that will help save small businesses and co-operatives money now and keep the money in their pockets. By doing that, they will reinvest in their businesses and co-operatives and bring more people in together.

I think of Eat Local, which is a great food co-operative in Sudbury. It is getting more and more members now who continue to invest in the business. As they invest in the business, more and more small businesses go into the small business. What happens? We create jobs and we grow the economy.

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by welcoming all my colleagues back to the House. I hope this return to Parliament is more productive than previous ones have been.

I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Pontiac.

I have the honour to speak on this first day back to Bill C-21, An Act to control the administrative burden that regulations impose on businesses. The bill introduced here at second reading stage is a good idea insofar as it claims to cut red tape for SME's.

I want to remind hon. members that in April, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said that after taxes, red tape was the second biggest concern of small business owners.

The one-for-one rule included in this bill tells businesses that every time a new administrative burden is placed on them, another will be lifted. That is a start. The bill is telling them that the administrative burden will not become greater in future. However, this rule still needs to be applied effectively, fairly and transparently.

However, like many of this Conservative government's bills, this one falls short of the mark. Government regulations to protect the health, safety and environment of Canadians should be a priority. This bill seems to completely disregard that obligation.

We need more than the government's promises and the preamble of a bill that could leave room for interpretation. We want to be assured that deregulation will not apply to these regulations.

On the one hand, the government wants to seem co-operative by introducing a bill like this, and on the other hand, its actions show that all it does is keep piling on administrative measures, whether it is through personal income tax measures or through various government programs that never reach their targets.

Last of all, this bill provides for a five-year review. This will result in a new administrative burden.

We believe in reducing the paper burden and in sensible solutions, but we need more than half-measures in a gimmicky bill, because small businesses are the drivers of entrepreneurship in our country. However, because of their limited resources, small businesses feel the weight of the administrative burden more than other businesses.

This summer, I had the opportunity to meet with the owners of small and medium-sized businesses in the riding of Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert. If it were also to meet with them, the government would realize that this bill is deficient. The owners told me that there is a real lack of co-operation among the different levels of government.

We know that this Conservative government finds it difficult to get along with its provincial and municipal counterparts. We have seen this from the beginning of its mandate. It is a serious problem.

SMEs must sometimes fill out federal and provincial forms. We need an agreement to make things easier. They should not have to fill out the same form twice and send it to different places based on different criteria. Small businesses told me that this is a real waste of time. They all agree that they have been squeezed by bank charges this year and that their profits have plummeted.

● (1310)

They sometimes even have to reconsider their decision to go into business. This goes for SMEs that have been in business for several years and those that are just getting started. Banking fees have gotten so high that SMEs have no choice but to take them into account. Today, people no longer pay with cash. It has become common to make small purchases with a debit or credit card. However, such transactions cost money; business owners must pay a percentage. That percentage has a serious impact. It considerably reduces profit margins and available funds that could have been reinvested in the local economy to hire a new employee or expand a store, for example.

The government says that it is prepared to help SMEs, but it does not go far enough. To date, the NDP is the only federal party to propose real solutions to this problem. We proposed regulating the fees that credit card companies charge merchants by creating an ombudsman position. Obviously, the Conservative government rejected this proposal, as usual.

Red tape is not the only thing that small business owners come to me about. They also regularly tell me that the Conservatives boast about helping small businesses, but that they did not renew the hiring credit for small business. It was not even included in budget 2014. However, SMEs have been clear that this hiring credit is important. It allows them to build their businesses and create dependable jobs.

SMEs get very little attention from the Conservative government. Perhaps the government needs to be reminded that there is a direct correlation between red tape and the long-term prosperity of these SMEs.

Unnecessary red tape puts a wrench in the smooth flow of trade and limits the exchange of goods and services that is the lifeblood of a healthy economy. However, as we know, this Conservative government would rather give billions of dollars in tax cuts to big businesses than help SMEs, which support our communities.

The NDP knows that small business owners work really hard. They create good jobs across the country and we believe that they deserve a break.

I support this bill at second reading. However, measures must be added to improve it and particularly to ensure that it meets the requirements of our entrepreneurs.

● (1315)

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert for her speech.

I want to talk about the content of the bill. In clause 2, “administrative burden” is defined as follows:

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2. ...“administrative burden” means anything that is necessary to demonstrate compliance with a regulation, including the collecting, processing, reporting and retaining of information and the completing of forms.

This shows the huge disconnect between the government's intentions—or so-called intentions—and reality. My colleague was right to mention small businesses and the hassles associated with the changes to EI, which have created huge headaches for many small business owners. These owners are finding it virtually impossible to manage their staff, which adds considerably to their burden.

I would like to know how confident my colleague is in how the government will implement this bill, regardless of what form it takes.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for his relevant question.

As I mentioned, I work hands-on in my riding of Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert. I have met with and listened to owners of small and medium-sized businesses. In response to my colleague's question, I will share the story of a family-owned grocery store. The store owner told me that the situation had become unbelievable.

He told me that he did not have much cash on hand. Furthermore, his wife had to spend time filling out cumbersome forms in the office, for which she was not even paid. This cut into his business's profits. He said that all levels of government should agree on a single form in order to reduce red tape. I told him that the NDP is listening and would improve the situation.

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, businesses and young business owners are the key to Canada's economic prosperity. Under the Conservative government, the manufacturing sector is struggling and has lost some of its lustre. A number of manufacturing companies, such as Electrolux, have lost employees and had to shut down.

What measures is the NDP putting forward to support SMEs in the near future and as of 2015?

● (1320)

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to answer that question. I will talk about the NDP's sensible, tangible solutions that will make things better for SMEs.

We want to reinstate the hiring credit for small businesses, cut taxes for SMEs, cap hidden fees for credit card transactions and create a tax credit for hiring and training young people. Better access to credit for SME owners will help those businesses grow. We want to make it easier for parents to transfer family businesses to their children, cut red tape, create tax credits to reduce the toll of payroll taxes and encourage SMEs to innovate.

Mr. Mathieu Ravnat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my interest in this bill is twofold because I am the official opposition's Treasury Board critic and the member for a riding that relies heavily on small and medium-sized businesses to create jobs.

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This year I had the tremendous privilege and pleasure of touring several such businesses in municipalities like Chelsea, Wakefield and Shawville. I even toured a number of pharmacies to talk about the drug shortage. It was great to consult with business people in my region. They agree that we need to cut red tape, but not necessarily via the approach in this bill.

As an MP, of course I believe in the principle of red tape reduction, which will reduce administrative hassles for business people. However, as the official opposition's Treasury Board critic, I have serious concerns about this bill. As is often the case with the Conservatives' bills, it seems that their almost religious zeal for defending the free market as they see it at any cost has led them to conceal in this bill their intention to eliminate regulations that protect my constituents' health, safety and environment. In light of the listeriosis crises and the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, we need this government to guarantee that it will do more to protect and regulate Canadians' health and safety.

Regulations that are in the public interest should remain in place. This bill jeopardizes them because it gives the President of the Treasury Board the power to eliminate such regulations under the guise of reducing paperwork for businesses. That is obviously not the way to achieve sound public administration.

It is true that the NDP wants to reduce the administrative burden borne by small businesses, but we do not want to do so at the expense of Canadians' safety. We cannot trust the Conservatives, who have a tendency to deregulate without considering safety, health or the environment.

It is not just a question of managing the number of regulations, but of determining which ones are helping Canadians. This means carrying out a proper study, which is a reasonable approach to public administration.

Only the preamble of the bill states that the regulations affecting the health and safety of Canadians will not be affected. We all know that the legislation that will govern these regulations has no preamble. No mention is made of the environment in the entire bill. If the Conservatives really care about the health and safety of Canadians, why did they not specifically guarantee the application of the bill and the regulations that protect their health and safety?

I would remind my colleagues in the House of some important facts about this government's tendency to let things slide when it comes to the health and safety of Canadians. The Conservatives do not have a good track record in terms of preserving these regulations.

For instance, last year, the Minister of Transport allowed an exemption to the Canadian Aviation Regulations for the air carrier WestJet. WestJet planes will now be able to operate with one flight attendant per 50 passengers rather than according to the standard of one flight attendant per 40 passengers. Other airlines have since asked for similar exemptions. The NDP has asked that the 1:40 rule be maintained, which is reasonable.

In 1999, the Liberals, who are no better, persisted with the Mulroney government's deregulation of rail safety by continuing to implement the safety management systems approach, which was maintained by the Conservatives. This approach leaves it up to the industry itself to ensure that its operations are safe, instead of

ensuring that the government works with the industry to set safety standards that should be followed. Basically, it is self-regulation. The goal of any business is to make a profit.

• (1325)

That resulted in many derailments throughout the country.

In addition, the Conservatives used the budget implementation bill, Bill C-4, to make changes to the Canada Labour Code, and those changes will gut the powers of health and safety officers in federal workplaces. It is unacceptable to compromise the health and safety of workers.

It is clear that the Conservative President of the Treasury Board should not be given discretionary powers over our laws and regulations that govern our constituents' health, environment and safety.

It is hard to believe that the Conservatives are sincere about wanting to reduce red tape. They did the exact opposite with the building Canada fund. Instead of helping municipalities and small businesses start infrastructure projects in a timely manner, the Conservatives set up a long and cumbersome bureaucratic process for every project worth more than \$100 million. That will create 6- to 18-month delays that will slow down important projects.

They did the same thing with their so-called employment insurance reform, which requires that employers provide more and more information about their employees. In addition, small and medium-sized business are not really getting any help.

For example, the Conservatives are dragging their feet when it comes to taking serious action to regulate anti-competitive credit card fees that merchants must pay to card issuers. If the Conservatives really wanted to help SMEs, they would have supported the NDP's idea to have an ombudsman to control the credit card fees that card issuers charge merchants. It was a simple and reasonable solution, but it was rejected.

This bill cannot be taken seriously. The principle behind it is good, but it is unclear whether it will achieve the expected results.

[English]

What we really need to do for small businesses is to identify what does not make sense in the system and eliminate it. That is a simple study. The one-for-one rule is too vague, and there is no guarantee that it is going to work.

We also have to stop giving lip service to small and medium-size businesses and actually help them out, for example, by restoring the small business hiring tax credit for young people; reducing taxes for small businesses specifically, not the corporate tax rate for the largest and most successful businesses in this country; cracking down on hidden credit card transaction fees; and perhaps redefining what a small and medium-size business is for government procurement contracts.

I do not know if members realize this, but small- and medium-size businesses are defined as 500 employees and less. I would approximate that, in my riding, the average number of employees that small and medium-size businesses have is 25. Therefore, it is completely unreasonable to expect a company with 25 employees to compete with the supposed small and medium-size business with 499 employees. It does not make any sense. There is no sensitivity built into the system regarding profit margins, the size of staff, et cetera.

We could talk about the service agreement between merchants and credit card companies that profit small business owners by directly passing on these fees to consumers. This increases the price of goods on everything. Despite dismissing a recent case against Visa and Mastercard, in a rare move, the Competition Tribunal called for a regulatory framework to deal with anti-competitive practices.

We could also create a new tax credit for businesses that hire and train young people, and financing to help small business owners grow their business. We could make it easier for parents to pass family businesses to their kids, create tax credits to offset payroll taxes, and help small businesses innovate, et cetera. In the agricultural sector, we could perhaps do something about risk capital and high interest rates for acquiring new agricultural lands.

It is clear that on this side of the equation, we are proposing sensible, concrete, realistic means of truly helping our small and medium-size businesses to create jobs that are desperately needed in our country.

• (1330)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He mentioned something that struck me. He talked about what we consider to be small and medium-sized businesses. The independent business people that we talk to often say that they hate the fact that the government is not looking at the issue the right way and truly taking small and medium-sized businesses into account when it makes regulations. In Canada, we have a lot of what are referred to as microbusinesses. I want to come back to co-operatives, since I am my party's critic for co-operatives.

We can make the same criticism of the government when it comes to co-operatives. As far as regulations are concerned, the government does not take the co-operatives' needs into account when it is creating programs. The government says that co-operatives are considered when these programs are established, but I think the Conservatives are totally ignoring what the co-operatives really need.

My colleague indicated that a business with 500 employees has the resources to deal with certain regulations, but a microbusiness or a self-employed worker does not have the resources to meet these demands. I would like the hon. member to elaborate on this very astute comment on this shortcoming in the regulations.

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her excellent question.

Government Orders

Like me, she knows that this country has never had a social democratic government at the federal level. We have had that good fortune provincially, however. In Manitoba, for instance, the tax rate for small and medium-sized businesses is 0%.

It is a balancing act. This government is a friend to big corporations, as were the previous Liberal governments. The wind of change needs to blow through to help small and medium-sized businesses and co-operatives at the federal level. We need to take another look at the system to ensure that there is true competition when it comes to federal procurement contracts. Unfortunately, it is always the same people who win. This government supports big corporate welfare. It is too bad, because the vast majority of jobs in this country are created by small and medium-sized businesses.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague the following question.

We are well aware that the Conservatives boast about helping small businesses by eliminating this so-called red tape. However, they did not renew the hiring credit for small business.

What does my colleague think about the Conservative government's approach to this issue?

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: Mr. Speaker, I find it unfortunate. Is this what we expected from the Conservatives? The answer is yes. Does this surprise me? The answer is no. We proposed specific solutions to help small and medium-sized businesses. They were reasonable solutions, but they were rejected.

It is hard to understand. I know that there are members on the other side of the House who own small and medium-sized businesses. However, the government has eyes only for big corporations like SNC-Lavalin, the big oil companies and the big farming companies in western Canada. They are what the government cares about most. That means that the government is not prepared to help small and medium-sized businesses become more competitive.

• (1335)

[English]

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Winnipeg North in his debut speech since noon today.

I do not think the irony will be lost on anyone that this bill would enable the government to craft a set of regulations about regulating regulations. With regard to the statute proposed in Bill C-21, everyone should be very clear there would be no statutory effect. The bill is about a policy. It affects a policy; it creates no statutory effect. I say that because subclause 8(1) of the bill clearly states:

No action or other proceeding may be brought against Her Majesty in right of Canada for anything done or omitted to be done, or for anything purported to be done or omitted to be done, under this Act.

It goes on to say in subclause 8(2):

No regulation is invalid by reason only of a failure to comply with this Act.

There is absolutely no enforcement mechanism. There are no teeth whatsoever behind this bill. What we are doing on the floor of the House of Commons on the very first day of the fall session is debating the creation of a policy, not a statute.

Government Orders

With that as the backdrop, let us talk about what this policy would do.

Its purpose is to reduce the administrative burden on businesses. We know that most regulations on the conduct of normal business will affect businesses, so this is a policy that would affect the regular practice of business. However, it goes beyond that. It would impact things that may not necessarily be front and centre or top of mind with us as parliamentarians.

It would affect the management of fisheries and the environment. It is not just the industry department, the finance department, or the Canada Revenue Agency that this measure would impact. We have to be very clear that it would impact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and how it regulates the inspection and regulation of food products. It would affect Health Canada with pharmaceutical products and other health products. It would affect the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as to how it manages our coastal and inland fisheries. It would affect a whole range of different departments. It would affect the Department of Natural Resources in the regulation of the mining sector.

With that said, this is a policy that is meant to reduce the number of regulations affecting all departments within the Government of Canada. It is not just the Canada Revenue Agency, the industry department, and a few of what would traditionally be viewed as the more business-oriented departments, because there is no department of the Government of Canada that does not impact the conduct of Canadian business across the board.

In responding to one of my questions, the hon. minister pointed out that 2,300 regulations have already been taken off the books since 2007. Most Canadians and certainly all parliamentarians should know that the catalogue of regulations in Canada is in the tens of thousands. Tones and tones of regulations exist.

The idea is to take down one regulation for every regulation that is brought in. It is basically about motivation, about trying to motivate government to do something about red tape.

Here is an equally effective strategy, and perhaps a better one: why not just cull the existing regulations? Here is where this bill falls a bit short. The committee that studies the bill really needs to dig into this aspect. The Government of Canada already has many volumes of regulations on the books, so the presumption of any reasonable and fair-minded Canadian would be that it is going to be tough on the government to bring in a new regulation because it will really have to scratch heads, think hard, and figure out what regulation it is going to eliminate.

• (1340)

We have many tones of existing regulation that is redundant without being culled. The government could simply pick one and remove it. That would meet the policy requirements that it proposes to enact with this supposed legislation, with this statutory instrument.

That is the key here, so is this really more about a communications exercise? Is it somewhat of a smoke-and-mirrors game for the government to try to look like it is doing something when it really is not doing a whole lot?

Is there merit behind this concept? There is, absolutely. The government is proving that with its own former regulatory red tape commission. The commission took seven years to come up with all of this. It was seven years of bureaucracy, seven years of spending, seven years of studying, and this is what it came up with.

Yes, there is a lot of fat out there. There is a lot of fat in this government. There is a lot of fat that the Conservatives just did not bother to tackle. They have come up with this statutory policy that has no effect whatsoever in law, since there is no liability or consequence to the government for not following its own legislation. It is a bill that regulates regulation.

Here we are debating a policy on the floor of the House of Commons on the very first day that we are back for the fall session, and we have already come to the conclusion that it really does not do a whole lot.

What I also find kind of funny is that I did not want to see this bill in the budget implementation act because budget implementation acts should simply be about budgets, but when we consider all the stuff that went into the Conservative government's implementation act that had nothing to do with the well-being of businesses or the economy, an argument might be made that perhaps this particular legislation might have been able to be folded into the budget implementation act. I would not agree with it, because I think budget implementation acts should be strictly about budgets.

However, that said, this bill was read on the floor of the House of Commons on January 29 of this year. We have not heard a word about it since, and we have actually passed the budget. After seven years of spending on the red tape commission and adding to the bureaucracy, if one is trying to get a signal or cue as to whether or not this is more about a communications exercise to show that this legislation to regulate regulations is a good thing, one need not look any further than that. That is what this is all about today.

What would be the most effective answer in dealing with red tape and government regulations? It would be to go through them one by one and cull any one that does not really have meaning or value. That would be the best and cheapest option, and administratively it would be the simplest and most efficient one. Quite frankly, the government could do it if it wanted to, but now there is this elaborate exercise attached to all of it to posture and create reports and add to the bureaucracy.

Our caucus is looking forward to getting this bill into committee to study some of these issues.

Coming from Newfoundland and Labrador, I will end with something that is very important to me. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans manages our coastal resources and all of our oceans almost exclusively through the use of regulation. If the government is suggesting that for every regulation it brings in it must reduce regulations by one, will government experts and outside experts be allowed into the committee room to analyze whether there might be unforeseen consequences that would actually reduce the ability of the government to do what is in the best interest of Canadians and our resources and our economy and whether this smoke-and-mirrors public relations exercise might actually cause a lot of harm?

● (1345)

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from the third party for his speech.

We have to admit that the Liberals were pretty good at using smoke and mirrors. Take for example the issue of climate change. The only practical measure that the Liberals took was to name a dog “Kyoto”. That is their track record.

I would like my colleague to explain the Liberals' decisions with regard to protecting the health and safety of Canadians. During their 13 years in office, the Liberals managed to dismantle the regulatory framework around rail safety by implementing safety management systems in the wake of the Mulroney Conservatives.

Given that the issue of Canadians' health and safety is addressed in the preamble rather than in the body of the bill, there are no real guarantees in this regard.

Can my Liberal colleague show that he is serious about the questions he is asking about this bill, given that his government did not have a very good track record during its 13 years in office?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member from the former fourth party made an interesting point. He signals clearly to the Canadian public, and specifically to the House, that if the NDP had its way, it would engage in a massive re-regulation exercise. This is a policy point that the NDP announced during its caucus meeting. It said that it would be announcing its platform in the coming weeks, if not sooner.

We look forward to hearing the NDP's position on exactly which federal entities, which federal agencies, which federal activities it would re-regulate in such a massive way.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the member asked why we do not simply get rid of all these regulations. The Liberals contributed to the deregulation in Lac-Mégantic. That happened to us, in Quebec; it did not happen where he lives. That caused such a mess, with such serious consequences.

Regulations are often needed to ensure the safety and protection of the public. Deregulation and special treatment for certain companies can jeopardize public protection.

How does the member plan to get out of this quicksand? Can he tell us how he sees these things?

[English]

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Mr. Speaker, I take a certain amount of umbrage in the fact that the NDP is already telling us and Canadians that the Liberal Party of Canada is about to form the next government. When we were in that position, the member asked what we would do to certain policies, regulations and statutes. That is a pretty telltale sign of where the NDP is going.

This bill is about eliminating other regulations. What I heard from the New Democratic Party is that it is supporting this legislation.

Government Orders

One minute those members are talking about a terrible thing being done, and we all agree there was a terrible tragedy, but they are pairing that with a regulatory system. They are saying that the regulatory system is the ultimate cause that we should be debating, but they are also saying that they support the legislation.

Does anyone else see the irony in all of this? Does anyone else see how ridiculous the New Democratic Party's positioning has been as it desperately tries to get itself out of the quicksand of its polling numbers of recent months?

● (1350)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I follow the Liberal Party critic. He has hit the nail head-on in addressing this issue.

It is important that we recognize that the current government, probably more than any other government, has its way of putting a Conservative spin on messaging. The member was right on when he made reference to the type of messaging that the government was hoping to achieve here. There is the bill, “red tape reduction act”, that they tie to small businesses, as if the government really wants to do something to assist small businesses in Canada.

All we have to do is look at the last six months or so to see the disaster the government has made for small businesses in one program, the temporary foreign worker program. We see the devastation that has caused. MPs from the Prairies would surely to goodness recognize the damage that has been caused to small businesses because of the government's inability and incompetence in administering one program. It is not a government that has been friendly to small businesses. It is a government that now says it wants to deal with reducing red tape. There is no doubt a great appetite from Canadians to see the reduction of bureaucracy. We all want to see red tape disappear where it can, so the Conservatives understand how important it is to appeal to that sector of society that loves to hear about reducing red tape.

We too believe there is some merit in reducing red tape. We do not necessarily need legislation to mandate the reduction of red tape, as the critic has pointed out. Why not go through a review of the many different thousands of regulations that are in place today and look at ways in which we can reduce red tape and regulation? There is no doubt that we can do a lot in reducing red tape, and we would encourage that where it is feasible to do so. We see that as a positive thing.

However, the Conservatives are saying they are going to reduce red tape, thereby helping small businesses. They are trying to make that connection so they can give the impression they are a friend to small businesses. There are numerous problems within the small business industry and we are not giving it the amount of attention it should receive to help small businesses grow and prosper.

Statements by Members

At the end of the day, when we talk about job creation and the importance of the middle class and what we need to be doing in Ottawa to enable our middle class to grow and prosper and have hope again, we should talk, at least in part, about ways in which we can support small businesses. The small businesses, looking forward into the future, are part of the backbone to our Canadian economy. If we want to create and generate jobs, the greatest number of potential jobs that can be created is through our small businesses. We should be looking at what we are doing to help facilitate those job numbers. The government has not done well in private sector, small business types of jobs. It has been negligent on that particular file.

There is a great level of difficulty for small businesses, including everything from registering the name, to looking into setting up a facility, wherever it might be in the country, to registering with Revenue Canada or getting an understanding of employment insurance and the many different benefits that have been paid into.

● (1355)

There is so much more we could do to support our small businesses. Imagine a small business that employs three or four people trying to understand the bureaucracy and regulations. It is more than just federal regulations. There are provincial and municipal regulations as well. It is endless in terms of the types of things we need to see addressed to assist our small businesses to do what they do best, which is to deliver a service, to provide a product, or from my perspective, to create a job. Small businesses across Canada from coast to coast to coast create opportunities and valuable jobs. That should be the focus.

The idea behind this bill is that the government says if it brings in a regulation, it will take away a regulation. As the Liberal Party critic has suggested, there are thousands of pieces of regulations out there that if properly reviewed, could be dealt with.

However, there are other important things with which we should be dealing. What about the idea of closer regulatory alignments with the U.S. in certain areas? The international trade between Canada and the U.S. and the automobile industry is an example. There has been some success, but no doubt there could even be a great deal more, for example, regulating emissions from vehicles. The amount of trade between Canada and the U.S. related to automobiles, parts and so forth is immense. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars. Are there things we could do to improve upon and ensure there is a closer regulatory alignment? I would suggest there is.

We should put more attention in that area as opposed to introducing legislation that is fairly bland, as the critic has pointed out. There is no real teeth to it. It is more of a policy statement. In reality, it is more of a political stand that originated out of the Prime Minister's Office, which is more interested in trying to give a false impression that the government is sympathetic to small businesses. To give that impression, it says that it wants to reduce regulation.

We can reduce regulation and we do not necessarily need legislation to reduce that regulation. We want the government to recognize that we need to do more real, tangible things that would allow for our small businesses from coast to coast to coast the opportunity to grow.

If we see, through budgets, policy and legislation, things that would help or assist, then we would see valuable jobs being created and other economic opportunities and prosperity.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North will have one minute when the debate on the bill resumes.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CANADIAN DELEGATION TO ISRAEL

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back.

On July 9, as I was travelling as a member of a parliamentary delegation to Israel, we were escorted to a bomb shelter as we toured the Tower of David Museum. Rockets fired from Gaza, by Hamas, were overhead and landing nearby. It was an eye-opening experience for all of us, and it showed us what the people of Jerusalem have to go through on a daily basis to be safe in their own city. It is something that we surely will not forget.

I wish to thank our hosts, David Cooper and J. J. Schneidman, from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and Mark Waldman of the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, for their hospitality, and for making us feel safe during a very troubling conflict.

Today I want to restate Canada's support for the state of Israel, and I pray that one day the Holy Land will know a permanent and lasting peace.

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● (1400)

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, cycling is an affordable, emission-free mode of transportation that has the added benefit of encouraging physical fitness. Cities that support cycling benefit by reducing vehicle traffic, which improves air quality and eases gridlock, a problem that costs my home city of Toronto an estimated \$6 billion a year.

Yesterday, I joined hundreds of Toronto cyclists at Bikestock. It was a ride to city hall to call for improved cycling infrastructure and better safety for cyclists and the motorists with whom they share the road. This is why today I have submitted a motion calling on the federal government to create a cycling infrastructure strategy and a plan to assist regions and communities.

It is time for the government to recognize the many benefits of cycling and to show national leadership. I urge all members to support this motion.

* * *

CYCLING

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the huge and positive impact that cycling has on our environment, our economy, and our health, at every stroke.

I rode last week in the GranFondo, from Vancouver to Whistler, where people like Richard Wooles and Corey Tracey of the B.C. cycling association were on hand with organizer Neil McKinnon.

I was reminded that cycling lowers health care costs and increases revenues from bike tourism. The mayor of Whistler predicted that Whistler would receive \$8 million from the fondo.

Cycling brings communities together, like those who gathered together in Ottawa this morning for the Pedal for Kids event. Sponsored by Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities, Pedal for Kids is an annual five-day fundraiser in which participants cover 500 kilometres on bikes, from Ottawa to Quebec City. Its purpose is to encourage kids to get active in sport.

Encouraging Canadians to get more active is one of the reasons that Canada Bikes and I expanded Bike Day on the Hill last May to become Bike Day in Canada. It is an attempt to increase the profile of cycling as a national agenda issue.

Canadians, let us get together and roll on.

* * *

GEORGE GATE

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past summer, the world of swimming lost a true giant. It was in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, for over three decades, at what was Canada's first indoor Olympic-sized pool, that George Gate, as head coach and then aquatics director, built the city's swim team into the powerhouse it remains to this day.

It is testimony to his unique gift as a coach and mentor that in addition to his success with swimmers, George built Pointe-Claire's diving program into one of the sport's finest.

George's vision was comprehensive, communitarian, and inclusive. He focused not only on elite athletes, but also promoted the benefits of aquatics for other aspects of life. He was a pioneer in water safety, lessons for novice swimmers and the disabled, and fitness for the elderly and those in rehabilitation.

As a citizen of the world, George was a decorated war veteran who saw action with the British Royal Navy in the North Atlantic, the Pacific, and in the British convoys to Russia.

I ask all members of the House to join me in expressing our heartfelt condolences to George's daughters, Brenda and Diane, and sons, Bill and Richard.

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LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader theorizes that the only way to keep marijuana out of the hands of children is to legalize it and regulate it.

Let us look at a highly regulated substance: alcohol. CAMH says that over 25% of our youth in grades 7 through 12 are binge drinkers, as are over 40% aged 20 to 24. Approximately 8% will become addicted to alcohol. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 15- to 20-year-olds, with alcohol being a factor in half of those deaths.

Statements by Members

How is regulation really working for our youth? Canadians are supposed to believe that if the Liberals sold marijuana in stores, drug dealers would experience an epiphany, obey the regulations, throw in the towel, and stop selling dope.

In addition to their leader, "the pied piper of pot", pro-marijuana Liberals include the "cannabis queen", Jodie Emery, who is a Liberal nomination candidate in Vancouver East, and Liberal Party CFO Chuck Rifici, who made millions selling his shares in his medical marijuana company.

Liberals want to be the party party. Unfortunately, they do not seem to care that legalizing marijuana would be abandoning the health and welfare of Canadian youth.

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● (1405)

[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this Saturday my south shore colleagues and I led a day of action regarding the future of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

I would like to commend the support shown by my constituents, especially the many volunteers who came out despite the cold and the rain. I am very proud of the Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert riding's record. We gathered over 700 signatures.

This shows that Canadians care about our public broadcaster and they are prepared to take action to save it from the budget cuts imposed by the Conservative government.

We love the CBC and we will continue to defend it against attacks from the Conservative government.

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[English]

VISITORS FROM AUSTRALIA

Mr. Royal Galipeau (Ottawa—Orléans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I note the visit to our capital today by two Australian visitors, Elizabeth and Peter Bardos, who are hosted by two wise residents of Orléans, Fran and Michael Rushton.

Mr. Bardos is a dedicated public servant who has spent his entire career making life better for his fellow countrymen, having worked for the Liberal Party of Australia and a number of members of Parliament of that great country down under.

Those close to Mr. Bardos have described him as a champion of democracy. Canada and Australia have for many decades enjoyed a friendly and highly productive relationship, one that is very special to this country, Canada.

Statements by Members

We had the opportunity to witness the quality of our relationship with Australia during the visit to Canada by Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott last June.

I would like to wish the Bardos' a most delightful visit to Canada.

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HPV VACCINATION PROGRAM

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank colleagues on both sides of this House for the kind words and prayers during my recent medical bout with cancer. I would also like to thank the physicians and staff of the Odette Cancer Centre of Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital.

I am very grateful for a positive outcome, but I am grateful as well for insight provided by medical professionals on a crucial matter of public health.

Colleagues will recall that while vaccination programs are a primary responsibility of the provinces, our government provided funding in the 2007 budget for a national vaccination program to immunize adolescent girls against the human papillomavirus, HPV. My doctors advise that the program should now be extended to cover boys, and that otherwise we can expect a spike in the incidence of HPV cancers in men in coming decades.

I am delighted to report that the Minister of Health has told me that she will take this matter under consideration.

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CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on our first day back in Parliament to extend our warmest wishes to our beloved House of Commons Clerk, Ms. Audrey O'Brien, who is recovering from emergency surgery.

It is so familiar to see Audrey sitting at the table in her robes, always on the alert for what is taking place in this chamber, where the unexpected is to be expected.

The Clerk's incredible professionalism, expertise, and guidance, not to mention her wry sense of humour, are hallmarks of our Parliament. Audrey serves her office and parliamentarians with distinction, honour, and dedication. She is a rare breed, and we are fortunate that she is our senior House officer.

We also offer support and thanks to the Acting Clerk, Mr. Marc Bosc, and will endeavour to give him as little grief as possible, something that will no doubt be broken by day's end.

On behalf of my fellow New Democrats and our leader, and I am sure all members of Parliament, we wish Audrey a speedy and full recovery.

We have just one little bit of advice. Stay off watching QP. We do not want to add to your stress.

Best wishes, Audrey.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the first day of the new sitting, and on this side of the House, we are excited to be back.

We are looking forward to the year ahead, and for good reason. It is because on this side of the House we are choosing to do more for Canadian families; choosing to keep Canada strong and principled in a dark and dangerous world; choosing to reduce deficit, cut taxes, and balance the budget; choosing to put honest, law-abiding citizens and victims ahead of criminals. We choose to take a strong stand in the world based on our values.

This is why we have lowered taxes for families and job-creating businesses. It is why we have cut the GST, introduced the tax-free savings account, created the universal child care benefit, and established income splitting for our pensioners. We will continue to work hard for all Canadian families.

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● (1410)

IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today on behalf of the good people of Davenport, in the great city of Toronto, to register my concern about racial profiling and the targeting of primarily Portuguese and Latino immigrant workers in my riding. This summer, agents from Canada Border Services reportedly went into bakeries, malls, and construction sites, asking those who fit this profile for their ID. The sweep has created outrage, anger, and fear among many in our hard-working immigrant communities.

In fact, I first heard of these raids from a local high school student who, close to tears, told me about how his father brought the family to Canada a couple of years ago from Portugal, got a job, and is working hard. They are building a life here, but since his work papers are expiring, they too are afraid that they are going to be targeted.

Instead of encouraging hard-working immigrant families, the government is harassing them. We need to fix this broken system. We can do this by putting the needs of families at the heart of our immigration system.

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WORLD WAR II HEROES

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, September 10, I was honoured to join my colleagues, veterans, and their families right across Canada to pay tribute to and remember those who fought and lost their lives in the Second World War.

On September 10, 1939, Canada stood up as a nation of just 11 million people and declared war in support of our allies. Canada rose up yet again to defend the rights of all people to live in peace and freedom. That is what makes Canadians who we are, the people who are prepared to go to the aid of others we have never met simply because it is the right thing to do. At home, abroad, in the air, on land, and at sea, people across this great land rallied together in extraordinary ways to defeat a brutal Nazi regime and stop its unspeakable atrocities.

At this event, I was honoured to present a limited edition lapel pin and certificate to those most deserving Canadian veterans. As we pay our respects in the coming months and years, let our veterans hear with one clear voice from Parliament that we shall never forget their heroism and sacrifice.

Lest we forget.

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RUGBY WORLD CUP

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this summer Canadian rugby took a giant leap forward, as our senior women's rugby team earned a second place finish at the 2014 Rugby World Cup. It was Canada's best result ever.

[Translation]

I would like to point out the contribution made by the seven Quebec players on the national team, including Magali Harvey, whose outstanding play led her to score 61 points for her team in five games. She was named the women's player of the year by the International Rugby Board for her efforts.

[English]

Our side showed cohesion and skill that only comes from countless hours of hard work and pushing the limits.

On behalf of the Liberal Party, I am pleased to offer my congratulations to our team for a job well done. As a proud Canadian and a former rugby player who fondly remembers his time on the pitch, I would like to thank these extraordinary women for raising Canadian rugby to new heights.

Well done, Team Canada. The future of rugby looks bright indeed.

Go, Canada, go.

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FRANKLIN EXPEDITION

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my mother was born in Chesterfield Inlet and was raised in the Arctic, as my grandparents worked for the Hudson Bay Company.

For me and all Canadians, one of the great mysteries in Canada's history was the tragic loss of the ships in the Franklin expedition, in 1846. This mystery has been wrapped in the icy waters of Canada's Arctic for more than 160 years. Earlier this month, a large clue to this national mystery was revealed with the finding of one of Sir John Franklin's ships.

Where many have failed, we are fortunate to have succeeded. The discovery would not have been possible without our modern

technology, skilled archaeologists, hardy crews, and the oral history of the Inuit, the same people who have inhabited these lands since time began.

Canadians are thankful to all those who contributed to this noble and important endeavour. While questions remain about the Franklin expedition, today there can be no question about the Arctic and Canada. Since the beginning, the Arctic has been an integral part of Canada, and forever shall it be the true north, strong and free.

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● (1415)

[Translation]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my NDP colleagues and I are back in Ottawa in fine form after spending the summer touring our constituencies.

Canadians are exasperated by the partisan attacks and empty rhetoric of the Liberals and the Conservatives. They are calling for a truly progressive government that has solutions to their problems.

When we look at their policies, we realize quite quickly that the red and blue policies are very similar. Just think of the oil port in Cacouna, the Keystone pipeline, the agreement with China, and the current war in Iraq.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve real change, not just superficial change.

In the next few weeks, we are going to show that together we can fix our health system, create good jobs, and set up daycare centres that meet our needs.

A year away from an election, the NDP is ready to form the government, a real progressive government that actually listens to people.

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[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is said that someone can be judged by the company they keep.

This summer, not only did we learn that the leader of the Liberal Party opposes revoking the passports of those who go overseas to commit terrorist acts, but we also learned that he visited the Al-Sunnah Al-Nabawiah mosque in Montreal.

This mosque is listed by the Pentagon as a location where known al Qaeda members were recruited, trained, and facilitated. Above and beyond that, this mosque teaches a fundamentalist distortion of Islam, one that preaches extremist, intolerant views and treats women as second-class citizens.

The leader of the Liberal Party thinks that the government should be telling him where he should and should not go. If he does not have the judgment to see barbarism is not a Canadian value, then he is definitely in over his head.

*Oral Questions***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***NEW MEMBER**

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

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. John Barlow, member for the electoral district of Macleod, introduced by the Right Hon. Stephen Harper.

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NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Arnold Chan, member for the electoral district of Scarborough—Agincourt.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Arnold Chan, member for the electoral district of Scarborough—Agincourt, introduced by Mr. Justin Trudeau.

* * *

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Adam Vaughan, member for the electoral district of Trinity—Spadina.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Adam Vaughan, member for the electoral district of Trinity—Spadina, introduced by Mr. Justin Trudeau.

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● (1420)

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. David Yurdiga, member for the electoral district of Fort McMurray—Athabasca.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. David Yurdiga, member for the electoral district of Fort McMurray—Athabasca, introduced by the Right Hon. Stephen Harper.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how many members of the Canadian Forces are being sent to Iraq?

[Translation]

How many members of the Canadian Forces will be sent to Iraq? How many?

[English]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the government has announced, and I gather was reviewed by a committee of this body, the Royal Canadian Air Force has been deployed to Iraq to deliver humanitarian and military assistance to Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State, ISIL, and there are several dozen Canadian army personnel also deployed to Iraq in an advise-and-assist capacity.

We are, of course, very proud that the men and women in uniform are always ready to undertake these missions on behalf of Canadians.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the Prime Minister's 2007 throne speech, he promised "any future military deployments must also be supported by a majority of parliamentarians". That is a direct quote from the Prime Minister. It puts his honour on the table. Now he is sending Canadian troops to join the war in Iraq without a vote in the House, without even a debate in this House.

Why is the Prime Minister breaking his own solemn promise to Canadians?

[Translation]

Why is the Prime Minister sending members of the Canadian Forces to Iraq without discussion, debate, or a vote in the House?

[English]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should know well the government's position. Of course, it is the right of any government that has the confidence of the House of Commons to advise the Governor General on military operations.

That said, wherever there has been a deployment of a combat nature, the government has put this to Parliament for a further confidence vote, and that is not the case with the present mission to Iraq.

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EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Prime Minister what exactly he said back then, in 2007: "any future military deployments". He is inventing now a distinction that did not exist at the time.

Oral Questions

● (1425)

[Translation]

Does the Prime Minister think it is acceptable that in a country as rich as Canada, families where both parents work full time can still be under the poverty line?

Does the Prime Minister think that is acceptable, yes or no?

[English]

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think if you review the record, you will see the government's position on parliamentary votes on military deployment has been very consistent.

[Translation]

As for minimum wage, the labour market is largely regulated by the provinces. The federal government follows the wages set by the provinces. It does not make sense to have two different wages for different classes of employees.

We will continue to work with the provinces on this.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many studies have shown that raising the minimum wage can help families make ends meet, without increasing unemployment or inflation. This has been proven on numerous occasions.

Why, then, is the Prime Minister handing out tens of billions of dollars in tax cuts to Canada's richest companies and refusing to increase wages for families at the low end of the scale?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the contrary.

This government lowered the GST for all Canadian families. This government created the universal child care benefit, and the New Democrats are the ones who voted against benefits for Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister does not hesitate to interfere in the market when it comes time to bring in more temporary foreign workers and pay them 15% less than Canadian workers to suppress wages, or to force seniors to work an extra two years before they can retire, or to trample on collective bargaining rights and impose back-to-work legislation.

Why is the Prime Minister only willing to interfere in the market when it is to lower wages?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the contrary. We are very proud to see that wages in this country have continued to rise in spite of the general economic turmoil around us.

There is lots we do for Canadian families, obviously. I mentioned the universal child care benefit, cutting the GST that affects all Canadian consumers, and enhancing the guaranteed income supplement. There are three things alone that benefit families, workers, and poor people, and in every case, the NDP voted against them. Why does the NDP vote against every idea unless it is about more taxes and more borrowing?

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need a plan for jobs and growth. This government's EI proposal would create neither.

Why would the Prime Minister sign off on his finance minister's plan that provides greater incentives to fire workers than to hire new ones?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the leader of the Liberal Party is talking about. Canada post-recession has one of the best job creation records in the world: 1.1 million net new jobs.

What we understand on this side is that his plan for higher taxes and higher deficits is not a plan that will help the economy. We are for eliminating the deficit, for continuing to lower our taxes, and for continuing to create jobs and growth.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative EI plan, announced last week to much fanfare, can offer over \$2,000—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Members are free to applaud when the member for Papineau is finished asking his question but not before then. The hon. member for Papineau.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if we actually look at the numbers of their EI plan, it offers up to \$2,000 in credit to businesses that fire workers and only up to \$200 if they hire a new worker.

As a proposal, why does the Prime Minister not offer instead an EI premium exemption for every new worker that a business would hire? That is a way to offer growth and job creation.

● (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me congratulate the Minister of Finance for his announcement and note that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the entire small business community, welcomed this announcement. What they do not welcome is the proposal of the Liberal Party, which through the establishment of an obligatory 45-day work year across the country would hike EI by some 35%. That is something we will never do.

[Translation]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that we must encourage job creation and economic growth. This government's EI plan encourages the firing instead of the hiring of workers.

Why would the Prime Minister not propose an EI premium exemption for every new job that a business creates? That is how you encourage economic growth and job creation.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me stress once again the announcement that the Minister of Finance made last week and the positive reaction from small and medium-sized businesses across the country. I congratulate the Minister of Finance for this fine announcement.

Clearly, that is the complete opposite of the Liberal Party's position, which seeks to increase EI premiums by 35% to create a 45-day work year. That is completely unacceptable for small and medium-sized businesses. That is something we will never do.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under our Constitution, managing natural resources falls under provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, we have a simple question for the Prime Minister: does he think that the provinces have a say when foreign dictatorships try to grab a piece of their natural resources? Do the provinces have a say in the matter, yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have the Investment Canada Act. Under the process set out by the legislation, the government consults with the provinces and territories on a regular basis.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there he goes again, confusing Investment Canada with the China FIPA that he just signed. Now that the Government of China owns Nexen, it is to be treated like any other Canadian company. It is therefore allowed to buy up an unlimited number of oil and gas leases in this country. It has nothing whatsoever to do with an Investment Canada review.

I repeat my question for the Prime Minister. He promised two years ago that foreign countries, especially foreign dictatorships, would not be allowed to get their hands on Canadian resources. Why is he denying Alberta the right to control its resources? Why is he selling out Alberta resources?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it would take an amazing leap of logic for anybody in Alberta to think the NDP is going to trust their resources to them.

Our foreign investment protection acts are subject to the Investment Canada Act, and obviously, in the case we have before us, this is an agreement we have reached with the Government of China that is widely and strongly supported by Canadian investors, because they need these protections, and we are making sure that our exporters and investors have legal protections in this market.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this infamous \$90,000 cheque issued by the Prime Minister's former chief of staff is at the heart of Mike Duffy's trial for fraud and corruption, which gets under way tomorrow. The question on everyone's mind is quite simple. How is it that the guy who received the cheque gets charged, but the one who signed it gets

away with it? That makes no sense. Where there is corruption, there has to be a corrupter.

Does the Prime Minister think that the Director of Public Prosecutions should launch an investigation to determine whether charges should also be laid against Nigel Wright?

● (1435)

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to congratulate the RCMP for the very thorough work that they did. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this case is before the courts right now, and we will let the courts make their decision.

At the same time, we know that the NDP is facing a similar investigation, with over \$1.5 million of potentially illegal funds that it used from taxpayers to support offices in provinces where it has no members of Parliament. I hope that the NDP will do the right thing and repay taxpayers.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that I have never given a cheque to a senator.

The Conservatives say that they are tough on crime, but not when their friends are involved. I should point out that they just let Mike Tyson into the country, even though he is a convicted rapist. But I digress.

Former Conservative Senator Mike Duffy is now before the courts, but the Conservative staff who were up to their necks in this scandal are doing extraordinarily well. Corruption is like doing the tango—it takes two.

When are the Conservatives going to clean house? When are they going to stop protecting their friends? When are they going to ask the Director of Public Prosecutions to launch an investigation into Nigel Wright?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he and a number of the members of his caucus cut cheques to support illegal offices in provinces where they actually have no members of Parliament, but again, we cannot forget that this is the exact same member who cut 29 separate cheques to a party that wants to break up Canada.

On this side of the House, we will continue to defend Canada. We will continue to do the things that have led Canada to be one of the most prosperous nations in the world. We will continue to cut taxes. We will continue to do what is right for families, because that is what Canadians' priorities are.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Director of Public Prosecutions was created in the wake of the Liberal sponsorship scandal to ensure independent justice when the Prime Minister's own office is involved. Now tomorrow, Mike Duffy is going up on 30 charges, including receiving a bribe, a bribe that involved the Prime Minister's staff, yet the Director of Public Prosecutions was not consulted.

The DPP's mandate says intervening and advising law enforcement agencies on matters relating to prosecutions and advising the RCMP. Does the minister agree that the Nigel Wright case would be within the mandate of the Director of Public Prosecutions?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as members know, this government does not direct the Director of Public Prosecutions. It is an independent office, and it governs itself on its own.

Again, we are very confident. The RCMP did a great job of this, and I want to commend them for the work they did. It is in front of the courts, and we will allow that decision to be made by the courts.

* * *

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the DPP has been put on ice ever since the Conservatives got into power, but let us look at the Conservatives' ongoing attack on Canadians' right to information. It has gotten so bizarre that apparently now the spending on Viagra in the military has become a state secret. I want to talk about dysfunction here, but we are talking about ethical dysfunction of the government.

Do they not understand that government spending is the spending of public money, and the reason we have the Access to Information Act is to be able to have Canadians hold the government to account? Why are they obstructing the Access to Information Act again and again and again?

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2012-2013 our government set a number of records for openness and transparency. This government processed a record number of access to information requests, released a record number of materials, and had improved turnaround times. Our government processed nearly 54,000 access to information requests, which is a 27% increase over the previous year: over 10,000 more requests. Our government also released a record number of materials. Over six million pages were released, an increase of nearly two million.

The numbers do not lie. Canadians are getting more and better access than before, thanks to this government.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative campaign to silence anyone who disagrees with them has reached a new low. Environmental groups, anti-poverty organizations, and international human rights defenders have all been targeted by political audits by the Conservatives.

Now more than 400 academics from coast to coast have signed a joint letter calling for a stop to this Conservative witch hunt. Will the minister suspend these political audits in order to clear the air, or will she continue targeting anyone who disagrees with the government?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that CRA audits occur at arm's length, conducted free of any political interference or motivation. Rules regarding charities and their political activities are

very long-standing. In 2012 alone, over \$14 billion was tax-receipted from approximately 86,000 charities. Charities must respect the law, and the CRA has a legal responsibility to ensure that charitable dollars donated by charitable Canadians are used for charitable purposes. The only politics in this story are the very shameful political motivations of the member and his party.

● (1440)

[Translation]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' goal is clear: silence those who do not share their opinion.

The minister is hiding behind the Canada Revenue Agency to conduct a witch hunt against charitable organizations whose only crime is being progressive. Oddly enough, so far, none of the right-leaning think tanks have been targeted. Is the minister going to stop this witch hunt and let charitable organizations do their work?

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member really should be ashamed of himself for attempting to score cheap political points on the backs of professional public servants at the CRA. As the director general of the charities directorate, the commissioner of the CRA, and I have said, there is no political interference or motivation in CRA audits whatsoever. The rules regarding charities and political activities, as I have said, are long-standing. CRA has a legal responsibility to ensure that charitable dollars are used appropriately, and charities have a responsibility to respect the law.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have been pretending to defend the Canadian public service in this place. Let us get this straight. Conservatives are for billions of dollars in corporate tax giveaways to their friends, but they are against hard-working Canadians earning a living wage. They are for secretive trade deals with China, but they are against trade deals that add value to our natural resources. Conservatives are for cutting employment insurance access for millions of Canadians, but they are against giving a premium break to the workers who pay into the program.

Will the minister finally do the right thing, reinstate the federal minimum wage, and help lift tens of thousands of working Canadians out of poverty?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, Canadians of all income levels have seen their incomes rise since our government came to office. They have seen their net worth increase.

Oral Questions

The NDP is opposed to every measure to assist with that. Our government has removed from the tax rolls some 850,000 low-income Canadians, measures that were opposed by the NDP. Our finance minister just cut premiums to help small businesses create new jobs, a measure opposed by the NDP. Our government is supporting our energy industry, the single greatest creator of high-paying jobs, an industry opposed by the NDP. Our government is creating new markets for energy and agriculture, all measures opposed by the NDP.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that ISIL is a threat not only to Iraq and Syria but to the entire collective security of the world and of our shared values.

Canadians, through Parliament, should be fully engaged on this issue and Canada's potential response to it.

Does the Prime Minister agree that Parliament should debate this issue and will he participate in such a debate?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has already indicated, this is not a combat mission. However, just last week I and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were before the defence committee and the foreign affairs committee to discuss this issue.

My understanding is that Parliament in fact will be discussing this, and I invite everyone to participate.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even economist Jack Mintz and small business champion Dan Kelly have criticized the Conservatives' employment insurance plan. They say that it is bad for economic growth and could discourage job creation.

Why do the Conservatives not adopt the Liberal plan, which is much more targeted and includes a break from employment insurance contributions for new employees?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party claims to support small businesses, but it is opposed to the idea of them saving over \$550,000.

[English]

It is quite remarkable that the Liberals would actually stand to talk about this issue, having raised EI premiums to \$60 billion, turned it into a slush fund, and then used it for purposes other than for which it was intended.

• (1445)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last government in fact reduced EI premiums 12 consecutive years in a row.

Canadians need a break from the \$5.4 billion in job-killing EI payroll tax increases imposed by the Conservative government.

The scheme announced last week totally misses the mark. There is no link to job creation and it is capped, going only to firms with up to a dozen employees. If they go over that, they lose \$2,200. That is an incentive to fire people.

Will the government simply provide a full EI refund to every employer who creates a new Canadian job? That would generate—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of what we did with small businesses, which are the generators of employment in our country.

Over 90% of small businesses, of all businesses, would benefit: 780,000 businesses and \$550 million over the next two years. This is precisely what we want to do: create more jobs for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a *Toronto Star* investigation has confirmed what the NDP has been saying for a long time: over the past six years, a number of Canadian pharmaceutical companies did not abide by laws regarding the safety of their products. What is worse, some of these companies are still allowed to sell their products, even though they willingly distributed defective medication. The complacency and lack of transparency at Health Canada is unbelievable.

How can the minister explain that the offending pharmaceutical companies did this under her watch and that they put the health of Canadians at risk?

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, whenever there is a dangerous product identified, Health Canada inspectors act immediately.

In the case of a drug produced by Apotex, Health Canada inspectors asked the company to remove it from the shelf and it refused.

We now have Vanessa's Law, which would allow our government to pull products that would be unsafe from the market immediately.

I ask the member to ensure that has quick passage and we will be able to act when manufacturers do exactly what we are concerned about.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, obviously there is still a pretty big problem.

When Canadians take a prescription drug, they deserve to know it is safe. However, now we know that drug companies are knowingly releasing defective drugs in Canada.

Instead of learning this from Health Canada, we had to hear it from the FDA. Health Canada refuses to release information on whom it monitors or what violations are found.

How can Canadians trust Health Canada when there is no transparency, and how could transparency and monitoring have become so bad in our country?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to not fearmonger.

She knows very well that Health Canada inspectors are professional. All of us recognize that nowhere are confidence and transparency more important than in the decisions made that affect the health and safety of Canadians. In fact, we just recently launched a world-leading regulatory transparency framework and action plan at Health Canada. We are just starting to post inspections of any pharmaceutical facilities and will continue to do just that so they are made public and available.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's failed plans to replace Canada's aging search and rescue aircraft hit a new low with the news that the RCAF had to source parts from a 50-year-old plane on display at the National Air Force Museum.

It would be funny if it were not for the fact that Canadians rely on the Hercules and Buffalo aircraft to respond to thousands of emergencies every year. Though started by the Liberals in 2002, there will not be replacement planes in operation until 2019, at the earliest.

Does the minister simply expect the RCAF to raid other museums in the meantime?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member was referring to was a mistake. When it was discovered, the RCAF took the appropriate measures.

That being said, this is the government that has delivered 17 new Hercules transport aircraft, 4 strategic transports, and 15 Chinook heavy-lift helicopters.

How did the NDP vote? The NDP voted against all of these. Every dollar for the military is opposed by the NDP.

• (1450)

[Translation]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, both the Conservatives and the Liberals botched the bidding process to replace the CF-18s.

The process had to be restarted as a result of their improvisation, secrecy, and inability to control costs. At this rate, it will be decades before we will have a new fighter jet in operation.

How do the Conservatives plan to replace the CF-18s? Are they going to ransack museums to find spare parts?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no decision has been made about replacing the CF-18 fleet.

We followed a process to evaluate all of the options, and an independent panel looked at all of the evaluations. Ministers are now

examining these reports and evaluations. A decision will be made once that is complete.

* * *

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the vital role small businesses play in the economy and job creation. That is why we are helping them grow and succeed with our low-tax plan.

Today, a small business earning \$500,000 now saves \$28,000 on their taxes. That is more money for entrepreneurs to spend on growing their business and hiring Canadians. We are not stopping there.

Could the Minister of Finance please tell the House what further actions our government is taking to support small business?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the newly elected member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca.

He is absolutely correct. Small business is vital for creating new jobs. That is why our new small business job credit lowers their employment insurance payroll taxes by 15%, and saves them \$550 million over the next two years. Ninety percent of all companies, 780,000 companies, will benefit.

Unlike the opposition, we believe in putting more money into job-creating ventures.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, almost a month ago, Tina Fontaine's body was found in the Red River. She was just 15 years old.

The government has a responsibility to help end the violence against indigenous women. Many have shared a social media campaign with the chilling slogan "Am I next?"

Today in Winnipeg, families are dragging the Red River to find the bodies of their loved ones. Canadians demand action.

Why is the government refusing to call a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in our country?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are terrible crimes against innocent people. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families.

The RCMP has said in its own study that the vast majority of these cases are addressed and solved through police investigations. We do not need yet another study on this topic. Some 40 studies have already been completed. We actually need the police to catch the individuals who are perpetuating these crimes and ensure they are punished.

Oral Questions

Now is not the time to get another study, another look by the lawyers. Now is the time for action, and that is what this government intends to do.

[Translation]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has decided to refuse to call a national inquiry because he does not think the disappearance and murder of close to 1,200 aboriginal women and girls is a systemic problem. Aboriginal communities and the provinces are unanimous in their desire to move forward.

Why are the Conservatives refusing this inquiry? Do they not understand that they are now completely alone in this?

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are terrible crimes against innocent people. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families.

[English]

As I just mentioned, the RCMP has said in its own study the vast majority of these cases have been addressed and are solved through police investigations.

What I will say, and am very proud of today, is that our government is committed to standing up for the victims of these crimes and protecting aboriginal women and girls. That is why this morning I was proud to table an action plan to address family violence and—

• (1455)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Davenport.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from indigenous women to refugees, the Conservative government seems all too happy to leave Canada's most vulnerable communities behind. First it takes away health care to refugees, something the Federal Court called cruel and unusual. Now it is trying to take away social assistance, letting sick kids go without health care, while their families are left penniless. Not only is this an attack on refugees, it is an attack on basic Canadian values.

Will the Conservatives do the right thing and withdraw this heartless bill?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has the most fair and generous immigration system in the world, the most fair and generous asylum system in the world, but Canadians have no tolerance for those who would abuse our generosity and take unfair advantage of that undoubted world-class generosity.

By making changes to the system, our government is ensuring immigration is protected from those who seek to abuse taxpayer-funded health care, welfare and other social benefits. We have done this in reforming our immigration system in the past. We will continue to look at legislation in this place from the government, from private members, that goes in that direction to ensure a generous system gives value for taxpayer dollars.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sadia Grogue (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under the Conservatives, Canada's reputation on the world stage is already suffering.

Canada has always been a welcoming country for immigrants and refugees, but the Conservatives are about to dramatically marginalize refugees by cutting their access to social assistance. They obviously have no morals.

When will the minister realize that Bill C-585 is a direct attack on human dignity?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the opposition does not want to say, especially not here or outside the House, is that Canada is still a country that welcomes the world's refugees and is the envy of all our partners.

Canada continues to welcome one in 10 refugees sent to third countries by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We are proud that over 18,000 Iraqis have been welcomed in Canada since 2009. That is what I call action and generosity. We will not take any lessons about that from the NDP.

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[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, congestion in Toronto is quickly reaching crisis levels. Experts now estimate that congestion in the GTA is reaching over \$11 billion annually. Ontario's premier has said that the federal government's investment is less than one-quarter of what it needs to be, yet the government has shamefully reduced the amount that is being spent on infrastructure, including Toronto's transit system.

When will the government heed Ontario's premier and start meaningful investments so Scarborough can have its subway?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has increased transfers to the Province of Ontario by 76%, up to \$19.2 billion. We have increased social programs. We have increased health transfers. We have increased equalization, and we have the longest and largest infrastructure program in Canadian history, totalling \$70 billion over the next 10 years.

We are very much focused on the issue of traffic congestion in the GTA, and we will do our part with the provinces and municipalities.

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ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask the Prime Minister a question about the 1,200 missing indigenous women who have either been murdered or who have disappeared.

In Winnipeg, volunteers do not have the Prime Minister's support. Instead, they turned to social media to raise funds to search lakes and rivers to find their missing loved ones.

On social media, indigenous women now ask, “Am I next?” When will the Prime Minister admit that this is a sociological phenomenon? When will he put as much effort into finding these missing people as he did into finding the missing Franklin expedition?

● (1500)

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, these are terrible crimes against innocent people and our thoughts and prayers are with those families, as well as with the victims.

However, I want to be very clear. How dare the opposition raise this when it opposed budgets for shelters, when it opposed the \$25 million that we have invested—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Status of Women has the floor.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch: Mr. Speaker, the opposition opposed our budget action of a \$25-million investment toward making sure that violence against aboriginal women is combatted. It opposed matrimonial property rights.

We are here and focused on making sure that the rights of victims are dealt with.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on September 11, TransCanada began offshore drilling near Cacouna in order to build an oil port in the middle of a fragile ecosystem. However, the National Energy Board has not yet reviewed the entire project, nor has the BAPE, which is supposed to begin hearings later this fall. In fact, only the NDP consulted Canadians this summer. To add insult to injury, the government refuses to publish the studies conducted by scientists at Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Why does the government refuse to put all the scientific information on the table? What is it hiding?

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been clear that projects will only move forward if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

TransCanada has not submitted the construction of a marine terminal in Cacouna for review to the National Energy Board. That is why it has not reviewed it.

At this stage, the only work being conducted in the area is exploratory in nature, and it has been carefully reviewed by DFO experts and authorized contingent on very strict conditions.

[Translation]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the government has nothing to hide, why did it insist that tomorrow's emergency committee meeting be held in camera? Why? Transparency? What transparency?

Oral Questions

Under this government, the environmental assessment process has become a joke. The regulatory bodies no longer have any teeth. The public and scientists alike are being muzzled. Now, without any scientific advice, work has resumed in an area where beluga whales are at risk. In short, Canadians are wondering if the deck has been stacked in favour of the oil companies.

How can the government allow work off the coast of Cacouna to begin without any advice from scientists to guarantee the protection of endangered species?

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the only work being conducted in this area is exploratory in nature. Furthermore, all of the scientific information relating to the review of this work is posted online.

I find it hard to comprehend why the NDP is running around requesting an emergency committee meeting to request information that it could find with a simple Google search.

* * *

INDUSTRY

Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians live and work in an increasingly digital world. Groups like the Alberta southwest economic development association understand that increasing Internet accessibility is essential for creating jobs and economic opportunities, and for connecting Canadians to online services.

To continue growing our Canadian economy, we need to ensure that Canadians, wherever they live, have access to high-speed Internet. Can the minister please explain what the government is doing to ensure that Canadians in rural and remote communities have access to high-speed Internet?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Macleod on getting elected. I also want to congratulate him on his very first intervention on his first day in this place, raising an issue of great concern to his constituents, and that is moving forward with digital connectivity.

We as a government have invested record amounts of money on infrastructure across this country. Part of that infrastructure is digital infrastructure to make sure that we take full advantage of the academic, economic, and social opportunities that are the fact of the digital age moving forward.

In this year's budget we have put forward a \$305-million investment to connect 280,000 households to make sure that Canada, the second-largest country in the world, has Internet connectivity in all of its communities. We are uniting Canada as we move forward to our 150th.

*Oral Questions***ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is on the wrong side of history. He stubbornly refuses to listen to premiers, indigenous leadership, the international community, and most importantly, the families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. His response, that we should not view this as sociological phenomenon is actually a refusal to accept his responsibility to prevent the deaths and stop this tragedy.

Will the Prime Minister apologize for his heartless and irresponsible remarks and call a national public inquiry now?

• (1505)

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear here. I have heard from victims' families directly. They want action, and that is precisely what we are delivering.

Today I was pleased to stand in the House and table our action plan to address family violence and violent crimes against aboriginal women and girls. This government is acting.

On this side of the House we are standing up for the rights of victims against these despicable crimes. I wonder why the opposition votes against every initiative we take to make sure these people are

The Speaker: The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, much like Rights and Democracy and the Pearson Centre, now the North-South Institute is shutting down because of Conservative cuts. The North-South Institute is an important institution. It was voted the best think tank in the world in its category in 2011 and the best think tank in Canada in the development sector in 2012. The institute had varied its sources of revenue for its projects and had been working for months with government officials to have its funding renewed.

However, the minister said no. Why?

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the North-South Institute is a think tank that is independent of the government.

Our government announced over three years ago that we would be moving to project-based funding and we would be winding down core funding. The North-South Institute committed three years ago to finding alternative fundraising, and the government provided two extensions to its contract to assist it in making that transition.

The International Development Research Corporation has held several calls for proposals for research projects. The North-South Institute has been selected for several research projects via these calls.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister's vision has reinvigorated the interest of Canadians in both their national history and the Arctic. The finding of one of the long-lost ships from the ill-fated Franklin expedition is a remarkable achievement and one that all Canadians can be rightly proud of. Parks Canada has conducted six major searches since 2008, covering hundreds of square kilometres in the Arctic.

Could the Minister of the Environment please explain to the House what the crucial elements were that helped us find one of the ships from the Franklin expedition?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the discovery of Sir John Franklin's long-lost ship defines our national identity. It connects us from the past to the present from coast to coast to coast.

The two ships were the only undiscovered national historic sites in Canada, and finding one of the ships is an excellent example of the teamwork between our government, the Government of Nunavut, and the private sector partners who shared resources and expertise.

The oral history of Inuit ultimately pointed us in the right direction and makes our case for Arctic sovereignty stronger than ever.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow Aéroports de Montréal will make its final decision regarding the future of Mirabel Airport. The proposal to demolish the terminal, despite the community's objections, is a worst-case scenario. The Liberal fiasco regarding Mirabel Airport is going to become a Conservative fiasco if the minister does not put a stop to the demolition. Instead, another use should be found for the building.

Will the minister listen to the people in our region or will she do what the Liberals did and completely ignore reality?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, Mirabel Airport is the property of Transport Canada but it is under a lease to Aéroports de Montréal. It is the one that is in charge of operating and taking the decisions around it. The decision that it has taken to bring down the terminal at Mirabel Airport is one that it is allowed to do under its lease agreements and it does respect the terms of the lease with Transport Canada.

• (1510)

[Translation]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matapédia, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the Maurice Lamontagne Institute library, Fisheries and Oceans Canada's only French-language library, is still in limbo because of the federal government. The books are all in boxes rather than on the shelves. Information is not being shared as effectively as it could be.

Six months ago, the Commissioner of Official Languages gave the minister a short nine-page report for analysis, asking that the library remain open. The minister wanted to read the report, but at the rate she is going, it must take her 20 years to read a novel.

The minister wanted to conduct an in-depth analysis. Will she make an actual decision and allow the Maurice Lamontagne Institute library to remain open? It is important for the region.

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, library users are asking for digital information, which is clear when our libraries average between five and twelve in-person visitors per year. We have received the Commissioner of Official Languages' final report and are considering it. Our libraries will continue to deliver services in both national languages. The commissioner has recognized that the model for DFO's scientific libraries will not affect service to the public or language of work for staff.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, in its most recent 2014 report, CSIS indicated that Canadians are going abroad to join jihadist groups, including Daech, and commit terrorist acts, mainly in Iraq and Syria. The possible return of these individuals poses an obvious threat to Canada's national security.

What does the government intend to do put an end to this new scourge that could one day come back to haunt us?

[English]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is a proud partner in the global fight against terrorism. That is why we have given security agencies a number of tools to combat terrorism and continue to protect law-abiding Canadian families from those who would seek to do them harm.

I would like to also remind the House that it was this government, the Conservative government, that introduced the first counter-terrorism strategy, passed the Combating Terrorism Act, and most recently, the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, which actually revokes citizenship from those who commit terrorism in Canada against our allies. I would also like to remind the House that we were the only party that voted in favour of that legislation.

Routine Proceedings

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, Cons. Ind.): Mr. Speaker, on July 17, Malaysian flight MH17 was shot down flying through Ukrainian airspace, killing all 298 civilians on board. Despite the very real demands and focus that the ongoing crisis in the Ukraine requires, the global community must follow through and ensure the perpetrators involved in this outrageous act are held accountable.

I want to thank the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for forcefully addressing this provocative act, expressing both outrage toward the perpetrators and profound sympathy for the innocent victims and their families. Can the Prime Minister please update the House on Canada's efforts in ensuring that these perpetrators are held accountable?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said, we extend our deepest sympathy to the families of all those who lost their lives in this unnecessary tragedy. Indeed it was a tragedy, and as the Prime Minister has said and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said, we would like an international investigation to find out who actually was responsible for bringing down this aircraft. We know it was brought down in the area that was held by the rebels, and we are looking for an international investigation to come to a final conclusion as to who actually brought this aircraft down.

* * *

• (1515)

[Translation]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency Charles Koffi Diby, Minister of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Ivory Coast.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[English]

The Speaker: While members are on their feet, I wonder if they will join me in welcoming Acting Clerk Marc Bosc and in sending our best wishes to Audrey O'Brien for a speedy recovery.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table a special report from the Canadian Human Rights Commission concerning the impacts of Bill C-21, an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(e), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 136 petitions.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled "Protocol Amending the Convention Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Physical Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital Gains", signed at London on September 8, 1978, as amended by the protocol signed at Ottawa on 15 April, 1980, by the protocol signed at London on 16 October, 1985, and by the protocol signed at London on May 7, 2003, done at London on 21 July, 2014; "Agreement Between Canada and the European Union on the Transfer and Processing of Passenger Name Record Data", done at Brussels on 25 June, 2014; "Amendment to Annex 7 of the International Health Regulations, 2005", adopted at Geneva on 24, May 2014; and "An Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America to Improve International Tax Compliance to Enhance Exchange of Information under the Convention Between Canada and the United States with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital", done at Ottawa on February 2014.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to the report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled "Protecting Canada and Canadians, Welcoming the World: A Modern Visa System to Help Canada Seize the Moment".

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GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM

Hon. Tim Uppal (Minister of State (Multiculturalism), CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Global Centre for Pluralism's annual report for 2013.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-36, an act to amend the Criminal Code in response to the Supreme Court of Canada decision in Attorney General of Canada v. Bedford and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report it back to the House with amendments presented by all parties of this House.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I make my motion I would like to designate Tuesday, September 16, and Tuesday, September 23, 2014, as the first and second allotted days.

There have been discussions among the parties, as per usual, and with respect to the address of the President of Ukraine on Wednesday, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House adjourns on Tuesday, September 16, 2014, it shall stand adjourned to Thursday, September 18, 2014; and that, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, the House shall be deemed to have sat on Wednesday, September 17, 2014;

That, when the House adjourns on Tuesday, September 16, 2014, item No. 1 in the order of precedence be dropped to the bottom of the Order of Precedence;

That any recorded division deferred, or which would have ordinarily been deferred to Wednesday, September 17, 2014, pursuant to Standing Order 93(1)(b), shall stand deferred to Wednesday, September 24, 2014, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business;

That the Address of the President of Ukraine, to be delivered in the Chamber of the House of Commons at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 17, 2014, before Members of the Senate and the House of Commons, together with all introductory and related remarks, be printed as an appendix to the House of Commons Debates for Thursday, September 18, 2014, and form part of the records of this House; and

That the media recording and transmission of such address, introductory and related remarks be authorized pursuant to established guidelines for such occasions.

● (1520)

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

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STATUS OF WOMEN

PETITIONS

OTTAWA RIVER

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to present petitions from residents from the national capital region who want to see the government act on the cleanup of the Ottawa River. Over 500 million litres of untreated raw sewage flows into the Ottawa River every year, and they would like to see our government live up to its commitment to actually help with the Ottawa River action plan and to reinstate protections under the navigable waters act.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition that points out women and girls of all ages face violence every day. Violence against women and girls takes an incalculable human toll. Violence drives over a hundred thousand women and children out of their homes and into shelters each year. In Canada, women continue to outnumber men nine to one as victims of assault by a partner or spouse.

The petitioners call upon the government to work in partnership with the provinces, territories, and stakeholders to develop a national strategy and action plan to end violence against women and to hold a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

CANADA POST

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer I was proud to work with CUPW local 548 to save door-to-door mail delivery in my riding of Hamilton Mountain. We circulated postcards and petitions that returned with thousands of signatures. I am pleased to table them on this first day of the fall session.

The petitioners all know that one cannot save a business by cutting services and raising prices. They also know that is exactly what the Conservative government has planned for Canada Post. While they can find millions for their well-connected friends, the Conservatives cannot seem to find a way to keep the mail coming to our door.

The petitioners are appalled that Canada Post wants to eliminate home delivery for millions of customers, slash rural postal hours, put thousands of employees out of work, and then have the gall to raise the price of stamps.

Our postal service helps connect us, and these cuts will unfairly impact the most vulnerable, including seniors and people with disabilities.

For all of those reasons, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to stop these devastating cuts to our postal service and look instead for ways to modernize operations.

While I know that the rules of the House do not allow me to endorse a petition, let me just conclude by saying how proud I am to stand in solidarity with both my constituents and Hamilton letter carriers on this important issue.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present two petitions.

[English]

The first petition is for an issue that one would have thought we would have solved long ago. That is equal pay for work of equal value. Despite years of work in this area, women still earn far less than men for work of identical characteristics, skills, and competence.

The petitioners in this case are from Calgary, Alberta, as well as from Saskatchewan, and a number are from Vancouver. They petition the House to take measures to enact legislation and policies to promote equality in pay equity.

●(1525)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of my own riding. They are from Brentwood Bay, Saanichton, Mayne Island, Pender Island, and Victoria. They call on the House of Commons and the government to immediately implement a moratorium against hydraulic fracking based on the evidence that has been tabled before the government that we simply do not know enough yet about the implications of this new technology, particularly as it affects water quality and groundwater.

[Translation]

MIRABEL AIRPORT

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since it was announced that ADM intends to demolish the Mirabel terminal, the community has been very clear that it does not want the demolition to happen. According to information we obtained this summer, the minister gave the go ahead but could still persuade the Mirabel airport administration to stop the demolition.

However, she is refusing to listen to elected officials from the Mirabel, Laurentian and Montreal regions. Let us hope that she will listen to the thousands of people from Mirabel who have signed this petition calling on her to intervene and ask ADM to stop this demolition.

[English]

SYRIA

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first petition highlights that the growing crisis in Syria has already generated 2.8 million refugees. Canada has committed to resettling 1,300 Syrian refugees.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to increase the resettlement quota for Syrian refugees to 10,000 under an accelerated program.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition represents thousands of people in British Columbia.

The petitioners highlight that 22-year-old Kassandra Kaulius was killed by a drunk driver. A group of people that has also lost loved ones to impaired driving calls itself Families for Justice. These people believe that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient.

The petitioners call for a new mandatory minimum sentencing for people who have been convicted of impaired driving causing death.

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer I took to the streets of Montreal's densely populated neighbourhoods to talk to people about the cuts at Canada Post. The people of LaSalle—Émard immediately signed this petition, which is calling on Canada Post to explore other options in order to modernize the crown corporation's business plan and to continue door-to-door delivery. This measure will adversely affect the people in my riding, including seniors and people with reduced mobility. In solidarity with the people of LaSalle—Émard, I am pleased to present this petition.

[English]

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to present a petition signed by literally tens of thousands of Canadians.

The petitioners call upon Parliament and the House of Commons here assembled to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known and that Canada still allows asbestos to be used in construction materials, textile products, and even children's toys. They point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial or occupational causes combined.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all of its forms and institute a just transition program for asbestos workers and the communities that they live in; to end all government subsidies of asbestos, both in Canada and abroad; and to stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

CANADA POST

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here we are again after the summer recess. I have had the opportunity to meet with literally hundreds of individuals and get signatures from even that many more in regard to Canada Post. They have submitted postcards, signed letters, and much more.

It is with pleasure that I table these petitions, which ask for the government to give strength to Canada Post. The petitioners look at having door-to-door delivery as a very important aspect of mail from 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, as is the normal custom after a long adjournment, we have a number of questions to be answered today, so I hope you will bear with me and we will try to get through them.

The following questions will be answered today: Nos. 503, 504, 506, 518, 517, 519, 529, 544, 548, 549, 559, 568, 571, 572, 574, 588, 607, 609, 615 to 617, 623, 627, 629, 631 to 635, 637, 639 and 641.

[Text]

Question No. 503—**Mr. Malcolm Allen:**

With regard to the use of azodicarbonamide in Canada: (a) in what year was Health Canada's most recent assessment of azodicarbonamide and its chemical by-products completed; (b) what research and data was used in this assessment; (c) did Health Canada's most recent assessment of azodicarbonamide include analysis of its chemical by-products semicarbazide and urethane and, if so, what were the results of this analysis; (d) when does Health Canada plan to undertake its next assessment of azodicarbonamide and its chemical by-products; (e) what has Health Canada established to be a safe, acceptable daily intake of azodicarbonamide and its chemical by-products; (f) what information does the government collect to ensure that Canadians are not exceeding the safe, acceptable daily intake of azodicarbonamide and its chemical by-products; (g) how many products containing azodicarbonamide have been approved for sale in Canada; and (h) what labelling requirements has the government established in regard to products containing azodicarbonamide and its chemical by-products?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada completed a thorough safety assessment of the use of azodicarbonamide in 2006.

The 2006 assessment took into consideration the available scientific data as well as the outcomes of scientific research conducted by Health Canada to investigate the safety of azodicarbonamide.

Health Canada's assessment of azodicarbonamide did take into consideration exposure to one of its main breakdown products, semicarbazide. While Health Canada scientists were aware that small amounts of urethane, or ethyl carbamate, can form in some products associated with azodicarbonamide use, the levels were considered to be consistent with low urethane levels that can naturally form in a number of foods and alcoholic beverages during fermentation.

The results of Health Canada's studies on semicarbazide demonstrated that manufacturers were using azodicarbonamide according to Canada's food additive provisions and that the levels of semicarbazide formed did not represent a health risk to consumers.

Health Canada is not aware of any recent scientific evidence that would suggest the current use of azodicarbonamide as a food additive, or exposure to semicarbazide, represents a health concern to consumers. Therefore, there are no plans to undertake another assessment in the near future. Should any scientific evidence indicate that the use of azodicarbonamide as a food additive presents a risk to human health, Health Canada would take appropriate action that could include reassessing the substance and amending the provisions that permit its use.

No acceptable daily intake has been established for azodicarbonamide or its chemical by-products, as the results of Health Canada's initial assessment and most recent reassessment have deemed such a level unnecessary.

In addition, following the 2006 evaluation, it was concluded that there was a very large margin of safety between doses associated with adverse effects in experimental animals and the maximum dietary exposure for Canadians. Therefore, an acceptable daily intake was also not established for semicarbazide.

Currently, azodicarbonamide can be used as a food additive in bread, flour or whole wheat flour at a maximum level of 45 parts per million, or ppm, in the flour. The regulatory provisions for the use of azodicarbonamide as an additive are "enabling" provisions, meaning that food manufacturers can choose to use azodicarbonamide, provided they do so in accordance with its legal conditions of use, however, they are not obligated to use it.

When used according to the stated conditions in the Food and Drug Regulations, exposure to either azodicarbonamide or its breakdown products, semicarbazide and urethane, do not represent a health risk to consumers. It is the responsibility of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to ensure that all food additives approved for use in Canada comply with their stated conditions of use.

When offered for sale, flour and whole wheat flour must carry a list declaring all ingredients, including any food additives contained within, such as azodicarbonamide.

Question No. 504—Ms. Megan Leslie:

With regard to Parks Canada's Parks Passport program: (a) for the time period of 2010 to 2013, broken down by month and year, (i) how many students registered for the program, (ii) of those who registered, how many attended, (iii) from what schools, (iv) in which region and city; and (b) broken down by region, province and year, which parks participated in the program?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, between 2010 and 2013, Parks Canada mailed 1,531,749 passes for entry into Parks Canada places to schools with grade 8 or secondary II students, or enough passes to distribute to every eligible student. Once the passes are distributed, no registration is required to validate them. Parks Canada calculated the required number of passes in collaboration with its program partners, based on information provided by school boards about the number of eligible students, including those in split classes, in their schools. The agency has endeavoured to be inclusive of home schooling, private schools, federally funded schools on reserves and charter schools, which are not included in the 347,694 grade 8 or secondary II students reported by Statistics Canada.

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The yearly totals are as follows: in May 2010, 390,365 passes were distributed; in April 2011, 381,142 passes were distributed; in March 2012, 380,639 passes were distributed; and in March 2013, 379,603 passes were distributed.

Students are not required to register their pass for use at Parks Canada places. However, based on Parks Canada's tracking systems, which include point of sale systems and manual procedures, an estimated 17,000 passes were used to enter Parks Canada places between 2010 and 2013.

To respect the privacy of minors, students entering Parks Canada places with a My Parks Pass are not required to provide their school's details. Therefore, data identifying the schools is not available.

To respect the privacy of Canadians, particularly minors, Parks Canada does not collect personal information from individuals using the My Parks Pass to enter Parks Canada places. Therefore, data on region and city is not available.

All parks and sites administered by Parks Canada participate in the My Parks Pass program through online and in-class activities. All Parks Canada places that charge an entry fee also participate by accepting the pass for free entry and discount.

Question No. 506—Ms. Peggy Nash:

With regard to gender-based analyses carried out by the Department of Finance: what are the titles, dates and authors of any reports or studies done by the department that provide a gender-based analysis of (i) income splitting, (ii) Tax-Free Savings Accounts, (iii) the Child Arts Tax Credit, (iv) the employee stock option deduction, (v) the Children's Fitness Tax Credit, (vi) pension income splitting, (vii) partial deduction of meals and entertainment expenses, (viii) partial inclusion of capital gains, (ix) the moving expense deduction, (x) the flow-through share deduction, (xi) cuts to program spending?

Mr. Andrew Saxton (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance undertakes gender-based analysis, GBA, on all new policy proposals for ministerial consideration, including tax and spending measures, where appropriate and where data exists.

For each initiative specified in Q-506, the points that follow provide the information available under title, author, and date of publication of the GBA.

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With regard to income splitting and pension income splitting, a measure to allow pension income splitting was announced in the tax fairness plan on October 31, 2006, and a GBA for the measure was completed by the Department of Finance. No other measure related to income splitting has been announced or implemented by the Government of Canada. As such, no additional information about a GBA in respect of this proposal is available.

With regard to tax-free savings accounts, this measure was introduced in the budget tabled on February 26, 2008. The GBA for the measure was completed by the Department of Finance in advance of the tabling of the budget.

With regard to the children's arts tax credit, this measure was introduced in the budget tabled on March 22, 2011. The GBA for the measure was completed by the Department of Finance in advance of the tabling of the budget.

With regard to the employee stock option deduction, this measure was introduced in 1977. Introduction of the measure predates the government's 1995 commitment to conduct GBA in respect of new policy proposals.

With regard to the children's fitness tax credit, this measure was introduced in the budget tabled on May 2, 2006. The GBA for the measure was completed by the Department of Finance in advance of the tabling of the budget.

With regard to pension income Splitting—see (i).

With regard to partial deduction of meals and entertainment expenses, this measure was introduced in 1987. Introduction of the measure predates the government's 1995 commitment to conduct GBA in respect of new policy proposals.

With regard to partial inclusion of capital gains, this measure was introduced in 1972. Introduction of the measure predates the government's 1995 commitment to conduct GBA in respect of new policy proposals.

With regard to the moving expense deduction, this measure was introduced in 1971. Introduction of the measure predates the government's 1995 commitment to conduct GBA in respect of new policy proposals.

With regard to the flow-through share deduction, the current flow-through share regime was introduced in 1986, but previous forms of the regime have been allowed by the Income Tax Act since the 1950s. Introduction of the measure predates the government's 1995 commitment to conduct GBA in respect of new policy proposals.

With regard to cuts to program spending, sponsoring departments and the Treasury Board Secretariat undertook a GBA on savings proposals that informed recommendations to Treasury Board and budget 2012 planned reductions to departmental spending.

Question n° 514 — **Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada since the department's creation, broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, PPSC, was created on December 12, 2006, when the Director of Public Prosecutions Act, part 3 of the Federal Accountability Act, came into force.

The PPSC is an independent organization, reporting to Parliament through the Attorney General of Canada, and is responsible for prosecuting offences under more than 50 federal statutes and for providing prosecution-related legal advice to law enforcement agencies.

Correspondence between the PPSC and other government departments mainly comprises communications between crown counsel and various investigative agencies, and is protected by solicitor-client privilege and/or litigation privilege. As well, in order to identify all correspondence with other government departments, it would be necessary to conduct a manual search of the files and records of all PPSC employees and agents, which is not feasible given the operational and time demands required to do so.

Question No. 517—**Hon. Ralph Goodale:**

With regard to federal non-refundable tax credits for public transit, children's fitness and children's arts: how many Canadians who submitted income tax returns did not have a high enough income to be able to use each in the 2011, 2012 and 2013 tax years?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, individual tax filers with taxable income, as reported on line 260 of the general income tax and benefit return, under the basic personal amount do not pay federal income tax.

The figures provided below include all individual filers whose taxable income was less than the basic personal amount. The figures are not limited to those who applied for the above-mentioned credits, as it is expected that some individuals will choose not to claim the credits given that their taxable income is less than the basic personal amount, and claiming any of these credits would not result in additional tax savings. As such, the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, cannot determine how many of these individuals may have been able to benefit from one or more of the above-mentioned credits.

The number of individual tax filers with taxable income less than the basic personal amount for tax years 2011 and 2012 are as follows. As the CRA is currently processing 2013 tax year returns, data is not currently available for that taxation year.

For 2011, the number of filers was 6,636,600, with a basic personal amount of \$10,527; and for 2012, it was 6,462,350, with a basic personal amount of \$10,822. The figures are rounded to the nearest 10. They are from the CRA T1 Data Mart and include all initially assessed returns processed up to May 2, 2014, that is, the most recent available data.

Question No. 519—Mr. Glenn Thibeault:

With regard to the Hiring Credit for Small Business, since 2011-2012: broken down by fiscal year up to and including the current fiscal year, (a) what is the total cost of the Hiring Credit for Small Business; (b) what is the total number of small businesses that successfully accessed the hiring credit; and (c) what was the average tax savings for small business owners who successfully accessed the hiring credit?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 2011 federal budget originally introduced the hiring credit for small business, HCSB. The HCSB was extended in 2012 and expanded and extended again in 2013.

With regard to (a), the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, administers the HCSB as part of its daily operations. As HCSB administration costs are not tracked separately, the CRA is unable to respond in the manner requested.

With regard to (b), the HCSB was a credit intended to stimulate new employment and support small businesses. Since its introduction, a number of Canadian small businesses have successfully accessed the credit. As the CRA tracks the number of employers who have received the HCSB by taxation year, rather than by fiscal period, its response is limited to information for the following tax years: 2011, 551,940 employers; 2012, 550,609 employers; and 2013, 509,544 employers to date. For 2013, the numbers represent a year to date total. It is anticipated that additional filing and processing of employer returns will increase the total number of employers receiving the credit for 2013.

With regard to (c), the HCSB provides a credit to the taxpayer's account at a minimum of \$2 and a maximum credit of \$1,000 based on the taxpayer's eligibility for the program. The available data focuses on the credit paid to taxpayers and may not fully represent the average tax savings for taxpayers who have successfully accessed the HCSB. The average credit paid to taxpayers by tax year is as follows: 2011, \$381.23; 2012, \$396.47; and 2013, \$422.74 to date. The 2013 HCSB threshold of the employers' portion of the employment insurance premiums was expanded from \$10,000 to \$15,000, which potentially has increased the number of taxpayers eligible to receive the maximum credit.

Question No. 529—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, within the timeframe provided, it would not be possible to manually verify the value of each of the contracts under \$10,000 granted by RCMP since January 1, 2013, given the volume of data. As a result, a complete and accurate response could not be produced.

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Question No. 544—Hon. Ralph Goodale:

With regard to railway grain transportation reporting requirements: for each week in the current crop year, starting August 1, 2013, how much grain was moved, as reported by each of CN Rail and CP Rail from prairie delivery points, (a) to a port for export, indicating (i) the type of grain, (ii) the port in each case; (b) out of country by rail, indicating (i) the type of grain, (ii) the destination in each case; and (c) to final domestic users, indicating the (i) type of grain, (ii) final domestic user in each case?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the grain transportation data forwarded to Transport Canada by CN Rail and CP Rail is provided pursuant to the Canada Transportation Act. Section 51(1) of that act states that "information required to be provided to the Minister pursuant to this Act is, when it is received by the Minister, confidential and must not knowingly be disclosed or made available by any person without the authorization of the person who provided the information or documentation." Consequently, this confidential information cannot be disclosed.

Question No. 548—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With regard to government-wide advertising activities, broken down by department, agency, and institution, since April 1, 2011: (a) how many advertisements have (i) been created in total, broken down by type (cinema, internet, out-of-home, print dailies, print magazine, weekly/community newspapers, radio, television) and by year, (ii) been given an identification number, a name or a Media Authorization Number (ADV number); (b) what is the identification number, name or ADV number for each advertisement listed in (a)(ii); and (c) for the answers to each part of (a), what is (i) the length (seconds or minutes) of each radio advertisement, television advertisement, cinema advertisement, internet advertisement, (ii) the cost for the production or creation of each advertisement, (iii) the companies used to produce or create each advertisement, (iv) the number of times each advertisement has aired or been published, specifying the total number of times and the total length of time (seconds or minutes), broken down by year and by month for each advertisement, (v) the total cost to air or publish each advertisement, broken down by year and by month, (vi) the criteria used to select each of the advertisement placements, (vii) media outlets used to air or publish each advertisement, broken down by year and by month, (viii) the total amount spent per outlet, broken down by year and by month?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), (b) and (c) iii, (v), (vii), and (viii), information can be found at <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/pub-adv/annuel-annual-eng.html>.

With regard to (c)(i), (ii), (iv), and (vi), the Government of Canada does not disclose information about the specific amounts paid for individual ad placements or the amounts paid to specific media outlets with which it has negotiated rates. This information can be considered third-party business sensitive information, and may be protected under the Access to Information Act.

Question No. 549—Mr. Marc Garneau:

With regard to foreign affairs, and specifically applications to export military goods or technology since January 1, 2000: (a) in respect of each such application, how many human rights experts were consulted (i) from within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, (ii) from within another department, specifying the department, (iii) from within an overseas diplomatic mission, specifying the mission; (b) for each such application, what methodology was employed to demonstrate that there is no reasonable risk that the goods or technology would be used against the civilian population; (c) in assessing that risk for each such application, were consultations undertaken with any of (i) Amnesty International, (ii) Human Rights Watch, (iii) the United Nations, (iv) any other external organization, specifying the organization; and (d) will the government revoke an export permit granted under such an application if there are new or mitigating circumstances or information that indicate the goods or technology may be used, or may have been used, against civilians or in other violations of human rights or international law or norms?

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Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), (b), and (c), applications for permits to export military goods or technology are assessed against a number of criteria, one of which is assessing the risk that the proposed export could result in human rights violations in the destination country. A number of DFATD divisions, including missions abroad, are involved in the review of permit applications. Consultations are also undertaken with the Department of National Defence and other agencies or departments as needed. Assessing risks of human rights violations is a key consideration during the review process. As part of their responsibilities, officers at our missions abroad and at geographic divisions at DFATD headquarters closely follow human rights issues, meeting regularly with human rights groups and organizations, and accessing information from these groups and organizations, from other non-governmental organizations, and civil society. This information is used to inform the consultation process and assess whether there is a significant risk that an export is likely to result in human rights violations in the destination country.

With regard to (d), officials closely monitor international developments that have the potential to negatively impact regional security, or that are resulting, or are likely to result, in violations of human rights. In cases where the situation changes in a destination country, export permits can be suspended or cancelled should it be determined that the export has become inconsistent with Canada's foreign and defence policies and interests, including on human rights grounds.

Question No. 559—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to government answers to written questions: (a) what is the rationale for the policy of the Privy Council Office not to release tabular or written material prepared in response to written questions in the native digital format in which it was prepared; (b) on what dates was this policy (i) established, (ii) revised; and (c) what are the dates, file numbers, and titles of any orders, memoranda, directives, or other documents in which this policy has been set forth?

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, except for those questions requiring an oral answer pursuant to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, the government's answers to questions on the order paper are contained in documents tabled in Parliament that bear a minister's or parliamentary secretary's signature. Any other version of a response is considered a draft and unofficial.

Question No. 568—Mr. Murray Rankin:

With regard to the DSC/Fiscal Arbitrator tax scheme: (a) when did the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) initially execute an investigation; (b) when did the CRA post a warning to the public; (c) how many citizens owed funds to the CRA, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region; (d) what were the (i) original amounts owed, (ii) penalties owed, (iii) interest owed; (e) what was the range of penalties; (f) as of June 5, 2014, how much (i) is still owed, (ii) how much has been paid, (iii) how many have paid the full balance, (iv) how many have paid a partial balance, (v) how many have not paid towards the balance; (g) how many have filed for bankruptcy and, as a result of bankruptcy, how much has been lost to the CRA in interest and penalties; (h) in total, how many files (i) received refunds, (ii) declined a refund; and (i) what would be the total amount owing had all files received a refund?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Section 241 of the Income Tax Act precludes the Canada Revenue Agency, the CRA, from providing taxpayer-specific information or information that would identify specific taxpayers; therefore, the CRA will not comment on an investigation that it may or may not be undertaking.

With regard to (b), on an ongoing basis, the CRA provides information to Canadians on tax matters, including warnings to beware of groups or individuals who conspire, counsel, and promote tax avoidance schemes. The CRA continues to issue substantial public warnings about tax schemes and inform Canadians about how to protect themselves from fraud through tax alerts, news releases, and fact sheets—all of which can be found on the CRA website—as well as through outreach and partnerships with stakeholders.

Information on these schemes and how to identify and avoid them is readily available to anyone seeking it. Through these various media the CRA also informs Canadians about the consequences of participating in and promoting various schemes, how to report participation in a scheme they become aware of, and how to come forward using the voluntary disclosures program to correct past tax mistakes before criminal and financial consequences occur.

When a conviction related to an illegal tax avoidance scheme occurs, the CRA issues a regional conviction news release to inform the Canadian public in order to help others who may have unknowingly participated in similar schemes and to deter others from participating. More information on convictions that have occurred within the last year is available on the CRA website.

Under certain circumstances, including when it may provide a more timely warning of ongoing schemes, the CRA issues news releases when charges are laid. The CRA has also provided interviews to the media to inform the Canadian public about participating in tax schemes, including the risks and costs they could incur and how to identify them and avoid taking part.

Specifically to warn taxpayers of schemes and fraud, in 2006 the CRA created tax alerts—a warning issued to the media, posted to the CRA website, and issued through an e-mail list and RSS feed. Some tax alerts have made specific reference to schemes involving fictitious business losses, while others have been broader, encompassing a call to action to seek independent advice from a trusted tax professional before becoming involved in a scheme or arrangement. Many of these alerts have reminded Canadians that if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

The CRA also collaborates with the Competition Bureau and the RCMP in its yearly promotion of Fraud Prevention Month. The CRA issues a yearly fraud prevention news release that reminds Canadians to protect themselves and leads them to the CRA's website, where a comprehensive web resource provides them with further details. Other products such as fact sheets and checklists on how Canadians can protect themselves have accompanied those releases.

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In addition to the yearly Fraud Prevention Month promotion, the CRA has also issued several other warnings about fraud or schemes. These have been distributed using News Canada articles, news releases, and tax tips during income tax filing season, and through the CRA's Twitter feed, which prominently features tweets on schemes, scams, and fraud. Regardless of the exact nature of the warning, web links to information on a variety of schemes and fraud are provided. Promoting those resources helps visitors learn about how to protect themselves on a variety of fronts.

With regard to parts (c) through (i), the CRA routinely audits questionable business losses. The CRA does not track information by specific tax scheme, such as DSC and Fiscal Arbitrators. Furthermore, section 241 of the Income Tax Act precludes the CRA from providing taxpayer-specific information or information that would identify specific taxpayers.

Question No. 571—Mr. Ryan Cleary:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (a) have there been any reports written on seismic testing and the effects on fish stocks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence since 1996; and (b) have there been any reports written on seismic testing and the effects on fish stocks off Newfoundland and Labrador since 2006?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the potential impact of seismic testing on fish, invertebrates, marine mammals, and sea turtles has been an area of study for many years. Researchers within Fisheries and Oceans Canada, as well as others within Canada and internationally, have conducted numerous studies, ranging from laboratory-scale experiments looking at effects on the physiology, behaviour, and survivorship of individual animals up to large-scale field studies looking at changes in fish stocks and fish catches before, during, and after seismic surveys. This includes research reports, summaries of broad syntheses, environmental impact statements, and the Canadian Statement of Practice, which guides the applications of seismic surveys. Most of these studies are applicable to all locations. In addition, there have been some reports produced on the specific areas mentioned:

With regard to (a), in the Gulf of St. Lawrence there have been reports produced on potential impacts of seismic testing as part of DFO's review of proposed development projects.

With regard to (b), in the waters off Newfoundland and Labrador there have been reports produced as part of the review of developments proposals, and also some reports on research conducted on lobster, crabs, and fish in local waters.

Question No. 572—Mr. Ryan Cleary:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Articles 39 and 40 of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) Conservation and Enforcement Measures: what have been the outcomes of citations issued in Canadian waters to foreign fishing vessels over the past five years?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, as the port citations were only just issued in May of this year, the Government of Canada has not yet been informed of the outcome by the vessels' home countries.

Question No. 574—Mr. Ryan Cleary:

With regard to the Department of Canadian Heritage: have there been any studies on the infrastructure at Cape Spear Lighthouse National Historic Site or Fort Amherst National Historic Site since 2000?

Mr. Rick Dykstra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Canadian Heritage has not conducted any studies on the infrastructure at Cape Spear Lighthouse National Historic Site or at Fort Amherst National Historic Site since 2000.

Question No. 588—Ms. Yvonne Jones:

With regard to corrections, since November 27, 2012: (a) has any department or agency conducted any review or assessment of physical conditions, practices, policies, or any other matter, pertaining to (i) the Baffin Correctional Centre in Iqaluit, Nunavut, (ii) correctional services in Nunavut in general; (b) what are the details, including dates and file numbers, of each such review or assessment; (c) has any department or agency conducted any review or assessment of physical conditions, practices, policies, or any other matter, pertaining to (i) Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, (ii) correctional services in Newfoundland and Labrador in general; and (d) what are the details, including dates and file numbers, of each such review or assessment?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a)(i), (a)(ii), and (b), the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, or PS, has not conducted any review or assessment pertaining to the Baffin Correctional Centre or any other correctional services in Nunavut. This is a territorial institution, not a federal institution.

With regard to (c)(i), (c)(ii), and (d), PS has not conducted any review or assessment pertaining to Her Majesty's Penitentiary or any other correctional services in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a provincial institution, not a federal institution.

With regard to (a)(i), since November 27, 2012, Correctional Service of Canada, CSC, has not conducted any review or assessment of physical conditions, practices, policies, or any other matter pertaining to Baffin Correctional Centre in Iqaluit, Nunavut. This is a territorial institution, not a federal institution.

With regard to (a)(ii), the last review of the Exchange of Service Agreement, or ESA, between CSC and the Territory of Nunavut was completed in April 2012 and is in effect until March 2018; there have been no further reviews of the ESA since November 27, 2012.

With regard to (b), there have been no further reviews of the ESA since November 27, 2012. As a result, there are no dates and file reviews between CSC and the Government of Nunavut to report.

With regard to (c)(i), since November 27, 2012, CSC has not conducted any review or assessment of physical conditions, practices, policies, or any other matter pertaining to Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a provincial institution, not a federal institution.

With regard to (c)(ii), in January 2012, in accordance with the provision of the ESA between CSC and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, a review of the ESA was completed to enable CSC to measure the results achieved against objectives set forth in the ESA.

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With regard to (d), this review focused on the continued relevance of the ESA, whether the agreement is effective in meeting its objectives within budget and without unwanted outcomes, whether it is cost-effective, and whether it was implemented as designed.

While this review did not focus solely on provincial corrections, it was concluded that the ESA has, in all key areas, been implemented as intended. It is fair to say that the success of the program initiatives and many others is due to the high level of collaboration and co-operation between the two jurisdictions at all levels.

The details, including dates and file numbers, of each discussion between CSC and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador are not readily available.

With regard to (a)(i), (a)(ii), and (b), since November 27, 2012, the RCMP has not conducted any review or assessment pertaining to the Baffin Correctional Centre or any other correctional services in Nunavut. This is a territorial institution, not a federal institution.

(c)(i)(ii)(d) With regard to (c)(i), (c)(ii), and (d), since November 27, 2012, the RCMP has not conducted any review or assessment pertaining to Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's or correctional services in Newfoundland and Labrador in general.

Question No. 607—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to Marine Atlantic Incorporated and the recent decision to eliminate two vessels crossing per week between Port aux Basques, Newfoundland and Labrador and North Sydney, Nova Scotia: (a) what consultations took place between Marine Atlantic and stakeholder groups in Newfoundland and Labrador, including names of stakeholders and how the consultations took place; (b) what were the established thresholds that had to be met before crossings were cancelled; and (c) what is the projected financial benefit or loss to Marine Atlantic for cancelling these crossings?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), no formal consultations took place between Marine Atlantic and stakeholder groups in Newfoundland and Labrador; however, the corporation did have regular informal discussions with members of various stakeholder groups in advance of the schedule change. These discussions centred around decreasing traffic levels with the corporation and trying to better understand the amount of traffic that commercial operators planned on moving during the summer.

With regard to (b), the decision to change the schedule was not based on specified traffic thresholds. The corporation's traffic has been declining, leading to revenues that were less than anticipated. Marine Atlantic recognized that it needed to change the schedule in order to better match traffic demand with available capacity and to ensure that the corporation could continue to meet its budgetary obligations.

With regard to (c), the projected savings from the 2014 summer schedule changes are approximately \$4.13 million.

Question No. 608—Ms. Joyce Murray:

With regard to the evaluation of options to sustain a Canadian Forces Fighter Capability: (a) has an assessment been made of the capacity of Canada's CF-18 fleet to contribute to operations beyond 2020; (b) what are the associated costs determined by this calculation, including necessary upgrades to maintain safe and effective operations of each plane, broken down by (i) type of upgrade, (ii) cost; (c) how many CF-18s out of Canada's current fleet could be upgraded; and (d) what is the estimated

new operational timeframe of all planes in part (c), broken down by individual aircraft in the fleet?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, as part of the evaluation of options, the CF-18 fleet was assessed for its ability to contribute to operations beyond 2020. The assessment also outlines the rough order magnitude cost estimate to maintain safe and effective operations from an airworthiness, regulatory, and operational relevance perspective.

Ministers are reviewing a number of reports from the evaluation of options, including fighter capabilities, industrial benefits, costs, and other factors related to the decision to replace Canada's CF-18 fleet.

Question No. 609—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to the announcement by the Minister of Transport on May 13, 2014, to strengthen world-class tanker safety systems: (a) what evidence, studies, research, discussions, advice or other methods were used to support the establishment of regional planning and resources to better respond to accidents in each of the following locations, (i) Southern British Columbia, (ii) Saint John and the Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick, (iii) Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia, (iv) the Gulf of St. Lawrence; and (b) what evidence, studies, research, discussions, advice or other methods were used to not support the establishment of regional planning and resources to better respond to accidents in Placentia Bay and the South Coast of Newfoundland?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, area response planning was approved as an overarching approach and will be implemented through a phased approach, starting in four areas: the southern portion of B.C.; Saint John and Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick; Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia; and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec.

A pan-Canadian risk assessment entitled "Risk Assessment for Marine Spills in Canadian Waters" was conducted by GENIVAR. It was used to determine the areas where area response planning would initially be implemented. Other criteria used in identifying these areas include a high level of risk, geographic coverage, and the involvement of all four certified response organizations, those being Atlantic Emergency Response Team, Eastern Canada Response Corporation Ltd., Western Canada Marine Response Corporation, and Point Tupper Marine Services Ltd. Involving the response organizations will allow each to work within the new area response planning model, test new response standards and techniques, and determine the operational and financial impact of implementing area response planning nationally.

Question No. 615—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With regard to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA): what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and CBSA from July 2013 to present, broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a preliminary search was done in ccmMercury, the file tracking system of the CBSA, to find the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and the CBSA from July 2013 to June 12, 2014. As a result of the volume and the processing required to provide the detail requested, the CBSA cannot produce a response by the specified deadline.

Question No. 616—Mr. David McGuinty:

With regard to the inventory of protests or demonstrations maintained by the Government Operations Centre: (a) which government departments or agencies are involved in the surveillance of public demonstrations; (b) when did the surveillance measures begin; (c) what government resources are employed in the surveillance; (d) for each department or agency, how many staff members have participated in the surveillance reporting system in each fiscal year since surveillance began; (e) what have been all the costs of implementing the surveillance; (f) how long are these surveillance measures intended to last; (g) which government department or agency maintains the data on the protests; (h) how long is such data retained; (i) who are the partners with whom it is shared; and (j) under what authority is it shared?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a) through (f), the Government Operations Centre does not conduct surveillance operations.

With regard to (g), the role of the Government Operations Centre, on behalf of the Government of Canada, is to support response coordination of events affecting the national interest. The Government Operations Centre seeks to maintain situational awareness of those demonstrations that may develop into events affecting the national interest. Situation reports are retained in accordance with the record-keeping accountability requirements of the Library and Archives of Canada Act.

With regard to (h), information obtained by the Government Operations Centre is retained for 10 years in accordance with the record-keeping accountability requirements of the Library and Archives of Canada Act.

With regard to (i), the Government Operations Centre works with all federal departments and agencies to ensure a whole-of-government response capability. It facilitates information-sharing for potential and ongoing events with other federal departments, with provinces and territories, and with its partners through regular analysis and reporting. Requests for information are part of the information-sharing process.

With regard to (j), information collected and situation reports prepared on events affecting the national interest are shared under the authority of the Emergency Management Act and the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Act.

Question No. 617—Mr. David McGuinty:

With regard to the telephone survey of nearly 3,000 Canadians conducted by the Reid Group regarding prostitution and delivered to the Department of Justice on February 10, 2014: (a) why is the Department refusing to disclose the information it contains; (b) did the Minister of Justice take the findings of this survey into account in the drafting of the new bill; (c) why did the Minister of Justice not see fit to publish the survey results; and (d) what organizations inside or outside government have received a copy of the survey results?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a) and (c), the department respects the Government of Canada policy with regard to

the undertaking of public opinion research and has delivered the results of this work and the related data to Library and Archives Canada for public release in accordance with the policy. The material is publicly available on the public opinion research reports website.

With regard to (b), the Minister of Justice does not rely on just one source of information as a basis for informing his decisions. The information collected from the telephone survey on prostitution was a single tool completed to provide the minister with information for use at his discretion.

With regard to (d), no organizations inside or outside of government received an advance copy of the survey results.

Question No. 623—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC): since June 27, 2011, has the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) or members of the RCMP Senior Executive Committee issued directives or suggestions in order to forbid or discourage RCMP offices or members of the RCMP from (a) providing letters of support to the CRTC on applications or processes that are or were before the CRTC; and (b) communicating with the Minister of Public Safety's office with regard to applications or processes that are or were before the CRTC and, if so, what are the (i) names of the individuals or office that issued such a directive or suggestion, (ii) dates when the directives or suggestions were issued, (iii) individuals or departments to whom the directives or suggestions were issued, (iv) details as to the content of the directives or suggestions?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), a member of the RCMP senior executive committee instructed RCMP members and employees to refrain from providing letters of support to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, CRTC, on applications or processes that are or were before the CRTC. The answer to (i) is Executive Director of Public Affairs Daniel Lavoie. The answer to (ii) is February 20, 2013. The answer to (iii) is the RCMP national communications services and communications group of "C" Division, Quebec. The answer to (iv) is that it was to remind those individuals, mentioned in response to (iii), that it would not be appropriate for an RCMP representative to endorse an application before the CRTC as the CRTC is a regulatory organization of the federal government.

With regard to (b), the RCMP did not issue directives or suggestions in order to forbid or discourage RCMP offices or members of the RCMP from communicating with the office of the Minister of Public Safety with regard to applications or processes that are or were before the CRTC.

Question No. 627—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:

With regard to government funding in the province of Ontario, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in the province, specifying for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, namely the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to the large volume of information involved, the government's long-standing practice with regard to questions relating to total grants and contributions is to provide an answer for one federal electoral district per question. The government invites the member to specify for which individual riding she would like the requested information and ask the corresponding question.

Question No. 629—**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:**

With regard to refugees: (a) as of June 11, 2014, how many of the 200 Syrian refugees the government committed to resettle were in Canada; (b) what was the average processing time in 2014 for applications for privately sponsored refugees; and (c) what was the average processing time in 2014 for applications for privately sponsored refugees from Syria?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is concerned, the Government of Canada is deeply concerned about the crisis in Syria and will continue to do what it can to best help the Syrian people. Canada has a long and proud tradition of providing protection to those truly in need. We have one of the most fair and generous immigration systems in the world. We welcome about one out of every 10 of all resettled refugees globally, more than almost any industrialized country in the world. Canada is one of the world's largest providers of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees. To date, Canada has committed more than \$630 million in humanitarian, development and security assistance to the Syrian crisis.

In response to the June 2013 UNHCR appeal for assistance with extremely vulnerable cases, Canada committed to permanently resettling 1,300 Syrian refugees by the end of 2014, 200 refugees through the government-assisted refugees, or GAR, program and 1,100 through the private sponsorship of refugees, or PSR, program.

It was only in late 2013 and early 2014 that the UNHCR began to call for increased resettlement efforts as an expression of international solidarity and burden-sharing while providing much needed protection to the most. To meet Canada's commitment the UNHCR began referring cases to Canada in late 2013.

In total, since the start of the Syrian conflict, Canada has received over 3,070 applications from Syrians seeking Canada's protection through the asylum and resettlement programs and we have provided protection to more than 1,230 Syrians.

As of June 11, 93 Syrian refugees out of the 200 that the government committed to resettle had arrived in Canada. As of July 2, as the minister confirmed to *The Globe and Mail*, 177 Syrian refugees of the 200 the government had committed to resettle had arrived in Canada. That number continues to rise. CIC reports processing times on a 12-month rolling period, based on the calendar year, so 2014 processing time data is not yet available. CIC also does not report processing times based on a client's country of origin but rather by processing centre. As such, this information is not available. That said, robust backlog, and wait time reduction strategies and resources have been implemented to reduce processing times generally.

Current processing times vary depending on the category. To see our processing times, please visit our website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/perm-other.asp>.

Processing times have begun to improve, and where working inventories have been established, cases are being put into process quickly. We continue to work toward processing times at all missions of 12 to 18 months for newly received PSR cases.

The Government of Canada remains committed to upholding its humanitarian tradition to resettle refugees and offer protection to those in need. CIC continues to work as effectively as possible to resettle refugees given operational and security limitations.

Canada is working closely with the UNHCR and resettlement countries to determine how best to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees, given the overwhelming scale of the displacement. Canada is reviewing an additional request from the UNHCR for Syrian resettlement as part of our broader response to this crisis. The Government of Canada remains committed to upholding its humanitarian tradition to resettle refugees and offer protection to those in need. CIC continues to work diligently and as effectively as it can to resettle as many refugees as possible.

Question No. 631—**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:**

With respect to an accidental release in March 2011 of industrial wastewater from a Suncor oil sands project into the Athabasca River: (a) when did the government of Alberta notify the federal government of the spill; (b) was the notification in (a) done pursuant to the Canada-Alberta Environmental Occurrences Notification Agreement; (c) what fines did the federal government impose for this violation of the Fisheries Act; (d) what non-monetary penalties did the federal government impose for this violation of the Fisheries Act; (e) if fines or non-monetary penalties were not imposed, for what reasons were they not imposed; and (f) with regard to the federal government's investigation of the incident, (i) on what date was the investigation opened, (ii) on what date was the investigation closed and (iii) what was the reason for the closing of the investigation?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the answer to part (a) is on Thursday, March 24, 2011 at 4:43 p.m.

In regard to part (b), yes, the Alberta CIC notification centre sent a summary email of the occurrence and a link to the full Suncor report to an Environment Canada environmental emergencies officer in the Edmonton office. The CIC notification reference number was 245344.

Regarding (c), the answer is none.

Regarding (d), the answer is none.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (e), information gathered during this investigation has determined that Suncor has been operating their wastewater system diligently and that the March 21, 2011, incident could not have been reasonably foreseen. Consequently, no charges were laid against Suncor. On November 8, 2011, the file was approved for closure, with no recommended enforcement action.

The answer to (f)(i) is on March 25, 2011; and (f)(ii) is November 8, 2011. Finally, (f)(iii), was answered in the response to (e).

Question No. 632—Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:

With respect to the government's response aimed at ensuring the safety of drug compounds to the under-dosing of chemotherapy drugs, discovered on March 20, 2013 at four Ontario hospitals: (a) what actions have been taken, with (i) drug compounders, (ii) each of the provinces and territories, in order to establish a federal regulatory framework for this sector; (b) what steps remain to be taken to successfully establish a comprehensive federal regulatory regime for drug compounders, similar to that which exists for drug manufacturers; (c) what new rules will be included with regard to purchasing protocols for compounding inputs; (d) will these protocols be equivalent to those for manufacturers; (e) how will compliance with the rules in (c) be monitored and enforced; (f) how does the government monitor and enforce manufacturing and purchasing protocols for drug manufacturers; and (g) how does the government ensure that monitoring and compliance are sufficient to ensure the safety of all Canadians who consume medications?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, since the under-dosing incident, Health Canada has undertaken these actions.

First, on April 19, 2013, Health Canada published the "Interim Regulatory Oversight of Admixing and Compounding" statement, allowing organizations involved in these activities to continue providing these services, if they meet certain conditions, while the department and the provinces and territories, or PTs, worked together to determine the long-term oversight of these activities.

Second, Health Canada convened the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Admixing and Compounding to collaboratively work toward two goals: to examine the scope and extent of hospital pharmacy outsourcing of drug compounding and admixing across Canada; and to determine the appropriate oversight of these activities. Health Canada also convened a sub-working group to bring clarity to the delineation between federal and PT oversight of these activities.

With regard to part (b), Health Canada has also been working collaboratively with key stakeholders such as the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities and the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists to determine how best to achieve regulatory clarity to enhance patient safety, and improve predictability and transparency going forward.

In regard to (c), (d), and (e), our government is determined that Canadians will have tough, effective regulations for drug safety. Health Canada has been actively working on a proposal for a federal approach to commercial compounding and initiated consultations in June 2014 to gain feedback from PTs and other key stakeholders on elements of the proposal and its implementation.

In regard to (c), details will be developed during the regulatory process in consultation with stakeholders.

In regard to (d), the proposed regulatory requirements would be proportional to the level of risk associated with the type of activity in question.

In regard to (e), proposed federal regulations would be an extension of existing regulatory frameworks governing the manufacturing of drugs, and Health Canada would develop an appropriate compliance and enforcement approach based on existing processes and procedures.

In regard to (f), Health Canada conducts routine inspections on a risk-based cycle to monitor compliance with the regulatory requirements, including the requirement to have and follow appropriate protocols related to the manufacturing of drugs. When non-compliance is identified, Health Canada verifies the corrective action taken by the manufacturer and takes appropriate enforcement action to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

In regard to (g), Health Canada administers an inspection program to regularly monitor the compliance of drug manufacturers with the regulatory requirements. Policies, guidelines and procedures related to the inspection program are regularly reviewed and audited to support continuous improvement so that Health Canada's inspection program provides effective oversight to help protect the health and safety of Canadians. The department also participates in ongoing assessment activities with international partners to confirm the international equivalence of the Canadian inspection system.

Health Canada is also enhancing the integrity of the health product supply chain in Canada by educating stakeholders and improving the oversight of the ingredients found in health products in accordance with the new active pharmaceutical ingredients regulations. In addition to the existing measures in place to protect the health and safety of Canadians, our government is enhancing patient safety by C-17, Vanessa's Law, which will require the reporting of adverse drug reactions by health institutions, mandatory recalls of unsafe drugs, and increased fines and penalties.

Question No. 633—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to the Correctional Service of Canada: what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and the Correctional Service of Canada from July 2013 to present, broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CSC is unable to respond to the request within the given timeframe. There are variations in the manner with which ministerial briefings and departmental correspondence are tracked and CSC's electronic document tracking database cannot be used to produce the requested information; therefore, an electronic search for the requested records is not possible. As a result, a manual search of files would be required in order to respond to this request. System limitations and the amount of resources that would be required for such a search prevent CSC from providing a full and consistent response to the request.

Question No. 634—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in the province of Nova Scotia, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to the large volume of information involved, the government's long-standing practice with regard to questions relating to total grants and contributions is to provide an answer for one federal electoral district per question. The government invites the member to specify for which individual riding he would like the requested information and ask the corresponding question.

Question No. 635—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to the large volume of information involved, the government's long-standing practice with regard to questions relating to total grants and contributions is to provide an answer for one federal electoral district per question. The government invites the member to specify for which individual riding she would like the requested information and ask the corresponding question.

Question No. 637—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in the province of New Brunswick, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to the large volume of information involved, the government's long-standing practice with

regard to questions relating to total grants and contributions is to provide an answer for one federal electoral district per question. The government invites the member to specify for which individual riding he would like the requested information and ask the corresponding question.

Question No. 639—Hon. John McKay:

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in the province of British Columbia, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to the large volume of information involved, the government's long-standing practice with regard to questions relating to total grants and contributions is to provide an answer for one federal electoral district per question. The government invites the member to specify for which individual riding he would like the requested information and ask the corresponding question.

Question No. 641—Mr. Marc Garneau:

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in the province of Quebec, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, due to the large volume of information involved, the government's long-standing practice with regard to questions relating to total grants and contributions is to provide an answer for one federal electoral district per question. The government invites the member to specify for which individual riding he would like the requested information and ask the corresponding question.

● (1530)

[English]

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 233 originally tabled on March 24, 2014 and a revised response to Question No. 328, originally tabled on May 6, 2014, as well as Questions Nos. 263, 493 to 495, 497, 500 to 502, 505, 507 to 513, 515, 516, 518, 520 to 528, 530 to 543, 545 to 547, 550 to 558, 560 to 567, 569, 570, 573, 575 to 587, 589 to 606, 610 to 614, 618 to 622, 624 to 626, 628, 630, 636, 638, 640 and 642 to 644 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 233—Ms. Charmaine Borg:

With regard to requests by government agencies to telecommunications service providers (TSP) to provide information about customers' usage of communications devices and services: (a) in 2012 and 2013, how many such requests were made; (b) of the total referred to in (a), how many requests were made by (i) RCMP, (ii) Canadian Security Intelligence Service, (iii) Competition Bureau, (iv) Canada Revenue Agency, (v) Canada Border Services Agency, (vi) Communications Security Establishment Canada; (c) for the requests referred to in (a), how many of each of the following types of information were requested, (i) geolocation of device (broken down by real-time and historical data), (ii) call detail records (as obtained by number recorders or by disclosure of stored data), (iii) text message content, (iv) voicemail, (v) cell tower logs, (vi) real-time interception of communications (i.e. wire-tapping), (vii) subscriber information, (viii) transmission data (e.g. duration of interaction, port numbers, communications routing data, etc.), (ix) data requests (e.g. web sites visited, IP address logs), (x) any other kinds of data requests pertaining to the operation of TSPs' networks and businesses, broken down by type; (d) for each of the request types referred to in (c), what are all of the data fields that are disclosed as part of responding to a request; (e) of the total referred to in (a), how many of the requests were made (i) for real-time disclosures, (ii) retroactively, for stored data, (iii) in exigent circumstances, (iv) in non-exigent circumstances, (v) subject to a court order; (f) of the total referred to in (a), (i) how many of the requests did TSPs fulfill, (ii) how many requests did they deny and for what reasons; (g) do the government agencies that request information from TSPs notify affected TSP subscribers that information pertaining to their telecommunications service has been accessed by the government, (i) if so, how many subscribers are notified per year, (ii) by which government agencies; (h) for each type of request referred to in (c), broken down by agency, (i) how long is the information obtained by such requests retained by government agencies, (ii) what is the average time period for which government agencies request such information (e.g. 35 days of records), (iii) what is the average amount of time that TSPs are provided to fulfil such requests, (iv) what is the average number of subscribers who have their information disclosed to government agencies; (i) what are the legal standards that agencies use to issue the requests for information referred to in (c); (j) how many times were the requests referred to in (c) based specifically on grounds of (i) terrorism, (ii) national security, (iii) foreign intelligence, (iv) child exploitation; (k) what is the maximum number of subscribers that TSPs are required by government agencies to monitor for each of the information types identified in (c); (l) has the government ever ordered (e.g. through ministerial authorization or a court order) the increase of one of the maximum numbers referred to in (k); (m) do TSPs ever refuse to comply with requests for information identified in (c) and, if so, (i) why were such requests refused, (ii) how do government agencies respond when a TSP refuses to comply; and (n) in 2012 and 2013, did government agencies provide money or other forms of compensation to TSPs in exchange for the information referred to in (a) and, if so, (i) how much money have government agencies paid, (ii) are there different levels of compensation for exigent or non-exigent requests?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 263—Mr. Mike Wallace:

With regard to questions on the Order Paper numbers Q-1 through Q-253, what is the estimated cost of the government's response for each question?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 328—Hon. John McKay:

With regard to any contracting paid for by the budgets of each Minister's Office since May 1, 2011, what are the details of all contracts over \$500 including (i) the name of the supplier, vendor or individual who received the contract, (ii) the date on which the contract was entered into, (iii) the date the contract terminated, (iv) a brief description of the good or service provided, (v) the amount of payment initially agreed upon for the contract, (vi) the final amount paid for the contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 493—Ms. Francine Raynault:

With regard to spending in the Joliette riding, what was the total amount spent, from fiscal year 2005-2006 up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by (i) the date the funds were received in the riding, (ii) the dollar amount, (ii) the program through which the funding was allocated, (iv) the department responsible, (v) the designated recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 494—Ms. Francine Raynault:

With regard to the operation of the Skills Link Program: (a) what is the approval process for an application; (b) how many parties propose recommendations to an application before ministerial approval; (c) how does the Minister's office assess an application; (d) how is the budget for the program split up across the country; (e) how much money was spent in each of the areas specified in (d) for the 2013-2014 program; (f) how much money was allocated and spent in each constituency for the 2013-2014 program; and (g) is money left over from the 2013-2014 program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 495—Ms. Francine Raynault:

With regard to the funding of First Nations educational infrastructure: (a) what are the prioritization criteria for deciding in what order on-reserve schools are to be renovated or modified; (b) what are the first one hundred schools on the prioritization list; (c) where does École Simon P. Ottawa in Manawan rank on the list; (d) what was the estimated useful life and capacity of École Simon P. Ottawa in Manawan at the time it was built; (e) when will École Simon P. Ottawa be replaced; and (f) what is the assessment in terms of the capacity of École Simon P. Ottawa in Manawan, given the population boom in this community?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 497—Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With regard to the management and publication of material related to judicial appointments: (a) what is the policy of the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada with respect to posting information pertaining to candidates; (b) in what way is the nomination material archived; (c) is the material on the website the same as in the binder provided to MPs and, if not, how do they differ; (d) when materials are removed from the website, (i) who keeps copies, (ii), who is provided a copy, (iii) how can this material be accessed, (iv) by whom can it be accessed, (v) how long is it kept; (e) are the materials from the website provided to the Supreme Court of Canada, (i) by whom, (ii) to whom, (iii) on what date, (iv) with what conditions relating to their retention, (v) if not, why not; (f) are the materials from the website provided to the Library of Parliament, (i) by whom, (ii) to whom, (iii) on what date, (iv) with what understating relative to their retention, (v) if not, why not; (g) are the materials from the website provided to the Department of Justice, (i) by whom, (ii) to whom, (iii) on what date, (iv) with what conditions relating to their retention, (v) if not, why not; (h) are the materials from the website provided to the Minister of Justice, (i) by whom, (ii) to whom, (iii) on what date, (iv) with what conditions relating to their retention, (v) if not, why not; (i) are the materials from the website provided to the Prime Minister's Office, (i) by whom, (ii) to whom, (iii) on what date, (iv) with what understating relative to their retention, (v) if not, why not; (j) are the materials from the website provided to Library and Archives Canada and, if so, (i) by whom, (ii) to whom, (iii) on what date, (iv) with what conditions relating to their retention, (v) if not, why not; (k) how many binders were prepared relative to Mr. Justice Marc Nadon's appointment and where are these binders now; (l) how many binders were prepared relative to Mr. Justice Wagner's appointment and where are these binders now; (m) in what way and through what processes can previous binders be consulted by (i) parliamentarians, (ii) the public, (iii) the media, (iv) legal scholars; (n) for how long does the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada retain all information relative to judicial appointment cycles and what are its policies on both retention of these materials and access to them; (o) with respect to the inclusion of publications, seminars and lectures in Mr. Justice's Wagner's materials, why is no such material included in Mr. Justice Nadon's materials and whose decision was this; (p) with respect to the statement made in the government's response to written question Q-239, that " (bb)(i) The material requested in the latest appointment process does not differ materially from those requested for the appointment of Justice Wagner" and "(iv) The wording was substantially the same", what is the difference between "materially" and "substantially" insofar as case law areas are concerned; (q) do the uses of "materially" and "substantially" mean that the wording was not exactly the same; (r) were Justices Wagner and Justice Nadon asked for the same exact materials and same areas of cases law and, if not, why not; (s) do the types of materials sought from candidates change between appointment cycles, (i) if so, why, (ii) who makes this determination; (t) do the types of material sought from candidates for Quebec seats change between appointment cycles, (i) if so, why, (ii) how is this determined; (u) with what bodies did the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada consult in developing a retention and access policy relative to materials associated with a judicial appointment; (v) why is candidate information on the website for the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada only temporarily online and how was this policy developed; (w) were any briefing documents, presentations, or memos prepared for ministers or their staff, from 2006 to present, regarding Supreme Court Appointments and, for each, what is the (i) date, (ii) title or subject-matters, (iii) department, commission, or agency's internal tracking number; (x) do members of the Selection Panel have access to the materials developed or used in an appointment process after the appointment has been made; (y) does the Minister of Justice or Prime Minister have access to the materials developed or used in an appointment process after the appointment has been made; (z) does an appointed justice have any access to the materials developed or used in the process after the appointment has been made; (aa) does any person consulted in the process of an appointment have any access to materials or records developed or used in the process at any time; (bb) what materials were developed or used in the most recent appointment process; (cc) what records of meetings or other items exist relative to the most recent appointment process, (i) by what means can they be accessed, (ii) by whom; and (dd) does the Minister of Justice or Prime Minister have any access to materials not accessible to other persons and, if so, what materials, and by virtue of what process or policy?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 500—Ms. Elizabeth May:

With regard to the contract announced on February 14, 2014, between the Canadian Commercial Corporation and the government of Saudi Arabia for the supply of armoured vehicles built in London, Ontario, by General Dynamics Land

Systems Canada, and the export permits issued by Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) in accordance with the contract: (a) how many export permits has DFATD issued related to the announced contract, and for each permit issued, what was the (i) value, (ii) date, (iii) valid duration; (b) of the \$4.02 billion worth in export permits issued to Saudi Arabia in 2011 for exports of Group 2 (military) goods, how many Group 2 permits were related to the announced contract; (c) were the export permits related to the announced contract issued to the Canadian Commercial Corporation, to General Dynamics Land Systems Canada, or to both; and (d) has the Canadian Commercial Corporation charged, or will it charge, fees for its services regarding the announced contract, (i) have these fees been charged or will they be charged to the Saudi Arabia government, to General Dynamics Land Systems Canada or to both, (ii) if so, is the fee a standard amount or is it determined by the size of the contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 501—Mr. Malcolm Allen:

With regard to salmon farming in Canada: (a) how many outbreaks of infectious salmon anemia have been reported in 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014, broken down by province; (b) how many outbreaks of infectious hematopoietic necrosis virus have been reported in 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014, broken down by province; (c) how much money has the government paid out in compensation to producers who were ordered to destroy salmon infected with infectious salmon anemia in 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014, broken down by province; (d) how much money has the government paid out in compensation to producers who were ordered to destroy salmon infected with infectious hematopoietic necrosis virus in 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014, broken down by province; (e) how much money has the government paid out in compensation to producers who were ordered to destroy salmon infected with other diseases in 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014, broken down by province; (f) how much money has the government paid out in compensation to companies headquartered outside of Canada which were ordered to destroy salmon infected with diseases in 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014; (g) what plans does the Canadian Food Inspection Agency currently have in place if there are more outbreaks of diseases resulting in compensation to salmon producers; (h) what biosecurity measures are salmon producers required to take in order to be eligible for compensation for the destruction of diseased salmon; (i) what cost-benefit analysis has the government undertaken concerning federal compensation to salmon producers; and (j) has the government examined the cost differential in federal compensation to salmon producers using open-pen systems compared to salmon producers using closed containment systems, and, if so, what were the results of this analysis?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 502—Mr. Malcolm Allen:

With regard to pesticide residues in tea: (a) what method is used by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to test pesticide residues in dry tea leaves; (b) for which pesticides does the CFIA test tea products, and do these tests include all pesticides approved in Canada; (c) how often does the CFIA test tea products for pesticide residues; (d) how many tea products were tested for pesticide residues in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014; (e) how many tea products were found to contain levels of pesticides exceeding the allowable limits in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and thus far in 2014, and what action was taken by the government in relation to those products; (f) what policies do the CFIA and Health Canada have in place for tea products containing the residues of multiple pesticides; (g) what analysis has the government undertaken of the potential risks to consumers posed by pesticide residues found in tea leaves, and what were the results of this analysis; and (h) how often does Health Canada assess the safety of pesticide residues in food products approved for sale in Canada?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 505—Ms. Joyce Murray:**

With regard to the staffing of Canadian Armed Forces clinics: (a) at each base/location, what is the number employed of (i) military psychiatrists, (ii) civilian psychiatrists employed directly by the Department of National Defence (DND), (iii) psychiatrists from Calian Technologies Ltd., (iv) military psychologists, (v) civilian psychologists employed directly by the DND, (vi) Calian psychologists, (vii) military medical doctors, (viii) civilian medical doctors employed directly by the DND, (ix) Calian medical doctors, (x) military medical social workers, (xi) civilian medical social workers employed directly by the DND, (xii) Calian medical social workers, (xiii) military registered nurses specializing in mental health, (xiv) civilian registered nurses specializing in mental health employed directly by the DND, (xv) Calian registered nurses specializing in mental health, (xvi) military addictions counsellors, (xvii) civilian addictions counsellors employed directly by the DND, (xviii) Calian addictions counsellors; (b) what is the average full-time equivalent salary for (i) military psychiatrists, (ii) civilian psychiatrists employed directly by the DND, (iii) Calian psychiatrists, (iv) military psychologists, (v) civilian psychologists employed directly by the DND, (vi) Calian psychologists, (vii) military medical doctors, (viii) civilian medical doctors employed directly by the DND, (ix) Calian medical doctors, (x) military medical social workers, (xi) civilian medical social workers employed directly by the DND, (xii) Calian medical social workers, (xiii) military registered nurses specializing in mental health, (xiv) civilian registered nurses specializing in mental health employed directly by the DND, (xv) Calian registered nurses specializing in mental health, (xvi) military addictions counsellors, (xvii) civilian addictions counsellors employed directly by the DND, (xviii) Calian addictions counsellors; and (c) what is the average number of patients treated per month by (i) military psychiatrists, (ii) civilian psychiatrists employed directly by the DND, (iii) Calian psychiatrists, (iv) military psychologists, (v) civilian psychologists employed directly by the DND, (vi) Calian psychologists, (vii) military medical doctors, (viii) civilian medical doctors employed directly by the DND, (ix) Calian medical doctors, (x) military medical social workers, (xi) civilian medical social workers employed directly by the DND, (xii) Calian medical social workers, (xiii) military registered nurses specializing in mental health, (xiv) civilian registered nurses specializing in mental health employed directly by the DND, (xv) Calian registered nurses specializing in mental health, (xvi) military addictions counsellors, (xvii) civilian addictions counsellors employed directly by the DND, (xviii) Calian addictions counsellors?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 507—Mr. François Choquette:

With regard to the current Parks Canada study of the Maligne Tours hotel construction proposal at Maligne Lake, near Jasper: (a) what are the study's terms of reference; (b) what is Parks Canada's role in deciding the outcome of this project; (c) when is the study due to be completed; (d) what are the criteria for (i) approval, (ii) rejection of private development projects; (e) will the study take into account the ecological integrity of Parks Canada; (f) will the study include public consultations and, if so, with (i) what groups, (ii) where, (iii) when; (g) will the study of the project be made public and, if applicable, how will the results be made public; (h) who will have access to the study's final report: (i) the public, (ii) government departments, (iii) ministers; (i) will the study consider the (i) direct, (ii) indirect, (iii) cumulative impacts of a development project of this size in determining the scope of the issue; (j) will the study take into account species at risk; (k) will the study take into account the standards for construction in rocky areas; (l) will the study consider the impacts of such a project on the future of the caribou, which is now an endangered species; and (m) will the study consider the impacts on (i) the economy, (ii) municipalities, (iii) communities, (iv) Aboriginal peoples, (v) human health, (vi) animal health, (vii) aquatic plants, (viii) aquatic animals, (ix) land plants, (x) land animals?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 508—Mr. Paul Dewar:

With regard to the procurement of temporary personnel services by the government over the last five years: (a) what is the total government expenditure for such services (i) in total, (ii) broken down by year; (b) for each year in this period, what amount was spent by each department; (c) how much was spent in each department or agency in the National Capital Region (NCR) alone, broken down by year; (d) what is the breakdown by province for such services; (e) which companies received contracts to provide temporary personnel services; (f) what is the annual combined value of all contracts awarded to each company; (g) how many people were hired by temporary employment agencies to work for the government, both nationally and in the NCR (i) in total, (ii) broken down by year; and (h) how many

employees were hired on a temporary basis, both nationally and in the NCR, broken down by (i) year, (ii) department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 509—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to petroleum coke (which may also be referred to as green coke, uncalcined coke, thermocracked coke, and fuel grade coke): (a) what is the government doing to assess and monitor the potential impact on the environment of its storage, transportation and use in Canada, including their impact on (i) water, air and land quality, (ii) acute and chronic human health issues, (iii) aquatic and terrestrial life; and (b) what is the government doing to mitigate the potential impacts referred to in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 510—Mr. Brian Masse:

With regard to Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada staff working on issues related to the Great Lakes Basin (Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River) from 1972 to 2014 inclusive: (a) what is the total number of such staff for each year, broken down by type of staffing (e.g. "scientific", "technical", etc.); and (b) what is the aggregate salary of all such staff, broken down by (i) actual expenditure, (ii) expenditures adjusted for inflation?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 511—Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With regard to disclosures by telecom and Internet providers (“providers”) of subscriber information: (a) what government agencies and departments request such data; (b) how many such requests have been made in the past five years, broken down by year and requestor; (c) from what providers has the government made requests in the last year; (d) from what providers has the government made requests in the past five years; (e) what is the breakdown of requests by agency and provider in (d); (f) how many individuals have had their subscriber data given to the government in the past five years, broken down by year; (g) what limits exist on what data or information the government can request from providers; (h) what limits exist on what data or information providers can supply; (i) in what ways are persons notified that their data has been requested; (j) in what ways are persons notified that their data has been provided; (k) are there any restrictions on how often the government is allowed to request data from providers generally and, if so, what are they; (l) are there any restrictions on how often the government is allowed to request data from providers relative to a specific user and, if so, what are these; (m) what are the restrictions, if any, to the amount or type of data providers may access in responding to a government request; (n) what sort of information may providers furnish about subscribers without a court order; (o) what does subscriber information entail; (p) what does the government seek when it requests subscriber information; (q) are there any restrictions on when a provider may inform its customers that a government agency has requested data; (r) have any of the government policies that pertain to requests for an access to subscriber data changed in the past five years and, if so, how; (s) how much money did the government spend on data requests, broken down by year, expense type, and the agency incurring the expense, for the past five years; (t) how much money did the government spend on storing and retaining data, broken down by year, expense type, and the agency incurring the expense, for the past five years; (u) how much money did the government spend assessing received data, broken down by year, expense type, and the agency incurring the expense, for the past five years; (v) how much money did the government spend to act upon received data, broken down by year, expense type, and the agency incurring the expense, for the past five years; (w) how often did the disclosure of data lead to action by the government; (x) for calendar year 2013, how many persons were charged with offences under an Act of Parliament where the government had requested subscriber data; (y) for what purposes does the government request subscriber data; (z) what evidence of their concern, if any, must government agencies have for requests for data on grounds of (i) child exploitation, (ii) terrorism, (iii) national security, (iv) foreign intelligence; (aa) what are the definitions and criteria established by the government relative to the enumerated categories in (z); (bb) how often are requests made relative to the enumerated categories in (z); (cc) what grounds other than those enumerated categories in (z) has the government identified as warranting subscriber data requests; (dd) what avenues exist for Canadians to contest governmental demands for access to data sent over communication devices; (ee) what avenues exist for providers to refuse a government request in this regard; (ff) broken down by requesting entity, what is the process by which a data request is made; (gg) in instances where Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC) has “incidentally” captured Canadians’ personal information, are there any protocols on what is done with that information; (hh) with respect to (gg), are there any restrictions on how long CSEC or another agency may keep the ‘incidentally’ captured data or on what they may do with it and, if so, what are these; (ii) of the data received by the government, how often and in what ways has it proved useful in ensuring the safety of Canadian citizens; (jj) of Canadians whose data was requested, how much data was provided with respect to (i) usage, (ii) geolocation of device (broken down between real-time and historical), (iii) call detail records (as obtained by number recorders or by disclosure of stored data), (iv) text message content, (v) voicemail, (vi) cell tower logs, (vii) real-time interception of communications, (viii) transmission data, (ix) other data requests; (kk) with respect to the categories in (jj), does the government request all such data in every case; (ll) how does the government determine what data to seek in each case, by what process and criteria, and with what reviews; (mm) with respect to the categories in (jj), does the government not request data with respect to any of them and if not, why not; (nn) with respect to the information types in (jj), which government agencies made such requests in the past five years, and what records are made of the requests; (oo) what records are stored with respect to data requests; (pp) how is the data received stored and for how long; (qq) who or what has access to obtained data; (rr) what is the average amount of time for which government requests data from law enforcement with respect to a specific individual; (ss) how quickly are providers required to respond regarding their ability to provide each type of data provided; (tt) how quickly must providers respond to government requests; (uu) in the past three years did the government provide money or any other form of compensation, including tax breaks, in exchange for information being provided to government agencies, and, if so, what were these; (vv) in what ways has the government consulted with the Privacy Commissioner to ensure that data requests comply with privacy law; (ww) with what

experts has the government consulted regarding requests for subscriber data; (xx) what protocols are in place to ensure that privacy rights are respected in this process; and (yy) how often has the government met with providers to discuss data requests, and when was the most recent such meeting?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 512—Mr. Sean Casey:**

With regard to research at the Department of Justice: (a) broken down by year for each of the last ten years, what studies were undertaken by the Department, and at what cost; (b) of the studies in (a), which ones are currently publicly accessible; (c) of the studies in (a) which, if any, have not been made public; (d) how much funding has been allocated to research and studies for each of the last ten years; (e) how much funding was spent on research and studies for each of the past ten years; (f) what policies or directives account for changes in funding allocated or spent at the Department; (g) who determines or determined the policies or directives in (g); (h) with regard to recent research cuts that the Minister has said were carried out “to ensure that we bring value to hard-earned taxpayers’ dollars”, how is value defined at the Department in the context of research and study; (i) what reports or studies has the Minister determined to be wasteful and according to what criteria; (j) what reports or studies has the Department determined to be wasteful and according to what criteria; (k) what reports or studies has the Minister determined do not “bring value to hard-earned taxpayers’ dollars” and how so; (l) what reports or studies has the Department determined do not “bring value to hard-earned taxpayers’ dollars” and according to what criteria; (m) with respect to the statement of the Minister that “research is undertaken to obtain information to support priorities of government,” how are the priorities of government identified and what are they; (n) what studies have been undertaken in the past five years to support the priorities of government; (o) have any studies been undertaken that do not support the priorities of government and, if so, what are these; (p) what studies or research proposals have not been proceeded with at Justice because they do not support the priorities of government; (q) who determines that a study or proposal does not support the priorities of government, and according to what criteria; (r) at what stage(s) is a study or proposal for research evaluated to determine that it does not support the priorities of government, and who conducts the evaluation; (s) what does the term ‘support’ mean in the Minister’s comment; (t) what is done with research that is undertaken to support the government’s priorities but yielded results counter to the government’s priorities; (u) have any such studies as in (t) occurred within the last 10 years; (v) in the past five years, has the government not proceeded with any research or study because it believed the results would be unfavourable; (w) in the past five years, has the government not re-released a study because its results were unfavourable or otherwise counter to advancing the government’s priorities; (x) how are research and study proposals evaluated by the Department; (y) what departmental officials recommended the recently announced \$1.2 million cut to research within the Department, and with what rationale; (z) who had final approval within the Department to cut \$1.2 million from the research budget; (aa) how many research studies or projects were already underway that were terminated as a result of the decision to cut the Department’s research budget; (bb) what were the subject matters of research that was affected as a result of the cuts within the Department; (cc) how much money had already been spent on active research studies subsequently cancelled due to cuts; (dd) what process or policy is in place to decide what research is to be undertaken now, and how has that policy changed, if in any way, over the past four years; (ee) is research that is conducted and published within the Department subject to redaction or editing from individuals other than the researchers, prior to its publication; (ff) after research is presented for possible publication, what other branches within the Department are involved with any redaction or editing of that research before publication; (gg) what role does the Privy Council Office have, if any, in approving, editing or redacting any research publications generated within the Department of Justice; (hh) what role does the Prime Minister’s Office have, if any, in approving, editing or redacting any research publications generated within the Department of Justice; (ii) how many times has research been sent to the Minister’s office before its publication within the Department or dissemination otherwise; (jj) what is the value for each research contract awarded in the past 5 years at the Department, broken down by year; (kk) what studies are presently underway at the Department, broken down by division; (ll) how many reports and studies does the Department produce annually and what are their titles; (mm) in the past five years, how much of the research and how many of the studies and reports produced are presented to the Minister, and what percentage of the total is this; (nn) in the past five years, how much of the research and how many of the studies and reports are tabled in Parliament, and what percentage of the total is this; (oo) for each of the past ten years, how many FTE research employees have there been at the Department; (pp) what factors were considered in determining the budget for research at the Department; (qq) what qualifications are required of researchers at the Department; (rr) on what evidence will the Department and Minister make decisions in the absence of research; (ss) what will the consequences of research cuts be on the quality and quantity of information the Department or Minister has; (tt) does the Department track in any way how often its research is accessed and, if so, how; (uu) does the Department track the number of page visits to research materials on its website; (vv) what trends and statistics exist regarding the accessing of studies and research on the Department’s website; (ww) are reports or

studies posted online viewed by the Minister’s office prior to their publication and, if so, by what process and with what role for the Minister or his office; (xx) have any reports or studies conducted in the last five years been presented to the Minister that are not online and if so, what are their titles; (yy) what briefing notes, decks, memos, or other materials relating to research have been prepared at the Department in the last five years and what are their file numbers; (zz) within the past five years, what briefing notes, decks, memos, or other materials relating to research funding specifically were created at the Department and what are their file numbers; (aaa) what mechanisms, policies, and processes exist to ensure that research is in no way politicized; (bbb) in what ways does the Department benefit from research, study, and analysis; (ccc) what priorities for research have been identified over the past 10 years and what changes in these priorities have occurred over time; (ddd) how many specific research proposals or studies has the Minister not proceeded with in the past five years, what were the proposed topics of study, and why were these not proceeded with; and how many specific research proposals or studies has the Department not proceeded with in the past five years, what were the proposed topics of study, and why were these not proceeded with; and (eee) what factors influence research funding at the Department?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 513—Ms. Elizabeth May:**

With regard to Bill C-22, and the government's obligation to enact laws that respect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as Supreme Court jurisprudence related to the "polluter pays" principle: (a) in developing the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act included in Part 2 of Bill C-22, on what (i) studies, (ii) case law, (iii) doctrinal sources did the government rely; (b) in developing the changes to Canada's offshore oil and gas operations regime in Part 1 of Bill C-22, on what (i) studies, (ii) case law, (iii) doctrinal sources did the government rely; (c) what statistics or empirical evidence as to the likelihood and consequences of reactor accidents causing offsite damage did the government rely on to justify (i) the need for the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act, (ii) the limitation of reactor operator liability to \$1 billion, (iii) the total shielding of reactor suppliers and vendors from liability even if their negligence causes damage; (d) what statistics or empirical evidence as to the likelihood and consequences of accidents in the oil and gas sectors did the government rely on to justify (i) the need for the provisions included in Part 1 of Bill C-22 related to the liability of offshore oil and gas companies, (ii) the maintenance of unlimited liability where fault or negligence is proven, (iii) the raising of the absolute liability limit for Atlantic offshore areas and the Arctic to \$1 billion where fault or negligence is not proven; (e) what analysis has the government performed to determine whether the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act will increase or reduce the risk of nuclear facilities to Canadian society and the environment, and what are the conclusions of this analysis; (f) did the government review the causes and contributors of major reactor accidents, such as Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima, in assessing the need and impact of the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act, and if so, what are the conclusions of this analysis; (g) has Bill C-22 been examined by the Department of Justice to ascertain consistency with the Charter, and if so, (i) who was responsible for performing the examination, (ii) when was the examination initiated, (iii) when was the examination completed, (iv) what were the conclusions of the examination; (v) when was the Minister of Justice presented with the conclusions of the examination; (vi) was a report of inconsistency prepared; (vii) was a report of inconsistency presented to Parliament; (viii) has there been an assessment of the litigation risk relative to the enactment of this legislation and, if so, what are the conclusions of this assessment; (h) has the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act included in Bill C-22 been examined by the Department of Justice to ascertain consistency with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the right of every Canadian to "liberty and security of the person" pursuant to section 7, and if so, (i) did the Department of Justice examine whether the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act's limitation of reactor operator liability to \$1 billion was consistent with the right of every Canadian to "liberty and security of the person", and what were the conclusions, (ii) did the Department of Justice examine whether the channeling of liability to reactor operators and removal of any liability for damages of reactor suppliers or vendors, even if the negligence causes or contributes to an accident causing offsite damage, was consistent with the right of every Canadian to "liberty and security of the person", and what were the conclusions; (i) has the Department of Justice evaluated whether the inclusion of an absolute cap on nuclear reactor operator liability in C-22, regardless of negligence or other tortious conduct, while allowing for claims in tort against oil and gas operators beyond the absolute liability requirement in C-22, meets the provisions of section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and if so, (i) what were the conclusions; and (j) has the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act included in Bill C-22 been examined by the government to ascertain compliance with the Supreme Court ruling *Imperial Oil Ltd. v. Quebec* (Minister of the Environment) and if so, what were the conclusions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 515—Mr. Scott Simms:

With regard to correspondence with federally registered political parties, what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and any registered political party since January 23, 2006, broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 516—Hon. Ralph Goodale:

With regard to the Major Infrastructure Component and the Communities Component of the Building Canada Fund announced in 2007: (a) are applications still being accepted; (b) how much of the funding has been allocated; (c) how much of the funding has been spent; (d) for completed projects, how much less was spent than was allocated; (e) how much of the amount referred to in (d), (i) has been

reallocated to new projects, (ii) has not been reallocated to new projects; and (f) how much of each component's funding is forecast to lapse?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 518—Mr. Glenn Thibeault:

With regard to the promotion of Canada's travel and tourism sector: broken down by fiscal year since 2005-2006 up to and including the current fiscal year, (a) what is the total amount spent by the government on advertising; (b) what is the total amount spent in foreign markets, broken down by individual market; (c) what is the total amount spent on print advertising, broken down by individual market; (d) what is the total amount spent on television advertising, broken down by individual market; (e) what is the total amount spent on radio advertising, broken down by individual market; (f) what is the total spending by the government for online or web advertising; and (g) what is the total amount spent on advertising through (i) Facebook, (ii) Twitter, (iii) Google?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 520—Mr. Sean Casey:

With respect to Ministers' Regional Offices (MRO) located in each province: broken down by year since 2006, (a) how many full time staff are assigned and based at each MRO; (b) how many part time or casual staff are assigned and based at each MRO; (c) how many contract staff are assigned to work at each MRO; (d) what are the titles and salaries with respect to answers provided in (a), (b) and (c); (e) what is the overall budget to operate each MRO; and (f) what is the list of all staff or titles used in each MRO?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 521—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to Statistics Canada, broken down by survey: for each of the current surveys for which some or all of the data has been collected from April to June 2014, (a) how many participants were selected; (b) how many participants agreed to be surveyed; (c) how many participants declined to be surveyed; (d) how many participants were contacted by letter (i) once, (ii) twice, (iii) three times, (iv) more than three times; (e) what is the average number of times that participants are contacted by letter; (f) how many participants were contacted by telephone (i) once, (ii) twice, (iii) three times, (iv) more than three times; (g) what is the average number of times that participants are contacted by telephone; (h) how many participants who declined to be surveyed were contacted by letter (i) once, (ii) twice, (iii) three times, (iv) more than three times; (i) what is the average number of times that participants who declined to be surveyed were contacted by letter; (j) how many participants who declined to be surveyed were contacted by telephone (i) once, (ii) twice, (iii) three times, (iv) more than three times; (k) what is the average number of times that participants who declined to be surveyed were contacted by telephone; (l) how many participants declined to be surveyed following (i) the first letter, (ii) the second letter, (iii) the third letter, (iv) a subsequent letter, (v) the first contact by telephone, (vi) the second contact by telephone, (vii) the third contact by telephone, (viii) a subsequent contact by telephone; (m) what other forms of communication does Statistics Canada use to contact potential participants, other than letter and telephone calls; (n) what is the policy for dealing with selected participants who have declined to be surveyed at the various stages of contact; (o) what arguments are made at each stage of contact to convince participants to agree to be surveyed; (p) what are the data retention and privacy policies regarding information from (i) participants, (ii) participants who declined to be surveyed; and (q) when was approval granted for the data retention policy regarding information from participants who (i) agreed to be surveyed, (ii) declined to be surveyed?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 522—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With respect to the Prime Minister's use of the government owned fleet of aircraft since January 2006 and for each use of the aircraft: (a) what are the passenger manifests for all flights; (b) what are the names and titles of the passengers present on the flight manifest; (c) what were all the departure and arrival points of the aircraft; (d) who requested access to the fleet; (e) who authorized the flight; (f) what repayments or reimbursements were made by passengers as a result of these flights; (g) what is the total cost of these flights; and (h) what is the total cost by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 523—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to government litigation and statutory validity: (a) for each year since 2006, which federal laws had their constitutional validity challenged; (b) what were the names of each of the cases in (a); (c) what was the outcome of each of these cases at each instance, broken down by court or tribunal and province; (d) what was the remedy utilized by the court in each case; (e) in which cases does a right of appeal remain; (f) in how many of the cases where no appeal remains did the government lose its defence of the law; (g) of the cases in (f), which specific provisions of which laws were struck down, by which courts and by which cases; (h) broken down by case referred to in (f), how much did the government spend and what is the breakdown of these costs; (i) in any cases, did the government concede an infringement of a right in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; (j) of the cases referred to in (i), in which cases did the government assert that the infringement was saved by section 1 of the Charter and in which, if any, did the government concede that an infringement was not saved by section 1; (k) did the government concede, in any case, that a federal law was contrary to the purposes and provisions of the Canadian Bill of Rights; (l) did the government concede, in any case, that a federal law was contrary to the purposes and provisions of the Constitution Act, 1982, other than the Charter; (m) of the cases in (k) and (l), what are their names and citations, sorted by year; (n) in what cases did a court find that a federal law was contrary to the purposes and provisions of the Constitution Act, 1982, other than the Charter; (o) in what cases did a court find that a federal law was contrary to the purposes and provisions of the Canadian Bill of Rights; (p) what are the citations for the cases in (n) and (o); (q) for any case in which a section or provision of federal law was struck down for violating the Charter, the Constitution Act, 1982, or the Canadian Bill of Rights, how has the government responded; (r) in which reference cases was the government's position not agreed with by the Supreme Court; (s) what is the cost breakdown for the cases in (r); (t) of provisions and sections of laws struck by courts for lack of constitutionality, which have been repealed; (u) what is the government's approach, plan, and policy with respect to the repeal of legislative provisions found unconstitutional; (v) regarding Reference re: Supreme Court Act, ss. 5 and 6, will the government repeal Section 6.1 of the Supreme Court Act (clause 472 of Economic Action Plan 2013 Act, No. 2); (w) what is the reason for the decision in (v) and what discussions, consultations, and meetings occurred on this point; (x) by what process would an ultra vires or unconstitutional provision be repealed, such as Section 6.1 of the Supreme Court Act (clause 472 of Economic Action Plan 2013 Act, No. 2); (y) what purpose is served by leaving inoperative provisions in statute; (z) what mechanisms exist in the government to identify inoperative legislative provisions; (aa) what mechanisms exist in the government to remove inoperative legislative provisions; (bb) when was the last time inoperative legislative provisions were removed; (cc) in all cases where a provision was struck from legislation, was a report of its constitutionality prepared pursuant to the Department of Justice Act; (dd) where a provision was struck from legislation, was a report of the statute's constitutionality prepared pursuant to the Department of Justice Act and tabled in the House; (ee) what factors explain why a provision was struck despite a report of its constitutionality being prepared; (ff) what factors explain why a provision was struck yet no report of its possible inconsistency tabled; (gg) what explains the presentation of laws later found unconstitutional despite the reporting requirement in the Department of Justice Act; (hh) in what cases since 2006 has a court, contrary to the contention of the government, read down a law; (ii) in what cases since 2006 has a court, contrary to the contentions of the government, resorted to "reading in"; (jj) what are the citations for the cases in (hh) and (ii) and how much was spent on their defence; (kk) what purposes and policy goals are served by leaving provisions of no force or effect in statute; and (ll) for any of the cases identified in any question herein, did the government ever consider invoking the notwithstanding clause?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 524—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Employment and Social Development Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 525—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 526—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Industry Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 527—Ms. Lise St-Denis:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Parks Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 528—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Natural Resources Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 530—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 531—Hon. Stéphane Dion:

With regard to government bills, what is the specific rationale for each coming-into-force provision in Bill C-23, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, which was introduced at first reading on February 4, 2014?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 532—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to government expenditures on media monitoring: what are the details of all spending, by each department and agency, including (i) the nature, (ii) the scope, (iii) the duration, (iv) the contract for media monitoring, (v) the names of the contracted services provided, (vi) the file numbers of all such contracts which have been in force on or since December 12, 2012?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 533—Hon. Mark Eyking:

With regard to government communications since March 24, 2014: (a) for each press release containing the phrase “Harper government” issued by any department, agency, office, Crown corporation, or other government body, what is the (i) headline or subject line, (ii) date, (iii) file or code-number, (iv) subject-matter; (b) for each such press release, was it distributed (i) on the web site of the issuing department, agency, office, Crown corporation, or other government body, (ii) on Marketwire, (iii) on Canada Newswire, (iv) on any other commercial wire or distribution service, specifying which service; and (c) for each press release distributed by a commercial wire or distribution service mentioned in (b)(ii) through (iv), what was the cost of using the service?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 534—Mr. Kennedy Stewart:

With regard to government spending in the constituency of Burnaby—Douglas: what was the total amount of government funding since fiscal year 2011-2012 up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by (i) the date the money was received in the riding, (ii) the dollar amount of the expenditure, (iii) the program from which the funding came, (iv) the ministry responsible, (v) the designated recipient?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 535—Ms. Annick Papillon:

With regard to government funding: what is the total amount of government funding allocated in the constituency of Québec from fiscal year 2012-2013 up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) initiative or project, for each department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 536—Ms. Annick Papillon:

With regard to government employees: what is the number of employees in the constituency of Québec from fiscal year 2006-2007 up to and including the current fiscal year, broken down by (i) year, (ii) department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 537—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the Kashechewan First Nation from 2005 to the present, broken down by year: (a) what were the costs of the overall infrastructure investments, broken down by investment; (b) what were the costs of infrastructure repairs, broken down by repair; (c) how much money was spent on emergency flooding, broken down by item; (d) how much money was spent on repairing and maintaining the dyke, by year; (e) what is the current status of the dyke; and (f) what monies were spent on evacuations and emergency services in each year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 538—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to the government's support to West Africa's counter-terrorism strategy and efforts to find the Nigerian schoolgirls held by Boko Haram: (a) what support has the government provided to the Economic Community of West African States' counter-terrorism strategy, broken down by project, including (i) start and end dates, (ii) partner organization, (iii) project rationale; (b) what support has the government provided to build Nigeria's anti-terrorism capacities, broken down by project, including (i) start and end dates, (ii) partner organization, (iii) project rationale; (c) what specific resources has Canada sent to Nigeria to help search for the Nigerian schoolgirls, and for each resource, what is (i) the monetary value of the contribution, (ii) the date the resource was “on the ground” in Nigeria, (iii) the date until which the resource will stay; (d) in order to be invited to the Paris summit to boost the search for the Nigerian schoolgirls, were invitees required to contribute a certain value, and if so, what was the requirement; (e) did Canada receive an invitation to attend the Paris summit; and (f) did Canada attend the Paris summit, (i) if so, in what capacity, (ii) if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 539—Mr. Bruce Hyer:

With regard to export permits issued by Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (FATDC): (a) what was the total value of export permits for Group 2 goods issued for export in each of the years 2012 and 2013, broken down by recipient country; (b) what is the value of export permits authorized for Export Control List Group 2 items, broken down by Group 2 subgroup item (2-1 to 2-22) for each recipient country in each of the years 2012 and 2013; (c) what is the value of export permits for Export Control List Group 2 items denied in each of the years 2012 and 2013, broken down by recipient country; and (d) will FATDC publish information on export permits annually to coincide with future “Reports on the Export of Military Goods from Canada”, including total values of denials and authorizations, broken down by Group 2 subgroup item for each recipient country?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 540—Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to the operations of the RCMP in and around the Town of High River, Alberta, between June 20, 2013, and July 12, 2013: (a) what special procedures and measures were implemented, and pursuant to what statutory and policy authorities and declarations were those special procedures and measures implemented; (b) what were the circumstances that informed the decision to engage in a door-to-door search of residences and non-residential buildings, what procedures or special measures were implemented to engage in this search, and pursuant to what statutory or policy authorities were those procedures or special measures implemented; (c) what were the circumstances that informed the decision to engage in entries through the use of force during the course of the door-to-door search of residences and non-residential buildings, what procedures or special measures were implemented to engage in the use of force, and pursuant to what statutory or policy authorities were those procedures or special measures implemented; (d) what organization or organizations were consulted by or provided advice to the RCMP respecting the need for and the conduct of the searches referred to in (b) and (c); (i) what information was sought, if any, by the RCMP from each organization; (ii) what information was provided, if any, to the RCMP by each organization; (e) what criteria were used to determine which residences and non-residential buildings to enter during the conduct of the searches referred to in (b) and (c); (f) what was the total number of residences that were entered by the RCMP during the searches referred to in (b) and what was the total number of residences that were entered by the RCMP during the searches referred to in (c); (g) what was the total number of non-residential buildings that were entered by the RCMP during the searches referred to in (b) and what was the total number of non-residential buildings that were entered by the RCMP during the searches referred to in (c); (h) were any residences or non-residential buildings referred to in (b) and (c) entered multiple times or on multiple dates and, if so, how many residences were entered multiple times or on multiple dates, and for what purposes were the initial entries and subsequent entries made; (i) what measures were taken by the RCMP, regarding each residence entered through the use of force by the RCMP, to ensure that residences were secured against further entry after the RCMP finished searching each residence; (j) did the RCMP allow anyone who was not an RCMP police officer to enter residences during the searches referred to in (b) and (c); (i) if (j) is answered in the affirmative, on a residence-by-residence basis, whom (by name, position and organization) did the RCMP allow into residences and for what purpose; (ii) if (j) is answered in the affirmative, have the home owners been made aware that non-RCMP personnel were allowed into their homes by the RCMP; (k) what information did the RCMP possess prior to the searches referred to in (b) and (c), regarding the presence, in residences and non-residential buildings in and around the Town of High River, of firearms, firearms ammunition, non-firearm weapons, and weapon accessories; (l) in how many cases were legally-stored firearms rendered illegally-stored, as a result of forced entries into residences by the RCMP; (m) during the course of the searches referred to in (b) and (c), what statutory authorization allowed the removal of, (i) legally-stored firearms from residences, (ii) illegally-stored firearms from residences, (iii) legally-stored ammunition from residences, (iv) illegally-stored ammunition from residences, (v) legally-stored weapons other than firearms from residences, (vi) illegally-stored weapons other than firearms from residences, (vii) legally-stored weapon accessories from residences, (viii) illegally-stored weapon accessories from residences; (n) how many of the items mentioned in (m)(i) through (viii), were removed by the RCMP; (o) did the RCMP remove any legally-owned items, other than firearms, ammunition, non-firearms weapons, or weapon accessories from any residences or non-residential buildings during the course of the searches referred to in (b) and (c) and, if so, how many items were removed, what were they, and what statutory and policy authorities allowed the RCMP to do so; (p) did the RCMP remove any illegal items, objects or substances, other than firearms, ammunition, non-firearms weapons, or weapons accessories, from any residences or non-residential buildings during the course of the searches referred to in (b) and (c) and, if so, what items were removed; (q) was a warrant or warrants for the search of residences and non-residential buildings or removal of any personal property, including but not limited to firearms, firearms ammunition, non-firearm weapons, and weapon accessories, ever requested; (i) if (q) is answered affirmatively, are copies of the requests available; (ii) if (q) is answered in the negative, why was no request for a warrant or warrants referred to in (q) made; (r) was a warrant or warrants for the search of residences and non-residential buildings or removal of any personal property, including but not limited to firearms, firearms ammunition, non-firearm weapons and weapon accessories, ever issued; (i) if (r) is answered affirmatively, are copies of the warrant or warrants available; (ii) if (r) is answered in the negative, why was the warrant or warrants not issued; (s) what was the total number of RCMP police officers who took part in the searches referred to in (b) and (c) and were the RCMP police officers conducting the searches referred to in (b) the same as the RCMP conducting the searches in (c) and, if not, what was the reason for the difference; (t) what are the names, ranks, positions, units, and detachments of the officer or officers who authorized or otherwise initiated the (i)

searches referred to in (b) and (c), (ii) removal of legally-stored firearms from residences, (iii) removal of illegally-stored firearms from residences, (iv) removal of legally-stored ammunition from residences, (v) removal of illegally-stored ammunition from residences, (vi) removal of legally-stored non-firearms weapons from residences, (vii) removal of illegally-stored non-firearms weapons from residences, (viii) removal of legally-stored weapon accessories from residences, (ix) removal of illegally-stored weapon accessories from residences; (u) did the RCMP gather any information over the course of the searches referred to in (b) and (c) and if so, (i) what information was gathered regarding any firearms, (ii) what information was gathered regarding any ammunition, (iii) what information was gathered regarding any weapon accessories, (iv) what information was gathered regarding any weapons, other than firearms, (v) has any form of database or information record (electronic or physical) been developed which could identify any of the residents, or residences, in and around the Town of High River, based on the presence of firearms, weapons, ammunition or accessories located during the conduct of the searches referred to in (b) and (c), (vi) is any of the information referred to in (u)(i) through (iv) still in existence and, if so, what information is still accessible by the RCMP, or any other government organization, (vii) under what statutory and policy authority did the RCMP have the legal right to gather any information referenced in (u)(i) through (iv), (viii) under what statutory and policy authority does the RCMP have the legal right to keep any information referenced in (u)(i) through (iv), (v) have any charges been laid based on any of the RCMP's findings from the searches referred to in (b) and (c) and, so, what are the charges that have been laid and how many of each type of charge have been laid; (w) have any members of the RCMP been charged or internally-disciplined, and to what degree, regarding, (i) the forced entry into residences or non-residential buildings in and around the Town of High River, (ii) the removal of any items from residences or non-residential buildings in and around the Town of High River; (x) what were the reasons (broken down by case) for (i) all entries (forced or otherwise) into each residence and non-residential building, between the dates of June 24 and July 12, 2013, (ii) all the searches of each residence and non-residential building between the dates of June 24 and July 12, 2013, (iii) the removal of any firearms, ammunition, non-firearms weapons and accessories from each residences and non-residential building, between the dates of June 24 and July 12, 2013; (y) what are the contents of all communications, hard copy or electronic, including but not limited to, mail, email, fax, text, letter, that have been exchanged between any members of the RCMP, as well as between the RCMP and any government officials, including but not limited to municipal governments, the Alberta provincial government and associated agencies and Crown corporations, the federal government and associated government agencies and Crown corporations, regarding the requirement of the searches referred to in (b) and (c), the conduct of the searches referred to in (b) and (c) and the removal of any items during the course of the searches referred to in (b) and (c); and (z) what is the source of the information provided in the responses to (a) through (y)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 541—Mr. Scott Reid:**

With regard to the actions of the RCMP in Alberta, between June 20, 2013 and July 12, 2013: (a) respecting the actions implemented in and around the Town of High River, Alberta, what statutory, regulatory and policy authorities (citing specific clauses) guided the RCMP's emergency response procedures; (b) were the RCMP's emergency response procedures, referred to in section (a), the same as the emergency response procedures used by the RCMP in other municipalities in Alberta, (i) was the RCMP's removal of firearms, firearms ammunition, non-firearm weapons, and related accessories, during the searches of residences and non-residential buildings in and around the Town of High River a course of action which was used in other communities in Alberta and, if so, where else was this course of action used, and to what extent, (ii) was the RCMP's decision to temporarily deny the residents of the Town of High River the ability to re-enter the town taken in other municipalities and, if so, what were the dates when the RCMP allowed residents to re-enter, and the circumstances which allowed re-entry, for each affected municipality, (iii) if (b) is answered in the negative, what were all of the differences in standard response procedures used by the RCMP in each municipality and the reasons for the differences; (c) during the RCMP's emergency response procedures implemented in and around the Town of High River, did the RCMP locate any people and, if so, (i) how many of the people located by the RCMP required assistance and how many were given assistance by the RCMP, (ii) how many people were located by the RCMP, or assisted by the RCMP, as a direct result of the RCMP's searching of residential or non-residential buildings, in and around the Town of High River, (iii) how many people were located by the RCMP, or assisted by the RCMP, as a result of the RCMP's forced entry into residential or non-residential buildings in and around the Town of High River, (iv) what forms of assistance were provided to anyone who was found through the RCMP's searching of residential or non-residential buildings in and around the Town of High River; (d) on what specific dates did the RCMP locate any people or domesticated animals, in and around the Town of High River, (i) through the searching of residences, (ii) through the searching of non-residential buildings, (iii) through the forced entry into residences, (iv) through the forced entry into non-residential buildings; (e) on June 20, 2013, what was the RCMP's standard procedure when responding to a natural disaster, and the declaration of a state of emergency, (i) regarding searching residences and non-residential buildings for people or domesticated animals, (ii) regarding forced entry into residences and non-residential buildings, while searching for people and domesticated animals, (iii) regarding the removal of valuable items discovered when searching residences and non-residential buildings for people or domesticated animals, (iv) regarding legally-stored firearms, ammunition, non-firearm weapons, or weapons accessories, which are located by the RCMP in residences and non-residential buildings, while searching, through forced entry or otherwise, for people or domesticated animals, (v) regarding illegally-stored firearms, ammunition, non-firearm weapons, or weapons accessories, which are located by the RCMP in residences and non-residential buildings, while searching, through forced entry or otherwise, for people or domesticated animals, (vi) regarding securing a residence or non-residential building, after being subject to forced entry by the RCMP, (vii) when was the procedure created and last amended; (f) did the RCMP have thermal imaging technology available for their use in and around the Town of High River, (i) if (f) is answered in the affirmative, how was the technology employed in and around the Town of High River, (ii) was the technology capable of identifying the presence of people or domesticated animals in residences or non-residential buildings without physically entering the buildings, and if not, why not and how was this determination reached; (g) what are the contents of all communications, hard copy or electronic including, but not limited to, mail, email, fax, text, letter, that have been exchanged between any members of the RCMP, as well as between the RCMP and any government officials including, but not limited to, municipal governments, the Alberta provincial government and associated government agencies and Crown corporations, the federal government and associated government agencies and Crown corporations, regarding the end of the state of emergency in all affected areas and the denial of re-entry of citizens in all affected areas; (h) what are the contents of the minutes of all the meetings attended by the RCMP with respect to the operations in and around the Town of High River; (i) on what date and time were any states of emergency or declarations pertaining to the Town of High River lifted; (j) on what date and time and by what means were the residents of the Town of High River notified of their ability to re-enter the town; and (k) what are the sources of the answers provided in (a) through (j)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 542—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to maternal newborn and child health (MNCH) and Canada's strategy "Saving Every Woman, Every Child: Within Arm's Reach": (a) will the

additional \$650 million for 2015-2020 over 2010-2015 spending be drawn from the existing Official Development Assistance (ODA) envelope or is it in addition to the existing ODA envelope; (b) how does the government plan to expand its current health and nutrition programming to address the needs of adolescent girls as per the Toronto Statement; (c) will the government develop a well-rounded, gender-equitable, and effective MNCH strategy that includes family planning and the full range of reproductive health services, (i) if not, why not; (d) how will the government involve women in developing countries in the design and implementation of women's health strategies; (e) will the government invest in the broader agenda of women's and children's rights in its development work; (f) why did the government not adopt the global consensus to add reproductive health to maternal, newborn and child health; (g) what monies will be devoted to (i) reducing the burden of leading diseases, (ii) improving nutrition, (iii) strengthening health systems and accountability, (iv) strengthening vital and civil statistics; (h) in what select developing countries will Canada focus its Forward Strategy for Saving Every Woman Every Child, and specifically (i) how does the government define high-impact health services, (ii) what specific high-impact interventions are included in Canada's Forward Strategy, (iii) what pre-pregnancy health services and interventions will the government focus on; (i) how does the government measure effectiveness of health systems projects, and when will the government report on effectiveness; (j) how will the government prioritize those countries and issues where concrete results can be attained for the world's most vulnerable women and children, (i) how will the Forward Strategy adhere to the Commission on Information and Accountability, (ii) what concrete outcome results will the Forward Strategy achieve, (iii) how does the government define the world's most vulnerable women and children; (k) what is the government currently investing in vaccines; (l) what are "the most effective life-saving vaccines and medicines" that Canada supports; (m) how will Canada build on its recent commitments to (i) the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, (ii) the Global Polio Eradication Initiative; (n) how will the government determine who are "the partners most proven to achieve results for women and children"; (o) define and specify the government's food security partnerships; (p) define and specify the government's MNCH partnerships; (q) as of the announced day of the Forward Strategy, what role and activities will the government undertake with respect to the Scaling Up Nutrition movement; (r) how will the government determine who are like-minded partners, (i) how will it determine which countries and partners are able to deliver the package of integrated nutrition interventions that represents the best return on development investment, (ii) what has been the process to determine the package of integrated nutrition interventions, (iii) what are the integrated nutrition interventions the government will support, (iv) what are the expected nutrition outcomes and return on investment expected of the Forward Strategy; (s) what monies will be devoted to support country partners' efforts to strengthen their civil registration and vital statistics systems, and how are these monies expected to improve (i) national documentation to help secure and safeguard an individual's rights, (ii) the delivery of health services, (iii) participatory approaches that include community-based monitoring systems; (t) when will consultations take place with (i) Canadian experts, (ii) international experts, (iii) partner countries to inform new investments; (u) how will rights-based organizations be included in the consultations; (v) what additional support will be provided to the Canadian Network for Maternal Newborn and Child Health, and for what time period; and (w) how will Canada push to ensure that MNCH features prominently in the post-2015 development agenda, (i) which health, hunger and nutrition goals and indicators will the government support, (ii) in which global forums will the government promote MNCH in the post-2015 development agenda?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 543—Hon. Irwin Cotler:**

With respect to the appointment of Justice Clément Gascon to the Supreme Court of Canada: (a) by what process was Justice Gascon identified and selected for appointment; (b) what was the role of the Department of Justice; (c) what was the role of the Minister of Justice; (d) what was the role of the Prime Minister; (e) what was the role of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs; (f) were any other ministers involved and if so what were their roles; (g) with whom did the government consult and when did these consultations occur; (h) what was the role of Parliament; (i) why was no ad hoc committee convened to meet Justice Gascon prior to his appointment; (j) what specific considerations were taken with respect to (i); (k) who made the ultimate decision with respect to (i); (l) has the government abolished the ad hoc committee process for reviewing Supreme Court nominees; (m) if the ad hoc committee meeting for new Supreme Court nominees has not been abolished, why did it not occur with Justice Gascon prior to his appointment; (n) will Justice Gascon appear before Parliament at any point relative to his appointment to the Supreme Court of Canada; (o) what specific criteria were established by which candidates were evaluated in the process by which Justice Gascon was selected; (p) how did Justice Gascon meet the criteria in (o); (q) why was Justice Gascon selected; (r) was preserving gender parity on the Supreme Court of Canada a goal of the process that resulted in the appointment of Justice Gascon; (s) what consideration was preserving gender parity on the Supreme Court of Canada in the process that resulted in the appointment of Justice Gascon; (t) in what ways does Justice Gascon's appointment preserve gender parity on the Supreme Court of Canada; (u) in what ways does Justice Gascon's appointment enhance diversity on the Supreme Court of Canada; (v) what particular areas of expertise were identified in the process that resulted in Gascon's appointment; (w) how were the areas in (v) developed; (x) what is known of Justice Gascon's expertise in the areas identified in (v); (y) what Justices of the Supreme Court of Canada were consulted with respect to Justice Gascon's appointment; (z) did consultation with the Chief Justice occur regarding Justice Gascon; (aa) is consultation with Chief Justice a normal practice in the course of selecting a nominee for the Supreme Court of Canada; (bb) what role is served by consulting with the Chief Justice or, if no such consultation occurred in this instance, what policy reasons justify excluding the Chief Justice from consultations; (cc) would there have been time for Parliamentarians to meet Justice Gascon prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court; (dd) with which parliamentarians did Justice Gascon meet prior to his appointment; (ee) what committees reviewed Justice Gascon's candidacy prior to his appointment; (ff) was Justice Gascon identified in the process that resulted in the nomination of Justice Nadon; (gg) at what stages of the process was Justice Gascon's eligibility for appointment assessed and by whom; (hh) does the answer in (gg) reflect any new process or procedure; (ii) with respect to Justice Minister Peter Mackay's statement as reported by CTV on May 28 that "Our list and their list are being examined in concert to find a common name," was the name of Justice Gascon common to both lists; (jj) how was the "our" list to which Minister MacKay referred developed; (kk) how many names were on "our" list; (ll) what went into selecting the names on "our" list and who was involved in this process; (mm) was the "our" list to which Minister MacKay referred developed through the process announced by previous Justice Minister Rob Nicholson on June 11, 2013 and if not, why not; (nn) with respect to the "their list" of which the Minister spoke, who developed this list and when was it provided to the government; (oo) did the government solicit in any way "their list"; (pp) how was "their list" assessed, by whom, and on what dates; (qq) how many names were on "their list"; (rr) what individuals were involved in the process that "examined in concert to find a common name" the lists referred to by the Minister; (ss) how long did the process in (mm) require and when did it terminate; (tt) were any outside legal opinions sought with respect to Justice Gascon's appointment, why or why not; (uu) what was the cost of Justice Gascon's appointment and what is the breakdown of these costs; (vv) if any of the answers to these questions are subject to solicitor-client privilege, who is the solicitor and the client for the particular question; (www) who from the Government of Quebec was consulted on Gascon's appointment, on what dates, and by whom; (xx) when were the Chief Justice of Quebec and the Chief Justice of the Quebec Superior Court consulted on Gascon's appointment and by whom; (yy) who from the Canadian Bar Association, the Barreau du Québec, and the Barreau de Montréal were consulted on Gascon's appointment and by whom; (zz) what academics were consulted, by whom and on what dates; (aaa) what victims' rights groups were consulted, by whom, and on what dates; (bbb) what aboriginal groups were consulted, by whom, and on what dates; (ccc) what women's groups were consulted, by who, and on what dates; (ddd) whereas in the past candidates have been first nominated and then appointed, was Justice Gascon ever nominated prior to his appointment by the government, and if so, when did this occur, if not why not; (eee) what changes to the process have been identified or completed through this appointment; (fff) what factors were considered relative to the timing of this appointment; (ggg) who decided the timing of the appointment announcement and in consultation with whom; (hhh) what benefits were derived from appointing Justice

Gascon prior to a Parliamentary ad hoc hearing; (iii) what benefits were derived from appointing Justice Gascon prior to the end of the scheduled Parliamentary sitting; (jjj) why was the appointment announced while Parliament was still sitting but without an ad hoc hearing; and (kkk) why was the appointment announced so far in advance of the Court's fall session; and (lll) is it anticipated the same appointment process will be used for the next vacancy on the Supreme Court of Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 545—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to post offices: (a) which post offices are subject to the 1994 moratorium on post office closures, broken down by (i) province, (ii) municipality, (iii) federal riding, (iv) address; (b) which post offices are not subject to the 1994 moratorium on post office closures, broken down by (i) province, (ii) municipality, (iii) federal riding, (iv) address; (c) since 2006, how many times has Canada Post changed its original proposed plan to reduce hours, move, close, or amalgamate a post office following a consultation period, broken down by (i) province, (ii) municipality, (iii) federal riding, (iv) address, (v) original proposed plan, (vi) changed plan following consultation; and (d) since 2006, how many times has Canada Post followed through with its original proposed plan to reduce hours, move, close, or amalgamate a post office following a consultation period, broken down by (i) province, (ii) municipality, (iii) federal riding, (iv) address?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 546—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Veterans Affairs Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 547—Ms. Judy Foote:

With regard to government expenditures associated with the National Day of Honour on May 9, 2014: (a) what is the total cost; (b) what is the cost and nature of each individual associated expenditure; (c) what is the breakdown of these expenditures, by (i) government department, agency, office, Crown corporation, other government body, program activity and sub-program activity, (ii) category; (d) what was the total cost to transport veterans and their families to Ottawa for the ceremony; (e) what is the cost and nature of each individual expenditure associated with the transporting of veterans and their families to Ottawa for the ceremony; (f) what is the breakdown of the expenditures in (e), by (i) government department, agency, office, Crown corporation, or other government body, (ii) program activity, (iii) category; (g) what are any expenditures associated with the National Day of Honour that have not been itemized in (a) to (f); and (h) for all related contracts, what were the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 550—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With regard to the disposition of government assets since January 1, 2006: (a) on how many occasions has the government repurchased or reacquired a lot which had been disposed of in accordance with the Treasury Board Directive on the Disposal of Surplus Materiel; and (b) for each such occasion, what was (i) the description or nature of the item or items which constituted the lot, (ii) the sale account number or other reference number, (iii) the date on which the sale closed, (iv) the price at which the item was disposed of to the buyer, (v) the price at which the item was repurchased from the buyer, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 551—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:**

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Public Works and Government Services Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 552—Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:

With regard to the backdrops used by the government for announcements since June 19, 2012: for each backdrop purchased, what was (a) the date (i) the tender was issued for the backdrop, (ii) the contract was signed, (iii) the backdrop was delivered; (b) the cost of the backdrop; (c) the announcement for which the backdrop was used; (d) the department that paid for the backdrop; and (e) the date or dates the backdrop was used?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 553—Hon. Wayne Easter:**

With respect to national parks and historic sites, for each of the following locations, namely, Abbot Pass Refuge Cabin National Historic Site, Alberta; Athabasca Pass National Historic Site, Alberta; Banff National Park, Alberta; Banff Park Museum National Historic Site, Alberta; Bar U Ranch National Historic Site, Alberta; Cave and Basin National Historic Site, Alberta; Elk Island National Park, Alberta; First Oil Well in Western Canada National Historic Site, Alberta; Frog Lake National Historic Site, Alberta; Howse Pass National Historic Site, Alberta; Jasper National Park, Alberta; Jasper House National Historic Site, Alberta; Jasper Park Information Centre National Historic Site, Alberta; Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site, Alberta; Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site, Alberta; Sulphur Mountain Cosmic Ray Station National Historic Site, Alberta; Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta; Wood Buffalo National Park, Alberta; Yellowhead Pass National Historic Site, Alberta; Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site, British Columbia; Figsdard Lighthouse National Historic Site, British Columbia; Fort Langley National Historic Site, British Columbia; Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site, British Columbia; Fort St. James National Historic Site, British Columbia; Gitwankang Battle Hill National Historic Site, British Columbia; Glacier National Park, British Columbia; Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, British Columbia; Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site, British Columbia; Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, British Columbia; Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve, British Columbia; Kicking Horse Pass National Historic Site, British Columbia; Kootenae House National Historic Site, British Columbia; Kootenay National Park, British Columbia; Mount Revelstoke National Park, British Columbia; Nan Sdins National Historic Site, British Columbia; Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, British Columbia; Rogers Pass National Historic Site, British Columbia; Stanley Park National Historic Site, British Columbia; Twin Falls Tea House National Historic Site, British Columbia; Yoho National Park, British Columbia; Forts Rouge, Garry and Gibraltar National Historic Site, Manitoba; Linear Mounds National Historic Site, Manitoba; Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site, Manitoba; Prince of Wales Fort National Historic Site, Manitoba; Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba; Riding Mountain Park East Gate Registration Complex National Historic Site, Manitoba; Riel House National Historic Site, Manitoba; St. Andrew's Rectory National Historic Site, Manitoba; The Forks National Historic Site, Manitoba; Wapusk National Park, Manitoba; York Factory National Historic Site, Manitoba; Beaubears Island Shipbuilding National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Boishébert National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Carleton Place National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Fort Beauséjour – Fort Cumberland National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Fort Gaspereaux National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Fundy National Park, New Brunswick; Kouchibouguac National Park, New Brunswick; La Coupe Dry Dock National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Monument-Lefebvre National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Saint Croix Island International Historic Site, New Brunswick; St. Andrews Blockhouse National Historic Site, New Brunswick; Cape Spear Lighthouse National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Castle Hill National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Gros Morne National Park, Newfoundland and Labrador; Hawthorne Cottage National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Hopedale Mission National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Port au Choix National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Red Bay National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Ryan Premises National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Signal Hill National Historic Site, Newfoundland and Labrador; Terra Nova National Park, Newfoundland and Labrador; Torngat Mountains National Park, Newfoundland and Labrador; Aulavik National Park, Northwest Territories; Nahanni National Park Reserve, Northwest Territories; Sahoyuê-şehdacho National Historic Site, Northwest Territories; Tukut Nogait National Park, Northwest Territories; Wood Buffalo National Park, Northwest Territories; Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Beaubassin National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Bloody Creek National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Canso Islands National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Nova Scotia; Charles Fort National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; D'Anville's Encampment National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Fort Anne National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Fort Edward National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Fort Lawrence National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Fort McNab National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Fort Sainte Marie de Grace National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Georges Island National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Grand-Pré National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Grassy Island Fort National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Halifax Citadel National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Kejimikujik National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Kejimikujik National Park, Nova Scotia; Marconi National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Melanson Settlement National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Port-Royal National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Prince of Wales Tower National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Royal Battery National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; St. Peters National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; St. Peters Canal National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; The

Bank Fishery - The Age of Sail Exhibit, Nova Scotia; Wolfe's Landing National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; York Redoubt National Historic Site, Nova Scotia; Auyuittuq National Park, Nunavut; Quttinirpaq National Park, Nunavut; Sirmilik National Park, Nunavut; Ukkusiksalik National Park, Nunavut; Battle Hill National Historic Site, Ontario; Battle of Cook's Mills National Historic Site, Ontario; Battle of the Windmill National Historic Site, Ontario; Battlefield of Fort George National Historic Site, Ontario; Bellevue House National Historic Site, Ontario; Bethune Memorial House National Historic Site, Ontario; Bois Blanc Island Lighthouse and Blockhouse National Historic Site, Ontario; Bruce Peninsula National Park, Ontario; Butler's Barracks National Historic Site, Ontario; Carrying Place of the Bay of Quinte National Historic Site, Ontario; Fathom Five National Marine Park of Canada, Ontario; Fort George National Historic Site, Ontario; Fort Henry National Historic Site, Ontario; Fort Malden National Historic Site, Ontario; Fort Mississauga National Historic Site, Ontario; Fort St. Joseph National Historic Site, Ontario; Fort Wellington National Historic Site, Ontario; Georgian Bay Islands National Park, Ontario; Glengarry Cairn National Historic Site, Ontario; HMCS Haida National Historic Site, Ontario; Inverarden House National Historic Site, Ontario; Kingston Fortifications National Historic Site, Ontario; Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area of Canada, Ontario; Laurier House National Historic Site, Ontario; Merrickville Blockhouse National Historic Site, Ontario; Mississauga Point Lighthouse National Historic Site, Ontario; Mnjikaning Fish Weirs National Historic Site, Ontario; Murney Tower National Historic Site, Ontario; Navy Island National Historic Site, Ontario; Peterborough Lift Lock National Historic Site, Ontario; Point Clark Lighthouse National Historic Site, Ontario; Point Pelee National Park, Ontario; Pukaskwa National Park, Ontario; Queenston Heights National Historic Site, Ontario; Rideau Canal National Historic Site, Ontario; Ridgeway Battlefield National Historic Site, Ontario; Saint-Louis Mission National Historic Site, Ontario; Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site, Ontario; Shoal Tower National Historic Site, Ontario; Sir John Johnson House National Historic Site, Ontario; Southwold Earthworks National Historic Site, Ontario; St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Ontario; Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site, Ontario; Waterloo Pioneers Memorial Tower National Historic Site, Ontario; Woodside National Historic Site, Ontario; Ardgowan National Historic Site, Prince Edward Island; Dalvay-by-the-Sea National Historic Site, Prince Edward Island; Green Gables Heritage Place, Prince Edward Island; L.M. Montgomery's Cavendish National Historic Site, Prince Edward Island; Port-la-Joye-Fort Amherst National Historic Site, Prince Edward Island; Prince Edward Island National Park, Prince Edward Island; Province House National Historic Site, Prince Edward Island; 57-63 St. Louis Street National Historic Site, Quebec; Battle of the Châteauguay National Historic Site, Quebec; Battle of the Restigouche National Historic Site, Quebec; Carillon Barracks National Historic Site, Quebec; Carillon Canal National Historic Site, Quebec; Cartier-Brébeuf National Historic Site, Quebec; Chambly Canal National Historic Site, Quebec; Coteau-du-Lac National Historic Site, Quebec; Forges du Saint-Maurice National Historic Site, Quebec; Forillon National Park, Quebec; Fort Chambly National Historic Site, Quebec; Fort Lennox National Historic Site, Quebec; Fort Ste. Thérèse National Historic Site, Quebec; Fort Témiscamingue National Historic Site, Quebec; Fortifications of Québec National Historic Site, Quebec; Grande-Grave, Quebec; Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site, Quebec; La Mauricie National Park, Quebec; Lachine Canal National Historic Site, Quebec; Lévis Forts National Historic Site, Quebec; Louis S. St. Laurent National Historic Site, Quebec; Louis-Joseph Papineau National Historic Site, Quebec; Maillou House National Historic Site, Quebec; Manoir Papineau National Historic Site, Quebec; Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve, Quebec; Montmorency Park National Historic Site, Quebec; Pointe-au-Père Lighthouse National Historic Site, Quebec; Québec Garrison Club National Historic Site, Quebec; Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park, Quebec; Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site, Quebec; Saint-Louis Forts and Châteaux National Historic Site, Quebec; Saint-Ours Canal National Historic Site, Quebec; Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site, Quebec; Sir Wilfrid Laurier National Historic Site, Quebec; The Fur Trade at Lachine National Historic Site, Quebec; Batoche National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Battle of Tourond's Coulee / Fish Creek National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Cypress Hills Massacre National Historic Site, SKFort Battleford National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Fort Espérance National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Fort Livingstone National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Fort Pelly National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Fort Walsh National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Frenchman Butte National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan; Motherwell Homestead National Historic Site, Saskatchewan; Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan; Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site, Yukon; Dredge No. 4 National Historic Site, Yukon; Former Territorial Court House National Historic Site, Yukon; Ivvavik National Park, Yukon; Kluanne National Park and Reserve, Yukon; S.S. Keno National Historic Site, Yukon; S.S. Klondike National Historic Site, Yukon; and Vuntut National Park, Yukon: during each of the 2012 and

Routine Proceedings

2013 operating seasons, what was the total employment, broken down by (i) full-time, (ii) part-time, (iii) seasonal employees?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 554—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With regard to materials prepared for deputy heads or their staff from January 23, 2014 to present: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date on the document, (ii) the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 555—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to materials prepared for Assistant Deputy Ministers from January 23, 2014 to present: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date on the document, (ii) the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 556—Hon. Wayne Easter:

With regard to government advertising: (a) how much has each department, agency, or Crown corporation spent to purchase advertising on Facebook in each fiscal year since 2006-2007 inclusive; (b) what was the (i) nature, (ii) purpose, (iii) target audience or demographic, (iv) cost of each individual advertising purchase; (c) what was the Media Authorization Number for each advertising purchase; and (d) what are the file numbers of all documents, reports, or memoranda concerning each advertising purchase or of any post-campaign assessment or evaluation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 557—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Veterans Affairs Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 558—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 560—Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Western Economic Diversification Canada since January 1, 2013: what are the (a) vendors' names; (b) contracts' reference numbers; (c) dates of the contracts; (d) descriptions of the services provided; (e) delivery dates; (f) original contracts' values; and (g) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 561—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) how many veterans have been hired at VAC and any other government department in each year since 2006; (b) for each year, how many of these were medically released members of the Canadian Forces hired in priority through the Public Service Commission; (c) what percentage of all hires at VAC since 2006 have been veterans; and (d) what specific efforts are being made by the Department to increase the number and percentage of veterans working within VAC?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 562—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With respect to legal action against the government regarding the Veterans Charter: (a) what is the total amount of money spent by all departments and agencies, broken down by department and agency, since January 1, 2010, in its defence against the Canadian veterans' class action lawsuit; and (b) what is the total amount of money all departments and agencies have spent to hire outside legal counsel, broken down by department and agency, for the same time period referred to in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 563—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to government expenditures on media monitoring: for every contract entered into, or in force, on or since March 21, 2013, what search terms were required to be monitored?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 564—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to materials prepared for ministers or their staff, from January 23, 2014 to present: for every briefing document prepared, what is (i) the date on the document, (ii) the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) the department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 565—Hon. John McCallum:

With regard to the government's immigration commitments in response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria and Typhoon Haiyan, for each event: (a) on what date did applications open for persons affected by the crisis; (b) how many applications have the government received since that date; (c) how many applications (i) have been approved, (ii) have been rejected, (iii) are still awaiting a final answer; and (d) when is the government ending these special measures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 566—Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' (DFO) Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP) Track 19: Outsourcing Research Capability of Contaminant Research: (a) is the government's objective to cease all biological effects contaminant research within DFO and if so, what are the reasons for this objective; (b) how many employees have been eliminated due to this objective and what are their positions and locations; (c) what programs or research initiatives are affected by this objective, including a detailed breakdown of how programs or research have been affected; (d) has the government established a small advisory group to oversee the outsourcing of research needs and, if so, what are the details of this advisory group, including (i) the date the advisory group was established, (ii) the number of members, (iii) their names, (vi) their position, (v) their background experience, (vi) their location, (vii) the internal tracking number and detailed information of any advice or recommendations the advisory group has provided to the government to date, (viii) the amount and details of any federal funding provided to the advisory group; and (e) were briefing documents related to or referencing the outsourcing of research capability of contaminant research prepared for all departmental officials at the Associate Deputy Minister level and above, from October 31, 2012 to the present and, for each document, what is the (i) date, (ii) title or subject-matter, (iii) Department's internal tracking number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 567—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to departmental procurement through CORCAN between fiscal year 2005-2006 and fiscal year 2012-2013: (a) what departments have purchased products through CORCAN; (b) what was the value of each department's procurement in each of the fiscal years; and (c) for each purchase, (i) what was the location or facility for which the purchase was made, (ii) was the procurement sole-sourced or put out to tender, (iii) was a quote requested from one or more private sector firms before purchasing the product from CORCAN?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 569—Mr. Murray Rankin:**

With regard to Old Age Security (OAS) pension and benefit appeals: (a) how many appeals were made to the OAS Review Tribunal between 2004 and 2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) appeals granted by the Department before a hearing was held, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were heard within 3 months of receipt of appeal notice, (x) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which were heard within 12 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiii) appeals which took more than 12 months to be heard; (b) how many hearings were held by the OAS Review Tribunal each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (c) how many appeals were made to the Pension Appeals Board between 2004 and 2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals made by clients, (v) appeals made by the Department, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the OAS Review Tribunal's decision, (vii) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the OAS Review Tribunal's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were heard within 3 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiii) appeals which were heard within 12 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 18 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which took more than 18 months after receipt of appeal notice to be heard; (d) how many hearings were held by the Pension Appeals Board in each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (e) how many requests for reconsideration were made to the Department in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) requests resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) requests not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) reviews which took place within 30 days of receipt of the request, (vii) reviews which took place within 60 days of receipt of the request, (viii) reviews which took more than 60 days to complete; (f) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the Department and requesting their case file from the Department received their case file (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (g) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the Department and requesting their case file from the Department were refused their case file, broken down by province; (h) how many applicants requesting a reconsideration by the Department were notified by phone of the outcome of their request and how many were notified by letter; (i) how many appeals were made to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal regarding OAS pensions and benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in a summary dismissal, (v) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were decided on the record, (x) appeals which were heard in writing, (xi) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xii) appeals which were heard in person, (xiii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which were heard within 4 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xviii) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xix) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xx) appeals which took more than 9 months to be heard; (j) in how many cases was the Department informed by the Social Security Tribunal of a notice of appeal (i) within 7 days of receiving the notice, (ii) within 14 days of receiving the notice, (iii) within 21 days of receiving the notice, (iv) within 30 days of receiving the notice, (v) more than 30 days after receiving the notice; (k) how many hearings were held by the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal in 2013-14, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (l) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal; (m) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal received their case file from the Department (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (n) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal were refused their case file by the Department, broken down by province; (o) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal were sent an acknowledgement of receipt of their notice of appeal (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after notice was sent; (p) how

many appeals were made to the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) cases where leave is not granted to appeal, (v) appeals filed by the Department, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Income Security Section's decision, (vii) cases not resulting in an overturn of the Income Security Section's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing is held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were decided on the record, (xi) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xii) appeals which were heard in person, (xiii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xviii) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which took more than 9 months to be heard; (g) how many hearings were held by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding OAS pensions and benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (r) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal; (s) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about communications sent to an appellant rather than to a third-party where requested; (t) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about logistical problems with hearings held by teleconference; (u) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about the Notice of Readiness system; and (v) how many requests for postponement has the Social Security Tribunal received after a Notice of Readiness has been filed by the appellant?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 570—Mr. Murray Rankin:**

With regard to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) pension and benefit appeals: (a) how many appeals were made to the CPP Review Tribunal between 2004 and 2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) appeals granted by the Department before a hearing was held, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were heard within 3 months of receipt of appeal notice, (x) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which were heard within 12 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiii) appeals which took more than 12 months to be heard; (b) how many hearings were held by the CPP Review Tribunal each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (c) how many appeals were made to the Pension Appeals Board between 2004 and 2013, broken down by (i) year, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals made by clients, (v) appeals made by the Department, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the CPP Review Tribunal's decision, (vii) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the CPP Review Tribunal's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were heard within 3 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xi) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xii) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiii) appeals which were heard within 12 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 18 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which took more than 18 months after receipt of appeal notice to be heard; (d) how many hearings were held by the Pension Appeals Board in each year from 2004 to 2013, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (e) how many requests for reconsideration were made to the Department in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) requests resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) requests not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) reviews which took place within 30 days of receipt of the request, (vii) reviews which took place within 60 days of receipt of the request, (viii) reviews which took more than 60 days to complete; (f) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the Department and requesting their case file from the Department received their case file (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (g) how many people requesting a reconsideration from the Department and requesting their case file from the Department were refused their case file, broken down by province; (h) how many applicants requesting a reconsideration by the Department were notified by phone of the outcome of their request and how many were notified by letter; (i) how many appeals were made to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal regarding CPP pensions and benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) appeals resulting in a summary dismissal, (v) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vi) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (vii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing was held, (viii) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (ix) appeals which were decided on the record, (x) appeals which were heard in writing, (xi) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xii) appeals which were heard in person, (xiii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which were heard within 4 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xviii) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xix) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xx) appeals which took more than 9 months to be heard; (j) in how many cases was the Department informed by the Social Security Tribunal of a notice of appeal (i) within 7 days of receiving the notice, (ii) within 14 days of receiving the notice, (iii) within 21 days of receiving the notice, (iv) within 30 days of receiving the notice, (v) more than 30 days after receiving the notice; (k) how many hearings were held by the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (l) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal; (m) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal received their case file from the Department (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (n) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal were refused their case file by the Department, broken down by province; (o) how many people appealing to the Income Security Section of the Social Security Tribunal were sent an acknowledgement of receipt of their notice of appeal (i) within 30 days of making the request, (ii) within 60 days of making the request, (iii) within 90 days of making the request, (iv) more than 90 days after making the request; (p)

how many appeals were made to the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding CPP pensions and benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province, (iii) region, (iv) cases where leave is not granted to appeal, (v) appeals filed by the Department, (vi) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Income Security Section's decision, (vii) cases not resulting in an overturn of the Income Security Section's decision, (viii) appeals withdrawn before a hearing is held, (ix) appeals withdrawn at hearing, (x) appeals which were decided on the record, (xi) appeals which were heard over the phone, (xii) appeals which were heard in person, (xiii) appeals for which travel costs were granted to the appellant, (xiv) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xv) appeals which were heard within 60 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvi) appeals which were heard within 90 days of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which were heard within 6 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xviii) appeals which were heard within 9 months of receipt of appeal notice, (xvii) appeals which took more than 9 months to be heard; (q) how many hearings were held by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal regarding CPP pensions and benefits in 2013-2014, broken down by (i) month, (ii) province; (r) how many cases are currently waiting to be heard by the Appeal Division of the Social Security Tribunal; (s) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about communications sent to an appellant rather than to a third-party where requested; (t) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about logistical problems with hearings held by teleconference; (u) how many complaints has the Social Security Tribunal received about the Notice of Readiness system; and (v) how many requests for postponement has the Social Security Tribunal received after a Notice of Readiness has been filed by the appellant?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 573—Mr. Ryan Cleary:

With regard to the Department of Finance and the 8.5% Hibernia share held by the government: (a) how many offers, both domestic and foreign, have been made for the 8.5% Hibernia share; (b) what has been the monetary range of these offers; (c) what did the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador offer; and (d) how much profit did the federal government make over the past 10 years from its share?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 575—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With respect to Canada's participation in the High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, held in Mexico City on April 17, 2014: (a) what are the names, titles, and affiliations of all persons who represented Canada at this meeting; and (b) what are the dates, file numbers, and titles of all documents prepared for the Canadian delegations or representatives at this meeting, or otherwise in respect of this meeting?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 576—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With respect to the National Day of Honour held on May 9, 2014: (a) what are the names, titles, and affiliations of those at the Canadian Legion with whom the Prime Minister's office consulted in advance of the Day of Honour; (b) what are the names, titles, and affiliations of those persons outside government who were consulted in advance of the National Day of Honour; (c) what are the details of the documents produced to inform the Canadian Legions about the National Day of Honour in advance of the Day; (d) what are the details of the documents produced to inform the Canadian Legion of the schedule, plans, and format of the National Day of Honour; (e) what were the dates and times of meetings for Minister Baird, the minister's staff, or Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development bureaucrats with representatives of the Canadian Legion concerning the National Day of Honour from March 1, 2012 to May 9, 2014; (f) what were the dates and times of meetings for Minister Nicholson, the minister's staff, or Department of National Defence bureaucrats with representatives of the Canadian Legion concerning the National Day of Honour from March 1, 2012 to May 9, 2014; (g) what were the dates and times of meetings for the members of the Prime Minister's Office with representatives of the Canadian Legion concerning the National Day of Honour from March 1, 2012 to May 9, 2014; (h) what are the dates and reference numbers of all briefing materials prepared for any Minister or any member of any Minister's staff concerning the National Day of Honour?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 577—Hon. Judy Sgro:**

With respect to the deportation of foreign nationals from Canada, for each year since 2009 inclusive: (a) how many persons were deported and to which countries; (b) how many were deported after having (i) been deemed a national security threat, (ii) violated immigration rules, (iii) received a criminal conviction; (c) to which countries does the government not deport persons (i) due to concerns of violating the principle of non-refoulement, as codified in international law, (ii) for any other reason, specifying the reason; (d) what are the dates, titles, and file numbers of all reports, memoranda, or other documents produced for the Minister of Public Safety in determining that persons will not be deported to a particular country or countries; (e) in the case of a country that has well-documented human rights violations, (i) what consideration is given to potential implications for deportees prior to Canadian government officials making final determinations on whether or not to deport persons to that country, (ii) which departments or agencies are involved in such a consideration, (iii) who has the final authority in making a determination; (f) on what basis would the need to deport a person trump concerns for that person's welfare after they are deported; (g) in the case of a country that is in the midst of a civil war or unrest, what consideration is given to this and its potential implications for a deportee prior to making a final determination on whether or not to deport a person; (h) what has been the annual cost in each year since 2009 inclusive of (i) transporting deportees to their destination, (ii) detaining deportees prior to deportation; (i) what is the average time a deportee is in custody prior to deportation; and (j) currently how many people are waiting to be deported?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 578—Hon. Judy Sgro:

With respect to the Clean Energy Ministerial held in May 2014 in South Korea: (a) what are the names, titles, and affiliations of all persons who attended on behalf of Canada; and (b) what are the dates, file numbers, and titles of all documents prepared for the attendees, or otherwise in respect of Canada's participation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 579—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:

With respect to Canadian official delegations to Ukraine in 2014: (a) what are the names, titles, and affiliations of all persons who travelled to Ukraine as part of these delegations; and (b) what are the dates, file numbers, and titles of all documents prepared for or in respect of these delegations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 580—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to the Government Operations Centre, for each protest or demonstration reported to the Centre by government departments or agencies since January 1, 2006, what was the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) description or nature, and (iv) department or agency making the report?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 581—Hon. Scott Brison:

With respect to Canada's participation in the Organization of American States (OAS), since April 2010: (a) what are the names, titles, and affiliations of all persons who have represented Canada at events or meetings related to the OAS; and (b) what are the dates, file numbers, and titles of all documents prepared for the Canadian delegations or representatives, or otherwise in respect of such events or meetings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 582—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to the use of government-issued credit cards by Ministerial exempt staff, for each Minister since May 31, 2012: (a) how many Ministerial exempt staff failed to pay the amount owing within the required time frame; (b) for each case identified in (a), (i) what is the name of the Ministerial exempt staff member, (ii) what was the amount owing; (c) how many Ministerial exempt staff used government-issued credit cards for non-governmental business; (d) for each case identified in (c), (i) what is the name of the Ministerial exempt staff member, (ii) what specific transactions were made and for what amounts; (e) how much has the government had to pay to cover the delinquent accounts of Ministerial exempt staff;

and (f) of the amount in (e) how much has the government recovered from the relevant Ministerial exempt staff members?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 583—Hon. Scott Brison:

With regard to government advertising: (a) how much has each department, agency, or Crown corporation spent to purchase advertising on Xbox, Xbox 360, or Xbox One in each fiscal year since 2006-2007 inclusive; (b) what was the (i) nature, (ii) purpose, (iii) target audience or demographic, (iv) cost of each individual advertising purchase; (c) what was the Media Authorization Number for each advertising purchase; and (d) what are the file numbers of all documents, reports, or memoranda concerning each advertising purchase or of any post-campaign assessment or evaluation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 584—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:

With respect to government advertising, for each television advertisement which has been aired during National Hockey League playoff game broadcasts since January 1, 2006: what is the (a) identification number, name or ADV number; (b) number of times each advertisement has aired during such a broadcast, specifying the total number of times and the total length of time (seconds or minutes), broken down by year and by month for each advertisement; (c) total cost to air each advertisement, broken down by year and by month; (d) criteria used to select each of the advertisement placements; (e) media outlet used to air each advertisement, broken down by year and by month; and (f) the total amount spent per outlet, broken down by year and by month?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 585—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:

With regard to government real property management, for each contract for the appraisal of real property since January 1, 2006: what are the (i) file numbers, (ii) dates, (iii) location or description of the property?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 586—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:

With regard to government procurement: what are the details of all contracts for the provision of research or speechwriting services to Ministers since April 1, 2006, (a) providing for each such contract (i) the start and end dates, (ii) contracting parties, (iii) file number, (iv) nature or description of the work; and (b) providing, in the case of a contract for speechwriting, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) audience or event at which the speech was, or was intended to be, delivered?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 587—Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg:

With regard to bank notes: (a) how many requests to reproduce the image of Canadian bank notes have been received by the Bank of Canada since April 1, 2006; (b) how many such requests have been approved, and how many have been rejected; (c) for each such request, what was (i) the proposed reproduction and its purpose, (ii) the proposed placement or distribution of the material featuring the bank note image, (iii) the date of the approval, (iv) the name of the requester, where requested by a group, business, or organization, (iv) whether the request was approved or rejected?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 589—Ms. Yvonne Jones:

With regard to National Defence: (a) what were the projects, proposals, plans, or developments which were to have been the subject of the anticipated “announcements” concerning 5 Wing Goose Bay contemplated or referred to by the former Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in an interview with CBC Newfoundland and Labrador On Point which aired on or about May 26, 2012; (b) were those announcements ever made, and if so, what were they, and when were they made; (c) if those announcements were not made, (i) what progress has been made towards the projects, proposals, plans, or developments contemplated in (a), (ii) when will they be made public; and (d) what steps have been taken since January 2006 towards the establishment at the base of (i) a rapid reaction battalion, (ii) an unmanned aerial vehicle squadron, (iii) any other unit, facility, or function which was not already established at the base on January 1, 2006, specifying the nature of that proposed or anticipated unit, facility, or function?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 590—Mr. Frank Valeriote:

With respect to the Scott et al. v. Attorney General of Canada legal action against the Government of Canada: (a) what is the total amount of money spent by all departments and agencies, broken down by department and agency, since October 30, 2012, in its defence against the Canadian veterans’ class action lawsuit; and (b) what is the total amount of money all departments and agencies have spent to hire outside legal counsel, broken down by department and agency, for the same time period referred to in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 591—Hon. Irwin Cotler:

With regard to the comments of Justice Minister Peter MacKay in the House on June 4, regarding a “compromise that occurred in the leaking of information around” the process of a Supreme Court appointment, and the statement of his spokesperson that “we are concerned about recent leaks from what was intended to be a confidential process, we are reviewing the process for future appointments” as quoted by the Toronto Star on June 3: (a) to what leaks do these comments refer; (b) when were these leaks discovered; (c) how were these leaks discovered; (d) how was the government informed of these leaks; (e) what measures were in place to prevent leaks; (f) how does the government define the “leaking of information”; (g) what meetings have occurred on the subject of these leaks, (i) on what dates, (ii) with whom present, (iii) with what goals, (iv) with what outcomes; (h) what materials, briefing notes, or other memos were created regarding these leaks and what are their dates of creation and file or reference numbers; (i) who developed the materials in (h); (j) do the “leaks” refer to an article by John Ivison of the National Post, dated May 1, regarding communications between the Chief Justice and Ministers of the Crown, or to material cited in that article; (k) do the “leaks” refer to an article by Laura Stone of Global News dated May 7 regarding communications between the Prime Minister’s Office and Marc Nadon suggesting Justice Nadon leave the Federal Court to rejoin the Quebec bar, or to material cited in that article; (l) do the “leaks” refer to an article by Sean Fine of the Globe and Mail dated May 23 regarding activities of the selection panel and names on government lists, or to material cited in that article; (m) if the answer to (j), (k), or (l) is negative, does the government dispute the veracity of the content referred to in the article referenced in the question; (n) what specific information has been leaked; (o) what is the extent and scope of the leak; (p) what are the consequences of the leak; (q) what meetings occurred regarding the articles referenced in (j), (k), and (l), (i) on what dates, (ii) who was present, (iii) what were the goals of the meeting, (iv) what was the outcome of the meeting; (r) what materials, briefing notes, or other memos were created regarding the articles in (j), (k), and (l) and what are their dates of creation and file or reference numbers; (s) from where did these leaks originate; (t) who had access to the information leaked; (u) what was done, if anything, to limit the dissemination of material once leaked; (v) were any news outlets contacted in an effort to limit the publication of leaked material; (w) were any journalists contacted to correct information in any story referencing a “leak”; (x) does the government’s conception of a leak include dissemination of information that is inaccurate; (y) what is the total number of leaks that occurred regarding the appointment process, and how was this number determined; (z) what steps has the government undertaken to investigate these leaks; (aa) have any meetings with the RCMP occurred regarding these leaks, (i) if yes, when and with whom, (ii) if not, why not; (bb) have any meetings with the Director of Public Prosecutions occurred regarding these leaks, (i) if yes, when and with whom, (ii) if not, why not; (cc) have any meetings with the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs occurred regarding these leaks, (i) if yes, when and with whom, (ii) if not, why not; (dd) what steps is the Commissioner for

Federal Judicial Affairs undertaking to investigate these leaks; (ee) what steps is the Department of Justice taking to investigate these leaks; (ff) what steps is the Minister taking to investigate these leaks; (gg) when is it expected that any investigation will be concluded; (hh) what penalties might be imposed if the sources of the leaks are found; (ii) what cost is expected to be incurred relative to any investigation into these leaks; (jj) what additional measures are being taken to ensure that more leaks do not occur; (kk) what steps were taken in the Prime Minister’s Office to investigate these leaks; (ll) what steps were taken in the Privy Council Office to investigate these leaks; (mm) what meetings or communications transpired between the Minister of Justice and the Prime Minister or his office regarding these leaks; (nn) who is responsible for these leaks; (oo) who is being investigated for these leaks; (pp) what suspects have been identified; (qq) has any motive been determined and if so, what are the motives and how was this determined; (rr) is the government itself investigating these leaks or will a third party be involved; (ss) what steps will be taken to ensure independence in any investigation of these leaks; (tt) have any wiretaps or other judicial orders been sought in relation to an investigation into these leaks; (uu) does the government consider information as being leaked if its dissemination occurs in a form where it is protected by privilege, such as on the floor of the House of Commons; (vv) who was informed of the leaks, on what date, and by what means; (ww) what was the impact of these leaks on the existing Supreme Court appointment process; (xx) what is expected to be the impact of these leaks on any future Supreme Court appointment process; (yy) how was the determination in (xx) made, by whom, with what policy objectives in mind, and with what expectations relative to future conduct by the government in identifying a nominee to the Supreme Court of Canada; (zz) who is in charge of investigating these leaks; (aaa) will Parliament be informed of the results of any investigation and if so, when; (bbb) if no investigations are occurring, why not; (ccc) if no investigations are occurring, is this compatible with the government’s policy objectives that include being “tough on crime”; (ddd) what measures will be in place for a future Supreme Court appointments process to prevent such leaks; (eee) what confidential materials related to the appointment process were created and distributed; and (fff) were all materials in (eee) returned, (i) if yes, when, (ii) if no, what materials remain unreturned to the government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 592—Hon. Stéphane Dion:

With regard to the Translation Bureau: (a) what was the total number of contracts awarded to outside suppliers for each year from 2006 to 2014; (b) with regard to the contracts (under \$25,000) awarded to outside suppliers, for each year from 2006 to 2014, what are the (i) suppliers’ names, (ii) contract reference numbers, (iii) contract dates, (iv) descriptions of services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contract amounts, (vii) final contract amounts if different from the original contract amounts; (c) with regard to the total cost of contracts awarded by the Translation Bureau to outside suppliers for each year from 2006 to 2014, what are the (i) suppliers’ names, (ii) contract reference numbers, (iii) contract dates, (iv) descriptions of services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contract amounts, (vii) final contract amounts if different from the original contract amounts; (d) what percentage of all work performed by the Translation Bureau was assigned to outside suppliers for each year from 2006 to 2014; (e) what was the Translation Bureau’s total business volume (in dollars) for each year from 2006 to 2014; (f) what percentage of documents was translated from French to English by the Translation Bureau for each year between 2006 and 2014; (g) what percentage of documents was translated from French to English by outside suppliers contracted by the Translation Bureau for each year between 2006 and 2014; (h) with regard to the elimination of positions within the Translation Bureau, for each year from 2006 to 2014, (i) how many full-time positions were eliminated, (ii) how many part-time positions were eliminated, (iii) which positions, (iv) in which Bureau departments, (v) who was consulted, (vi) what impact has this had on delivery deadlines for translation requests; and (i) regarding the hiring of employees within the Translation Bureau, (i) how many new positions were created within the Translation Bureau for each year from 2006 to 2014, (ii) position titles, (iii) how many full-time positions (iv) how many part-time positions, (v) in which departments were the new positions created?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 593—Hon. Stéphane Dion:

With regard to the former Yekau Lake Practice Bombing Range: what are the dates, titles and file numbers of all reports, memoranda, dockets, dossiers or other records since January 1, 2006, held by any department or agency concerning the Range or environmental remediation of the site?

Routine Proceedings

(Return tabled)

Question No. 594—Hon. Stéphane Dion:

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

(Return tabled)

Question No. 595—Mr. Glenn Thibeault:

With regard to uncollected fines and administrative monetary penalties: broken down by fiscal year and offence, since 2005-2006, up to and including the current fiscal year, (a) what is the total amount collected by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada under the National Fine Recovery Program; and (b) what is the total amount of unpaid fines that has yet to be collected by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada under the National Fine Recovery Program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 596—Mr. Massimo Pacetti:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the regions of Quebec since January 1, 2006: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contacts' reference numbers, (iii) dates of contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 597—Ms. Hélène Laverdière:

With regard to the government's Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Summit held in Toronto, May 28-30 2014: (a) who within the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development was responsible for the organization of the MNCH Summit; (b) what was the initial budget of the event and (i) did the Summit go over budget, (ii) if so, what were the cost overruns, (iii) were there unforeseen expenses; (c) what was the total cost of the Summit; (d) what was the total cost for the venue rental (Fairmont Royal York); (e) how many bedrooms in the Fairmont Royal York were paid for by the government and at what cost; (f) how many names were on the final guest list and what were the names; (g) how many government officials and employees attended the Summit and what are their names; (h) how many guests who are not employees of the government had their stay at the Fairmont Royal York paid for by the government and what are their names; (i) did the government pay for the travel expenses of international visitors; (j) how was the Fairmont Royal York chosen as a venue for the Summit, (i) on what date was the hotel first contacted with regard to the Summit, (ii) on what date was the contract with the hotel signed, (iii) did the Summit organizers contact venues other than the Fairmont Royal York and, if so, how many; (k) what was the total cost for security; (l) what was the total cost of meals and hospitality; and (m) was the Summit paid for by funds dedicated to the Muskoka Initiative?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 598—Ms. Hélène Laverdière:

With regard to Canada's funding and participation within the United Nations (UN) and its agencies: for each fiscal year from 2006-2007 to 2013-2014, (a) how much funding did the government allocate for each UN agency, related specialized agency, fund and program; (b) for each UN body, specialized institution, fund and program, which ones (i) saw their funding reduced, (ii) saw their funding fully cut, (iii) saw their funding increased, or (iv) received new funding from the government; (c) what is the annual evolution of Canada's overall multilateral funding for all UN agencies, funds and programs compared to its bilateral funding; (d) what have been Canada's priorities at the UN from 2006-2014; (e) what have been Canada's priority issues since 2006; (f) what resources and projects were assigned to each priority issue and what were the results; (g) how has Canada voted for each UN General Assembly resolution since 2006; (h) how did Canada vote at the UN's other bodies; (i) does the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development provide Canada with directives in writing on how to vote within the UN's various bodies; (j) what department within DFAIT, and previously within DFAIT, is responsible for preparing such documents for the votes; (k) what departments and members of the

Prime Minister's Office are responsible for or are involved in the (i) choices, (ii) directions, (iii) monitoring involving Canada's financial contributions to the UN, and what are the roles of those working within these Canadian bodies; (l) which countries benefit from Canadian funding within the UN; (m) what partners, non-governmental organizations and others are involved in implementing programs funded by Canada at the UN; (n) how has Canada contributed, both financially and in its participation to the issue of reforming the UN since 2006; (o) why was Canada defeated during the election for non-permanent membership on the Security Council; and (p) did DFAIT prepare the Government of Canada's policy papers for Canada's election to a seat on the Security Council in 2010?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 599—Mr. Scott Simms:

With regard to construction-related tenders, requests for proposals, contracts, and related activities on all military bases, assets, and facilities related to 9 Wing Gander since 2006: what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings or departmental correspondence between the government and all entities, departments, companies, contractors, or individuals, broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved, (ix) military base, asset, or facility, (x) type of activity or contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 600—Mr. Ted Hsu:

With regard to Correctional Service Canada and the closure of Kingston Penitentiary (KP) and the Regional Treatment Centre (RTC): (a) as of April 19, 2012, what was the stated plan for the relocation of inmates; (b) as of September 30, 2013, what was the stated plan for the relocation of inmates; (c) as of October 1, 2013, where were the inmates residing; (d) as of April 1, 2014, where were the inmates residing; (e) as of June 1, 2014, where were the inmates residing; (f) as of June 1, 2014, what was the stated plan for the relocation of inmates; (g) what modifications to Collins Bay Institution were procured to address the increased inmate population resulting from the temporary relocation of inmates, (i) on what dates were these modifications authorized, (ii) on whose authority, (iii) what contracts were signed relating to these modifications, (iv) what is the dollar value of each of the contracts in (iii), (v) what is the status of each of the contracts listed in (iii), (vi) what will the total cost be for temporarily housing inmates at Collins Bay Institution; (h) what modifications to Bath Institution were procured to address the increased inmate population, (i) on what dates were these modifications authorized, (ii) on whose authority, (iii) what contracts were signed relating to these modifications, (iv) what is the dollar value of each of the contracts in (iii), (v) what is the status of each of the contracts listed in (iii), (vi) what will the total cost be for modifications required to accommodate the increased inmate population for KP and RTC; and (i) what modifications to Millhaven Institution were procured to address the increased inmate population, (i) on what dates were these modifications authorized, (ii) on whose authority, (iii) what contracts were signed relating to these modifications, (iv) what is the dollar value of each of the contracts in (iii), (v) what is the status of each of the contracts listed in (iii), (vi) what will the total cost be for modifications required to accommodate the increased inmate population for KP and RTC?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 601—Hon. John McKay:

With regard to Canada's climate-change policy: (a) will the government match the United States' recently-announced plan to reduce 17 percent of its carbon emissions from 2005 levels by 2020 by reducing carbon pollution from the nation's coal fired power plants, their largest emitter, by 30%; (b) if the government intends to match these efforts against Canada's largest emitter, the oil and gas sector, what departments or agencies will be involved in this preparation; (c) are there existing plans in place to reduce carbon emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2020; (d) if so, what are the details of these plans; (e) how and when will these plans or policies be communicated to the Canadian public; and (f) when, where and how many times has the Minister of the Environment or her staff met with representatives of the oil and gas industry to negotiate greenhouse gas emission reductions?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 602—Hon. Gerry Byrne:**

With regard to the Department of Canadian Heritage: what was the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) agenda, (iv) list of attendees or participants by name and title, (v) file or reference number, for minutes of all meetings of any group or committee involved in the planning or programming of 2014 Canada Day events in Ottawa?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 603—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:

With regard to the portions of the anti-spam legislation that come into force on July 1, 2014: (a) how many inquiries has the government received from companies about the new law; (b) what outreach activities has the government undertaken to help companies understand their obligations under the new act; and (c) how much money has the government spent to inform Canadians or businesses about the new law?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 604—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:

With regard to National Parks: what are the dates, titles, and file numbers of all reports, memoranda, dockets, dossiers, or other records, since January 1, 2006, held by any department or agency, concerning the proposed Never Forgotten National Memorial at Green Cove, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 605—Mr. David McGuinty:

With regard to the National Capital Commission (NCC): (a) what were the costs and details of expenditures related to the relocation of the NCC's Capital Infocentre, located at 90 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, to the World Exchange Plaza, located at 45 O'Connor Street, Ottawa, Ontario, in 2011; and (b) what are the costs and details of expenditures, or the anticipated costs and details of expenditures, related to the anticipated relocation of the Infocentre from the World Exchange Plaza to its former location at 90 Wellington Street?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 606—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to the operations of Marine Atlantic Incorporated and the operation of vessels between the ports of Port aux Basques and Argentia, Newfoundland and Labrador and North Sydney, Nova Scotia: for the time period of fiscal years 2009-2010 through to 2013-2014, (a) how many trips were cancelled in each of these years including the (i) date, (ii) time of scheduled crossing, (iii) scheduled port of departure and arrival, (iv) reason for cancellation; (b) for each crossing during this period of time, what was the volume of traffic onboard compared to the capacity of the vessel for commercial and non-commercial traffic; and (c) what were all the various advertised rates for each of these years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 610—Mr. Scott Andrews:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and more specifically all fish quota allocations in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) fishing areas 2J3KL, 3MNO, 3PS, 3PN and 4R for the time period 2004-2014: (a) what quotas in each of these NAFO areas were assigned for harvesting by companies or businesses, including the company or business name and address, quota amount, species, applicable NAFO area, year and any specific conditions of license; and (b) of the quota allocations identified in (a), how many of the companies or businesses that were granted an initial quota were permitted to have another company or fisher harvest (sublease) the initially assigned quota, including the name and address of this assigned company or fisher, quota amount assigned, species, applicable NAFO area and any specific conditions attached to the permission granted?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 611—Mr. Sean Casey:

With regard to any travel claim or any other expense claim submitted by any Minister, Parliamentary Secretary or Minister of State, or any ministerial staff: since 2006 and broken down by department or agency, what is (i) the amount of each claim

rejected, (ii) the reason why the claim was rejected, (iii) the reason why the claim was amended?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 612—Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan:

With regard to the proposed Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP): (a) what policies, timelines, actions and monitoring does the draft RNUP legislation and strategic plan specify to protect and restore native habitat in the park to (i) restore the "main ecological corridor" outlined in the Greenbelt Plan (2005), the Rouge North Management Plan (section 4.1.1.2), the Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan (2007), the Rouge Park Natural Heritage Action Plan (2008), and the Rouge River Watershed Strategy (2007), (ii) protect and improve water quality and migratory fish habitat within the Little Rouge River, part of the Toronto Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement "Area of Concern", (iii) surpass the minimum 30% forest cover and 10% wetland per watershed recommended in the report "How Much Habitat is Enough" for "viable wildlife populations", (iv) increase the sequestering of precipitation and carbon dioxide to mitigate climatic extremes and reduce the risk to properties and infrastructure from flooding and erosion, (v) improve habitat size, quality and connectivity, (vi) combat adverse edge effects and invasive species, (vii) improve the park's ecological health, resilience and integrity, (viii) increase the proportion of the park accessible to nature and people; (b) what policies, actions and timelines does the draft RNUP legislation and strategic plan outline to respect, strengthen and implement existing federal, provincial and municipal environmental policies, laws and plans, including the (i) Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and Toronto "AOC" Remedial Action Plan, (ii) Rouge River Watershed Strategy (2007), (iii) Canada's Species at Risk Act and associated commitments, (iv) Canadian National Parks Act and Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, (v) Species at Risk Act and Migratory Birds Act, (vi) Fisheries Act and draft Fisheries Management Plan for Rouge River (2011), (vii) Navigable Waters Protection Act, (viii) Rouge Park Management Plan (1994), (ix) Rouge North Management Plan (2001), (x) Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002), (xi) Greenbelt Plan (2005), (xii) Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan (2007), (xiii) Rouge Park Natural Heritage Action Plan (2008); (c) how much of the land within the 57 km² RNUP Study Area is (i) native forest habitat, (ii) wetland habitat, (iii) leased for cash cropping of corn or soy beans, (iv) leased for agricultural uses other than cash cropping, (v) leased for private residences, (vi) within public utility corridors, (vii) not leased, (viii) accessible to the public; (d) what area (in hectares) and percentage of the proposed RNUP Study Area is currently leased to private individuals or corporations; (e) how many individuals currently lease land within the RNUP study area; (f) how many land parcels in the RNUP study area are currently leased to (i) farmers who once owned the subject land parcel but were expropriated in the 1970s, (ii) provincial government employees or their close family members, (iii) federal government employees or their close family members, (iv) Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) employees or their close family members, (v) municipal government employees or their close family members, (vi) non farmers, (vii) lease holders who do not live in the RNUP area; (g) for the most recent year available, what are all the leased properties in the RNUP study area, broken down by (i) geographic location and approximate boundaries of the leased property marked on a map, (ii) land area (hectares) associated with the lease, (iii) buildings associated with the lease (for example 1 house, 900 ft², 1 barn 1500 ft², (iv) name of leaseholder and name of tenant(s), (v) annual lease rate and length of lease, (vi) length of time the current leaseholder has leased the property, (vii) true annual public cost of property upkeep and lease administration, (viii) public investment in the property needed to address modern building code, fire, safety and energy conservation standards; (h) what is the current TRCA and Transport Canada process for awarding and renewing land leases in the RNUP study area and what are any proposed changes to improve competition, public transparency, fairness and fair market return on these public land leases; (i) what percentage of the corn grown on leased Rouge Park lands in 2013 was grown for ethanol production; (j) what are the planned staffing expenses and other RNUP expenditures by Parks Canada in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016; and (k) what is the planned utilization of the funding from the Waterfront Regeneration Trust in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 by Parks Canada or the TRCA?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 613—Ms. Elizabeth May:**

With regard to Bill C-22, with particular emphasis on the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act (NLCA): (a) in developing this legislation, what was the government's policy for consulting with non-industry stakeholders and civil society groups, (i) which non-industry stakeholders and civil society groups did the government consult with, (ii) which aspects of the legislation were they consulted on, (iii) what were the exact dates on which these consultations took place; (b) in developing the NLCA, did the Department of Natural Resources ask licensees of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission who are nuclear power generating station operators who supply electricity to public electricity grids whether adopting unlimited liability for nuclear operators, without increasing financial security, would increase electricity prices, and if so, (i) what were the responses of the licensees, (ii) what evidence does the government have to support the assertion that removing the cap on operator liability, without raising financial security, would increase electricity prices; (c) does the Department of Natural Resources know how much self-insurance licensees carry for on-site damage and, if so, what amount is insured by the licensees for that on-site damage; (d) what analysis or assessment has the government performed to determine whether signing and ratifying the Convention on Supplementary Convention (CSC) and passing this legislation would result in an increase in public safety; (e) has the government assessed whether the NLCA will have a negative or positive impact on the achievement of Canada's sustainable development goals and, if so, what were the results of this assessment; (f) has the Department of Natural Resources asked industry whether nuclear suppliers would accept exposure to liability and, if so, (i) what were the responses provided, (ii) what were the exact dates on which these consultations took place; (g) is it necessary to link operator liability caps to the capacity of insurance providers to provide insurance and, if so, (i) why is this so, (ii) why was this not a limiting factor in developing Part 1 of Bill C-22; (h) what is the government's analysis of what level of costs would be an inordinate "burden" on the nuclear industry for insurance; (i) why did the government not use the same definition of 'reasonable costs' for insurance for the nuclear industry and the offshore oil and gas industry, (i) what were the respective definitions used for Parts 1 and 2 of Bill C-22, (ii) how are they different, (iii) what was the policy rationale for using different definitions; and (j) after the passage of the NLCA, how would the CSC be ratified, (i) would parliamentary debate be required before the convention could be ratified, (ii) does the government agree that the ratification of the convention should be reviewed by an all-party committee, (iii) why has the government not ratified any other international nuclear liability conventions since the 1960s, (iv) can the government file reservations or exemptions regarding any requirements of the CSC, v) have any other signatories to the CSC filed any such reservations or exemptions, and if so, which signatories have done so and what are the specifics of the reservations and exemptions?

(Return tabled)

Routine Proceedings

Question No. 614—Ms. Kirsty Duncan:

With respect to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine: (a) how does the government define this doctrine; (b) when does this doctrine apply; (c) is this doctrine a part of Canadian foreign policy and, if so, how; (d) who determines when R2P is appropriate and how is this determination made; (e) when was the doctrine most recently mentioned by the Prime Minister in a public speech and in what context; (f) when was the doctrine most recently mentioned by the Prime Minister in a public document and in what context; (g) when was the doctrine most recently mentioned by a minister other than the Prime Minister in a public speech and in what context; (h) when was the doctrine most recently mentioned by a minister other than the Prime Minister in a public document and in what context; (i) for (e), (f), (g), (h), what was the date of the document or speech and where can the full text be accessed; (j) in what discussions has the Prime Minister raised R2P in the last two years, broken down by date and parties present; (k) in what discussions has the Minister of Foreign Affairs raised R2P in the last two years, broken down by date and parties present; (l) in what discussions has a minister other than the Minister of Foreign Affairs or Prime Minister raised R2P in the last two years, broken down by date and parties present; (m) for (j), (k) and (l), (i) when did the meetings occur, (ii) who was present, (iii) what was the context, (iv) what notes or minutes of the meeting exist and what is their file or control number, (v) why was R2P mentioned, (vi) what was said; (n) in what meetings attended by the Prime Minister since 2010 has R2P been on the agenda; (o) in what meetings attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2010 has R2P been on the agenda; (p) in what meetings attended by a minister other than the Prime Minister or Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2010 was R2P on the agenda; (q) were any meetings where R2P was on the agenda declined by the Prime Minister since 2010 and, if so, why was the meeting declined; (r) were any meetings where R2P was on the agenda declined by the Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2010 and, if so, why was the meeting declined; (s) were any meetings where R2P was on the agenda declined by a Minister other than the Minister of Foreign Affairs or Prime Minister 2010 and, if so, why was the meeting declined; (t) does the government view R2P as part of domestic policy and, if so, how; (u) in what ways has R2P found expression in Canadian policy; (v) what government decisions have been made that implement R2P; (w) what directives or memos have been created regarding R2P and what are their access or control numbers, sorted by agency creating the document; (x) what goals has the government identified with respect to R2P and how are these goals being implemented and assessed; (y) what meetings involving the government have taken place in the last five years regarding R2P, (i) who was present, (ii) what was the agenda, (iii) what documents were prepared for the meeting or created in relation to it and what are their file or control numbers; (z) to what conferences regarding R2P have government employees attended, broken down by date and title; (aa) broken down by date, to what conferences regarding R2P has the government declined to send representation and what was the reason the conference was declined; (bb) what steps are being taken to implement R2P and who is taking these steps; (cc) in what ways can the steps in (bb) be verified; (dd) how is Parliament kept abreast of developments regarding R2P; (ee) what discussions has the government had regarding how to 'domesticate' R2P and what was the (i) venue, (ii) date, (iii) outcomes, (iv) attendee list; (ff) what steps has the government taken to appoint a senior-level government official to serve as a National R2P Focal Point for atrocity prevention; (gg) by when will Canada have a senior-level government official to serve as a National R2P Focal Point for atrocity prevention; (hh) what policy objectives have been identified with respect to having to appoint a senior-level government official to serving a National R2P Focal Point for atrocity prevention; (ii) what studies have been undertaken by the government with respect to R2P since 2006, broken down by date of study and indicating (i) title, (ii) authors, (iv) results, (v) recommendations, (vi) where and how it may be accessed; (jj) what discussions regarding R2P has Canada had with the United Kingdom and the United States, (i) when did any discussions take place, (ii) what were any outcomes, (iii) what were the resulting recommendations, (iv) was a report produced and, if so, how can it be obtained; (kk) does the government have a comprehensive national strategy to mainstream the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities and, if so, how can it be accessed; (ll) what government strategies, memos and documents have been prepared regarding the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities, broken down by date, and what are their file or control numbers; (mm) what steps is the government taking to develop a comprehensive national strategy to mainstream the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities; (nn) who is responsible for the development of a national strategy to mainstream the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities; (oo) has the government undertaken studies to examine the potential use of mobile technology to produce increasingly precise and accurate warnings for potential victims of mass atrocities to adequately prepare or move to safety and, if so, (i) what are the studies' titles, (ii) dates, (iii) results, (iv) recommendations; (pp) what meetings, briefings, or memos have occurred or been produced regarding the potential use of mobile technology to produce increasingly precise and accurate warnings for potential victims of mass atrocities; (qq) what discussions has Canada had with the United

Nations (UN) regarding R2P; (rr) what meetings and discussions has Canada had with the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations regarding R2P, (i) when did the meetings occur, (ii) who was present, (iii) what was the topic; (ss) what meetings and discussions has Canada had with the UN's Department of Political Affairs regarding R2P, (i) when did the meetings occur, (ii) who was present, (iii) what was the topic; (tt) what meetings and discussions has Canada had with the Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Genocide Prevention regarding R2P, (i) when did the meetings occur (ii) who was present, (iii) what was the topic; (uu) what were the outcomes of the meetings in (qq), (rr), (ss) and (tt), broken down by meeting; (vv) were any reports produced with respect to the meetings or discussions in (qq), (rr), (ss), (tt) and, if so, (i) how can they be accessed, (ii) what are their file or control numbers; (ww) what steps has Canada made with respect to creating a standing, rapid-reaction UN force, (i) when did any discussions take place, (ii) with whom did any discussions take place, (iii) what were any outcomes, (iv) was a report produced and, if so, how can it be accessed; (xx) what discussions has Canada had with respect to limitations on the use of veto powers when situations meet R2P criteria and, if so, (iii) what was the venue, date, outcomes and, if not, (iv) why not; (yy) what analysis or strategy meetings and documents have been prepared regarding (xx) and what are their file or control numbers; (zz) what discussions has Canada had with other governments, UN agencies and departments with respect to early warning and prevention, broken down by date indicating (i) venue, (ii) topic, (iii) persons present, (iv) outcomes, (iv) reports, memos, or other materials relative to the meeting or discussion and their file or control numbers; (aaa) what budget exists for R2P implementation and how has this been determined; (bbb) what memos, directives, or documents exist regarding the phrase "Responsibility to Protect" and what are their file or control numbers; (ccc) have government employees been discouraged from or otherwise restricted in their use of the phrase "Responsibility to Protect"; and (ddd) have any government documents been edited to remove the phrase "Responsibility to Protect" and, if so, (i) what was the document, (ii) when did the edit occur, (iii) why was the change made?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 618—Mr. Rodger Cuzner:**

With regard to Social Security Tribunal (SST) and the four administrative tribunals it replaced, the Employment Insurance Board of Referees, the Employment Insurance Umpires, the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security Review Tribunals, and the Pension Appeals Board: (a) what is the number and percentage of total appeals that were made to each prior tribunal for fiscal years 2004-2005 to 2012-2013, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region, (iii) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (iv) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) appeals withdrawn before hearing by the claimant and the Department, (vi) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (viii) average number of days it took to schedule a hearing after receipt of appeal notice, (ix) when is an appeal file considered in backlog, (x) how many files were in backlog at the end of each fiscal year; (b) what is the number and percentage of total appeals concerning Employment Insurance that were made to the SST General Division for fiscal year 2012-2013 and year to date, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region, (iii) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (iv) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) appeals withdrawn before hearing by the claimant and by the government, (vi) appeals withdrawn at hearing by the claimant and by the Department, (vii) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (viii) appeals summarily dismissed by the SST General Division because it felt there was no reasonable chance of success, (ix) in how many cases referred in (b) (viii) did the claimant not submit additional information after being told that his or her case might be summarily dismissed, (x) how many initial requests by the claimant or the government to adjourn or postpone the hearing were received pursuant to section 11 of the SST Regulations, and how many were granted and denied, (xi) when is an appeal file considered in backlog, (xii) how many files were in backlog at the end of each month and fiscal year, (xiii) what are the reasons for any backlog, (xiv) what is being done about any backlog, (xv) what is the oldest appeal in backlog; (c) what is the number and percentage of total appeals concerning Old Age Security that were made to the SST General Division for fiscal 2012-2013 and year to date, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region, (iii) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (iv) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) appeals withdrawn before hearing by the claimant and by the department, (vi) appeals withdrawn at hearing by the claimant and by the department, (vii) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (viii) appeals summarily dismissed because the SST Member felt there was no reasonable chance of success, (ix) in how many cases referred in (b)(viii) did the claimant not submit additional information after being told that his or her case might be summarily dismissed, (x) how many initial requests by the claimant or the government to adjourn or postpone the hearing were received pursuant to section 11 of the SST Regulations, and how many were granted and denied, (xi) when is an appeal file considered in backlog, (xii) how many files were in backlog at the end of each month and fiscal year, (xiii) what are the reasons for any backlog, (xiv) what is being done about any backlog, (xv) what is the oldest appeal in backlog; (d) what is the number and percentage of total appeals concerning the Canada Pension Plan that were made to the SST General Division for fiscal 2012-2013 and year to date, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region, (iii) appeals resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (iv) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the Department's original decision, (v) appeals withdrawn before hearing by the claimant and by the Department, (vi) appeals withdrawn at hearing by the claimant and by the Department, (vii) appeals which were heard within 30 days of receipt of appeal notice, (viii) appeals summarily dismissed because the SST Member felt there was no reasonable chance of success, (ix) in how many cases referred in (b)(viii) did the claimant not submit additional information after being told that his or her case might be summarily dismissed, (x) how many initial requests by the claimant or the government to adjourn or postpone the hearing were received pursuant to section 11 of the SST Regulations, and how many were granted and denied, (xi) when is an appeal file considered in backlog, (xii) how many files were in backlog at the end of each month and fiscal year, (xiii) what are the reasons for any backlog, (xiv) what is being done about any backlog, (xv) what is the oldest appeal in backlog; (e) what is the number and percentage of total appeals concerning Employment Insurance that were made to the SST Appeals Division for fiscal 2012-2013 and year to date, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region, (iii) appeals resulting in an overturn of the SST General Division's decision, (iv) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the SST General Division's decision, (v) how many appeals that were summarily dismissed by the SST General Division were appealed to the SST Appeal Division, (vi) how many judicial reviews of a decision rendered by the SST Appeal Division were brought before the Federal Court of Appeal, (vii) how many leave to appeal applications were granted and denied by the SST Appeal Division, (viii) how many of the denials in (vii) were appealed before the Federal Court; (f) what is the number and percentage of total appeals concerning Old Age Security that were made to the

SST Appeals Division for fiscal 2012-2013 and year to date, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region, (iii) appeals resulting in an overturn of the SST General Division's decision, (iv) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the SST General Division's decision, (v) how many appeals that were summarily dismissed by the SST General Division were appealed to the SST Appeal Division, (vi) how many judicial reviews of a decision rendered by the SST Appeal Division were brought before the Federal Court of Appeal, (vii) how many leave to appeal applications were granted and denied by the SST Appeal Division, (viii) how many of the denials in (vii) were appealed before the Federal Court; (g) what is the number and percentage of total appeals concerning Canada Pension Plan that were made to the SST Appeals Division for fiscal 2012-2013 and year to date, broken down by (i) province, (ii) region, (iii) appeals resulting in an overturn of the SST General Division's decision, (iv) appeals not resulting in an overturn of the SST General Division's decision, (v) how many appeals that were summarily dismissed by the SST General Division were appealed to the SST Appeal Division, (vi) how many judicial reviews of a decision rendered by the SST Appeal Division were brought before the Federal Court of Appeal, (vii) how many leave to appeal applications were granted and denied by the SST Appeal Division, (viii) how many of the denials in (vii) were appealed before the Federal Court; (h) what is the set standard to hold a hearing once an appeal is filed by the claimant for the (i) prior tribunals, (ii) SST General Division, (iii) SST Appeals Division; (i) what are the results in achieving the standard in (h); (j) what is the average number of days to schedule a hearing from receipt of the appeal notice claimant for the (i) prior tribunals, (ii) SST General Division; (k) what is the annual cost of the prior tribunals for fiscal 2004-2005 to 2012-2013 broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) cost by most detailed cost category available; (l) what is the annual cost of SST for 2013-2014 and year to date broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) cost by most detailed cost category available, including division; (m) what is the number of prior tribunal members as of March 31 of each fiscal year from 2004-2005 to 2012-2013; (n) what is the expected and realized annual cost savings created by the SST in 2013-2014 and what is the reason for any discrepancy; (o) what is the expected and realized efficiency savings, created by the SST in 2013-2014 and what is the reason for any discrepancy; (p) what is the anticipated and actual cases convened by the SST by way of (i) written questions and answers, (ii) teleconference, (iii) video conference, (iv) personal appearance in 2013-2014 and, if there is any discrepancy, why; (q) what is the anticipated and actual percentage of total cases convened by the SST by way of (i) written questions and answers, (ii) teleconference, (iii) video conference, (iv) personal appearance in 2013-2014 and, if there is any discrepancy, why; (r) if there were no expectations for (p) and (q), why not, and why did the government develop the new proposed practice of written questions and answers, teleconference and video conference as opposed to in person hearings; (s) how many video-conferencing centres were (i) planned to be and (ii) were operational to deal with the expected caseload for the first year of the SST and the supporting rationale for the number; (t) if there was no rationale for (s) why wasn't there one; (u) where were the prior tribunals (i) centre locations, (ii) regions served; (v) are there currently SST video conferencing centres available to those same locations in (u) and if not, why not; (w) what were strategic and operational objectives set for the SST's first year, (i) were they met, (ii) if not, why not, (iii) what impact is there on client service and cost to taxpayers versus the prior tribunals; (x) what were the specific required types of training for SST members in 2013-2014 broken down by (i) General Division, (ii) Appeals Division if applicable; (y) did all SST members receive the required training to date, and if not, why not; (z) what was the expected and actual amount of training (in hours, days or whatever the standard training units are) and the cost in 2013-2014 for (i) each SST member, (ii) all members; (aa) how many SST members were hired and actively performing their duties at the end of each month in 2013-2014 and year to date, broken down by division SST in general; (bb) how many SST members have resigned or been fired to date and why; (cc) what negative feedback or complaints has the SST received or government received about the SST from (i) its members, (ii) stakeholders, claimants and others regarding the operation and function of the SST since it began operating and, if so, what are the comments or the reference numbers of the internal files that contain that information; (dd) was any audit, evaluation, or review document prepared or conducted on the SST since it became operational and, if so, what was the date and the internal file or reference number associated with each; (ee) what is the expected ongoing cost and efficiency savings and the supporting rationale; (ff) if the government did not set specific targets or expectations referenced in (ee), why; and (gg) was any study or report done by the government to justify the creation of the SST and, if so, what are the date completed and any internal file or reference numbers associated with them?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings*Question No. 619—**Hon. Ralph Goodale:**

With regard to regulations published in the Canada Gazette since the introduction of the “One-for-One” rule, broken down by year: (a) how many regulations have been published; (b) for how many did the rule not apply; (c) how many were carved out from the rule; and (d) how many resulted in an equivalent reduction in regulations due to the rule?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 620—**Mr. Scott Simms:**

With regard to all aspects of the seal industry: what are the file numbers of all ministerial briefings, departmental correspondence or other government records since 2006, broken down by (i) minister or department, (ii) relevant file number, (iii) correspondence or file type, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) origin, (vii) intended destination, (viii) other officials copied or involved, (ix) country or regions involved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 621—**Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to the Directory of Federal Real Property administered by the Real Property and Materiel Policy Directorate of the Treasury Board Secretariat: for all properties located in Kingston and the Islands, (a) broken down by custodian and property title, what is the value of these properties on the financial records of the department, agency or Crown corporation responsible; (b) broken down by custodian and property title, how many properties have currently been declared surplus, and how did these properties appear on the financial records of the department, agency or Crown corporation responsible (i) prior to having been declared surplus, (ii) after having been declared surplus; (c) broken down by custodian, property title and sale price, how many properties have been sold prior to having been declared surplus since 2006, and what was the value according to the financial records of the department, agency or Crown corporation responsible (i) prior to the sale, (ii) for each year from 2006 to 2014; (d) broken down by custodian, property title and sale price, how many properties have been sold after being declared surplus since 2006, and what was the value according to the financial records of the department, agency or Crown corporation responsible (i) prior to the sale, (ii) for each year from 2006 to 2014; and (e) broken down by custodian, property title and sale price, how many properties have been sold without having been declared surplus since 2006, and what was the value according to the financial records of the department, agency or Crown corporation responsible (i) prior to the sale, (ii) for each year from 2006 to 2014?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 622—**Mr. Massimo Pacetti:**

With regard to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC): since January 1, 2012, has the Prime Minister's Office, The Privy Council Office, or the Minister of Public Safety's Office issued directives or suggestions to (i) Senators or their offices, (ii) Members of Parliament or their offices, (iii) the Correctional Service of Canada or its members, (iv) the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or its members, (v) the Canada Border Service Agency or its members, in order to forbid or discourage them from (a) testifying at CRTC hearings; and (b) providing letters of support to the CRTC on applications or processes and, if so, what are the (i) names of the individuals or offices that issued such a directive or suggestion, (ii) dates when the directives or suggestions were issued, (iii) individuals or departments to whom the directives or suggestions were issued, (iv) details as to the content of the directives or suggestions?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 624—Mr. Ted Hsu:**

With regard to high-speed Internet access in rural and Northern Canada: (a) concerning the funds announced in Digital Canada 150 in order to extend and enhance high-speed Internet services in rural and Northern areas, (i) has Howe Island, Ontario, been identified as an area of particular need or concern, (ii) specific to Howe Island, what measures are being undertaken to ensure that high-speed Internet services are available, (iii) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services on Howe Island, (iv) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Kingston and the Islands, (v) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, (vi) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Leeds—Grenville, (vii) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, (viii) how much money has been spent improving broadband services on Howe Island, (ix) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Kingston and the Islands, (x) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, (xi) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Leeds—Grenville, (xii) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, (xiii) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services on Howe Island, (xiv) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Kingston and the Islands, (xv) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, (xvi) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Leeds—Grenville, (xvii) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, (xviii) what is the process by which these funds were or are to be allocated, (1) when was this process determined, (2) which individuals were consulted, (3) which organizations were consulted, (4) on what date was the process finalized, (5) on whose authority, (ix) what is the expected date for these funds to be made available, (xx) what is the expected date for these funds to be made available on Howe Island, (xxi) what is the projected timeline for the project on Howe Island, (xxii) what is the projected timeline for the project as a whole, (xxiii) what is the specific scope of the project, (xxiv) were bids solicited, (1) if yes, how was this process determined, (2) when was this process determined, (3) which individuals were consulted, (4) which organizations were consulted, (5) on what date was the process finalized, (6) on whose authority, (xxv) are bids expected to be solicited, (5) if yes, how was this process determined, (2) when was this process determined, (3) which individuals were consulted, (4) which organizations were consulted, (5) on what date was the process finalized, (6) on whose authority, (xxvi) how are the funds advertised, (xxvii) what is the expected impact of the project, (xxviii) what is the expected impact of the project on Howe Island specifically, (xxix) if no money is allocated to Howe Island, what steps should Howe Island residents take under the program to obtain high-speed Internet services; (b) with regard to the funds announced in Economic Action Plan 2014 in order to extend and enhance high-speed Internet services in rural and Northern areas, (i) has Howe Island, Ontario, been identified as an area of particular need or concern, (ii) specific to Howe Island, what measures are being undertaken to ensure that high-speed Internet services are available, (iii) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services on Howe Island, (iv) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Kingston and the Islands, (v) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, (vi) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Leeds—Grenville, (vii) how much money is earmarked for improving broadband services in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, (viii) how much money has been spent improving broadband services on Howe Island, (ix) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, (xi) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Leeds—Grenville, (xii) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, (xiii) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services on Howe Island, (xiv) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Kingston and the Islands, (xv) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, (xvi) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Leeds—Grenville, (xvii) how much money is projected to be spent improving broadband services in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, (xviii) what is the process by which these funds were or are to be allocated, (1) when was this process determined, (2) which individuals were consulted, (3) which organizations were consulted, (4) on what date was the process finalized, (5) on whose authority, (ix) what is the expected date for these funds to be made available,

(xx) what is the expected date for these funds to be made available on Howe Island, (xxi) what is the projected timeline for the project on Howe Island, (xxii) what is the projected timeline for the project as a whole, (xxiii) what is the specific scope of the project, (xxiv) were bids solicited, (1) if yes, how was this process determined, (2) when was this process determined, (3) which individuals were consulted, (4) which organizations were consulted, (5) on what date was the process finalized, (6) on whose authority, (xxv) are bids expected to be solicited, (1) if yes, how was this process determined, (2) when was this process determined, (3) which individuals were consulted, (4) which organizations were consulted, (5) on what date was the process finalized, (6) on whose authority, (xxvi) how are the funds advertised, (xxvii) what is the expected impact of the project, (xxviii) what is the expected impact of the project on Howe Island specifically; and (c) with regard to the funds from the recently completed Broadband Canada program, (i) was Howe Island, Ontario, identified as an area of particular need or concern, (ii) specific to Howe Island, what measures were undertaken to ensure that high-speed Internet services are available, (iii) how much money has been spent improving broadband services on Howe Island, (iv) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Kingston and the Islands, (v) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, (vi) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Leeds—Grenville, (vii) how much money has been spent improving broadband services in the riding of Prince Edward—Hastings, (viii) what was the process by which these funds were or are to be allocated, (1) when was this process determined, (2) which individuals were consulted, (3) which organizations were consulted, (4) on what date was the process finalized, (5) on whose authority, (ix) what was the specific scope of the project, (x) were bids solicited, (1) if yes, how was this process determined, (2) when was this process determined, (3) which individuals were consulted, (4) which organizations were consulted, (5) on what date was the process finalized, (6) on whose authority?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 626—Ms. Chrystia Freeland:

With regard to the administration of the Access to Information Act: for each institution subject to the Act, what are, for each year since 2006 inclusive, (i) the total number of requests received, (ii) the number of requests by institution that were subject to an extension notice, broken down by particular paragraph of subsection 9 (1) of the Act, (iii) the reasons for the extension other than those indicated in subsection 9(1), specifying those other reasons?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 628—Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:**

With regard to the government's announcement, in July 2013, to provide an additional 1300 places for the resettlement of those displaced by the Syrian Civil War by the end of 2014: for fiscal years 2010-2011 to 2013-2014 inclusive, (a) how many Syrian nationals whose refugee claims stem from the Syrian Civil War have been resettled in Canada, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) country of residence at time of application, (iii) type of sponsorship (government or private) (iv) current place of residence in Canada; (b) how many applications for resettlement have been denied, broken down by reason for denial; (c) for both categories of sponsorship, government and private, for Syrian nationals, beginning from the date that the case was referred to the Canadian Embassy by either the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) or the sponsoring organization, what was the average wait time for processing applications, broken down by (i) fiscal year for 2010-2011 to 2013-2014, (ii) country of residence at time of the submission of resettlement claim, (iii) type of sponsorship; (d) what was the average wait time for resettlement of approved resettlement applications for both categories of sponsorship, government and private, for Syrian nationals, broken down by (i) fiscal year for 2010-2011 to 2013-2014, (ii) country of residence at time of the submission of resettlement claim, (iii) type of sponsorship; (e) what is the total number of government-sponsored resettlement applications for Syrian nationals submitted by the UNHCR to Canada since 2011, broken down by (i) fiscal year for 2011 to 2014, (ii) current country of residence or country of residence at time of application, (iii) due cause for resettlement as defined by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Additional Protocols; (f) what criteria is used by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to prioritize the claims referred to in (e); (g) how many of the cases referred to in (e) did Canada request from UNHCR in 2013-2014 and how many cases was UNHCR able to refer; (h) how many of the cases referred to in (e) does the government plan to request in 2014-2015; (i) how many of the cases referred to in (e) does the government anticipate will come from UNHCR; (j) what is the total number of pending applications or applications under review for resettlement of Syrian nationals submitted by private sponsorship Agreement Holders, Groups of Five, Community sponsors, or individual private sponsors, broken down by (i) year for 2010-2011 to 2013-2014, (ii) type of sponsor, (iii) geographical location of sponsor in Canada, (iv) due cause for resettlement as defined by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Additional Protocols, (v) current country of residence of candidates for resettlement; (k) how many Full Time Equivalent staff was allocated within CIC for processing of the government's announced additional places for Syrian nationals in fiscal years 2011 to 2014 inclusive, for all categories of sponsorship (government or private), and what was the geographical distribution of these allocations; (l) what was the budget for processing all categories of resettlement claims for Syrian nationals from 2011 to 2014, broken down by (i) fiscal year for 2010-2011 to 2013-2014, (ii) processing centre; (m) how does CIC allocate applications for resettlement of Syrian nationals given the announced 1300 additional places for those displaced as a result of the Syrian Civil War; (n) how many places are prioritized for private sponsorship and for government sponsorship; (o) has the Office of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration or CIC made any arrangements with (i) non-UNHCR partners, i.e. non-governmental organizations, including, but not limited to, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Jesuit Refugee Services, (ii) international governmental organizations, including but not limited to, the International Society for the Red Cross/Red Crescent and the International Organization for Migration, (iii) with on the ground capacity in Syria or any other regional states including but not limited to Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, to help identify resettlement candidates or conduct Refugee Status Determination procedures for Syrian nationals for resettlement to Canada under the government's announced 1300 additional places; (p) how were these partners in (o) identified, (ii) what are the terms of reference for these partnerships; (q) are there any plans to expand to additional on- the- ground partners; and (r) has the Minister's Office or the CIC began engage in three-way partnerships among the government of Canada, the UNHCR, and private sponsors who are sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) to facilitate the arrival of Syrian refugees and is the government of Canada prepared to provide up to six months of income support through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 630—Ms. Charmaine Borg:

With regard to requests by government agencies to telecommunications service providers (TSPs) to provide information about customers' usage of communications devices and services: (a) between 2001 and 2013, how many such requests were made; (b) of the total referred to in (a), how many requests were made by the (i) RCMP, (ii) Canadian Security Intelligence Service, (iii) Competition Bureau, (iv) Canada Revenue Agency, (v) Canada Border Services Agency, (vi) Communications

Security Establishment Canada; (c) for the requests referred to in (a), how many of each of the following types of information were requested, (i) geolocation of device, broken down by real-time and historical data, (ii) call detail records, as obtained by number recorders or by disclosure of stored data, (iii) text message content, (iv) voicemail, (v) cell tower logs, (vi) real-time interception of communications (i.e. wire-tapping), (vii) subscriber information, (viii) transmission data (e.g. duration of interaction, port numbers, communications routing data, etc.), (ix) data requests (e.g. web sites visited, IP address logs), (x) any other kinds of data requests pertaining to the operation of TSPs' networks and businesses, broken down by type; (d) for each of the request types referred to in (c), what are all of the data fields that are disclosed as part of responding to a request; (e) of the total referred to in (a), how many of the requests were made (i) for real-time disclosures, (ii) retroactively, for stored data, (iii) in exigent circumstances, (iv) in non-exigent circumstances, (v) subject to a court order; (f) of the total referred to in (a), (i) how many of the requests did TSPs fulfill, (ii) how many requests did they deny and for what reasons; (g) do the government agencies that request information from TSPs notify affected TSP subscribers that information pertaining to their telecommunications service has been requested or accessed by the government, (i) if so, how many subscribers are notified per year, (ii) by which government agencies; (h) for each type of request referred to in (c), broken down by agency, (i) how long is the information obtained by such requests retained by government agencies, (ii) what is the average time period for which government agencies request such information (e.g. 35 days of records), (iii) what is the average amount of time that TSPs are provided to fulfill such requests, (iv) what is the average number of subscribers who have their information disclosed to government agencies; (i) what are the legal standards that agencies use to issue the requests for information referred to in (c); (j) how many times were the requests referred to in (c) based specifically on grounds of (i) terrorism, (ii) national security, (iii) foreign intelligence, (iv) child exploitation; (k) what is the maximum number of subscribers that TSPs are required by government agencies to monitor for each of the information types identified in (c); (l) has the government ever ordered (e.g. through ministerial authorization or a court order) the increase of one of the maximum numbers referred to in (k); (m) do TSPs ever refuse to comply with requests for information identified in (c) and, if so, (i) why were such requests refused, (ii) how do government agencies respond when a TSP refuses to comply; (n) between 2001 and 2013, did government agencies provide money or other forms of compensation to TSPs in exchange for the information referred to in (a) and, if so, (i) how much money have government agencies paid, (ii) are there different levels of compensation for exigent or non-exigent requests; (o) for the requests referred to in (a), how many users, accounts, IP addresses and individuals were subject to disclosure; (p) for the requests referred to in (a), how many were made without a warrant; (q) do the government agencies that request information from TSPs keep internal aggregate statistics on these type of requests and the kind of information requested; and (r) do the government agencies that request information from TSPs notify individuals when the law allows or after investigations are complete that their information has been requested or disclosed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 636—Hon. Geoff Regan:

With regard to government telecommunications, what is the total amount of late-payment charges incurred in each month since January 2012 inclusive, in respect of: (a) cellular telephone service; and (b) service for all other wireless devices other than cellular telephones, broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) service provider?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 638—**Hon. John McKay:**

With regard to the Act to promote the efficiency and adaptability of the Canadian economy by regulating certain activities that discourage reliance on electronic means of carrying out commercial activities, and to amend the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act, the Competition Act, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and the Telecommunications Act, S.C. 2010, c. 23: (a) what promotional and outreach activities has the government undertaken to inform businesses and organizations about their obligations under the Act; (b) what is the total cost of each activity; (c) what is the cost of each activity per province; (d) what is the estimated audience of each activity; (e) how many businesses or organizations are estimated to be impacted by the anti-spam law; and (f) what assessments has the government done about the readiness of organizations to comply with the law, and what are the file numbers, dates, titles, and results of those assessments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 640—**Mr. Marc Garneau:**

With regard to the RCMP: for each recommendation made by Assistant Chief Judge Daniel R. Pahl in his report dated March 3, 2011, made under the Alberta Fatality Inquiries Act, concerning the shooting deaths of four members of the RCMP on March 3, 2005, (a) what measures, if any, has the RCMP or government taken in response to each recommendation; (b) when were those measures taken; and (c) if no measures have been taken in response to a particular recommendation, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 642—**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in Yukon, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 643—**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in Nunavut, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 644—**Hon. Carolyn Bennett:**

With regard to government funding, for each fiscal year since 2007-2008 inclusive: (a) what are the details of all grants, contributions, and loans to any organization, body, or group in the Northwest Territories, providing for each (i) the name of the recipient, (ii) the location of the recipient, indicating the municipality and the federal electoral district, (iii) the date, (iv) the amount, (v) the department or agency providing it, (vi) the program under which the grant, contribution, or loan was made, (vii) the nature or purpose; and (b) for each grant, contribution and loan identified in (a), was a press release issued to announce it and, if so, what is the (i) date, (ii) headline, (iii) file number of the press release?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

S. O. 52

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of two requests for emergency debate and I will hear them in the order in which I received the requests.

I will go first to the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

[Translation]

EBOLA OUTBREAK

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we know, many crises are unfolding around the world, such as the ones in Iraq and Ukraine, for example. However, one potentially very serious crisis could affect the development and safety of Africa and perhaps even the health of Canadians. We must not forget this crisis.

I am obviously speaking about the Ebola outbreak, an out-of-control epidemic raging in West Africa. There are more than 4,000 cases, but the figures could be much higher because not all cases have been reported. We know that Ebola kills more than half of the people infected and that there is no treatment for this terrible disease. It is urgent that this epidemic be contained as quickly as possible if we do not want to see the number of people infected increase exponentially. Resources on the ground are overwhelmed. Doctors Without Borders, which is perhaps the most active organization on the ground, has been forced to send home people suspected of having the disease. When these people return home, they risk infecting many others.

Dr. Liu, the president of Doctors Without Borders, said that it is our historic responsibility to act. This is urgent. We must act now to ensure that this does not turn into an even greater problem in the very near future. The situation is getting worse with every passing day. Therefore, a debate on this matter in the House of Commons is urgently needed. If we hold the debate tomorrow, my colleagues may not have enough time to prepare to work on this important issue. However, the longer we wait, the more serious the problem will become. There is talk at this time of an exponential increase. Every day counts.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge you to grant this emergency debate so that we can all work together and see what Canada can do.

[English]

The Speaker: The Chair also has a notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

[Translation]

IRAQ

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to ask you to hold an emergency debate on Canada's military role in Iraq.

Privilege

As you know, last week the Prime Minister announced that Canada would be sending a few dozen special operations forces soldiers to Iraq to support the Kurdish army in the country's north. The soldiers are there in an advisory capacity and will remain behind the front lines. The forces' mission will be reassessed after 30 days.

[English]

Engaging our country in a military mission should be the subject of debate in Parliament, particularly given the fact that the Prime Minister has announced plans for it that remain short on detail and, most importantly, open-ended. MPs should have the opportunity to express themselves on this very serious matter. Many questions remain to be answered.

● (1535)

[Translation]

I hope that you will grant my request and that we can hold this emergency debate as soon as possible.

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank both hon. members for raising these matters and I am inclined to grant an emergency debate on both subjects.

Given that the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie had her request in first, I will schedule hers for tonight, and I will schedule the emergency debate for the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie for tomorrow evening following private members' business.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on this question of privilege about closure.

[English]

I am rising at my first opportunity on this question of privilege, given that between the Speech from the Throne in October and when we adjourned June 20, there had been 21 occasions on which closure of debate occurred, and I maintain that the exercise of my rights and the rights of my colleagues in this place have been obstructed, undermined, and impeded by the unprecedented use of time allocations in the second session of the 41st Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, in presenting this fairly legal argument to you, I propose to leave out page numbers and citations because I have prepared a written version of this for your office and I hope that will be acceptable to you that I skip page numbers in this presentation. *Hansard* may not have the numbers of the debates, but I hope there is enough context so people can find them.

I believe this excessive use of what is often called “guillotine measures” is a violation of the rights of all members of Parliament, but I would like to stress that there is a disproportionate impact on members such as me who are within either smaller parties, that is less than 12 members, or who sit actually as independents, because in the roster of recognizing people in their speaker slot, quite often

those of us in the smaller parties or independents simply never get to speak to the bills at all.

My question, Mr. Speaker, bears directly on what your predecessor said in this place on April 27, 2010. He said, “...the fundamental right of the House of Commons to hold the government to account for its actions is an indisputable privilege and in fact an obligation.”

In the autumn of 2011, in a ruling concerning the member for Mount Royal, Mr. Speaker, you yourself said that to constitute a *prima facie* case in regard to matters of obstruction, interference, molestation or intimidation, you need to “...assess whether or not the member's ability to fulfill his parliamentary [activities] has been undermined.” At that moment in the same *Debates*, you had the occasion to reflect on “...the Chair's primordial concern for the preservation of the privileges of all members...” and you added, “As your Speaker, one of my principal responsibilities is to ensure that the rights and privileges of members are safeguarded, and this is a responsibility I take very seriously.”

I now have occasion to turn to other words that will guide us in this matter. From the Supreme Court of Canada in the Vaid decision, in the words of Mr. Justice Binnie, speaking for the court, he outlined the scope of parliamentary responsibility and parliamentary privilege for the management of employees and said, “Parliamentary privilege is defined by the degree of autonomy necessary to perform Parliament's constitutional function.” He went on to say at paragraph 41 of that Supreme Court of Canada judgment:

Similarly, Maingot defines privilege in part as “the necessary immunity that the law provides for Members of Parliament, and for Members of the legislatures of each of the ten provinces and two territories, in order for these legislators to do their legislative work”.

I would repeat and emphasize that, because although the Vaid decision was on a different fact set, Mr. Justice Binnie spoke to our core responsibility as parliamentarians when he said that we must be able, as legislators, to do our legislative work.

Mr. Justice Binnie continued in the Vaid decision to say:

To the question “necessary in relation to what?”, therefore, the answer is necessary to protect legislators in the discharge of their legislative and deliberative functions, and the legislative assembly's work in holding the government to account for the conduct of the country's business. To the same effect, see R. Marleau and C. Montpetit...where privilege is defined as “the rights and immunities that are deemed necessary for the House of Commons, as an institution, and its Members, as representatives of the electorate, to fulfill their functions”.

Mr. Justice Binnie went on to find further references in support of these principles from Bourinot's *Parliamentary Procedure and Practice in the Dominion of Canada*.

● (1540)

These are fundamental points. The purpose of us being here as parliamentarians is to hold the government to account. It is obvious that no legislative assembly would be able to discharge its duties with efficiency or to assure its independence and dignity unless it had adequate powers to protect itself, its members, and its officials in the exercise of these functions.

Finally, Mr. Justice Binnie—again, for the court—said at paragraph 62, on the subject of parliamentary functions in ruling that some employees would be covered by privilege, that coverage existed only if a connection were established between the category of employees and the exercise by the House of its functions as a legislative and deliberative body, including its role in holding the government to account.

As I said earlier, this approach was supported by your immediate predecessor. In a December 10, 2009 ruling, the Speaker of the House, the Hon. Peter Milliken, said that one of his principal duties was to safeguard the rights and privileges of members, and of the House, including the fundamental right of the House of Commons to hold the government to account for its actions, which is an indisputable privilege, and in fact an obligation.

It is therefore a fundamental principle of Westminster parliamentary democracy that the most important role of members of Parliament, and in fact a constitutional right and responsibility for us as members, is to hold the government to account.

The events in this House that we witnessed before we adjourned on June 20, 2014, clearly demonstrate that the House and its members have been deprived of fulfilling constitutional rights, our privilege, and our obligation to hold the government to account, because of the imposition of intemperate and unrestrained guillotine measures in reference to a number of bills. Over 21 times, closure has been used.

It is only in the interest of time that I am going to read out the numbers of the bills and not their full description. Bill C-2, Bill C-4, Bill C-6, Bill C-7, Bill C-13, Bill C-18, Bill C-20, Bill C-22, Bill C-23, Bill C-24, Bill C-25, Bill C-27, Bill C-31, Bill C-32, Bill C-33, and Bill C-36 were all instances where closure of debate was used.

In many of the instances I just read out, and in the written argument I have presented, closure of debate occurred at second reading, again at report stage, and again at third reading. The limitation of debate was extreme.

A close examination of the guillotine measures imposed by the government demonstrate that the citizens of Canada have been unable to have their elected representatives adequately debate the various and complex issues central to these bills in order to hold the government to account. Members of Parliament have been deprived and prevented from adequately debating these measures, through 21 separate motions for time allocation in this session alone. It undermines our ability to perform our parliamentary duties.

In particular, I want to again highlight the effect that the guillotine motions have on my ability as a representative of a smaller party, the Green Party. We do not have 12 seats in the House as yet, and as a result we are in the last roster to be recognized once all other parties have spoken numerous times. Quite often, there is not an opportunity for members in my position, nor for independent members of Parliament, to be able to properly represent our constituents.

Again, I should not have to repeat this. Certainly you, Mr. Speaker, are aware that in protecting our rights, as you must as Speaker, that in this place we are all equals, regardless of how large our parties are. As voters in Canada are all equal, so too do I, as a

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member of Parliament, have an equal right and responsibility to represent the concerns of my constituents in this place, which are equal to any other member in this place.

As speaking time that is allotted to members of small parties and independents is placed late in the debates, we quite often are not able to address these measures in the House. This would be fair if we always reached the point in the debate where independents were recognized, but that does not happen with closure of debates. My constituents are deprived of their right to have their concerns adequately voiced in the House.

● (1545)

Political parties are not even referenced in our Constitution, and I regard the excessive power of political parties over processes in this place, in general, to deprive constituents of equal representation in the House of Commons. However, under the circumstances, the additional closure on debate particularly disadvantages those constituents whose members of Parliament are not with one of the larger parties.

Mr. Speaker, in the autumn of 2011, in your ruling considering the member for Mount Royal and his question of privilege, you said that one of your responsibilities that you take very seriously is to ensure that the rights and privileges of members are safeguarded. The principal right of the House and its members, and their privilege, is to hold the government to account. In fact, it is an obligation, according to your immediate predecessor.

In order to hold the government to account, we require the ability and the freedom to speak in the House without being trammelled and without measures that undermine the member's ability to fulfill his or her parliamentary function. As a British joint committee report pointed out, without this protection, members would be handicapped in performing their parliamentary duty, and the authority of Parliament itself in confronting the executive and as a forum for expressing the anxieties of citizens would be correspondingly diminished.

To hold the government to account is the *raison d'être* of Parliament. It is not only a right and privilege of members and of this House, but a duty of Parliament and its members to hold the government to account for the conduct of the nation's business. Holding the government to account is the essence of why we are here. It is a constitutional function. In the words of the marketers, it is "job one".

Our constitutional duty requires us to exercise our right and privilege, to study legislation, and to hold the government to account by means of raising a question of privilege. This privilege has been denied to us because of the consistent and immoderate use of the guillotine in regard to 21 instances of time allocation, in this session alone.

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This use of time allocation, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is unprecedented in the history of Canada, and infringes on your duty as Speaker to protect our rights and privileges as members. As you have said many times, that is your responsibility and you take it very seriously. However, these closure motions undermine your role and your duty to protect us. Therefore, it diminishes the role of Speaker, as honoured from time immemorial.

In fact, you expressed it, Mr. Speaker, in debates in the autumn of 2011, at page 4396, when you had occasion to reflect on “the Chair’s primordial concern for the preservation of the privileges of all members..”, and when you added, “As your Speaker, one of my principal responsibilities is to ensure that the rights and privileges of members are safeguarded, and this is a responsibility I take very seriously.”

Denying the members’ rights and privileges to hold the government to account is an unacceptable and unparliamentary diminishment of both the *raison d’être* of Parliament and of the Speaker’s function and role in protecting the privileges of all members of this House.

In conclusion, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the intemperate and unrestrained use of time allocation by this government constitutes a *prima facie* breach of privilege of all members of this House, especially those who are independents or, such as myself, representatives of one of the parties with fewer than 12 members.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your consideration in this matter. I hope you will find in favour of this question of privilege, that this is a *prima facie* breach of the privileges and rights of all members.

• (1550)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by pointing out that there was some confusion in my friend’s address. There was a sort of blurring of the lines between closure and time allocation. They were referred to as one and the same thing, but as we know, they are two entirely different devices.

Time allocation and closure exist under different headings in our Standing Orders, and they are not the same. However, much of what the member casually referred to as closure is in fact motions for time allocation.

The two should not be confused, as they were in her argument. It is important for all those who are listening to be aware of that and to understand that there has been some confusion in the arguments that were laid out on that basis.

While I disagree with the hon. member’s question of privilege, I do want to express my appreciation for the advance notice that she provided. It has given an opportunity to provide some research and to share it with you, Mr. Speaker.

What is interesting is that this is a question of privilege that suggests that the government, in following exactly the letter of the law and rules that are laid out before us in the Standing Orders that have been adopted in this very House, has somehow offended the privileges of individual members. It is quite clear from the outset that in following the rules, and in following them exactly, we cannot in any way be offending the privileges of members. It is the members

of this House themselves who have set those rules for the conduct of this chamber. The rules have endured for many years in the form that we are dealing with today in this motion for privilege.

I do appreciate the member’s abundant comments and quotes from Mr. Justice Binnie, for whom I have a high regard. They are all very noteworthy, but I do not see that they bear any relevance to the actual question at hand of the use of time allocation. Good words that they might be, they were not trenching upon the issue in any way whatsoever.

However, we do have ample guidance. For example, page 669 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* is quite clear. It says:

...the Speaker has ruled that the Chair possesses no discretionary authority to refuse to put a motion of time allocation if all the procedural exigencies have been observed.

That tells us straight out that simply using the rules as written, and following them, is appropriate.

On March 1, 2001, at page 1415 of the *Debates*, Deputy Speaker Bob Kilger ruled on a question of privilege concerning the former Liberal government’s use of time allocation. He said of the matter then before the Chair:

In the case which gave rise to the point which I am addressing, there has been no suggestion that the government in any way deviated from the procedure laid out in the standing orders. I do not feel, under those circumstances, that there are any grounds whatsoever which would lead the Chair to intervene. The Chair wishes to be very clear on this point. The rules and practices established by this House with respect to time allocation leave the Speaker with no alternative in this matter.

Simply put, the rules are the rules.

The Chair then quoted Mr. Speaker Fraser’s March 31, 1993 ruling, at page 17861 of the *Debates*:

I have to advise the House that the rule is clear. It is within the government’s discretion to use it. I cannot find any lawful way that I can exercise a discretion which would unilaterally break a very specific rule.

Once again, the rules are the rules, and following them is entirely appropriate.

Going back to Deputy Speaker Kilger’s ruling, before dismissing the question of privilege under consideration, he said:

Our system has always been one which functions on the basis of rules established by the House itself. However, under our current standing orders, it would be highly inappropriate for the Chair to take unilateral action on issues already provided for in the standing orders. Where the standing orders give the Speaker some discretion, then it is the Speaker’s responsibility to be guided accordingly; where no such guidance is provided, no such action can be taken. It is certainly not up to the Chair to establish a timetable for the business of the House.

It is by its rules and not by the authority of the Speaker that the House protects itself from excesses, both on the government side and on that of the opposition. The Speaker’s role is to judge each case as it arises, fairly and objectively, and in so doing, to ensure that those rules are applied as the House intended.

It is quite clear that adhering to the letter of our Standing Orders, the rules which we adopt to govern our conduct, can hardly form the basis of a *prima facie* case of privilege.

However, as I understand the grievance of the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, she is principally concerned about having the opportunity to participate more often in debate. Generally speaking, she questions the overall amount of time budgeted for debates for government legislation.

● (1555)

Mr. Speaker, should you find that argument appealing and wish to perhaps show some courage and disagree with all previous Speakers, decide that it is your role as Speaker to unilaterally review our rules, change them and make those kinds of amendments, I would provide you with some statistics as guidance for that policy argument that you should ignore the rules, if you want to take that courageous stand on the basis of policy. That is, a comparison of the amount of time spent debating comparable legislation in our present Parliament with the current parliament in Westminster, which of course is our parent Parliament, if you will, whose rules we have followed the path of. Here is what it reveals.

Contrary to the arguments of many in the opposition and media pundits, we actually have more extensive debate here than ever occurs in the British parliament.

For example, the average Canadian government bill in this Parliament, or since the last election, is debated at second reading for almost three sitting days, or 2.74 days, which is the average number. To compare with Britain, instead of three days at second reading, a typical bill in that current parliament since the last election is debated about one day, or just over that at 1.16 days. Therefore, we have almost three times as much debate on average for each bill in the Canadian Parliament as does the British parliament.

At report stage, the comparison is even more dramatic. Our average is 1.41 sitting days in Canada and in Britain it is 5.8 hours, not days, which is less than a full sitting day, for consideration. Then at third reading, the difference is even more stark where in Canada we spend on average 1.55 sitting days on third reading of a bill while the House of Commons of the mother parliament can deal with third reading on average in 41 minutes. That is 41 minutes compared with our over one and a half sitting days at third reading.

This tells you, Mr. Speaker, that notwithstanding the complaints and carping of the opposition, we actually have more ample debate here than they do in the British House of Commons.

The opposition says that we are shortening debate. No, we are actually a real talk shop compared with what they do across the ocean. Once more, this does not reflect the individual members' of Parliament right to speak. We have only 308 members, but their 650 MPs can get the same amount of work done in well less than half the time because they are not quite such a talk shop. I guess they are a little more efficient. Perhaps they have a culture that actually focuses on getting things done as our government seeks to do.

Whatever the case, one can see clearly that the government's use of time allocation here is not about shutting down debate. It is not about cutting short the amount of time of debate provided members. It is in fact exactly what I have said it is from the start. Time allocation exists and is used by us as a scheduling device to create certainty in debate so that people know when a debate will conclude, and members can plan to vote and know when those votes will occur.

I will quote from Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, citation 533, which says exactly the same thing. I have quoted from it before.

Privilege

Time allocation is a device for planning the use of time during the various stages of consideration of a bill rather than bringing the debate to an immediate conclusion.

Of course, that is the difference between time allocation and closure.

We have approached time allocation as a tool for the orderly and predictable management of the legislative agenda. Those statistics I offered clearly demonstrate that the time we propose for consideration of a bill is adequate and quite generous. In fact, I know that there have been occasions where the opposition have complained in this place that we have allocated more time than is necessary to debate a bill.

More pointedly though, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands I think raises the disappointing argument about the number of speeches that she can personally give in the House. With respect to the actual act of a member of Parliament speaking in the House, as we all know, speaking turns are done on the principle of catching the Speaker's eye. The convention of catching the Speaker's eye is described at page 318 of O'Brien and Bosc:

No Member may speak in the House until called upon or recognized by the Speaker; any Member so recognized may speak during debate, questions and comments periods, Question Period, and other proceedings of the House. Various conventions and informal arrangements exist to encourage the participation of all parties in debate; nevertheless, the decision as to who may speak is ultimately the Speaker's.

That point is echoed at citation 461 and 462 of Beauchesne's.

● (1600)

Therefore, what we have in this question of privilege is really an implicit criticism, Mr. Speaker, of your conduct rather than that of the government. As you said in your own ruling of April 23, 2013, at page 15798 of *Debates*:

...the need to "catch the Speaker's eye", as it is called, continues to underpin the Chair's authority in this respect.

Members are free, for instance, to seek the floor under questions and comments at any time to make their views known. They are also free at any time to seek the floor to intervene in debate itself on a bill or motion before the House. Ultimately, it is up to each individual member to decide how frequently he or she wishes to seek the floor, knowing that being recognized by the Speaker is not always a guaranteed proposition.

The right to seek the floor at any time is the right of each individual member of Parliament and is not dependent on any other member of Parliament.

The right of the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to seek the floor in debate does not depend on any other member, not even me, as government House leader. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the conclusion of your April 23, 2013, ruling offers clear advice to the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I will quote you again, Mr. Speaker:

Were the Chair to be faced with choices of which member to recognize at any given time, then of course the Chair would exercise its discretion.... If members want to be recognized, they will have to actively demonstrate that they wish to participate. They have to rise in their places and seek the floor.

Perhaps the hon. member will be cheered by the fact that the growing rates of independent members, thanks to the continued loss of MPs from the New Democratic caucus, means that the proportional debate rotation used as guidance by the Chair will see sooner and more frequent speaking opportunities for members not belonging to recognized parties.

Privilege

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I think you are on very solid ground to dismiss this question of privilege without the need to reserve your decision.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome you back to Parliament, as well as the government House leader, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and all other members of Parliament.

This is an important issue and I am rising in support of the question of privilege raised by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. This is an issue that has been raised before. I want to flag at the outset that O'Brien and Bosc, which is our bible, as we know, describes time allocation as allowing for specific lengths of time to be set aside for the consideration of one or more stages of a public bill. The term "time allocation" suggests primarily the idea of time management, but the government may use a motion to allocate time as a guillotine.

As we know, we have had a reference from the government House leader saying that time allocation is somewhat different from closure. He is right, technically, but as we know, in both cases we are talking about the use of time by the government as a guillotine. That is the point the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has raised and it is a valid point to be considered as you look at her question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

It is true that the government has used both time allocation and closure as a guillotine. In this Parliament alone—this is the sad record of the government—it has shut down debate 75 times. That is more than any other government in Canadian history.

[Translation]

Seventy-five times, Mr. Speaker, that is incredible. Clearly, this is an attempt to hamstring the democratic process.

[English]

I want to quote somebody who should have a lot of credibility with the government, and that is the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism. He said in the House, back in 2002, the following:

I am displeased that the bill represents the 75th time that the government has invoked closure or time allocation since it came to power in 1993, abusing that very significant power to limit and shut down debate in this place more than any other government in Canadian history.

This is parliament. Parliament is derived from the French word "parler" which means to speak. It is the place where the representatives of the common people speak to issues that affect the common good.

For the government to, for the 75th time, prohibit members from speaking on behalf of their constituents and to the national interest on matters of grave concern, such as the budget implementation bill, is yet more unfortunate evidence of the government's growing arrogance and contempt for our conventions of parliamentary democracy.

That was said by the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism. I believe that intervention from the government side obviously raises the major concerns that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has raised. I should add that when the Minister for Multiculturalism raised the 75th time back in 2002, that was over four mandates and four Parliaments. We are talking about 75 closure and time allocation motions in one single Parliament, an abuse and contempt of

democracy that we have simply never before seen in Canadian history.

Many times it is Conservative MPs who have their rights thrown aside by the extraordinary use of time allocation and closure. In fact, on most bills now, as we know, there is only a handful of Conservative members who even get up to speak, which means their constituents in their ridings are deprived of the ability to express themselves on government legislation and there are many Conservative MPs who simply have not been able to speak on a single government bill.

● (1605)

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, O'Brien and Bosc quote Maingot on the subject of questions of privilege. I know that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands takes this issue very seriously. Maingot said:

The purpose of raising matters of "privilege" in either House of Parliament is to maintain the respect and credibility due to and required of each House in respect of these privileges, to uphold its powers, and to enforce the enjoyment of the privileges of its Members. A genuine question of privilege is therefore a serious matter not to be reckoned with lightly and accordingly ought to be rare, and thus rarely raised in the House of Commons.

[English]

As the House knows, in November 2011, the NDP brought forward a motion that aimed to provide the Speaker with a level of discretion in granting the government leave to introduce closure or time allocation on legislation before the House, preventing the government from abusing it as it certainly has over the last year and certainly has over the course of this Parliament in an unprecedented way. The Conservatives at that time rejected that proposal.

That was not the opinion of the current Prime Minister on November 26, 1996, here in the House of Commons, when he said:

In my view, the procedure of using time allocation for electoral law, doing it quickly and without the consent of the other political parties, is the kind of dangerous application of electoral practices that we are more likely to find in third world countries.

I would also like to point out a report, which was cited by O'Brien and Bosc, prepared by Yvon Pelletier, a parliamentary intern from 1999-2000. The article was based on his research essay, which was awarded the Alf Hales Prize as the best paper submitted by the 1999 and 2000 interns. He spoke of time allocation in the House of Commons:

Accordingly, it became necessary to set up mechanisms to manage the time allocated to debate so that a final decision could be made in a reasonable period of time. However, a balance had to be struck between the right to speak for an appropriate length of time and Parliament's right to reach decisions.

[Translation]

The only notable change to that provision was made in the fall of 1989, when the House of Commons renumbered its standing orders. Time allocation is now covered in Standing Order 78. Since the governing party has shown no desire to change this standing order, which is very much in its favour, the use of time allocation continues to be this government's preferred time management strategy. Unless changes are made to this standing order, time allocation will continue to be the strategy of choice for muzzling the opposition.

That is why we are rising in the House to support the question of privilege raised by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

What we are seeing here is unprecedented: 75 times in a single Parliament. This is an abuse of time allocation and closure. There is no doubt about it. This violates the rights of MPs, both in opposition and in government, to rise in the House to speak and represent their constituents.

That is why we are rising to support this question of privilege.
[English]

The Speaker: I thank hon. members for their contributions and will come back to the House with a decision in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ENERGY SAFETY AND SECURITY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-22, An Act respecting Canada's offshore oil and gas operations, enacting the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act, repealing the Nuclear Liability Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: There is one motion in amendment standing on the notice paper for the report stage of Bill C-22. The sponsor of the motion as well as the two members who had submitted an identical notice have indicated to the Chair that they do not wish to proceed with the motion. Therefore, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

• (1610)

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.
(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Greg Rickford: moved that the bill be read a third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome all members of this place back, and in addition, the new members.

It is with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to discuss how our government has taken action to strengthen energy safety and security in Canada's offshore and nuclear energy industries.

[Translation]

The health and safety of Canadians and of our environment is of the utmost importance to our government.

Government Orders

[English]

In the Speech from the Throne we pledged that no resource development would proceed unless safe for Canadians and safe for the environment. In other words, no development would proceed unless rigorous environmental protection and health and safety measures were in place. That is the goal of Bill C-22. The legislation builds on Canada's already strong record of safety and security in the nuclear and offshore industries, and it will ensure that Canada's thriving energy sector will continue to grow.

One of the key features of the energy safety and security legislation is the \$1-billion protection it provides to Canadians. The legislation would raise the absolute liability limits in both offshore and nuclear sectors to \$1 billion. These changes would ensure that Canada continues to have world-class regulatory regimes. As hon. members know, Canada's liability regime is founded on the polluter pays principle. With Bill C-22, we are enshrining this principle into legislation for the first time. The bottom line is that Canadian taxpayers and the Government of Canada will not have to foot the bill in the unlikely, perhaps rare, event of a spill.

[Translation]

The Canadian offshore oil and gas industry is booming and provides many economic benefits for Canada's Atlantic region, including thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in revenue.

[English]

From an economic perspective, activities in the Newfoundland and Labrador offshore accounted for about 28% of the nominal provincial gross domestic product in 2012. In the Nova Scotia offshore, they represented about 3% of the provincial GDP.

Canada collected an impressive \$8.4 billion in royalties from the Newfoundland and Labrador offshore and \$2 billion from the Nova Scotia offshore and transferred those funds to these respective provincial governments. I am sure they appreciated that. Offshore development is currently one of the fastest growing sectors in Canada. Right now there are five major projects under way in the Atlantic offshore, another project under construction with initial production slated for 2017, a major prospect in the Flemish Pass, and several major exploration projects under way.

Atlantic Canada currently produces about 200,000 barrels of oil a day. That is about 15% of Canada's conventional crude oil production and seven million cubic litres a day of natural gas. Put another way, that is enough to heat about 950,000 Canadian homes for one year.

[Translation]

There are still opportunities for the oil and gas industry. Our country has the resources to help meet international demand for energy, which is expected to increase by one-third by 2035.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Most of that growth in demand is coming from emerging economies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Few countries are developing natural resources on the scale and at the pace of Canada. There are hundreds of major natural resource projects under construction or planned for the next 10 years. These are worth approximately \$675 billion in investment.

The Government of Canada shares the management of the offshore with the governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Companies operating in Canada's offshore have an excellent track record. Every stage of offshore oil and gas project development, from exploration to production, is managed and regulated by the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board or the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board.

• (1615)

These boards ensure that operators exercise due diligence to prevent spills in Canada's offshore. With this in mind, we work closely with these two provinces to update and expand legislation to ensure that Canada's offshore regime remains world class.

Canada's environmental safety record in the Atlantic offshore, for example, is already very strong. In fact, some 73 million barrels of oil are produced in the region each year, without a significant spill since production began in 1997. Our plan for responsible resource development strengthens environmental protection by focusing resources on the review of major projects. We have put forward new measures, new fines, to punish those who would break Canada's rigorous environmental protections. We have also increased the number of inspections and comprehensive audits of federally regulated pipelines.

What is more, we are bringing in tough new measures for oil tankers to ensure the safe transport of energy resources through our waterways. These measures include the introduction of the safeguarding Canada's seas and skies act and the formation of an expert tanker safety regime and proposed ways to strengthen it. Building on these measures with Bill C-22, our government is taking tangible steps to make our robust liability regime and its great record even stronger.

Our proposed changes focus on four key areas: prevention, response, accountability, and transparency. They will help further strengthen safety and security to prevent incidents and ensure a swift response in the rare or unlikely event of a spill. As I mentioned, our liability regime is founded on the polluter pays principle.

First, we are proposing to enshrine this principle in the legislation and to maintain unlimited liability when an operator is found to be at fault. This will clearly establish that polluters will be held accountable.

Second, we will ensure that the liability limits reflect modern standards. Under the current regime, offshore operators in the Atlantic have absolute liability of \$30 million. Given the value of this resource and the boom currently under way in offshore exploration and production, most members, I think, can agree that this amount needs to be raised. That is why we are increasing the benchmark to \$1 billion with this bill. In this way, Canada's benchmark remains among the highest in the world.

In addition to increasing the absolute liability in the Atlantic from \$30 million to \$1 billion, our government is also increasing the absolute liability in the Arctic from \$40 million to \$1 billion. Fault or negligence does not have to be proven for operators to be responsible for that amount of damage or compensation. I think that is important.

Let us move to a discussion, then, of financial capacity.

[Translation]

We must also ensure that companies operating offshore have the financial capacity to meet their obligations.

[English]

Before any offshore drilling or production can take place, companies have to prove that they can cover the financial liabilities and damages that may result from a spill. Currently the financial capacity requirements range from \$250 million to \$500 million, with \$30 million to be held in trust for working in the Atlantic offshore and \$40 million for working in the Arctic offshore. This deposit is held in trust by the offshore regulator as a letter of credit, guarantee, or bond. These amounts will increase to \$1 billion for financial capacity and \$100 million to be held in trust per offshore project. These are significant resources that I think go a long way to help build public confidence.

Furthermore, we are taking steps to create greater transparency in the offshore industry. With this in mind, we are making emergency planning, environmental plans, and other documents filed with regulators available to the general public. This will ensure that operators make protecting Canadians and the environment their first priority.

These are just some of the ways we are protecting Canadian taxpayers by ensuring that Canada has one of the strongest offshore liability regimes in the world.

• (1620)

In fact, with the passage of this legislation, Canada's offshore liability will be among the most stringent in the world. We will ensure that only those companies with an interest in operating safely and securely and with the financial wherewithal to address any problems will be able to comply.

I would like to spend some time talking about nuclear liability, the second piece of this act.

Canada's nuclear industry is also a critical component of our energy resource mix. This industry accounts for 30,000 high-quality jobs and helps make Canada's electricity supply among the cleanest in the world.

[Translation]

Electricity from nuclear energy powers our homes, our businesses, our cities and even our cars. In fact, nuclear energy is helping reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 89 million tonnes a year, which is the equivalent of over 18 million cars.

[English]

Our country is recognized the world over as a leader in nuclear energy for a number of important reasons. For one, Canada's nuclear industry boasts an impressive safety record. It has operated safely and securely for over 50 years. In fact, there has never been a single claim under Canada's nuclear liability act.

We have robust technology, a well-trained workforce, and rigorous regulatory requirements. The industry is supported by legislation, such as the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act, and is overseen by the independent expertise of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

What most Canadians probably do not realize is that Canada's nuclear liability regime is already nearly 40 years old, young by anyone's standard in this place, I am sure. However, times and standards have changed when it comes to the nuclear industry. Clearly, this legislation needs to be brought into the modern age.

[Translation]

As a responsible government, we must ensure that our system is up to date and that it can respond to any incidents. That is why we have brought in a bill to modernize Canada's nuclear liability regime.

[English]

This new legislation will increase the amount of compensation available to address civil damage from \$75 million to \$1 billion. We believe that the \$1-billion figure strikes the right balance between protecting Canadian taxpayers and holding companies accountable in the event of an accident. The amount is also in line with current international standards.

The proposed legislation maintains the key principle of absolute and exclusive liability for operators of nuclear facilities for injury and damage. This means that the liability of the operator will be unqualified and undivided. There will be no need to prove fault, and no one else will be held liable.

These are big numbers we are talking about. In fact, nuclear insurers have indicated that a \$1-billion liability limit would mean an increase in premiums of five to eight times the amount operators are currently paying. If we take, for example, some of the operators in Ontario who have several reactors at their nuclear power plants, they currently pay premiums in the neighbourhood of up to \$1.2 million for a \$75 million insurance policy. Under this legislation, they would be required to pay annual premiums of up to \$10 million for a \$1 billion insurance policy.

What about the cost to ratepayers? Based on average monthly electricity consumption by Ontario households of 1,000 kilowatts an hour, the impact of the increased insurance would amount to a very small amount. In fact, it would be roughly less than \$2 per year.

As for compensation, Bill C-22 will broaden the definition of compensable damage to include physical injury, economic loss,

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preventative measures, and environmental damage. It will also extend the limitation period for submitting compensation claims for bodily injury from 10 years to 30 years. This will help address any latent illnesses that may only be detected years later, after an accident. It is another important way our government is protecting the health and safety of Canadians.

•(1625)

Bill C-22 would significantly improve the claims compensation process, increase the financial liability of nuclear operators for damages and provide greater legal certainty for Canada's nuclear industry. Ultimately, these reforms would boost public confidence, Canadians' confidence in the safety and responsibility of the industry as a whole.

Our government is taking these concrete steps to address other important issues for the nuclear sector. This includes responsibly managing legacy waste, restructuring Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and promoting international trade.

Let us talk about international efforts.

As hon. members know, when we talk about nuclear energy, we are talking about a global issue that knows no borders. With Bill C-22, we are implementing the provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. This convention is an international instrument to address nuclear civil liability in the rare and unlikely event of a nuclear incident.

By adhering to these additional international standards, Canada will bolster its domestic compensation regime by up to \$450 million by bringing in significant new funding. This will bring the total potential compensation in Canada up to \$1.45 billion.

Joining this convention will reinforce our commitment to building a strong, global, nuclear liability regime.

[Translation]

This underscores how important this Canadian bill is, not only with respect to financial issues, but also in other areas, such as clarifying what constitutes a nuclear incident.

[English]

These changes will also help provide greater certainty for Canadian nuclear supply companies that want to market their services in a country that is a member of the convention.

Given that our closest neighbour, the United States, is already a member, our membership will allow the two countries to establish civil liability treaty relations.

Korea and Japan have also signalled their intention to join the convention. Once Canada becomes a member, the convention will be one step closer to becoming a reality.

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In conclusion, our government believes that economic prosperity and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive goals. They can and they do go hand in hand. The legislation we are debating today is designed to do just that.

[Translation]

This bill will ensure that Canada's energy resources are developed safely and responsibly and that the environment is protected.

[English]

The energy safety and security act would provide a solid framework to regulate the offshore and nuclear liability regimes in Canada and to ensure they would remain world class. It sends a strong signal to the world that Canada is a safe and responsible supplier of energy resources and that Canada, at the same time, is open for business.

That is why I want to urge all hon. members to support this important legislation. I have appreciated the debate in previous sittings, and I look forward to responding to questions from my colleagues at this time.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as you can imagine, as the NDP critic for natural resources, I have a ton of questions for the minister that I would love to ask, but I do not want to offer him a big buffet today so he can pick and choose which ones he answers. I will focus in on something really specific.

Access to information documents acquired by Greenpeace indicate that the Department of Natural Resources commissioned a study on the impacts of the economic effects of a nuclear accident in 2013 to support revisions to the nuclear liability and compensation act.

According to those documents, Ontario Power Generation and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission limited the scope of another study on the health effects of a nuclear accident so they would not undermine the study by the ministry.

The CNSC study was released to the public and the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, but study on the economic consequences of a nuclear accident was not.

To me, it is completely unacceptable that both parliamentarians and the public would be kept in the dark with respect to that study as we are debating Bill C-22.

I am respectfully requesting the minister today to agree to table those documents in the House of Commons so we can all have the benefit of knowing what that study said before we give third and final reading to the bill.

• (1630)

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question and her participation in this debate.

At every turn throughout this debate, we have had an opportunity to look at legislation tabled here today, and in previous debates, that talks about a world-class liability regime. In getting to that point, we have had every opportunity to hear from experts.

There is plenty of information out there for us to rely on in order to advance the debate on this important and timely subject matter.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the committee reports at the committee stage, where the committee reviewed this bill, the scope of the committee's work was strictly restrained. It was very narrow, as decided by the government majority in that committee, of course.

One sometimes senses the invisible hand of the minister in the committee and the decisions that are made. However, one of the things that we ought to have been studying was the impact of this bill in the north and what the limits ought to be for liability, particularly in relation to oil and gas exploration in the north.

The Prime Minister likes to go to the north and go around on snowmobiles and so forth, and we see him on the front of ships, but he does not seem to show much interest in the environment. We never hear him mention climate change when he is in the north, for example. That is a concern.

In committee we ought to be able to look at questions like what our response capacity is and what we could do about incident prevention in the north. When the committee last talked about these issues a few years ago, at the time of the BP Deepwater Horizon blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, the experts that came before it said that the ability to deal with spills in the north, under the ice in the Arctic, was not there.

However, we know the minister has given approval for at least two wells. I think that there are three exploration licences that have been given in the Beaufort Sea, two of which are in deep water.

What is going to happen here?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's curiosity on this issue.

Canada's current absolute liability limits have not been updated since the 1980s. Indeed, we are taking a significant leap forward from the \$30 million to \$40 million range in the Atlantic and Arctic to \$1 billion. This will place Canada's liability regime squarely among those of its peer countries.

In case of fault or negligence liability remains unlimited.

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that should be very interesting to all Canadians. All of us care about our environment. We want to ensure that our environment is protected. In fact, no government in Canadian history has been more proactive on the environment than this government.

I think what Canadians want to know is, in broad terms, how would Bill C-22 actually toughen the environmental standards? We are not content to sit where we have been. We are continually increasing the environmental standards.

I would like the minister to address how this bill would toughen our environmental standards, continue to hold our energy companies accountable and ensure that the environment is protected for Canadians while our development proceeds.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's contributions and her hard work on the standing committee with her two hands, and not my invisible one.

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I appreciate the fact that energy is a key issue for her constituents. What I can assure her is that our regime and what is proposed in this bill, in both offshore and nuclear liability, compares well with the international community in terms of competent, independent regulators and their ability to enforce the kinds of standards about which she is concerned. We recognize that there are other countries that have provided benchmark standards. Norway and Australia are world leaders in offshore regimes, based on their respective regimes of extensive regulation and predictable process.

We have looked to those regimes. We have considered the important and rigorous role that the independent boards perform at arm's-length in the interest of putting the safety of our Canadian communities in these areas, and Canada as a whole, at the forefront in developing these kinds of regimes, whether they are nuclear, offshore, pipelines, tanker safety and the like.

• (1635)

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP also believes that polluters must pay. This reduces the liability of taxpayers, who should not have to pay for something that they did not do.

Could the minister explain to Canadians why the bill does not apply to the nuclear industry? I am referring to the 33rd meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on June 3, 2014.

Furthermore, why does a company like General Electric, a reactor supplier, not have any obligation in the case of an incident? This question is in reference to the 34th meeting of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources on June 5, 2014.

[English]

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, while some countries have an unlimited liability limit, which would be Finland, Germany, Switzerland and Japan, in practice the capacity for operators to compensate for damages is limited.

For example, in the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear accident, the Japanese government stepped in to bail out its operator. This meant it was effectively putting the utility under government ownership in order to allow it to continue to supply electricity to its customers.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member pointed out the fact that the absolute liability for an offshore spill had increased from \$30 million to \$1 billion. That is a significant increase of \$970 million, and that is a good thing. However, in the United States, for example, the cap on the absolute liability for a spill is at \$12.6 billion U.S. Ours is going to be set at \$1 billion Canadian and in the United States it is \$12.6 billion U.S.

In 2010, the total cost for the British Petroleum spill in the Gulf of Mexico with the Deepwater Horizon is \$42 billion U.S. and rising. That includes the total cleanup, the criminal penalties and civil claims.

The increase from \$30 million to \$1 billion is a significant increase, but is it enough?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Mr. Speaker, I hope the member is signalling support for this industry as a whole. I had a chance to be in Newfoundland not too long ago where the palpable enthusiasm in economic activity in Newfoundland was very clear to me. The important role that we play in working with Newfoundland and Labrador on offshore activities, particularly in regard to this act, is significant in terms of striking that right balance between a liability regime that works for continued economic activity.

Canada's current absolute liability limits, as I said earlier, have not been updated since the 1980s. This bill seeks to ensure that Canada's offshore regime for oil and gas remains world class. The \$1 billion absolute liability would place Canada's regime squarely among those of its peer countries. As I have said before in answers to previous questions, in the case of fault or negligence liability remains unlimited.

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to participate in the debate on Bill C-22, an act respecting Canada's offshore oil and gas operations, enacting the nuclear liability and compensation act, repealing the Nuclear Liability Act and making consequential amendments to other acts.

I suppose I should begin by giving a brief synopsis of what the legislation is about, since it has now been some months since the bill was last before the House.

With respect to nuclear liability, Bill C-22 would update Canada's nuclear liability regime to specify the conditions and the procedure for compensation of victims following an incident at a nuclear power plant. It would maintain the principles of absolute limited and exclusive nuclear liability for operators except in situations of war or terrorist attacks. It would increase the absolute liability limit from \$75 million to \$1 billion. These nuclear liability changes would apply to Canadian nuclear facilities, such as nuclear power plants, research reactors, fuel processing plants, and facilities for managing used nuclear fuel. Moreover, the bill would extend the limitation period for submitting compensation claims for bodily injury from 10 years to 30 years to address latent illnesses, while maintaining the 10-year period for all other forms of damage.

With respect to offshore oil and gas liability, Bill C-22 purports to update Canada's offshore liability regime for oil and gas exploration and operations to prevent incidents and to ensure a swift response in the event of a spill. It would maintain unlimited operator liability for fault or negligence and would increase the absolute liability limit from \$40 million in the Arctic and \$30 million in the Atlantic to \$1 billion for offshore oil and gas projects in both Arctic and Atlantic waters. Significantly, the bill explicitly references the polluter pays principle to establish clearly and formally that polluters will be held accountable.

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As members may recall, my NDP colleagues and I supported this bill at second reading in order to get it to committee so that it could be studied thoroughly and so we could present amendments to fix its many flaws. As we indicated at the time, our support was premised on the promise made by the former Minister of Natural Resources that there would be plenty of time for public consultations. I guess we should have known better.

After the cabinet shuffle in the spring, the new Minister of Natural Resources simply ignored his colleague's commitment. Instead of comprehensive public hearings and detailed scrutiny of the bill, the natural resources committee was allotted only three meetings, for a total of six hours, to study this important piece of legislation. Two of those meetings were set aside to hear from witnesses and one meeting was for clause-by-clause consideration. To add insult to injury, one meeting designated for witness testimony was cut short because members had to go to the House for votes, and that lost time was never compensated for at a later date.

With apologies to Thomas Hobbes, this committee process was "nasty, brutish and short". The whole process was a sham, entirely in keeping with the government's utter disdain for public consultation. The government's desire to get this legislation passed without any meaningful input was, of course, not lost on Canadians.

As one witness said before the committee, her family lives just shy of four kilometres from the Pickering nuclear power plant. Her neighbours know nothing about Bill C-22 going through Parliament, and the witness did not have time to tell people that Pickering residents' personal assets were currently being discussed in the hallowed halls of Ottawa. They have one newspaper that goes out Wednesday and Thursday. They could not even get real-time news during the ice storm through the mainstream media, let alone news about a bill rushed through Parliament.

Not surprisingly, this impassioned plea for more time to study Bill C-22 and its impact on Canadians and their communities did nothing to change the government's approach to dealing with this important file.

Just as Canadians got the brush-off, so did members of Parliament. New Democrats put forward serious amendments, buttressed by expert testimony, that would have significantly improved the government's bill. The amendments were reasonable and simply aimed to strengthen the bill by bringing fairness and balance to its approach. However, not a single one of our amendments was adopted, and as a result, the government missed out on enacting a truly cutting-edge piece of liability legislation for Canada's energy sector.

It is unfortunate that I have only 20 minutes in the House today to reflect on some of the powerful witness testimony that we heard in committee. Twenty minutes is wholly inadequate to explain the importance of some of the amendments New Democrats moved and to explain the deleterious consequences of the government's inaction with respect to their adoption. At a minimum, I owe it to those who lent us their expertise to give a high-level overview of the bill's serious flaws.

In a nutshell, here is what New Democrats attempted to accomplish with our amendments. First, we tried to establish the

polluter pays principle, including the removal of a liability cap. Second, we wanted to see the sustainability principle adopted in this legislation by including non-use value damages.

● (1640)

Third, we attempted to increase the incentive for safety by making suppliers and contractors liable, not just operators.

Fourth, we moved an amendment that would increase the timeframe for submitting claims regarding bodily injury, latent illnesses, and death.

Finally, we tried to get concrete commitments for inclusive public consultations on a go-forward basis.

We moved 13 amendments in these five broad categories, but not a single one was passed. Let us look at them in a little more detail so that folks who may be watching the debate here today can truly understand the potentially dire consequences of the Conservatives' intransigent attitude on this file.

Let us look at what the bill entails. The single biggest flaw in this bill is that it continues to subsidize the industry by making taxpayers assume any financial risk in excess of \$1 billion. It does this by failing to uphold the critical principle of polluter pays. In Bill C-22, absolute liability is capped at \$1 billion, putting public funds and taxpayers on the hook for accidents that exceed this limit.

Witnesses repeatedly told the natural resources committee that the \$1 billion cap is as arbitrary as it is inadequate. Here is just a sampling of the testimony we heard.

In a submission from the Canadian Environment Law Association, Theresa A. McClenaghan wrote:

...the amount of \$1 billion is far too low to provide assurance of the ability to adequately compensate victims of a severe accident in both the offshore oil and gas as well as the nuclear energy sectors. In the offshore oil and gas case we saw the experience with the Deepwater Horizon spill where President Obama established a \$20 billion fund which is not even inclusive of the environmental damages or state clean up costs. The potential consequences of a Fukushima large accident from the nuclear plants in Ontario could far exceed the amount of 1 billion dollars; this number would have to be assessed in light in property values in the GTA as well as the experiences at Chernobyl and Fukushima. The concerns about the reality of potential accidents are not academic concerns; an article written by Dr. Kristin Shrader-Frechette of the University of Notre Dame just after the Fukushima accident listed 26 unintentional nuclear core-melt accidents that have occurred worldwide since the 1950s; the most notorious of course including Chernobyl in 1986 and the three at Fukushima in 2011. For Fukushima, the Physicians for Social Responsibility have cited figures ranging between \$250 billion and \$500 billion in consequences from the events there. The scale of these types of accidents far exceeds the billion dollar amount that Bill C-22 establishes for the absolute liability limit in both the oil and gas and the nuclear sectors.

Professor William Amos from Ecojustice echoed those concerns. He said:

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I sense the \$1 billion number is literally picked out of thin air. Conversations we had with the government were not dissimilar to the question of what's the right number. We said there is no right number; it should be unlimited liability.

It seems to me that at a certain point there has to be a recognition on the part of the government that, if there is going to be a functioning free market, then entities that want to engage in risky activities, for example Arctic offshore drilling, they should be able to pay the full freight. I think it is unlikely that we could expect the crown to recover all of the damages caused, including non-use damages, if there were a worst-case scenario off any of Canada's coasts.

He went on to say:

The goal of any extracontractual liability regime is to make sure that an operator's actions in terms of prevention are at the highest possible level and to make sure that the company itself, not the Crown or the taxpayers, assumes the clear risks. Certainly, when a regime is based on the polluter pays principle, and when the provisions of the legislation require the company to pay a greater part of the damages in the case of a catastrophic spill, the company will take steps in advance to modify its behaviour. In this case, modifying the behaviour of those with a financial stake is most important.

Finally, I want to quote from the testimony of Dr. Gordon Edwards from the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility:

We urge you, as elected representatives of the Canadian population, not to approve this Act for third reading without insisting on due diligence.

First of all, why is there a need for such a limitation of liability? Shouldn't every enterprise be required to accept full responsibility for potential offsite damages?

If the government has to ultimately step in to deal with a messy situation, such as that at Lac Mégantic, so be it—but why should the owner or operator have his responsibilities lifted from his shoulders ahead of time?

Secondly, where did the figure of one billion dollars come from? This is even less than the cost of a reactor refurbishment. It is far less than the cost of onsite damages in the event of a severe nuclear accident, for which the owner/operator is fully liable and adequately insured....

Costs are mounting. Overnight, the estimated cost of the radioactive cleanup of Port Hope went from \$800 million to \$1.8 billion. Overnight, the \$7 billion cleanup of Chalk River went up by another billion dollars.

• (1645)

New Democrats on the committee took that expert testimony to heart and introduced amendments to abolish the \$1-billion liability cap. We agree that Canadian taxpayers should not be on the hook for cleanup and compensation costs beyond the \$1 billion. The Canadian taxpayer is not the polluter and therefore should not be held liable for damages caused by the industry. Only if we legislate the polluter pays principle will Canadians get the protection they deserve.

Keeping on the theme of liability, let me quickly raise a couple of other issues we sought to address through our amendments at committee. First, as if it was not bad enough that the Conservatives refuse to lift the liability cap altogether, they added insult to injury by giving additional discretion to the minister to reduce absolute liability even below the already inadequate \$1-billion threshold. In the absence of any credible rationale for providing relief from liability, we moved to have those provisions scrapped from the bill. We simply cannot trust the Conservative government to protect the public interest when it has a track record of abusing arbitrary powers. Not surprisingly, our amendments were handily voted down by government members on the committee.

Our efforts to create a more even distribution of liability met a similar fate. In its current iteration, Bill C-22 completely excludes suppliers from any liability. On the nuclear side, they are not held accountable beyond negligence, thereby limiting the possibility of a more even distribution of liability. Not incorporating the supply chain as part of the liability process places the entirety of the blame

on the operator. This allows smaller suppliers to act in a hazardous way, increasing the likelihood of a nuclear accident, as companies down the supply chain may act with financial impunity for their actions.

Instead of leaving taxpayers on the hook for cleanup costs that a company could not pay, New Democrats at the committee submitted amendments that would include suppliers and contractors in the liability process. This would increase the incentive for implementing best practices throughout the entire supply chain and would therefore help to ensure the safety of Canadians.

A number of witnesses supported our belief that we needed to fix the imbalance in the existing legislation. Theresa McClenaghan, from the Canadian Environmental Law Association, addressed supplier and contractor liability this way. She said:

Both aspects of the bill channel supplier and contractor liability to the operator or the licence holder for that absolute liability portion, but only on the oil and gas side is liability ever possible against suppliers and contractors and their negligence. On the nuclear side, that's never possible. The nuclear suppliers to that entire supply chain never have to consider the consequences of the decisions they are making around risk, and on the nuclear side as well as the oil and gas side, decisions are made every day around risk.

In its brief, CELA said:

...we would recommend amending Bill C-22 to bring suppliers and contractors into the liability framework in the nuclear sector, just as it does in the offshore oil and gas sector, and to remove the cap on liability so that the nuclear operators as well as others in the supply chain are liable for consequences of their negligence beyond their \$1 billion insurance.

I could not agree more. We should not be allowing suppliers and contractors to engage in the nuclear sector with full immunity from any and all liability risks. Nuclear operators should be facing the full consequences of any negligence on their part, just like they do in the oil and gas sector.

Shawn-Patrick Stensil, a nuclear analyst from Greenpeace, agreed. He said:

At this time, in terms of liability, a reactor supplier has no obligation if an accident occurs. That is how the law is worded and that is also true of the new version. In our opinion, this is not a good thing.

In the case of Fukushima, it was demonstrated that the designer, General Electric, was aware of the reactor's problems not only in design but also in manufacturing. That was not what caused the accident, but it did contribute to the radiation leaks into the environment. In any other industry, the Japanese could have sued the company.

We therefore recommend that there be a right of recourse in that respect.

The operator is always the entity that can be sued. However, a negligent supplier could be sued by the operator as he is in the best position to do so and thus obtain the largest amount of compensation for the affected population. That is what we are requesting.

Sadly, even this most reasonable amendment was rejected by the Conservatives at committee.

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●(1650)

The same is true for another eminently reasonable amendment dealing with the health of Canadians. We moved an amendment that sought to increase the time frame for submitting claims regarding bodily injury, latent illnesses, and death. The current prescription for claiming damages due to injury and latent illness is 10 years. Bill C-22 would increase this to 30 years, but there is no medical evidence to suggest that health issues manifest and are then able to be identified within 30 years. On the contrary, from what we know about the mutagenic effects of radiation release and exposure, the government should have used this opportunity to include an additional generation to the time frame for submitting claims.

In an effort to strengthen this part of the bill, New Democrats moved an amendment that would have simply extended the time limit from 30 years to 50 years. However, even something as straightforward as that was met with Conservative opposition. Protecting the public interest was clearly not at the forefront of the government's objectives when drafting the bill.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the Conservative members on our committee would also vote down our amendment seeking to create meaningful and inclusive public consultation on this file. New Democrats moved an amendment that would require the review of the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act to be made public, and that it be done in consultation with non-industry stakeholders and those not affiliated with the nuclear industry. Such an approach is crucial to transparency and accountability. As Dr. Edwards asked rhetorically at committee, "should there not be an opportunity for adequate public input and debate on the substantive pan-Canadian issues of equity that are involved? Shouldn't citizens from provinces without nuclear power reactors be given the opportunity to comment on a bill that would potentially bind their children and grandchildren?"

The answer of course is yes; they absolutely should. However, that was not the answer we got from the Conservatives when we moved our amendment at committee. Those efforts too were voted down.

I know my time is almost up, but I do want to say just a few more things about the offshore oil and gas side of the bill. One of the cornerstones of the NDP's energy policy is sustainable development. It ought to be a guiding principle in all sectors of Canada's energy economy. However, as it is currently written, sustainability gets short shrift in Bill C-22. It de facto ignores those vital aspects of our world that cannot and have not been assigned a monetary value. The bill fails to provide any regulation-making provisions for the calculation of non-use environmental damages.

Here is what Professor Amos told our committee. He said:

...the Supreme Court of Canada recognized the availability at common law of natural resource damages, or damages which compensate for harm to non-use value...of the natural environment....

However, natural resource damages claims at common law are currently subject to uncertainties. ...the process for assessing natural resource damages is ill-defined, reflecting a lack of baseline ecological information and the inherent difficulty in assigning monetary values to environmental values.

It is commendable that Bill C-22 includes the legislated imposition of liability for natural resource damages, including the

explicit adoption of damages for non-use values. However, no regulation-making powers are included in Bill C-22 for the calculation of non-use damages. This is a serious gap, as significant regulations are needed to address the lack of baseline ecological information and the inherent difficulty in assigning monetary values to environmental values.

To close that gap, we moved an amendment to both quantify and account for the loss of non-use damages. We wanted to use the regulatory window to include the environment in assessing the scope and the cost of harm to the environment. Sadly, those provisions were never adopted, leaving the whole section on non-use damages deeply flawed.

None of our amendments were intended to tease the proverbial bears. We acknowledged that starting the debate on enhanced liability was a step in the right direction. However, failing to improve the bill represents a colossal wasted opportunity. We did not propose things that were radical or over the top. In fact, most of our amendments simply sought to bring greater fairness and balance to the legislation. Even our proposal to remove the liability cap altogether is not as radical as the government would like Canadians to believe. In fact, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Austria, and Switzerland all have unlimited liability for nuclear power plants already. Even in the U.S., the absolute liability limit is \$12.6 billion.

Do not let the Conservative response to that fool you, Mr. Speaker. Predictably, the Conservatives will try to suggest that an unlimited cap would encourage operators to claim bankruptcy instead of cleaning up after an accident.

However, that is looking at the problem upside down. New Democrats believe that liability has to be strong enough to ensure that a nuclear or offshore disaster never happens in the first place, and that operators will have to put the best safety measures into practice. That is how to protect the interests of Canadians, and frankly, they deserve nothing less.

●(1655)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about the very important issue of liability. There is no doubt that Canadians as a whole want to see more accountability for corporations in terms of developing our resources.

The question I have for the member is specific to the offshore oil and gas industry.

One cannot help but think of the economic benefits that Newfoundland and Labrador have experienced through a lot of offshore development. However, it would seem that the NDP position, or at least what the member seems to be implying, is that with any sort of offshore gas exploration whatsoever, any interested private sector company would have to provide, up front, the potential liability insurance for any potential disaster that may occur.

Could the member provide some clarification? What goes through my mind is the impact that would have had on today's oil and gas industry in Newfoundland.

● (1700)

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question from my colleague specifically about the oil and gas offshore industry.

The member referenced Newfoundland, but it would be equally valid on the west coast. I appreciate what he is saying about unlimited liability seeming perhaps too high a threshold, which I suppose is what he is suggesting.

I would remind the member that the offshore BP gulf oil spill of 2010 is expected to cost as much as \$42 billion for total cleanup. What the current government is proposing is that the company be on the hook for only \$1 billion. If this happened in Canada, that would leave Canadian taxpayers on the hook for \$41 billion.

To suggest that companies who engage in these activities ought to be liable in a polluters-pay-principle kind of way for their operations off our shores is not an unreasonable position. In fact, I dare say even members of the government, well not elected members from the government, but certainly bureaucrats who work for the government would agree.

I will read what Mr. Jeff Labonté, Director General, Energy Safety and Security Branch, Energy Sector, Department of Natural Resources, said when he was before the committee:

...I think providing for higher levels of liability provides a better level of protection. The higher the level of liability, the more likely that industry and actors within the community will take broader measures to be more preventative to help ingrain the safety culture that's expected of the operations.

Surely Canadians deserve to have the safety culture ingrained in their operations.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for her very enlightening speech.

I have already had the honour of speaking to this bill in the House. What came out of the committee's work shakes me to the core and really scares me. I would like to quote Gordon Edwards, who had this to say about the problem of liability: "The exposure of the Canadian taxpayer is unavoidable under this legislation and it's unlimited. ...It is financial planning with no planning whatsoever."

In other words, as with the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, the people responsible for those accidents will sneak away and the burden will fall on the taxpayers, the government, the provinces and the municipalities that may be victims of an accident.

Government Orders

Witnesses testified at only two meetings. I would like my colleague to tell me how those far-too-short meetings went and what the tone of the government representatives was.

[English]

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to comment on that again, because as I said during my comments in the speech, it was ridiculous. We had three meetings set aside at two hours each. Two sets of two hours to hear witnesses and then two hours to deal with this mammoth bill and for clause-by-clause consideration.

We did not have nearly enough time to hear from Canadians. Those who made submissions to our committee actually commented on the fact that they did not have enough time to give us thoughtful and in-depth expert opinion.

We were fortunate that some of the members I quoted, from Ecojustice, from CELA, from Greenpeace, gave us superb testimony, but my goodness, when we are talking about legislation that potentially deals with the equivalent of a Fukushima-type accident, which happened in Japan and cost \$250 billion to \$500 billion for cleanup, surely we should have taken our time in making sure that we have this piece of legislation right.

This is not only about taxpayers being on the hook for cleanup, that for sure is part of the equation, but equally important, as MPs in this House, it is our responsibility to make sure that we have legislation in place that prevents those accidents, those spills, from happening in the first place.

I am proud to serve in the caucus of a leader who was the environment minister in Quebec, who has years of experience and a proven track record on sustainable development, on environmental protection.

We had expertise to give and the time just did not allow us to do that job as fully as we would have liked.

● (1705)

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask the hon. member if it is not the NDP position, essentially, that in this country the nuclear sector should not exist and should cease to exist. Is it the NDP position that in the oil and gas sector there should be no more exploration? What is its position in relation to this kind of resource development on both these issues?

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, of course we acknowledge that the nuclear industry will be with us in the foreseeable future. What we on this side of the House would like to see is the government actually getting serious about investing in a diversified, mixed energy economy. To that end we would like the government to actually invest in new technologies, in green technologies, which is something the government has not done at all.

On the contrary, we have lost the renewable power production incentive and the wind power production incentive. Even something as beloved by Canadians as the eco-energy retrofit program for people's homes was gutted by the government.

Government Orders

Yes, we acknowledge that the nuclear industry will be part of our energy mix for some time to come, but we desperately want the government to diversify that mix, and we have not seen any commitment from the government. On the contrary, we are now taking steps backward.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain for the way she summarized the shortfalls in the legislation. She was very thorough and she was eloquent in her speech as well.

I have also spoken on the legislation, and some of the immediate weaknesses in the legislation in terms of the absolute liability is the fact that it is not enough.

As the hon. member pointed out, there will be an increase in absolute liability from \$30 million to \$1 billion. That is a substantial increase, but when we compare it to other jurisdictions, as the hon. member pointed out, like the United States, for example, which has an absolute liability of \$12.6 billion and where the case of the *Deepwater Horizon*, the 2010 spill in the Gulf of Mexico, has a total cleanup bill so far of \$42 billion and rising, we can see that the \$1 billion this legislation points out is not enough.

I have two questions for the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain. First, do we deserve any less in terms of absolute liability than the United States?

The second question is whether or not the increased liability could enhance the prevention of nuclear accidents or offshore oil and gas accidents.

Ms. Chris Charlton: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question because both parts of it are spot-on. That is exactly what we should be focusing on in this debate.

I want to say that we had ministry officials, the minister's own advisers, before the committee. I quoted Mr. Labonté before. Let me do it again. Here is what he said:

...recognize that our liability levels were less than our peers and thus, we wanted to keep up.

If we wanted to keep up, why are we so far below the liability levels of our peers even now, even under this new legislation? Germany, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Austria, and Switzerland all have unlimited nuclear liability for nuclear power plants in place already. Even in the U.S., as my colleague just rightly pointed out, the liability limit is \$12.6 billion.

If we are taking this opportunity, the first in 40 years, to update the legislation, why not get it right? Why not do what the minister's own officials are suggesting and get us to the same level as our peers? We have failed to do that, and I think it is one of the reasons the bill is deeply flawed.

• (1710)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to be here today, in the House of Commons, to speak to Bill C-22.

[*English*]

The Conservative government has failed, on numerous occasions, to follow through on prior attempts to update nuclear liability legislation and update the safety and security regime for Canada's offshore. I am pleased to see that this legislation has finally come to third reading. Past attempts were started and then the government would either call an election or prorogue the House and not bring the bill forward. We have seen that with various government bills, whether it be on the Criminal Code or a variety of matters. The government introduces a bill with great fanfare and then we do not see it for months. It disappears, and the government does not present it again in the House. It is nice to see that finally we are getting somewhere in terms of this legislation moving forward because it does deal with an important issue in terms of nuclear liability and the liability for spills offshore.

I want to thank the witnesses who appeared before the natural resources committee to talk about this legislation. We would have liked to have heard a lot more from them, had we not been cut off a number of times, and had we not had a limited time of three days to consider the bill. I appreciate that they were willing to share their expertise, provide insightful comments, and give us their sage advice. We should all be thankful when experts appear before our committees.

Unfortunately, as is the case with much of the work conducted in committees of the House, the government restricted the scope of the study of this legislation. We all know that the government has the majority on almost all committees and can determine not only what the committee will study but the terms and scope of the study. It was very much restricted in this case. In fact, government members showed a distinct lack of interest in what we should have been doing, which was to make every effort to ensure that we ended up with the strongest possible legislation on this issue. If we think about the role of members of Parliament and our responsibility to hold the government to account and ensure that legislation is as good as possible, in my opinion, that did not allow us to do the job we ought to have been able to do, which is what committees are for.

If a member is a government backbencher or a member of the opposition and not a minister or a parliamentary secretary, then that member has the responsibility for holding the government to account. When governments have been going for a while, I have seen some members on the backbenches start to realize that. However, it would seem that we have fewer than ever with the Conservative government and we need to see more of that kind of attitude. There is a lack of interest in legislation that is focused on more than just the economic side of the equation, as in this case when we are dealing with the economy and the environment. We must do better than that in future.

The development of our natural resources and the strength of our economy depends on having good policies that people can have confidence in, so we can get community support for the kind of things that are happening or might happen in natural resources. If the government is seen as simply a cheerleader, as not being a responsible regulator, then we are going to have a hard time convincing Canadians that we are going to do a good job of regulating the natural resource sector. That is the fundamental problem that the government has at the moment.

The Liberal Party supports the development of our energy potential in Canada. We recognize the positive contribution that resource development has on our economic growth and job creation, especially for the middle class.

We also understand, and this is essential, that resource development must be done in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner. It must be done through consensus building, which is something that is entirely lacking these days. The need is there to ensure that if an accident does happen, the proper regimes are in place to deal with an accident. Obviously a key part of that process is by making sure that legislation, like this legislation dealing with liability limits, is in place and that it protects our interests. With regard to Bill C-22, everyone in the House understands that there is a need to raise the absolute liability limit in terms of the offshore oil and gas sector and the nuclear sector.

• (1715)

Let us be very clear. Let us understand what this means. If we have a case where there is an accident, either at a nuclear site or in the offshore oil and gas sector, and negligence is proven by the operator, liability is then unlimited. The operator would have to pay for the entirety of the damages, whatever they might be.

What we are talking about is a case where negligence is not proven and the liability is absolute. This means that regardless of whether someone proves that the operator was negligent, it still has to pay, because the operator was undertaking this risky activity. That is what this is about.

That is the reason we have supported this legislation. It is going in the right direction. In the nuclear sector, it would increase the liability cap from \$75 million to \$1 billion, bringing Canada in line with the promises it made when it signed the international Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. In the offshore oil and gas sector, the absolute liability for companies operating in the Atlantic offshore would increase from \$30 million to \$1 billion, and in the Arctic, from \$40 million to \$1 billion.

With regard to the Arctic, as I was saying earlier when I asked the minister a question, there are still many unanswered questions. Is \$1 billion adequate in the Arctic, where the environmental conditions make spill response efforts very challenging? There we are dealing with a situation where we are a long way from ports. It is a remote and isolated area, with difficult conditions.

We heard today that the minister has approved exploration licences, two of them in deepwaters in the Beaufort Sea. We heard at the natural resources committee a couple of years ago, at the time of the BP *Deepwater Horizon* well blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, that the technology did not exist to clean up a spill in the high Arctic in deepwater under ice.

It seems to me that this is a very irresponsible decision by the government when that kind of cleanup capacity is not there, yet we did not have a chance at the committee to get into this because the scope of our study was so restricted. That is most unfortunate.

Why did we not also take the opportunity to look at our ability to respond generally, and to review our ability to respond to other events and accidents in shallow water in the Arctic, or any kind of spill there? We did not get to that.

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As my esteemed colleague from Ottawa South said in debate on Bill C-22, the committee should examine the question of response capacity and incident prevention in the Arctic. That should have been examined by the committee. I hope that the member is recovering well from a broken ankle that he unfortunately suffered not too long ago, and I look forward to his quick return.

Instead of being concerned that the science does not always exist to confirm how long ecological damage will last, the government has rushed through those Beaufort Sea exploration licences that I mentioned. That is perhaps why the government decided that the scope should be so narrow for our committee study.

The member for Ottawa South also correctly pointed out that while looking at the issue of nuclear liability, the committee should have addressed the question of what has been happening around the nuclear sector in the past eight years. I suspect that government members may have been told to avoid any discussion of how we are no longer a world leader in the production of nuclear power capacity, as we have been in the past. They may have been told to avoid discussion of how the government ran down the value of the AECL and sold it off at bargain basement prices, and how it compromised Canada's future with regard to nuclear energy. This is not to mention the production of medical isotopes, which has been so important, and where Canada has been one of the world leaders.

Part of the discussion at the committee around suitable liability limits should have been focused on how we see the role of nuclear power as part of the energy mix going forward. The committee, for example, could have looked at how nuclear might fit in with renewable power options in the future, and other energy sources, like geothermal or tidal.

Wind is another area that is very interesting these days. My province of Nova Scotia has tremendous wind resources. I suppose some might say MPs have good wind resources as well, but that is another kind of wind resource. I am not sure if my colleague appreciated that remark, but he seemed to agree.

• (1720)

I recently had the pleasure of meeting with Dr. Lukas Swan, a professor of engineering at Dalhousie University. He runs the renewable power storage lab where they are working with various kinds of batteries. However, the important thing is not so much the different kinds of batteries, as the examination of the different kinds of conditions that happen with wind turbines. Sometimes there will be different speeds and fluctuations, with all kinds of variables. They are trying to find out what works best in managing the batteries so that we can have more capacity.

Government Orders

At the same time, there is a new study going on in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, involving a company called LightSail. It started because of the research of a young woman from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. She is a graduate of MIT and has developed new technology to store energy, in air basically, underground cabins that compress air. Previously there were problems with that, and she has created a new technology where a very fine mist can be sprayed so that heat is not created. Heat had apparently been a problem in this technology until now. There is a major trial project going on in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, thanks to the brilliant research of this young person, who is 26 years old and from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. That is a marvellous example of renewable energy that is happening right here.

In fact, if we in Canada can get this right, if we can actually find a way to be successful with much better storage of electricity, we will overcome the problem of wind, which unlike the wind of some MPs of course, does not blow all the time. Wind does not blow all the time. Therefore variability is a problem when we want to have power. People want to turn on the television, a microwave, oven, or do the laundry, and not just when the wind is blowing. Getting this right so that we can even out the power supply with storage could make an enormous difference. In a place like Nova Scotia, it could remove the need for what we have now, which is power created by coal and natural gas, although more and more wind is playing an important role. We think tidal power is making very good progress, and we hope it will play a big role in the future.

It is unfortunate that the scope of the committee work was restricted. We did not get an opportunity to examine these important questions in a broader context. We could have perhaps ended up with a much stronger bill. It reminds me of a study that we did last year at committee on the cross-Canada benefits of the oil and gas sector. There is no question that there are benefits to that sector across this country. I am from Nova Scotia. We have natural gas off our shore, which is important. We have exploration by BP and Shell for oil, and that could have a positive impact on our economy. There are benefits across the country.

As I said before, it is the Conservatives who have majority at committee, so they have the ability to determine what a committee will study and what its scope will be. In having a study that looks only at the benefits, where we cannot ask questions about the cost, problems, challenges, or the downsides of an industry, we end up with a report that has no credibility with the public. It does not advance what we are attempting to do in creating a report that is credible, to tell of the impact across the country, both good and bad. Let us have a balanced approach and look at both of these things because there are benefits and there are costs that we need to examine. We need to make it more sustainable. We need to improve the performance of the industries. We have some that are good, but there is always room for improvement on the environment.

We all recognize that Bill C-22 is an important piece of legislation, particularly given some of the disasters we have seen recently around the globe. There was the devastating meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, which is estimated by the Japanese National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology to cost at least \$31 billion; I heard a much larger figure earlier. The damages from the BP *Deepwater Horizon* spill, in the Gulf of Mexico, are estimated at \$42 billion.

While this updated legislation is long overdue, we do need to ensure the level of liability is appropriate in relation to the level of potential damage of either a nuclear incident or an offshore spill. It is also relevant to consider how frequently these things occur. We have to examine those things. If we do not consider both of those, we have the view of the NDP, which is that we would not have the kind of exploration we have had off Newfoundland and Labrador and not have the economic benefit we have had.

• (1725)

We have to have a good regime that protects our environment, but let us have one that makes sense. Let us consider all of these things.

We of course need to make sure that Canadian taxpayers are not at risk and that the polluter pays principle is maintained. That is why it is important that if a company is negligent, it pays the whole shot, obviously. Let us keep that in mind.

The real question before us today is this: do we think the limit of liability for the nuclear sector should be at \$75 million, or should it be \$1 billion? For the offshore, should it be \$30 million in the Atlantic and \$40 million in the Arctic, or \$1 billion? Which is it going to be?

In my view, the answer is fairly obvious. This bill is by no means perfect; it could have been much improved; it should have had much more study in committee; however, the answer is this bill should be supported.

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place on behalf of my constituents in Davenport in Toronto.

I have to say that I am just a little confused about the Liberal position on this bill. The member is comparing the liability in this bill to accidents that have happened, Fukushima being one of them, in which the bill mounts beyond the \$30-billion, \$40-billion, \$50-billion range, so I suppose the question is this: does the member think that \$1 billion is enough, given the fact that the liability in the United States is over \$12 billion? Does the member feel or believe that Canadians should be protected to at least the level that their American neighbours are protected, or is he happy with \$1 billion?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my hon. colleague, I think the question is actually this: do we think that we have to consider the environmental concerns and the impact of environmental disasters as well as the economic benefits of various activities? Do we consider both, or do we decide that we are not going to have any of these activities? The result of the NDP position on this issue would be that we would not have these activities at all. We would not have an offshore sector off Newfoundland and Labrador. Is that really what the NDP wants? They would not answer that question earlier. They would not say that they do not want that, but that is what flows from what they are saying.

Government Orders

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the remarks from my colleague. I was not at the committee, but I am certainly concerned about the remarks that he made with reference to the committee, which seemed to describe the way that my committee operates too. There is a limited selection of witnesses, and it tries to narrow the focus of the study and not get to some of the broader issues.

In my area, liability would always be a concern, but I have to question the member. Liability is one side of the equation. What is the government doing in terms of prevention? In the fisheries in the gulf and on the east coast, fishermen are greatly concerned and are opposed to some of the exploration for oil development. That development could lead to an economic boom, but they are concerned because they do not believe enough preventive measures are being taken to assure the protection of the environment during that exploration and possibly during the drilling for oil and gas.

Therefore, my question is a broader one. Has the committee looked at those other issues from a preventive side rather than just from the liability side, as this bill seems to purport to do?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, the fact is that the current government is not all that interested in prevention in general. We think of its attitude towards criminal penalties. In most cases the Conservatives are much more interested in penalizing people, especially in cases of criminality, than they are in prevention, and this is another example of that attitude.

As I was saying earlier, this is an area that the committee ought to have been able to study to see what is happening in this field and have experts tell us what is going on and what ought to be happening. I know that much more should be happening under the current government in terms of prevention.

However, the fact of the matter is that, again, the scope was restricted so much by the Conservatives in committee. The Conservatives, who have a majority, ended up with a scope so narrow that one was not able to get into it very much, and we had only three days to study the bill.

In the end, though, the question is whether we are better off with a limit of \$30 million or a limit of \$1 billion. I think the answer is obvious. In the utopian world of the NDP, perhaps it would be unlimited. Of course, then we would not have any of these activities at any rate. It is fine to think of living in utopia, but we do not.

● (1730)

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the bill would increase the absolute liability from \$30 million to \$1 billion, which is a good thing, and it is absolutely welcome. However, the increase would still pale in comparison to the absolute liability of the United States, which has been set at \$12.6 billion U.S. That is \$12.6 billion U.S. versus \$1 billion Canadian.

The member for Halifax West seems to be suggesting that if we increase the absolute liability to any more than \$1 billion, we would be killing the industry. However, if the United States can have an absolute liability of \$12.6 billion U.S. for their industry, is the member saying that we cannot afford to have that same level of

absolute liability set for Canadian waters and waters off Newfoundland and Labrador?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, this leaves me confused about what the NDP's position is. Is it in fact, as I have heard up until now, that absolute liability should be unlimited, or is it what the member is now proposing, which is the American level is of \$12 billion?

This leaves me a bit confused. I am not surprised that I hear a confused response from NDP members on this issue, but I do not think it makes much sense to be unclear in the way that they are on this question.

As I said before, the fact of the matter before us is this: do we vote for a bill that would increase the limit in the offshore of Newfoundland and Labrador from \$30 million to \$1 billion, or do we not?

In my view, the bill is not ideal, but I have to decide whether it is an improvement and whether to vote for it or not, even if it is not the ideal. I know the NDP love the ideal, but we are not in the world of playing with ideals. We have to make a choice, and we are making the choice to move in the right direction, even if imperfectly.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, were it not so disappointing, it would be pretty funny to see the hon. member for Halifax West mimicking the Conservatives. It is resignation on his part. He is giving up in the face of the challenge of trying to improve a bill that might have some relevance and a positive impact, but that stops far too short when it comes to the issues in question, whether we are talking about offshore oil development or the nuclear industry.

It is truly disappointing to see him use rhetoric, sophism, to bring everything down to "if you are not with us, you are against us". If he is going to imitate George W. Bush, then maybe he could use his words. In any case, he could take the time to listen to our arguments to understand and see how woefully inadequate this bill is. That is why we are against it. I would like my colleague to explain why he gave up so quickly and why he is giving in to the Conservatives on a bill that is clearly inadequate.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I respect the NDP's right to take the stance that it has. If I understand correctly, they believe that absolute liability should be unlimited, even if there is no proof that there was any negligence. In my opinion, that would put an end to the oil industry in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Nova Scotia.

I respect their right to that opinion, but I do not agree with them. I believe that when we have the opportunity to improve the situation, by increasing the limit from \$30 million to \$1 billion, we should approve it. That is my opinion, but I respect their alternative position.

● (1735)

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Wetaskiwin.

Government Orders

I appreciate this opportunity to speak to our government's proposal to modernize and strengthen Canada's nuclear and offshore liability regimes and how these proposed changes will ensure that Canada's safety system for these important industries continues to be world class. Knowing that some hon. members have had questions in this regard, I would like to specifically address the increase in the amount of absolute liability this bill would provide, an amount that not only meets but in many cases exceeds the standards set in other countries.

At the outset, I would like to remind my colleagues of the outstanding safety record of Canada's nuclear industry. We can be proud that it is second to none. Through decades of service, Canadian nuclear technology has a proven record for safety and reliability, a record for safety and reliability that matches or surpasses any in the world.

The regulatory framework for Canada's nuclear industry is similarly highly regarded around the world. It is solid and robust, supported by legislation such as the Nuclear Safety and Control Act and the Nuclear Fuel Waste Act, overseen by the independent expertise of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. Together and with the industry's own commitment to excellence, this regulatory framework and independent oversight continue to assure Canadians that they can rely on our nuclear industry to be a safe, secure, reliable provider of clean electricity.

At the same time, our government is aware that one aspect of Canada's nuclear regulatory regime is not in keeping with international standards.

The existing Nuclear Liability Act has been in place since 1976. While the basic principles underlying the legislation remain valid, the act is almost 40 years old. It, indeed, needs to be updated to keep pace with international trends, including increasing the level of compensation to an adequate level in the unlikely event of a nuclear incident that leads to injuries or damage.

In fact, the liability limit would have been increased already had it not been for the ideological opposition that the NDP has for nuclear. Nonetheless, our government remains focused on establishing a modern liability regime to address potential civil damages that may result from a nuclear incident. That is precisely what Bill C-22 would do.

Bill C-22 would increase the amount of compensation available to address civil damage from \$75 million to \$1 billion. This amount is not only in line with current international standards, it is in fact significantly higher than the limits set by a number of what might be considered Canada's nuclear peers.

In the United Kingdom, for example, operator liability is currently capped at approximately \$260 million, barely a quarter of the absolute liability that would be imposed by this bill. In France, a country with close to 60 power reactors, the operator liability limit is even lower, at about \$140 million in Canadian funds. In Spain the limit is about \$227 million in Canadian funds, in South Africa it is \$240 million Canadian and in Belgium it is \$450 million, less than half the liability amount that Bill C-22 would put in place in Canada.

I would also like to remind hon. members that we are talking about absolute liability. That means an operator is responsible for up

to \$1 billion in compensation for damages that may result from an incident, regardless of the cause, regardless of who is at fault and even if fault is never established or even alleged. This means Canadian taxpayers are not left on the hook. This bill would also require operators to demonstrate that they would have the financial capacity to deliver that amount.

● (1740)

I would remind hon. members as well that Bill C-22 would also serve to implement the provisions of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. By adhering to this convention, Canada increases its domestic compensation regime by up to \$500 million by bringing in significant new funding from the other parties to the convention. In order words, the total potential compensation available in Canada could reach \$1.5 billion.

It has been suggested that Canada should follow the example of the United States where nuclear liability limits appear to be higher. In fact, in the United States the individual operator's liability is capped at about \$415 million in Canadian funds, again a fraction of what would be the case with this new legislation in Canada. It is true that in the event of an incident that resulted in damages in excess of an operator's liability insurance, the U.S. regime includes a provision for all operators of power reactors in the U.S. to contribute to a compensation fund, \$125 million each for the reactors they own. The difference here, however, is that there are more than 100 power reactors in the United States. Such a system is not feasible in Canada where we have only 19 reactors and 4 operators.

In determining an appropriate limit for absolute liability, we must take into account, and this bill certainly does take into account, that liability must be within the capacity of insurers. Bill C-22 addresses the need for operators to provide appropriate compensation without burdening them with exorbitant costs for unrealistic amounts of insurance against events that are highly unlikely to occur in our country.

The \$1 billion strikes a proper balance between providing adequate compensation for citizens for a nuclear incident and holding companies to account in the event of an incident. This amount is also well above the liability limit imposed on nuclear operators in many other countries and it is in line with limits that have been proposed in the E.U.

In summary, Bill C-22 would ensure Canada's nuclear liability regime meets the definition of "world class" in every respect, from the type of damages that can be claimed to the time allowed to make claims, to the \$1 billion in absolute liability of nuclear operators to pay those claims. I urge all members in the House to support this important legislation.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a quotation to the member.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission requires that there be, at most, a 0.01% chance of any given nuclear reactor having a nuclear accident with core damage. For the 10 reactors in the Toronto area, a simple calculation demonstrates that this probability, over five years, is 10 times 5 times 0.01%, or 0.5%.

The probability exists. How can the member say that there is no risk to Canadians?

• (1745)

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, as I said, this act would modernize safety and security for Canada's offshore and nuclear energy industries. It would ensure a world-class regulatory system as well as strengthen safety and environmental protections. It builds on Canada's strong record and would ensure our energy sector could thrive. The \$1 billion absolute liability would place Canada's regime squarely among those of its peer countries.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, when looking at issues of liability, even though \$1 billion in liability is certainly more money for which the nuclear industry would have to be responsible than in previous bills, the reality is, as we know from nuclear accidents, that \$1 billion will not begin to cover the cost of a large-scale nuclear accident in Canada.

Initially, it was put forward as an excuse for holding it to \$1 billion as a liability cap that if it were not there, it could affect provincial electricity rates. However, through questions on the order paper I had it confirmed that it would not affect provincial electricity rates to remove the cap.

I would like to ask my friend, the hon. parliamentary secretary, this. Would it not be more prudent to have no cap at all and to ensure that the nuclear industry, under the polluter pay principle, pays the full cost of the accident we hope will never happen, but could in fact happen any day in our country?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, again, what we are talking about is absolute liability that will be paid in the event of an incident.

Operators will be expected to carry insurance to cover the costs of any incident should it occur. The \$1 billion absolute liability will place Canada's regime squarely among those of its peer countries.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member just said that the \$1 billion absolute liability will put us "squarely among those of its peer countries". However, the \$1 billion pales in comparison to the absolute liability in the United States of \$12.6 billion.

How can the member say that this puts us squarely among our peer countries when there is a difference of \$11 billion or \$12 billion? What is the member talking about?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, it is not correct to say that the liability limit is \$12 billion in the United States, as the member continues to assert.

The United States' system is very different from that of other countries. In fact, the operators' liability is capped at \$375 million of insurance. In the event of an accident resulting in damages exceeding

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the liable operators' insurance, all U.S. operators, 104 reactors, would also contribute up to \$125 million for each reactor they operate, which would make available a compensation pool of a maximum of \$13 billion should it be required.

This type of pooling system would not be feasible in Canada given that we have far fewer nuclear reactors.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope you had a great summer. It is nice to be back and to see all my colleagues here in the House. I trust that everyone had a great break. It is nice to see that we picked up right where we left off, in the spirit of co-operation here in the House.

I am pleased to participate in this important debate on Bill C-22. While it is not a topic around the barbecue circuit in my riding, be assured that it is very important that we discuss this. The bill is important, because it seeks to increase safety and accountability in Canada's offshore and nuclear liability regimes.

Most hon. members would know that Canadians are very fortunate. Canada has an extraordinary wealth of natural resources that other nations can only envy. In an increasingly energy-hungry world, we are among the world's leading energy producers of crude oil, natural gas, and uranium. With our vast energy resources, Canada is well positioned to play a leading role in meeting the world's future energy needs.

As the International Energy Agency has told us, traditional energy sources like oil and gas will continue to be the dominant energy source for many years to come. However, the world energy map is changing dramatically. In fact, global energy demand is expected to increase by about 40% from 2010 to 2035, with much of that new demand coming from Asia.

World energy demands are on the rise, and Canada has an enormous supply of energy to meet these demands. Growing energy demands in the Asia-Pacific and the developing world are ushering in a new era of energy use and opportunity for our great country. There are hundreds of major resource projects currently under way in Canada or planned over the next 10 years. They are worth approximately \$675 billion in investment. That means hundreds of thousands of jobs for Canadian families, jobs in every sector of our economy and in every corner of our country.

With these opportunities on the horizon, our government is working to increase Canadian trade and investment and to expand Canada's energy infrastructure. That is why I would like to talk about the government's responsible resource development plan.

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Our government's plan for responsible resource development is helping to ensure that Canada can seize these new opportunities and others to come. Our plan is sending a strong message that Canada is open for business and has a modern, efficient regulatory system. We have set firm beginning-to-end timelines for project reviews. Where provincial review processes meet federal requirements, we can get projects moving faster by eliminating the unnecessary duplication that has weighed down project reviews in the past. Our streamlined approach is providing clarity and predictability for project proposals. It is making international investments in Canada's natural resource sectors much more attractive. In a nutshell, it means that new projects and proposed infrastructure will be reviewed and approved to come on stream in a timely manner so that Canada can sharpen its competitive edge.

However, our plan is not just about developing resources efficiently. It is about developing them responsibly. Simply put, we will not approve any project unless it can be done safely. Let me assure members that we are committed to developing Canada's natural resources while strengthening our environmental protection. We firmly reject the notion that we cannot do both. Through our actions, we are proving that we definitely can.

Over the past year, our government has initiated a series of new measures to ensure the safe development of our natural resources. Through our plan for responsible resource development, we have introduced new enforcement mechanisms, including monetary penalties for non-compliance with environmental requirements. Oil and gas pipeline inspections have increased by 50% a year, and comprehensive audits of pipelines have been doubled.

While our government focused on increasing safety measures for our energy sector, what did the opposition do? They voted against more pipeline inspections, against implementing fines for companies that break the law, and against doubling the number of pipeline audits. That is truly a record of shame.

As part of our commitment to responsible resource development, our government promised Canadians that we would take action to maintain a world-class liability regime in Canada's nuclear and offshore energy industries. We have been clear: projects will only be approved if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

One of the key features of Bill C-22 is that it would raise the absolute liability limits in the offshore and nuclear sectors to \$1 billion, bringing Canada's offshore and nuclear liability limits in line with similar regulatory regimes, such as in the United Kingdom, Norway, and Denmark.

• (1750)

As hon. members are aware, Canada's liability regime was founded on the polluter pay principle. With Bill C-22, we are fulfilling our commitment in the Speech from the Throne to enshrine this principle in law. This means that Canadian taxpayers would be protected in the unlikely event of a spill or accident. With the passage of this legislation, companies operating in Canada's Atlantic and Arctic offshore areas would be subject to one of the highest absolute liability standards in the world.

Canada's nuclear safety record is outstanding. In fact, there has never been a claim under Canada's Nuclear Liability Act. We have

robust technology, a well-trained workforce, and stringent regulatory requirements. However, as a responsible government we must ensure that our security systems are always up-to-date and able to respond to any incident. That is why we are demonstrating our commitment by introducing legislation to strengthen Canada's nuclear liability regime.

Ultimately these measures are all about the same thing: acting responsibly by protecting Canadians and protecting our environment. This legislation would provide a solid framework to regulate the offshore and nuclear liability regimes in Canada to make them truly world-class. It would send a strong signal to the world that Canada is a safe and responsible supplier of energy resources and that Canada is also open for business.

Unfortunately, the NDP wants to shut down Canadian businesses by opposing the nuclear industry. As the leader of the NDP said, "I want to be very clear. The NDP is opposed to any new nuclear infrastructure in Canada." That is not a responsible position.

The bottom line is that our government will not take any lessons from the opposition. We will focus on what matters to Canadians: ensuring that resource development is done responsibly and creating jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity for all Canadians.

I urge the NDP to abandon its reckless position and encourage all members to support this important legislation.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his speech.

However, I will not hide the fact that I have many questions and concerns that he did not address.

My question is about a very specific topic, and that is damages associated with non-use value. This is an important principle that has been raised during debate on this bill. We can always quantify the economic value of a natural area, but we also need to look at other damages. There could be significant repercussions for communities.

With respect to marine areas, we were had by the Conservatives when they focused protection measures solely on commercially viable species, which overlooks the richness, the diversity and the complex interrelationships in a marine environment.

I would like to hear the hon. member's thoughts on the government's deliberate failure to include non-use value. It seems quite problematic to me. It is a huge loophole that companies could exploit.

[English]

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, the member is asking me a question in regard to changes made to the Fisheries Act, and the House is currently debating Bill C-22, which is nuclear and offshore liability changes we are proposing.

The reality is that everything under the absolute liability regime would be covered when it comes to the polluter pays principle. That would mean damages to people, damages to property, and damages to the environment. All of it would be covered under absolute liability. That is what the word “absolute” means. It is unfortunate that the hon. member does not understand that word.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I said earlier in my remarks on the bill that members on the Conservative side are only interested in one side of the equation, or they were in committee when we studied this legislation, but it is also true of the NDP and its position on the bill.

Does my hon. colleague not think that we ought to consider what tax revenue comes to Canada and its provinces from these industries? What revenue is there for Canadian workers who have salaries in the nuclear sector or in the offshore oil and gas sector? What revenue is there for pensioners who have pension funds or mutual funds that invest in these sectors?

We heard from the minister that going to \$1 billion for absolute liability would increase the cost of insurance for these companies by eight or nine times. Could the member tell us if he knows what the NDP's plan of unlimited absolute liability would do to the cost of insurance for the companies in this sector? What would be the impact on these sectors?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, rare is the day when I have a colleague in the Liberal Party asking me to help him beat up colleagues in the NDP. However, I will take the bait, because here is what the NDP is proposing.

The NDP and the Green Party simply do not want nuclear facilities in Canada. I will answer my colleague's question directly. My understanding is that raising liability to \$1 billion would cost the average household a couple of dollars a year on its utility bills to cover it. However, if we were to move to unlimited liability and the vast amount of liability being proposed by other parties, it would result in a hefty increase to those premiums. Ultimately, as we all know, regulated utility industries are regulated to the point where they will make a profit. That is the way those systems are set up, and those costs will be passed on through those energy utility boards in the various jurisdictions to those consumers. That much we do know.

It is a responsible approach to go to \$1 billion of unlimited liability for the offshore sector for oil and gas and for nuclear liability. We have seen from various countries around the world that we are in line with what everyone else is doing. We are going to protect our environment but also not place an unreasonable burden. We will strike that right balance not only to protect taxpayers but to ensure that there is money left over on the kitchen table at the end of the month.

• (1800)

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate, I understand that there is a motion from the member for Leeds—Grenville.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek unanimous consent for the following motion that you will get it.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practices of the House, during the debate tonight pursuant to Standing Order 52, no quorum calls, dilatory motions, or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

ENERGY SAFETY AND SECURITY ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, An Act respecting Canada's offshore oil and gas operations, enacting the Nuclear Liability and Compensation Act, repealing the Nuclear Liability Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House after working in the constituency all summer. I am glad to see my colleagues' smiling faces around, all ready to co-operate as we move forward into this session.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-22, an act respecting Canada's offshore oil and gas operations, and enacting the nuclear liability and compensation act. I will be splitting my time with the member for St. John's East whom, I am sure, will have lots to say about how the bill would affect Atlantic Canada.

I do have an admission to make. George Bush has been very influential in my life, and I somehow cannot seem to get nuclear and nuclear straight sometimes, so I beg your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, if I do accidentally misspeak. I promise that is as far as I will go toward copying Mr. Bush.

I also thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for her hard work on the bill. She is an outstanding member of Parliament and also a great leader within the NDP. She has led the natural resources committee since taking over recently very well, so I thank her for her work.

Although we supported the bill at first reading, we did so with the hope that the committee would accept some of our amendments, would listen to the witnesses, listen to what we had to say on our side. Unfortunately, we will not be supporting the bill at third reading because we did not really feel we were listened to. We put forward 13 amendments, which we thought would improve the bill quite a lot, but the Conservatives rejected all 13 of those amendments.

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I was formerly a member of the natural resources committee and quite enjoyed my time there. I found my colleagues on both sides to be open to suggestions, willing to bring in witnesses who were not partisan, and really conciliatory. I quite enjoyed my time in that committee. Even sometimes they would accept motions from the opposition parties for study, which I thought was quite good of them.

I do not actually think that the rejection of these amendments came exclusively from the members of the committee. It was probably from the PMO. As we know if we have been on enough committees in the House, no matter what kind of debate we are having or what kind of witnesses we hear from, we do have dictums that come from central office to say what exactly will show up in bills. Again, it is sad that this happens.

In fact, I think that perhaps this is related to the bill. There is a member of the natural resources committee from Saskatoon—Humboldt who has a private member's motion where committee chairs would have much more freedom over the content of their reports and also the committee agenda. I am proud to say I jointly seconded that motion and support it as it moves through the House, hopefully to enactment. That bill points out what should happen in committees.

However, I do think the members of the natural resources committee are reasonable on all sides and would do a very good job if they were freed from the constraints of the Prime Minister's Office. I really do not fault the natural resources committee for rejecting all our amendments, but we know that the all-seeing eye that is the PMO has probably made this happen.

My second comment about the bill is that it is all about energy, once again. It seems that all the time of the natural resources committee was spent talking about energy usage and disposal all across Canada. I find that this not only engages the natural resources committee but also the industry committee, which I have also sat on.

We have had many bills tabled in the House that specifically deal with how we use energy in Canada. This one is no exception. This one is about how we extract oil and gas or how we use nuclear power and what happens in the event of accidents. It is tied in to our consumption and usage of energy. It shows us a sliver of the complexity of energy usage in Canada.

For example, just to outline a little bit of what is included in the bill, it updates Canada's nuclear liability regime to specify the conditions to compensate victims following an incident at a nuclear power plant and the levels of liability of operators. That is needed. Every country in the world that uses nuclear power has to have these kinds of provisions. It is a needed step forward but a very small part of Canada's energy portfolio.

• (1805)

The second is dealing with oil and gas exploration off the coast. The measures in the bill are supposed to explain what happens in the event of an accident, so they are important. This is off the Arctic and Atlantic waters.

There are important issues that are dealt with in the bill. Although we know it has been tabled five times and finally coming through the House, whether it will make it all the way to the end I do not know.

However, it is too bad that it was rushed through at this stage and none of our amendments were taken.

Part of our problem with the bill is that it does not really uphold the idea of polluter pays. It does discuss this notion but it does not really deal with polluter pays when it comes to the nuclear energy sector. For example, there are provisions in the bill, as I understand it as I was reviewing it again this morning, that allow the minister to make adjustments as to how much a company or operator would have to pay in the event of an accident. It does not mandate an inclusive consultation process for specific projects.

In my riding where this is not specifically related to oil and gas but the industry, when there is no proper consultation there are problems with getting the social licence from the local community. Therefore, whether it is pipelines, drilling offshore, or dealing with nuclear energy, if there is no proper consultation there will never be social licence and there will be problems.

We have had a pipeline rupture in my community in 2007. Because there was not an inclusive system in terms of how we deal with pipeline spills, there are still ripples within the community and real resentment toward the company for these types of accidents.

The other problem with the bill is that it removes company liability for oil spill chemical dispersants. That is also a problem because if we think that we have to clean up the oil and we use something that is as bad as oil or even worse, then there is no liability for the companies and we think that is a problem. I think the folks listening at home or reading what we propose would say that these are things that are worth including in the bill, but of course they have been rejected.

Our 13 suggested amendments were consistent with the principle of polluter pays, including the removal of the liability cap, which reduces taxpayer liability. As we have seen, these offshore spills, the BP spill in the gulf in the United States is a recent example, can run into the billions of dollars for cleanups. The liability cap right now is far below the costs of such a cleanup. Our amendments also included the principle of sustainability by adding non-use value damages, which are important to consider.

When I think about what we are debating here, what we are talking about, what is going through on this third reading, it is the whole idea of how we deal with energy in Canada. We do not have a comprehensive plan. Most countries in the world have a national energy strategy. They have not only a long-term view of what should happen in the country but also a comprehensive view, which is thematic. For example, in the United States energy security is probably the key principle of its national energy strategy and everything kind of falls from this key principle.

We have a sliver of a bill that deals with a very small component of our overall energy plans in this country. Unfortunately, it is not very comprehensive and non-inclusive. It is kind of a shallow vision instead of what we really need for Canada, which is a large vision. That is what people will get when they elect an NDP government in 2015.

• (1810)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Burnaby—Douglas for his important presentation. I share his concerns about the nuclear industry.

There has been no industry that constitutes such a giant white elephant in terms of its fiscal impact on Canadians. Contrary to what we heard earlier from a Conservative colleague, this industry has gobbled up about \$40 billion in taxpayer subsidies. Removing the cap would not affect provincial electricity rates in any provinces that still use nuclear energy.

The reality is that, there but for the grace of God go we, every single event that occurred at Three Mile Island had previously happened in Ontario nuclear plants but not all on the same day and at the same reactor. Human error is always the biggest risk. As more reactors are brought on stream, the promises made when they are built are never fulfilled. We are always told they are going to be reliable and then we find that retubing is required or that the Point Lepreau reactor in New Brunswick is over budget, as always, or that it takes much longer than the government thought it would take. The government of the day in New Brunswick that approved retubing Point Lepreau ignored the recommendations of its own public utilities commission to do so. It ignored the advice, by the way, of the current leader of the Green Party of New Brunswick, David Coon, who clearly said more money would be wasted.

It is interesting to hear Conservative members defend an industry that has gobbled up things that they usually would have opposed, massive subsidies to something that simply cannot bear market forces.

I would ask my hon. colleague if he would not agree to just removing the cap on liability and making this industry pay its own way if, God forbid, we ever have a nuclear accident.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to deal with in the member's question.

Those of us who live on the west coast are very conscious of nuclear accidents. We were concerned about possible radiation coming on the shores of British Columbia as a result of the Fukushima plant accident. Government monitoring has been cut, so it is hard for us to determine the exact extent of this radiation.

However, I am quite excited about a new technology called fusion. A very active company in my riding called General Fusion is trying to move toward a much safer use of nuclear energy. I try to visit it every year and see its progress and it is going quite well. I am proud of its work and hopefully that technology will develop.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if there is one issue that sets us apart from the members across the way, it is natural resources.

Today, in response to a question I asked as to why nuclear energy was not included in Bill C-22, the minister more or less said—I do not have his exact words in front of me—that when disaster struck Japan, it was so bad—those are my words—that the government had to take matters into its own hands.

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If I understand what this government is saying, we will pay once disaster strikes. Canadians will pay for everything that happens with regard to health, cancer, the environment, and cleanup. We saw what happened in Lac-Mégantic.

The NDP prefers to plan ahead. When a company sets up somewhere, can we estimate the environmental cleanup cost in the event of an accident? What would be the human cost and the health-related cost in the event of an accident?

We have to look at this from a sustainable development standpoint. That is the right approach. We need to have green development—we are indeed a green party—for our country so that Canadians can have what is best for them and their children.

• (1815)

[English]

Mr. Kennedy Stewart: Mr. Speaker, planning is essential and that is what we have been proposing since we were elected as the official opposition in 2011, and beforehand. My colleague from St. John's East could probably tell us how long we have been arguing for the need for a national energy strategy when we do forward planning, not only inclusive but comprehensive. That is greatly lacking on the other side. Those members are content to have foreign companies come in and do whatever they want in Canada. We think that is not the right way to go and more Canadians are agreeing with us.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity today to speak on third reading of Bill C-22. Third reading, of course, is the opportunity to debate the bill after the committee has, we hope, improved it during committee hearings by listening to experts from all sides, accepting recommendations from experts as to how the bill can be improved, and, in most Parliaments, accepting amendments from the opposition seeking to make the legislation better.

Unfortunately, in this Parliament we do not see much of that. In fact, it is very rare for amendments from the opposition to be accepted by the government, even when it agrees with them. In an incident during the debate on a justice bill, 88 amendments were made in committee; the government rejected them all, only to try to make them itself at third reading, and they were ruled out of order. That is how obstinate the government can be.

Government Orders

I spoke as well on second reading, and my colleagues in the NDP, the official opposition, as you may know, Mr. Speaker, supported this bill at second reading. We saw it as an improvement over the existing regime and we supported it in the collegial hope that when evidence was heard from experts in committee, their expertise, knowledge, and understanding would be taken into account and there would be a better bill at third reading. Unfortunately, the 13 amendments that were presented by the official opposition were all rejected by the government. Not only that, it limited the debate. There was a request for an additional week to deal with some of the debates and discussions that needed to take place, and that was refused.

I can say that there are some things New Democrats like about this bill, and I will repeat them because I think we are responsible for some of them.

This bill, in one form or another, without the oil and gas part of it, the nuclear side, has been before Parliament previously. This is, I think, the fifth time. At one time, the NDP was the only party that opposed the bill when the cap was raised from \$75 million to \$650 million. It is now up to \$1 billion, so that is an improvement over what would have existed if the bill had gone through a couple of years ago, and New Democrats take credit for arguing that the \$650 million limit was inadequate. There has been an improvement in that way, so we are pleased to say that we have had some effect on this aspect.

The real problem, of course, was that for some 38 years Canada's nuclear industry has had a cap of \$75 million of liability. This is an industry that can cause enormous amounts of damage not only to the environment but also to the health of individuals for many years to come. We noticed that with the Fukushima situation in Japan, the Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine, and, of course, with Three Mile Island a number of years ago in the U.S. These were very serious accidents, and to say that we are going to have an absolute total liability of \$75 million is clearly a direct subsidy to an industry—a licence, in fact, to not only pollute but also to cause extraordinary harm to the citizens of a country.

That is what we are talking about here. Some people might call it a subsidy to the industry, but it is also a licence to pollute, to destroy the environment, and to take risks.

One of the things about liability is the obligation to look after the damages that are caused. That is what the polluter pays principle is. If people pollute the environment and make a mess, they need to clean it up. If someone says they do not have to clean it up, there is going to be a bigger mess. Anybody who has teenagers in their homes knows that. If teenagers are told they do not have to clean up after themselves, that they can leave their dishes wherever they want and throw their clothes on the floor because someone else will look after that, then there are going to be a lot of messy dishes and a lot of clothes on the floor. Saying that people have liability and responsibility makes the operators, whether of offshore oil and gas or of a nuclear facility, care more about safety. Obviously there is going to be a safety regime, but it makes them take responsibility in a way that they might not otherwise and it gives safety a bigger priority.

● (1820)

The \$1 billion sounds like a lot, but not when it is put into perspective. I heard the member for Wetaskiwin. I think he was trying to be reasonable. He said that the \$1 billion liability is going to cost and that it will be the consumers who will have to pay for it. He said it would add \$2 or maybe \$3 a year to each consumer's electricity bill. I will take him at his word; I do not know the numbers. He must have some reference for those numbers.

However, if it was \$5 billion liability, it would cost consumers \$10 or \$15 per year. We are talking about \$1 a month. For the protection that we are talking about here, maybe that is reasonable. Maybe people opposite think it is unreasonable. I do not think it is unreasonable if we are talking about having protection versus not having protection and about having an incentive for a nuclear operator to pay greater attention to avoid accidents.

It is a little bit a question of degree, but it is also a question of principle. We have asked to see the polluter pay principle in both aspects of this bill. In the oil and gas section there is a \$1 billion absolute liability, whether the operator is at fault or not, and in the case of fault on the part of an operator in the oil and gas industry, there is an unlimited liability. They have to find the resources or insure against the resources up to whatever the cost of the damage is.

It can be argued, and we would argue, that the \$1 billion is enough in terms of absolute liability if we are looking at an accident in the Gulf of St. Lawrence or in the Arctic. Absolute liability means that it starts getting cleaned up right away, regardless of who ultimately has to pay.

That is what fault is all about. Lawyers will fight over who is responsible or what percentage of the fault lies with this party or that party. That is fair. I am not opposed to lawyers, as some people in this House seem to be. Lawyers have a role to play; I played one myself. The Speaker probably did a fair bit over his career as well. In the meantime, absolute liability is designed to make sure that the job gets done.

This is a question that has to be dealt with. Although the liability may be spread in fault after it is all over, and we are still seeing that in the Gulf of Mexico case with *Deep Horizon*, absolute liability means that it gets started right away. The work is done to clean up the damage that has been done because they are going to be responsible regardless of what the fault is, and we have that.

I am going to just end here. The reason we are not supporting the bill now is that it does not include the polluter pay principle on the nuclear liability side and it does not include the principle of sustainability. Even with the \$1 billion absolute cap, it gives the minister the right to waive it or lower it at his discretion. That is the wrong thing to do, because it opens up the door to all sorts of lobbying and favouritism.

Everybody would lobby, presumably, because if it is available to them, why should they not? Why should they not seek an exemption? Why should they not seek to lower their liability because of the consequences it might have for shareholders of the company or for some other aspect of their operation?

Based on those problems, the failure to accept reasonable amendments to this bill, and the failure to recognize these principles in the bill, we cannot support this bill at third reading.

• (1825)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech, which truly enlightened us about the possibilities and the limitations within this bill. I would like my colleague to elaborate on some of these limitations he talked about in his speech.

In his view, what improvements could be made to the bill? Can he talk about the NDP's proposals to improve this bill that the government unfortunately left out?

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, the improvements that we sought to make would have been to ensure that the principle of sustainability was contained in the bill and spelled out to demonstrate the requirement that there be a recognition of these principles of sustainability when one is dealing with inclusive participation, the precautionary principle, and equity or fairness with sustainable development between the environment and industry, but we do not have that. One of those aspects is, of course, the issue of absolute liability.

The total maximum liability for the nuclear industry is set at \$1 billion. However, we know the extent of the accidents that have happened. Experts say that these accidents can happen somewhere in the world every 10 years, so it is not beyond the realm of possibility.

Obviously the industry tries to be as safe as it can, but why should the people of Canada accept that liability beyond \$1 billion when it seems that it is possible for the industry itself to accept it for a reasonable amount of money?

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

If we look at the nuclear sector specifically, one of the deficiencies of the bill is the issue of financial liability for all the suppliers and contractors working with operators. Right now, they are unfortunately not included and that might create problems in the supply chain, leaving only operators liable.

That seems problematic to me. I think my colleague will agree that, if all of the stakeholders in the supply chain are liable for problems and damages caused by a nuclear accident, we can obviously hope that they will adopt better practices. I would like to hear his thoughts on that.

• (1830)

[English]

Mr. Jack Harris: Mr. Speaker, it is a bit complicated in one sense, but the insurance principle is basically that we spread the risk. The more people who share the responsibility, the easier it is to manage the risk. That is the basis of insurance.

Why should there not be liability for people who happen to be suppliers? If they are excluded from liability, then that seems to be a

problem. We believe that they should be included in the responsibility for accidents. If they are participating in that industry, they should participate by bearing some of that risk themselves.

Standing Order 52

EMERGENCY DEBATE

[Translation]

EBOLA OUTBREAK

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the Ebola outbreak.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP) moved:

That the House do now adjourn.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Vancouver East.

The Ebola epidemic is truly a major crisis and, unfortunately, we are not talking enough about it. It is a potential transnational threat. The World Health Organization is now saying that it is an international public health emergency.

It has been reported that there are 4,000 cases of Ebola, but everyone knows that there are probably more because even the countries affected by this epidemic are unable to identify all those affected in their area of responsibility, not to mention the people who are hiding because they do not want anyone to know that they have Ebola. More than half the people who contract the disease die. There is no treatment.

All of this is already very worrisome, but the main concern is the speed with which the disease is spreading. It is spreading quickly because, at this time, we are unable to respond to the crisis.

Doctors Without Borders is probably the most active organization on the ground at this time, and it has to send patients home. It cannot admit them to the treatment centres, particularly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Needless to say, the health services of these countries are also unable to meet the needs.

I would like to provide an overview of the situation in Monrovia, where every day Doctors Without Borders has to send 10 to 30 patients who are infected with the disease home because there is no room in their treatment centres. Those 10 to 30 patients may then spread the disease to dozens of other people who will also not be able to get into a treatment centre and will continue to spread the disease. We are witnessing a potentially exponential phenomenon with dire consequences. If we do nothing, the number of cases will only continue to rise.

Liberia has been particularly hard hit and its health care system has collapsed. There are not enough people to cope with the problem, medical personnel are often sick themselves and other doctors and nurses are afraid to go into the health care centres because they might catch this horrible disease.

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It is not only patients who are suffering as a result of the collapse of the county's health care system, but everyone. Treatment is not available for diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, and pregnant women no longer have access to care.

The effects are devastating. Riots are starting to break out in these countries. We are concerned about security and stability in these countries and in other countries that may be affected. We must not forget that this disease is spreading slowly but surely.

This is also having an impact on our development efforts. For example, Liberia is collapsing. All of the development efforts in this part of West Africa could be derailed or set back years by this terrible epidemic.

This is of concern to us from a humanitarian standpoint since we are talking about very poor countries that cannot deal with such a crisis.

● (1835)

[English]

I am going to read a quote from a Médecins Sans Frontières staffer working in Liberia, and I think it says it all. He said:

In decades of humanitarian work I have never witnessed such relentless suffering of fellow human beings or felt so completely paralysed and utterly overwhelmed at our inability to provide anything but the most basic, and sometimes less than adequate, care.

[Translation]

This person has several decades of work experience in this type of environment.

We also must not forget that as the number of cases of the disease rises in West Africa, where this epidemic is occurring right now, the risk that the disease will spread to other places also rises, even though that risk is marginal right now. I would like to quote another individual.

[English]

I would like to quote Michael Osterholm who is the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. He said:

The Ebola epidemic in West Africa has the potential to alter history as much as any plague has ever done....If we wait for vaccines and new drugs to arrive to end the Ebola epidemic, instead of taking major action now, we risk the disease's reaching from West Africa to our own backyards.

[Translation]

This also definitely affects our border services, since agents must monitor people coming into our country.

I would like to share another quotation.

[English]

For example, Kayt and Stefan Mahon in Canmore are waiting for twins they adopted in Sierra Leone, but because the state is so overwhelmed, they cannot get the papers. They are waiting for these children and they are afraid that these children do not have access to health services anymore because Sierra Leone is overwhelmed with the crisis. That is the kind of effect it is having right now on Canadians.

I see my time is short. I could have talked on the issue longer, but I would like to congratulate the Canadian government for what it has done so far, but it is far from enough. We need to do more. We need to show leadership. The UN has asked for \$600 million. The U.S. has given \$100 million to fight this epidemic. We need to give money. We need to help with laboratories, which we have done, but with transport if needed and to involve military. We need to offer to deploy DART in this region. People are asking for that. We deploy DART in times of natural catastrophes around the world. We have a catastrophe in West Africa now. This would be the time to deploy DART.

[Translation]

The Ebola epidemic began six months ago. It is the largest Ebola outbreak ever recorded. At this point, we are losing the battle. It is not only the people of West Africa who are losing it, but humanity as a whole. We are putting our own long-term safety at risk.

We are currently losing the battle, but we can turn that around if we show some leadership and do everything we can now to combat this terrible epidemic.

I would remind everyone that the longer we wait, the more it will cost to solve the problem. There are more and more cases every day.

● (1840)

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank my colleague and congratulate her for having taken the initiative that has allowed us to debate this undeniably urgent matter and show that Canada is a compassionate country that cares about others. We also want to do our part to help our neighbours and friends, our extended family, which is indeed all of humankind.

She mentioned an acronym I have heard before, but I do not remember exactly what it stands for: DART. I wonder if she could talk about what this acronym means and the impact such an intervention could have on the current crisis.

I would like to point out that as the member for LaSalle—Émard, I have the honour and privilege of representing many members of the African diaspora who have been seriously affected by this epidemic and have suffered because they have family and loved ones in those regions. In my riding, many members of that community have received deportation orders to various countries in Africa. This is causing a great deal of stress for these African families, which I am fortunate enough to represent. I have met with them many times in my office.

My question has two parts: how are we showing solidarity with the people of Africa, and can my colleague talk a little more about the DART initiative?

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, first of all, yes, this is about humanity and solidarity with other human beings struggling with what is basically a calamity. It is also the smart thing to do. The longer we wait to take action, the more that action will cost and the farther-reaching the consequences.

As I said, of course, we have to monitor our borders. There are people who have adopted children but cannot go get them. There is always a risk—slight, but a risk nonetheless—that Ebola might appear in Canada. There is no treatment for Ebola.

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My hon. colleague also talked about all of our constituents of West African origin who are watching what is going on in their countries of origin, where they might have family and friends, and who are very worried. My colleague raised a very important point about deportations. All deportations must be postponed until this situation is resolved.

DART is a team that can be deployed rapidly. It has been deployed in a number of places, such as the Philippines, if I remember correctly, to respond to natural and other disasters. This is a disaster. I think DART is the ideal response to this situation.

• (1845)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have met with people in my constituency who have family members in Sierra Leone and in Liberia. Their stories are absolutely heartbreaking, such as talking with their loved ones back home, hearing about some of the quarantines, concerned about the health and safety of strong friends and family members who are in those countries.

Canada is not untouched by this epidemic, as the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie has rightly pointed out. Canada is very much touched by this. Even if it is touched by family and friendship links, we are touched by this massive epidemic that is spreading throughout Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, and potentially other countries in West Africa.

I listened to the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie's wonderful and important speech in this regard, and I am glad that she has triggered this emergency debate because this is something that all of us should be seized upon. It is an extremely important issue. What specifically should Canada be doing now to help those countries? What should the Canadian government and Canadian parliamentarians be saying to those people of Sierra Leonean, Liberian and Guinean origin who have family members who are in peril by this epidemic in their countries of origin?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I can understand that people with family and friends in that part of the world would be absolutely devastated.

In Sierra Leone, bodies are lying in the streets and women are giving birth without medical care. The situation is tragic and its impact reaches far beyond Ebola sufferers. Entire systems have disintegrated.

Just as an aside, I lived in West Africa for three years. I have friends there too. When I found out that Senegal was affected, I thought of all of the friends and former colleagues I left behind. As a Canadian, I am affected by this issue, but I am also personally affected.

This is a perfect opportunity for Canada, which has always had a strong relationship with West Africa, to show leadership. We have to send DART, money, mobile labs and support for transportation because transportation assistance is a big issue in West Africa. We also have to share our expertise in responding to biological disasters. There are many things we can do.

Many organizations on the ground have asked us to deploy DART to respond to the crisis.

[*English*]

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, for putting in for an emergency debate today on this very important and concerning issue of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. I would also like to thank the Speaker for granting that request. This is something that can happen in our Parliament.

It does not happen very often, but clearly this is an emergent issue. Therefore, I am very glad that on our first day back in Parliament we are debating this very important issue. I think it is very good that the NDP has brought this forward.

I have listened very carefully to what my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie has had to say as our deputy foreign affairs critic, and as a person who, in her professional life, is very knowledgeable about West Africa and other countries she has lived in.

As parliamentarians, as human beings, we have a sense of responsibility about the human condition. We are thousands of miles away from what is taking place. We may have some connections, as my colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster said, through constituents and families, but we are very far away from what has been taking place, other than what we see on the nightly news. It is heartbreaking, and one feels a sense of powerlessness that such a deadly virus can take hold of communities and spread fear. Therefore, I think it is very important that as parliamentarians we stop and think about what is going on there, what we can do, and how we can share responsibility.

This is a transcontinental and a global issue, and there is no way that we should see ourselves as somehow separate from it or that it does not affect us. Obviously, we are not affected as directly as people are in those communities, but there is a connection. I think that tonight's debate is about those connections and what we as Canadian parliamentarians need to do.

As the health critic for the NDP, there are a couple of points that I would like to focus on.

First, I think it is important to recognize that the basic conditions in some of these countries are precarious and severe. If there were an outbreak like this in Canada, one would hope that the response would be immediate. I am sure there would be challenges and barriers, and we saw that with SARS, for example, which was minuscule compared to what we are seeing with Ebola.

We have a high-functioning health care system. We have community health centres, doctors, public health agencies, and the Public Health Agency of Canada. In fact, we learned from SARS what we need to do in terms of a public response when something like this happens. However, I think it is very important to recognize the very precarious nature of the health care systems in the countries we are speaking about.

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For example, in Liberia, there is one doctor to treat nearly 100,000 people, so already the health condition of the population is very precarious. If you add on to that an outbreak and epidemic of Ebola, there are health care workers who themselves are getting sick. In fact, the WHO reports that over 240 health care workers have contracted Ebola in the affected countries and at least 150 have died. If you add on that health care workers then feel very fearful about going to work, we can begin to see that whatever fragile system was in place begins to break down and makes the pandemic even more difficult to cope with.

We have a responsibility in the short term to think about what needs to be done, but we also have to think about this in the longer term, in terms of the north and the south and the needs of developing countries, the global inequities, income inequality, where resources go, and basic infrastructure for health care. This point has been made by the WHO, over many decades, in terms of accessibility of health care and how incredibly important it is to life and well-being. Of course, this now is magnified a thousand times or more when we look at a deadly epidemic.

• (1850)

I liken this to the HIV/AIDS outbreak in a way. When we think about the early stage of HIV/AIDS, there was fear and stigmatization. That still actually exists today. There was very little treatment available. Even today, research is being done to look for a vaccine. Over the decades, the scientific community and the research community did come up with accessible treatment options. In fact, some of that work was done here in Canada by amazing doctors, like Dr. Julio Montaner, from Vancouver.

Looking at HIV/AIDS and how the globe responded, it took a global effort. The Global Fund is the largest funder of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. It took that kind of effort to get into those communities, to build the infrastructure for basic health care.

We need to pay attention to that and not lose sight of it. We cannot say that a short-term effort is needed to get on top of this. It is not. It is about changing the way that the global community works. It is about dealing with those inequities between the north and the south. It is about ensuring that the human right and dignity for health care, for basic medicine and access to medicine, is upheld.

Then it would not be the daunting challenge that it looks to be when we read that the WHO is saying that over the next three months we could be looking at 20,000 infected people. The exponential growth of this epidemic is quite frightening. That is my first point.

The other point I would like to make is in terms of what Canada can do. My colleague, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, has already given some suggestions about what Canada can do. One thing we could do is to make sure that our own public health agency, the Public Health Agency of Canada, is in good shape. We actually do need to have a response here in Canada as well as assisting internationally.

It is very disturbing when I read information from the Canadian Public Health Association, which is a sort of non-governmental association of public health advocates and practitioners across the country. It points out, for example, that PHAC, the Public Health

Agency of Canada, has seen a budget allocation decrease, from \$677 million in 2010-11, to \$579 million in 2013-14. That is a reduction of over 14%.

That has to be concerning, because the Public Health Agency of Canada is the agency responsible for public health overall, and for infectious diseases. PHAC's budget for health promotion, disease prevention, and public health infrastructure has decreased by \$152 million, or 26%, between 2010-11 and 2013-14.

I want the government to take note of that. What is our own capacity to assist here in Canada, when we have a Public Health Agency of Canada that is being depleted and its capacity is being diminished?

Further, in terms of what Canada can do, my colleague has spoken about DART, the Disaster Assistance Response Team, which Canada has become very well-known for. That is a very important initiative. We do want to hear from the government as to whether they are planning to consider sending in DART.

As well, there are other measures that we need to be following up on: supporting the scaling up of isolation centres in the country, deploying mobile laboratories to improve diagnostic capabilities, establishing dedicated air bridges to move personnel and equipment to and from West Africa, and building a regional network of field hospitals to treat suspected or infected medical personnel.

Those are a few concrete suggestions. At the end of the day, we want our government to step up. We want Canada to be leading the way, not following. We want to show a sense of solidarity with those communities that are so horribly affected by this virus. We want Canada to play its part.

Hopefully, through this debate tonight, the government will step up to the plate and will make it clear to Canadians that we will do our part.

• (1855)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her comments.

She reminded us how fortunate we are to have a public health care system here in Canada. However, at the same time, we need to be concerned about the cuts being made to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

As the member said, we are obviously all concerned about these issues. As they say, a virus does not need a visa to travel. We are all concerned, and we are obviously all concerned on a human level.

I was interested in my colleague's comments on thinking long term about these countries' health care services. As I pointed out in my own speech, this Ebola epidemic will have a significant negative impact on the development of these countries, which means that it will also have a negative impact on the countries' ability to develop adequate public health care systems. This is a sort of vicious circle.

Could my colleague speak to that?

*Standing Order 52**[English]*

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, clearly we look at structural questions. We have to respond in an immediate way, but we have to approach this very serious question of the Ebola virus in a structural way and make sure that there is a sustained, progressive, and accessible approach that begins to change the social and economic conditions and ensure that people have access to health care.

I want to add one other point, and that is that right here in Ottawa, the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute itself has been doing a lot of research. When they wrote to the minister in the middle of August, they said:

We have constructed and commissioned a Virus-Manufacturing Suite that specializes in the production of pharmaceutical grade products very similar to the VSV-EBOV vaccine.

This is actually another initiative that could be taken up right here in Canada. I do not know where the government is on the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and the incredible work it is doing. This is taking place right here in Canada, and the government needs to support it, because the development of a vaccine, of course, is very critical.

● (1900)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa threatens the lives and well-being of whole communities, and the virus has, and will continue to have, a significant impact on children's health and well-being. There are currently 4.5 million children under the age of five living in areas affected by the Ebola virus. Although Ebola is not typically a children's disease, its impact on children has been significant. Children who have lost one or both of their parents to Ebola face the risk of growing up without proper care or of having to fend for themselves. They may also experience distress from witnessing the suffering of their parents or relatives or face stigma and discrimination.

I am wondering what my colleague thinks about what more the government could do to help children in areas where Ebola is spreading.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, that is a very thoughtful question.

We can learn a lot from HIV/AIDS. We can learn about sustained support in communities that are affected; the empowerment of women; systems that can provide support to those communities in the long term, whether it is health care, social, or economic; and getting rid of stigma and discrimination. This is what had to happen when the HIV/AIDS epidemic first began, and it still has to happen today.

At the AIDS conference in Melbourne in July, the UNAIDS was predicting that it is possible that by the year 2030, we could have a generation free of AIDS. That is because of the systematic work that is being done. We have to do the same thing here. We have to take the same approach. It cannot be short term; it has to be long term.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Canada's Minister of Health, I am pleased to participate in tonight's debate on Canada's contribution to assisting with the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. I will be splitting my time with the member for Don Valley East.

Tonight I would like to provide an update on Canada's response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Let me begin by stating that the risk to Canadians is very low.

[Translation]

The risk to Canadians remains very low.

[English]

There has never been a case of Ebola in Canada. The Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person. It is spread through direct contact with infected body fluids, not through casual contact, like the flu.

As previously stated by Dr. Greg Taylor, deputy chief public health officer for Canada, we have a number of systems in place in Canada to identify and prevent the spread of serious infectious diseases like Ebola. We have comprehensive procedures in place at our borders to identify sick travellers arriving in Canada. These are set out in the Quarantine Act, which is administered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at every point of entry into Canada. The act requires travellers to report to the Canada Borders Services Agency if they are ill upon arrival. As well, airlines and airport authorities are required to report ill travellers arriving on international flights to quarantine officers. Quarantine officers are vigilant in their surveillance of travellers who are ill. These officers have authorities under the act to take action to protect the public.

In addition, we are fortunate to live in a country like Canada where hospitals have sophisticated infection control systems and procedures in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection, protect health care workers, and provide the best care possible for the patient. To support these systems, the public health agency has a series of infection control guidelines that are used by health care institutions across the country. Dr. Taylor, his team, and all of us are working closely with provincial and territorial partners in health.

Abroad, the Ebola outbreak in Africa is the largest on record. Tragically, it is by far the most severe and complex the world has seen in 40 years of combatting this virus.

● (1905)

[Translation]

What is tragic is that this is the most serious and complex epidemic of this virus that the world has seen in 40 years of fighting this disease. It has had a devastating effect on West African countries.

[English]

The impact has been devastating for West African countries.

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While the risk to Canadians is very low, Canada is committed to supporting our international partners in responding to the outbreak. To date, Canada has contributed well over \$5 million dollars in support of humanitarian, security, and public health interventions to address the spread of the disease in West Africa. This includes things like funding Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders and the World Health Organization to strengthen the field response to the outbreak and to mitigate associated threats to health and security.

We have also provided a mobile lab unit that is now based in Sierra Leone and is staffed by Public Health Agency of Canada employees. It provides on-the-ground laboratory diagnostic support. This helps quickly identify when a person is infected with Ebola so that necessary steps can be taken to protect the person and the community.

After speaking with Dr. Margaret Chan, head of the WHO, we are also donating 800 to 1,000 doses of the experimental vaccine known as vesicular stomatitis virus-based vaccine, made for the Ebola virus. As many may be aware, this vaccine has never been tested in humans but has shown great promise in animal research. Canadian scientists at the agency's national microbiology laboratory developed the vaccine, and the Government of Canada owns the intellectual property associated with the vaccine.

I mention this because Canadians should be very proud not only of our nation's aid efforts and the work of non-governmental organizations on the ground but of the groundbreaking research that continues to be conducted in Winnipeg. This is among the many accomplishments of this world-renowned lab, and I am very proud of the work Dr. Kobinger and his colleagues are doing.

While the experimental vaccine is promising, it does not replace the need for rapid diagnosis, good infection control practices, and tight coordination among partners involved in the response.

Though Canada is a leader in helping to fight this outbreak, it is clear that further comprehensive efforts from the international community are still required to prevent and control the spread. The Director-General of the World Health Organization has called on countries to intensify international, regional, and national outreach to bring the outbreak under control. To meet that goal, preventing further transmission of the virus to health care workers is essential.

Health care professionals responding to the outbreak are often on the front lines of an unpredictable, contaminated environment. They often face the risk of infection themselves, a risk that increases if they do not have the resources and equipment they need, yet protective equipment and resources are in short supply in these affected regions. In some areas, these resources are overly expensive or unaffordable for the most affected countries.

Our international colleagues confirm that health care workers need more resources and the best available protection to reduce the spread and risk of infection. This will of course allow more health care workers to continue working in those communities to help fight the spread of the virus.

Recently the World Health Organization reported a shortage of equipment in the affected countries and has appealed to member states for donations for use by front-line workers in the affected countries, and Canada is stepping up to provide that assistance. I am

pleased to announce that tonight our government is offering over \$2.5 million in personal protective equipment to the World Health Organization to aid in the global response to Ebola in West Africa.

Equipment such as respirator masks, gloves, face shields, and gowns are necessary to prevent the spread of infection. When used correctly, protective equipment can also help reduce the risk of coming into contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person. The equipment and resources we will be providing are medical assets for Canada, meaning that we will still have sufficient stockpiles to meet Canada's own needs and to protect Canadians, but we do have the ability to give.

By providing these much needed supplies, the Government of Canada is enabling health care workers and other response workers in the area to manage this outbreak. It is our hope that our announcement tonight will offer much-needed assistance to workers on the front lines of the Ebola response and that they will have the equipment needed to ensure their safety for the duration of the outbreak.

As we continue to fight together, Canada remains committed to supporting all of our partners in controlling this epidemic.

● (1910)

[Translation]

As we continue to fight together, Canada stands determined to help all of its partners fight this epidemic.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that additional supplies will be sent to the region. That is important. However, the crisis is so severe that it will take drastic measures to combat this virus and prevent it from getting worse.

As the minister knows, we have military personnel with the medical expertise to deal with this type of situation. We have DART, of course, which is known all over the world. I am wondering whether the Canadian government would consider sending these resources to the region.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the Public Health Agency of Canada is in contact with all departments that have the ability to respond. I thank her for her support of tonight's donation to the WHO. It will strengthen the field response on the ground.

I want to reassure Canadians about what has been a very sustained and progressive response by the Canadian government in the fight against Ebola.

We have had very close contact with the WHO. We have been working very closely at the Public Health Agency of Canada with those at the WHO in the response. We have not only donated millions to help the WHO to strengthen its own field response, we now have donated close to \$2 million to support humanitarian interventions led by Doctors Without Borders. We are also supporting the Red Cross in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone through its emergency disaster assistance fund. As well, we are supporting the WHO through its international health grants program to support more assistance for its operational costs in West Africa.

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The Public Health Agency of Canada has been at the forefront working with the WHO with technical expertise, whether it is giving advice to those working on this issue through the expertise of our microbiology lab in Winnipeg or deploying a team of scientists in a mobile lab from Winnipeg to Sierra Leone to contribute to efforts to stop the Ebola outbreak. We had a team before which just came back to Canada. We deployed a new team last week and it is on the ground helping to test samples submitted by local health authorities. That does a great deal in helping the public health capacity in those local regions.

The experimental vaccine is something new and very promising, but there is a lot of hope that we can work with the international community to either ensure that the vaccine is available and that we continue to do the proper research necessary to ensure if it is safe and effective, that it is something we can use in the future. It is ready to transport when necessary.

We are on the ground now supporting those communities that are being affected immediately with the resources they need. We are also looking and involved in meeting the long-term research and capacity building to help those communities in a way that they need most.

• (1915)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for her contribution tonight. Could she tell us what the Global Health Security Action Group is, the global health security agenda and is Canada participating and if so, how?

Hon. Rona Ambrose: Mr. Speaker, the global health security initiative is an initiative that was very much spearheaded by Canada originally, but has a number of global partners that come together to discuss these kinds of issues in particular, like Ebola, and the threat that they can have on the global context.

A meeting has been called by the United States of the global health security initiative group that will be held in two weeks in Washington. We will be participating in that meeting along with a number of our global partners to talk about next steps in tackling Ebola.

We are already in contact with our partners in that global community to share information, talk about next steps and resources. I met with the U.S. ambassador today to speak about Ebola at length and the U.S. response in ensuring that we have a coordinated response with the United States as well as our border protection.

The global health security initiative is a global initiative that is effective and in this context is exactly the right kind of vehicle to be discussing these issues. It brings together the many different facets that have to respond when something like this is happening, whether it is the public health agencies, the health departments, the departments of defence, foreign affairs departments of many different countries that come together. They need to be a part of a response like this.

Mr. Joe Daniel (Don Valley East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the House about the tragic outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, and the steps the Government of Canada is taking to ensure Canadians here at home remain safe and protected.

The Ebola situation in West Africa has been devastating. My thoughts are with those who are affected by this. The Government of Canada is closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and working closely with our international partners to support the response and to help those who are suffering. Thankfully, we have learned that while Ebola outbreaks have generally had a case fatality rate of up to 90%, this particular outbreak has shown a survival rate of 47%.

While this current outbreak in West Africa has been ongoing since December 2013, Ebola first appeared in 1976. The House and all Canadians should be reassured that in all this time there has never been a case of Ebola in Canada. The risk to Canadians is very low. The outbreak continues to be confined to several countries in West Africa.

Even if a case of Ebola were to arrive in Canada, it would not be able to spread easily. There are a number of reasons for this.

First, Ebola spreads in the community through direct contact with infected bodily fluids. The scientific evidence shows that Ebola is not airborne and cannot be transmitted through casual contact. The Ebola virus does not spread like a common cold or influenza or even like SARS. Furthermore, it cannot be spread by a person who is not showing any symptoms.

Second, the situation and environmental context in West Africa is radically different from that in Canada. Our hospitals in Canada have sophisticated infection control systems and procedures in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection, protect the health care workers and provide the best possible care for patients. In contrast, the West African countries that are affected have limited resources to respond to a prolonged outbreak, especially in rural areas. In the health care infrastructure, greatly in the countries and communities affected, there is a lack of personal protective equipment and, tragically, outbreak control strategies have been met with distrust due to fear and misinformation.

Despite the fact that the risk to Canadians is very low, the Government of Canada remains vigilant and is taking concerted action to ensure Canadians continue to be protected against the Ebola virus. This includes maintaining our preparedness to detect, investigate and manage people with Ebola virus in the unlikely event that a case were to appear in Canada. We are well prepared.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has recommended that Canadians avoid all non-essential travel to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone due to the outbreak. As well, public health notices have been issued for Nigeria and Senegal recommending that travellers take special precautions.

For those who must travel, I must reiterate that the risks remain low. To date, there has not been one confirmed Ebola case contracted on an airplane anywhere in the world. Furthermore, there are no direct flights between Canada and the countries affected by the Ebola outbreak, further reducing the risk to the rest of the Canadian public.

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The government is ensuring that Canadian travellers know how to protect themselves and what they need to do if they begin to experience symptoms of illness. It is recommended that those travelling in affected areas monitor their health carefully and seek immediate medical attention if they develop symptoms that could be associated with Ebola within three weeks of returning.

Canada is well prepared to identify and manage ill travellers. The Quarantine Act is administered by the Public Health Agency of Canada 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at all points of entry into Canada. Technical guidance and protocol have been shared with provinces and territories and with the transportation sector to detect and manage suspected cases of Ebola infection. Front-line staff have been trained to screen international travellers arriving in Canada for communicable diseases and to refer any traveller suspected of being ill to quarantine officers. Under the Quarantine Act, officers have the authority to implement the appropriate public health measures to ensure public safety.

● (1920)

From there, a strong network of laboratories stands at the ready to detect and respond quickly in the unlikely event that a case of Ebola arrives in Canada.

While maintaining our domestic vigilance, the Government of Canada is also involved in an international early warning system that detects reports of outbreaks and emergencies from around the world. The Government of Canada is keeping frequent contact with the WHO and other international partners and authorities responding to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Some Canadians were unnerved to hear the media reports over the past few weeks of suspected cases of Ebola in Canada from people who had travelled to West Africa. In every case, the individuals suspected of being infected with the Ebola virus were identified, isolated, investigated by the public health authorities and tested for the Ebola virus by the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

While each case turned out to be negative, these cases tested our responsive capability and demonstrated to Canadians that we were ready to respond and that our systems were working. We have learned from our experiences with SARS and the H1N1 influenza pandemic, and we are applying those learnings to how we prepare for future outbreaks.

Canada should be proud of its world-class researchers and science capacity. It was our very own scientists at the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory who developed an experimental vaccine for the Ebola virus. The Government of Canada has offered a donation of 800 to 1,000 doses of this experimental vaccine to the WHO. We are committed to supporting the efforts of our international partners to control the Ebola outbreak, and we hope that the experimental vaccine will help to address this global crisis.

Canada is keeping a small supply of the experimental vaccine to conduct research and clinical trials on safety and efficacy. We will also keep some doses in the unlikely event that it is needed in Canada. At the same time, Canada continues to work with our international partners to explore the significant legal and ethical

issues on the use of experimental vaccines and therapies in humans. The Public Health Agency of Canada is working with Health Canada to develop the Canadian protocol for this compassionate use of the vaccine.

Canada should also be proud of our humanitarian support to address the spread of Ebola in West Africa, including significant funding and the deployment of Canadian experts to assist on the ground.

While the situation and the media reports from West Africa are quite dire, I want to reiterate that the risk to Canadians is very low. There has never been a case of Ebola in Canada. The Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person, and it cannot be transmitted by casual contact. The Government of Canada is already taking action and will continue to take action to prepare and protect Canadians against the Ebola virus and other infectious disease threats.

I would like to close by extending my heartfelt condolences to those affected in West Africa and by encouraging Canadians to support international relief organizations working in this area.

● (1925)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in tonight's emergency debate requested by my NDP colleagues. I feel this is the right thing to do. For the past month and a half or two months, public awareness has been raised to the crisis unfolding so far away and yet so close to us. Under circumstances such as these, we realize that we practically live in a great big village.

I will always remember Philippe Leblanc's report on Radio-Canada at the end of July, when he described how the situation was starting to affect villages in West Africa. When we look into the issue, we clearly see today that many people feel that western countries not directly affected are slow to respond and are turning a blind eye to this reality. We are happy to see that some announcements have already been made.

I will therefore ask my colleague from Don Valley East whether he does not think that it would be in our best interests to do something as soon as possible to eradicate the disease as quickly as we can. The bigger the problem, the more dangerous it becomes for everyone on the planet.

[English]

Mr. Joe Daniel: Mr. Speaker, clearly we need a full understanding of how lacking some of these countries are in infrastructure and in being able to implement things in an instant, like in Canada. It is obviously a difficult situation. Some of the areas in West Africa are extremely remote and getting to the people, and putting things into action before they discover what the virus is, is very difficult. That is clearly why Canada has put a mobile unit in that area, so it can get a quick response in diagnosing this virus.

I think Canada is participating extremely well in supporting the eradication of that in the African countries.

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Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am also grateful that people like Dr. Theresa Tam and Dr. Eilish Cleary have gone to the region. They make us very proud because Canada has had tremendous leadership on the Ebola virus for a very long time, including in Angola over a decade ago.

As the member explained, this disease is very difficult to get, other than human-to-human direct contact, bodily fluids. I wonder two things. As a member from Toronto who was on the receiving end of the travel advisory in Toronto during SARS, I wonder if the member could explain why the travel advisory has been given to Canadians going to Africa when we know it will seriously affect the economy of the region. Indeed, the member is saying that the risk is low. I have been hearing all summer that it is very difficult for those countries that Canada has taken this stand, when other countries have taken a different stand.

In the member's explanation that even though there are no direct flights from that region to Canada, are passengers on flights from London and connecting flights given information about Ebola on landing in Canada, including being asked if they have been to the region and letting them know about the symptoms and the fact that they should seek medical advice if they get these kinds of symptoms?

• (1930)

Mr. Joe Daniel: Mr. Speaker, the advice has already been posted and is available to all people. Clearly, the effect is going to be an economic one. It is a risk. There is no reason at all for travelling there except for essential business, because the risk of catching this and bringing it back to this country is higher if people do that. The advisories have been given for these countries. It will affect them economically and it would affect us economically as well if we were to have an Ebola outbreak here. That is clear.

In terms of the advice being given to passengers, I am not familiar with that part of it. From a Canadian perspective, I visited North York General Hospital just the other day and it already has Ebola facilities ready. They have tested two cases, which were not positive. Therefore, the infrastructure that we have in place in Canada is also ready for a potential outbreak of Ebola and I think we are in good hands.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa—Vanier tonight.

I rise tonight to speak about the Ebola outbreak in West Africa where the situation is dire and getting worse every day, where the international response has been inadequate, and where the global community must dramatically scale up its response. The worst Ebola outbreak in history has hit Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and has reached Nigeria and Senegal. It has been blamed for more than 2,200 deaths. Ebola is spread through direct contact with the bodily fluids of sick patients, making doctors and nurses especially vulnerable to contracting the virus, which has no vaccine or approved treatment. Without immediate international action we are facing the potential for a public health crisis that could claim lives on a scale far greater than the current estimates and set the countries of West Africa back a generation.

As U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power said, “This is a perilous crisis but one we can contain if the international community comes

together to meet it head on.” As a result, she has asked the 193 UN member states to come to a meeting with concrete commitments to tackle the outbreak, especially in hardest-hit Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea.

Health practitioners and scientists know how to contain Ebola and it is important that we must avoid panic and fear, but our collective response to date has not been sufficient. We must tackle Ebola aggressively and in a coordinated manner.

Very briefly, Ebola virus disease, formerly known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a severe often fatal illness in humans. Outbreaks have a case fatality rate of up to 90% and have primarily occurred in remote villages in Central and West Africa near tropical rainforests. The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission. Fruit bats of a particular family are considered to be the natural host of the Ebola virus. Severely ill patients require intensive supportive care. No licensed specific treatment or vaccine is available for use in people or animals.

Our health critic and I first wrote to the Minister of International Development on August 3, 2014, about Ebola and asked, among other requests, whether the government would consider providing additional funding to help fight the Ebola outbreak. We were pleased to see the government provided an additional \$5 million in funding on August 8, 2014. I am looking forward to receiving answers to our other questions.

The needs on the ground have changed significantly since the beginning of August and Canada can and should be doing more. At that time, the World Health Organization was asking for \$100 million, but it is now asking for \$600 million to stop Ebola transmission in affected countries within six to nine months and to prevent the international spread of the virus in West Africa.

Moreover, in many areas of intense transmission the actual number of cases may be two- to fourfold higher than that currently reported, and the aggregate case load of Ebola virus disease cases could exceed 20,000 over the course of this emergency. The top U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention official has warned that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has become a real risk to the stability and security of society in the region.

While I recognize Canada's contributions to date, I would like to know what more the government is considering to assist its international partners to provide aid in the affected regions, particularly as the international response has been inadequate and the world is losing the battle to control Ebola.

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The reality is that we need to dramatically scale up international response. Nearly 40% of the total number of reported cases has occurred within the past several weeks. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued an international rescue call for a massive surge in assistance on September 5, warning that “the world can no longer afford to short-change global public health.” Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone need more doctors, nurses, beds, and more equipment.

• (1935)

The European Commission and the U.S. have given more than \$250 million in additional funding. The U.S. has a 26-person disaster response team in place, and the U.S. military has trained 230 armed forces of Liberia personnel on the proper use of personal protective equipment, safe handling of patients, securing health sites, and escorting humanitarian and medical personnel. The United States has also sent more than 70 disease control experts to West Africa who are providing technical expertise to national public health institutions and agencies to help protect and prevent the spread of the Ebola virus, and have put in place a second Ebola testing laboratory.

Does the government accept that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has become a real risk to the stability and security of society in the region? Does the government accept that Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone need more doctors, nurses, beds, and equipment?

Does the government accept that the international response has been inadequate and that we need to scale up international response? Is the government considering responding to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's international rescue call and the World Health Organization's request of \$600 million? In light of the United Nation's international rescue call, will Canada do more to help?

Specifically, how is Canada working with other countries, particularly through the Global Health Security Action Group and the global health security agenda? How is the government working across departments and what specific departments are involved in each of preparedness, response and recovery, and what is the lead agency for each? What specific actions are each of the departments undertaking?

What is the government doing to ensure the safety of Canadians travelling to West Africa to undertake humanitarian work, commerce and trade, and to safeguard the well-being of those who are there now in areas where Ebola is spreading? What guidance is being provided to Canadians before they leave and while in areas in which Ebola has been reported? If they think they have symptoms compatible with Ebola, what should they do upon their return to Canada?

How specifically was the April 18 funding of \$1,285,000 used to address the outbreak? How many specialists and in what disciplines did Canada send to work with the World Health Organization and/or to West Africa to help? How specifically was the August 8 funding of \$5 million to address the outbreak spent?

What specific plans were put in place to monitor the health of the three-person mobile team from Winnipeg's National Microbiology Laboratory as they were brought home from Sierra Leone and afterward in voluntary isolation, and for how long were they in isolation?

Although the risk is low, is Canada ready to isolate and care for someone if affected? Does the Public Health Agency of Canada have a public awareness plan to help Canadians understand the prevention, transmission, and signs and symptoms of the disease?

Canada can and must do more. We are asking the government to show leadership in responding to this deadly, devastating outbreak.

As the United Nations said, a humane world cannot allow Africa to suffer on such an extraordinary scale.

• (1940)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her comments. I completely agree with her that the world is about to lose this battle. However, I think there is also a way to turn things around and win. As she pointed out, the situation is very serious in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. I would say Nigeria as well, even though there are not a lot of cases reported there, because the cases identified in that country are in highly populated urban areas and therefore the risk of the disease spreading is very high.

I would also like to point out that I agree with my colleague that Canada can and should do more. I would now like to know whether she has specific suggestions on what more Canada should do.

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, there are many interventions that must be prioritized: scaling up isolation centres; deploying mobile laboratories to improve diagnostic capabilities; dedicated air bridges to move personnel and equipment to and within West Africa; building a regional network of field hospitals to treat suspected or infected medical personnel; and, what really needs to happen, an operationalization of the new Ebola road map.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has raised a number of serious questions that need answers from the government.

She raised a series of questions, and I would hope that the members of the governing party would ensure those answers are provided. It goes right to the heart of the strategy of controlling Ebola, of assisting internationally, and of protecting the country domestically from an outbreak.

A number of us were here at the time of the SARS outbreak. The government took a lot of measures at that time, in terms of protecting our own country and assisting the rest of the world.

I listened to the minister speak earlier. She talked about how people are required to report to Canada Border Services and that there are people who monitor. However, in previous times when there were these kinds of outbreaks, there were temperature spotters. I am not sure about the technology, but there was equipment at the airport to ensure that anyone who came off a plane with a temperature was checked. I do not see these kinds of measures being taken in this country.

My colleague outlined how not enough is happening internationally, and I agree with her 100%. However, what does she see happening domestically to protect Canadians?

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, that is one of the reasons we wrote to the Minister of International Development on August 3.

At that time, we asked that the minister show leadership and work across departments; we suggested Border Services and Health, for example. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for answers to that letter. I am hoping that those answers will be forthcoming.

That is why I have outlined a series of questions tonight. We have asked the same thing: Will the government show leadership, and how is it working across departments?

• (1945)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Etobicoke North for sharing her time with me.

This is an extremely serious situation that not only five countries in Africa face, the whole region of West Africa faces, and if we are not prudent, the entire could face it.

There is a three-prong approach that I would encourage the government to take good note of, and perhaps act on and advise Canadians about.

The first is one that everyone would agree on. It is to contain the situation. It started in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Incidentally, the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association was planning a bilateral visit to both Liberia and Sierra Leone at the end of August. We felt that out of respect and concern for our colleagues, we should postpone that visit, not even thinking that it would get as bad as it is currently. It just goes to show that if we did that, there is an entire array of people who are cancelling visits or business trips to those countries. That is one of the factors that has to be looked at.

Those are the three countries. However, it has now spread to Nigeria, and I gather there has been a case or more in Senegal. It has to be contained, and that is not easy because these countries, Liberia in particular, have lost a great number of their health professionals who were trying to help the population fight this terrible virus.

The containment is also difficult because of the long incubation period. As we know, it is 21 days. The World Health Organization has now given notice that it could take at least nine months before the world can feel secure that the virus has been contained. Therefore, we are looking at a very difficult, costly, and demanding episode in front of us.

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Canada needs to help protect *Médicins sans frontières*, and others who are volunteering to go there as well, so they can protect the populations wherever they go. However, it goes beyond that.

[Translation]

The Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association executive met with Ivory Coast's Minister of Foreign Affairs this afternoon. As the minister explained to us, 26% of Ivory Coast's population is from neighbouring countries. As a result, movement is continuous. Ivory Coast borders two of the countries I just mentioned, and they are already afflicted and affected by this virus.

I must congratulate the Ivorian authorities for what they have done. Apparently, 90% of the population has a mobile phone. The authorities used them to inform everyone about best practices to avoid contamination and the transmission of the virus. For example, the minister told us that people do not shake hands anymore. To avoid any contact that might spread the virus, they use gestures to say hello and goodbye. These measures are fairly simple, but by contacting 90% of the population, they have so far managed to prevent the spread of the virus.

However, there are other countries in West Africa.

[English]

These other countries, whether Ghana, Togo, or closer, Cameroon and so on, also need help to make sure that this is contained. We are not talking about immediately, or 21 days, which is the incubation period; we are talking about nine months at least. They need help financially, and with professionals, so they are able to train other professionals they need in a very short timeframe.

• (1950)

[Translation]

Financially and on a professional level, the ability to contain the virus is the primary objective.

[English]

The second one is more domestic. Canadians have to be made aware of this, and of the measures they need to take, so that if this virus ever reaches our soil, it is not spread. We had a case not long ago.

[Translation]

A young woman returning from Sierra Leone was hospitalized and quarantined in Gatineau because she had a fever. Thank God, she was not infected with Ebola. However, it is not impossible that one of our constituents might become infected.

Indeed, we should ensure that the general public knows what to do to keep from spreading this virus, which can kill 50% to 90% of people affected, depending on the population.

[English]

I was listening this afternoon to one of my colleagues on the government side. He did not give me permission to speak publicly, but it was in a meeting, so I will tell the details.

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His daughter was working in Liberia and she married someone from there. She saw a mother of seven kids whose husband died of Ebola, and she wanted to have the body of her husband to bury it. However, the authorities would not give it. They put the body in a bag and put in all kinds of chemicals to contain it, and they buried it. Somehow, during the night, they convinced a guardian at wherever the body was buried to get it. They got it and brought it home. The seven children were all infected and they have all died now.

This is the reality on the ground that they face right now. We have to help them contain it, and we have to ensure it is not transmitted here.

[Translation]

My second proposal is therefore to prepare Canadians.

Third, we need to find a cure for this virus. I would like to applaud a number of our fellow Canadians in the medical field who have worked on it. It seems that the Department of Defence has also done some research.

[English]

It is known that viruses frequently mutate. So far the human race has been fairly lucky, in that this contamination is not spread in the air. It is spread by transmission of bodily fluids. However, if ever this virus mutates to the point that it can be transmitted by airborne contagion, we are facing a humanitarian crisis worldwide. We need to address this. We saw how these things can happen when they spread.

The other bracket I need to open is the economic impact. In Nigeria, where it has not spread as widely as it has in Liberia or Sierra Leone, already four per cent of the economy has tanked. The gross domestic product has tanked by four per cent. It is the same thing in Sierra Leone, and it is affecting places like Ivory Coast where there is no contagion right now. That is because people are cancelling meetings; people are not going there.

We saw that happen in Toronto when the SARS disease reached our shores, and that was spread by air. We in Canada have a fairly good health system and a good prevention system, and a fairly well-advised population, yet we saw the impact it had on Toronto and its area.

If we do not find a way to first stop this transmission and a way to fight it, then we are looking at an incredibly devastating situation. It will be in Africa to start, and it will spread elsewhere, and eventually it will reach the whole world.

We, our government and Canadians, have a responsibility to address this. It is as imminent and urgent as anything we are facing now. If we do not address it, unfortunately we will all end up paying a huge price. We can avoid that, and we should avoid that.

[Translation]

That was the gist of my message.

Now, this virus needs to be contained not only in the affected countries, but also in the neighbouring countries. We need to help those countries financially and enable professionals to travel there. We owe so much to those professionals who are willing to go.

We need to prepare Canadians as a preventive measure and put in place the resources needed to find a way to kill this virus.

• (1955)

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from the Liberal Party for his speech. I have come to know his passion for Africa and for the parliamentary association in which actively participates.

The hon. member did a good job of explaining what steps need to be taken to deal with this terrible disease and the different ways Canada can help.

I heard a report on Radio-Canada about the many children being orphaned by this epidemic. The report talked about what needs to be done not only immediately, but also on the heels of the devastation the Ebola virus has caused in the affected countries.

Can my colleague explain in detail what he thinks about this?

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the question.

Obviously, we will have to talk later about what to do after the crisis. Right now we have to focus on the crisis and how to contain it, and on finding a way to eradicate the virus before it spreads in an absolutely disastrous way. After the fact there will certainly be many situations in which every developed country like ours will have a role to play. I am thinking about the orphans, for example. Four years ago, on January 12, some 250,000 people perished in a massive earthquake in Haiti and many children became orphans. Canada stepped up to the plate.

I think we can definitely do something to help the orphaned children whose parents have died from this virus, whether in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea or anywhere else. For now, we must focus on how to control and eradicate this virus, otherwise the needs will exceed our ability to help people.

[English]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising the issues and in particular for speaking about the issue of SARS.

The riding that I represent in many ways was the epicentre of the SARS epidemic that hit Toronto, and there were lessons learned that extended well beyond just the health care sector.

For example, we know that many people within the health care sector require three jobs to earn a single salary, and the way they moved between hospitals played a significant role in the spread of that disease. We came to understand in Toronto that cuts to other parts of government and government programs sometimes impact epidemics in ways that are catastrophic not just for health care professionals but also for the people who are directly affected, the victims.

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We know that the government has reduced the number of embassies and consulates in Africa and is now requiring people from different African countries to travel through three, four, five, and six different countries simply to file immigration documents or business documents or even inquiries to the Canadian government, just because they are required to do it in person. That movement through these different countries in Africa is becoming more and more difficult, and it also risks becoming an agent by which the disease gets spread.

I am curious as to whether there has been any discussion or response you are aware of to try to see if the Canadian government should not be restructuring its response diplomatically to Africa so that it can support these countries and also avoid playing a role in unexpectedly spreading this disease to unaffected parts of the continent.

As well—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please.

Before I go to the member for Ottawa—Vanier, I know the member for Trinity—Spadina is new and I welcome him to the House. If he could direct his comments to the Chair rather than directly to his colleagues, it would be greatly appreciated. Also, the Chair will give you a cue when your time is approaching its end.

The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join you in congratulating our new colleague from Trinity—Spadina as he joins the House today for the first time. He asked a very pertinent question, one for which I do not have an answer.

I have to share in his concern, however. As we shut down too many embassies and consulates in Africa, we are forcing people to travel from country to country. Lo and behold, that is the case in East Africa and also in West Africa. I know one ambassador there who has the responsibility for five countries, including some of these. Now they cannot travel. The borders are crossed in some cases. We are causing more difficulties than are necessary.

I would hope that we would learn from this. Once we have tackled the terrible situation that currently exists in West Africa—and we hope it does not spread and that we contain it and eventually cure this damned thing—then at that point we hope the government would consider the implications of the decisions to close embassies and would reopen some for a number of reasons, not just to avoid spreading disease but also to help people get on with their lives without having to wait endlessly for some results and information that usually should come much faster than that.

• (2000)

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to the House on Ebola and the tragedy unfolding in West Africa. I will be splitting my time with the member for Kootenay—Columbia.

West Africa is currently experiencing a devastating Ebola outbreak. This outbreak of Ebola has been ongoing in West Africa since December 2013 and was officially declared an outbreak in March 2014 by the World Health Organization. On August 8, 2014,

the World Health Organization declared Ebola a public health emergency of international concern.

The Government of Canada is closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and we are also working closely with our international partners to support a coordinated response. Our thoughts are with the citizens of the countries affected by Ebola, as well as with Canadians who have loved ones in those countries or who are working there as part of the international Ebola response effort.

I would like members of Parliament and all Canadians to understand that the risk of Ebola in Canada remains very low. There has never been a case of Ebola in this country. However, people may rest assured that we are well prepared should this occur. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to work with the provinces and territories to plan and prepare for the rare chance that Ebola is ever imported into Canada by travellers from an affected area.

The Government of Canada has a number of systems in place to identify and prevent the importation of the Ebola virus into Canada. The Canada Border Services Agency and the Public Health Agency work together to ensure that travellers from affected countries are healthy when they arrive in Canada and are aware of actions they should take if they begin to experience symptoms of illness.

I would like to take a few moments to provide more background information on what exactly Ebola is and how it is transmitted to humans.

Ebola is a severe viral disease that causes hemorrhagic fever in humans and animals. Hemorrhagic fevers are infectious diseases that can be associated with severe and life-threatening bleeding as well as severe dehydration and organ failure.

It is important to note that the Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person. Ebola is introduced into the human population through close contact with the body fluids of infected animals. In Africa, fruit bats are considered a possible natural host for the Ebola virus.

Although contact with infected animals results in the introduction of the infection to humans, once contracted by humans, Ebola spreads in the community through human-to-human transmission. Unlike the flu or other respiratory infectious diseases, it is not airborne and cannot be transmitted through casual contact. In the current outbreak in West Africa, the spread occurs primarily among close contacts and family caregivers and as a result of local customs such as burial rituals.

The incubation period for Ebola, meaning the time between exposure and the onset of symptoms, varies between two and 21 days. Infected persons become contagious only when they have symptoms. Although infected, they are not contagious during the incubation period.

Ebola is a challenging disease to diagnose, as it has a wide range of common symptoms associated with a number of illnesses in Africa, such as malaria. It can only be medically confirmed through specialized laboratory testing.

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Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague and I work well together on the foreign affairs committee, so it is great to see her in the House tonight in this debate.

I want to address the first question in terms of losing the battle with regard to more resources. Not being an expert, I do not know how much money we would need. You mentioned \$600 million in your second question. I know that you are aware of the money that Canada has committed, the \$5 million. Just tonight, about an hour or so ago, the Minister of Health announced an additional \$2 million for personal protective equipment. That is a good start.

One thing we need to continue to do is work with the international community, because it has to be a collaborative effort. If it was to be \$600 million, that seems like a huge number, but as we continue to work with our partners on the ground and with the WHO, we can figure out what the needs will continue to be in the coming days.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would remind all hon. members to direct their comments to the Chair rather than directly to their colleagues.

The hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia.

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, continuing on the answer he just provided with regard to the additional \$2 million that the minister spoke of tonight, could the member please expound upon what the protective gear would do to help those trying to assist people with the disease in Western Africa?

Mr. Dean Allison: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the \$2 million, I would like to repeat what has been committed so far just to remind our friends at home who are watching.

As I mentioned, there are over \$5 million to stop the outbreak, which includes \$2.95 million to the WHO to strengthen field response to the outbreak and mitigate associated threats to health and safety, \$1.7 million to support humanitarian interventions led by Doctors Without Borders to reduce and control the spread of the virus in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and to provide care for those affected, \$160,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross to support the response to the outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone through its emergency disaster assistance fund and \$200,000 to the WHO through the international health grants program to support a request for assistance toward operational costs in West Africa and the coordination and deployment of international technical expertise.

The question the member just asked me is in addition to the amount that was announced tonight, the \$2 million, by the minister for personal protective equipment. Once again, that was a request made by the international community just last week and here we are responding within the week. That would be to provide gowns, gloves and a number of things that would keep the workers safe as they essentially put their lives on the line in dealing with these cases and work with people who are affected.

That \$2 million will be very helpful in terms of personal protective equipment to help the workers, the people on the ground, to deal with the affected people.

• (2015)

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House tonight to highlight actions taken by

our government to ensure Canada is prepared to manage public health threats such as Ebola and how Canada keeps its borders safe.

First, I want to emphasize how our thoughts are with those affected by the Ebola situation in West Africa.

Although the outbreak is taking place beyond our borders, Canada is playing an important and historic role in the global response, as well as engaging in extensive preparedness measures at home.

To date, the government has contributed more than \$5 million in support of international humanitarian and public health security interventions. The government has also supported the development of an experimental vaccine for Ebola. We recognize that while such a vaccine is promising, it does not replace the need for rapid diagnosis, good infection control practices and tight coordination among partners.

Canada is providing world-leading laboratory expertise to help in the response effort in West Africa. We are also participating in an international early warning system that detects reports of outbreaks and emergencies from around the world to ensure an effective, coordinated and rapid response.

While there has never been a case of Ebola in Canada and the risk to Canadians remains very low, the government continues to actively work with provinces and territories here at home to ensure that our health care system is prepared for any infectious disease risk that lands on our doorsteps.

From the outset, the government's response has been robust and comprehensive, including world-class preparedness at home as well as meaningful contributions and impacts abroad as part of the global response.

These actions demonstrate the health and safety of Canadians has always been, and will continue to be, our top priority. To be clear, the risk to Canadians from the Ebola virus is very low. The Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person. It is spread through direct contact with infected body fluids, not through casual contact. To date, there has not been a single case of Ebola contracted on an airplane.

Nonetheless, our government has taken steps to assist the people in West Africa, and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

While an imported case could potentially occur in Canada, it is highly unlikely to spread between Canadians given the strength of our health care system, existing prevention and control procedures, and overall preparedness.

The Government of Canada has a number of systems in place in Canada to identify and prevent the spread of serious infectious diseases like Ebola, as well as providing ill travellers with the best possible care.

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The Public Health Agency of Canada was created in response to SARS to enhance Canada's preparedness to respond to situations like the one before us today. As a result, Canada is more prepared to address infectious disease risk today than ever before, recognizing that the many public health threats, such as outbreaks of serious infectious disease, such as Ebola, do not stop at the border.

We have also undertaken targeted work with other countries and international organizations, like the World Health Organization to build global public health security. On August 8, the World Health Organization declared the recent outbreak Ebola in West Africa a public health emergency, an international concern. It also determined that a coordinated response from the international community was required to prevent further spread of the disease.

Canada is already implementing many of the measures being advised by the World Health Organization, including maintaining preparedness to detect, investigate and manage people with Ebola virus in the unlikely event that a case were to appear in Canada.

● (2020)

Canada engages with international multilateral partners to promote global health security, including preventing and responding to public health threats. Building on our existing world health care system and prevention and control expertise, Canada's response to the Ebola situation is also being guided by the World Health Organization. On a global scale, the World Health Organization recommends managing Ebola by minimizing risk of exposure and spread.

First, the emphasis is on containment or reduction at the source. This involves treatment, screening and contact tracing on the ground for affected individuals in West Africa.

Second, there is an emphasis on limiting the spread across borders of affected countries in Africa. This includes exit screening, such as temperature checks for individuals who are travelling from affected countries.

Third, there are measures in place to detect ill travellers at points of entry in Canada.

I would like to take a few minutes to outline Canada's preparedness on how public health partners and border security officials across Canada are working together to ensure the health and safety of Canadians.

Comprehensive procedures are in place at our borders to identify ill travellers arriving to Canada. These procedures are set out in Canada's Quarantine Act which is administered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at all Canadian international points of entry. Canada requires travellers to report to a Canada Border Services agent if they are ill upon arrival. Canada Border Services Agency officers are also trained to screen arriving international travellers for signs and symptoms of infectious disease. Any travellers showing symptoms are referred to quarantine officers from the Public Health Agency of Canada for follow-up.

To be clear, the risk to Canadians is very low. There are no direct flights between Canada and countries currently affected by the Ebola virus outbreak.

Controls at our borders are just one of many interventions to reduce the spread of infectious disease and to protect Canadians. Should a traveller from an affected country develop symptoms associated with Ebola, the Canadian public health system is ready to respond with appropriate infection prevention and control, laboratory testing and treatment measures. While waiting for test results, various infection protection and control measures would be initiated within hospitals and the health care system to ensure the individual would be isolated and contained to minimize the risk of spreading the disease.

Hospitals in Canada have sophisticated infection control systems and procedures in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection, protect health care workers and provide the best care possible for those affected.

To keep Canadians informed, the Public Health Agency of Canada provides information directly to Canadians, such as travel health notices available online and through social medium platforms, including Twitter, and through the media by providing appropriate web, email, phone and contact information for people to get additional information.

In addition to these existing practices, we can quickly adapt our national response measures to address changing circumstances and evolving risk in the situation abroad. Canada's health professionals are prepared to act when an individual who has travelled from a region affected by Ebola is presented with symptoms within 21 days following the exposure.

We will continue to work with federal, provincial and territorial, and international partners to ensure a consistent and coordinated Canadian response.

In closing, I want to reassure Canadians of Canada's overall readiness to effectively respond to and manage public health threats like Ebola. The risk to Canadians remains low. This government is working to keep Canada's borders safe. Our health care system is prepared for rapid action. Canada is ready.

● (2025)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia for taking part in this evening's debate.

I cannot help but think of the people I met this weekend who were singing the praises of the organization Doctors Without Borders, which is definitely the most important player trying to put an end to this crisis. Doctors Without Borders Canada has said that what we need to do is send the Disaster Assistance Response Team, which is also known as DART.

Would my colleague agree that that would be the right thing to do?

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[English]

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, there is a coordinated effort being made by a number of countries around the world, Canada being just one. We will involve ourselves with all of the countries to ensure that the most appropriate action is taken. Canada will do its part with the many nations that are involved.

I hope that Canada, along with the other nations, will be able to stop this outbreak as soon as possible.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could comment on how coercive measures, such as forced quarantines and laws criminalizing the failure to report suspected cases, impact cases and containment.

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, certainly forced quarantine from the perspective of this outbreak in Canada is not required. We have not had a case here in Canada. If the member is speaking to West Africa, whether it be Liberia, Guinea, or the other countries, certainly there is an opportunity to look at that. However, I do not understand whether that is occurring right now.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand that Canada has been working on an experimental vaccine. I am just wondering if the hon. member could talk a little bit about what has been done with regard to that vaccination.

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, what I can tell members is that approximately 1,500 doses of an experimental vaccine, designed by the Public Health Agency of Canada, have been produced under license by a U.S. company to support ongoing research. We have offered 800 to 1,000 doses of this experimental vaccine to the World Health Organization as a response to help fight this outbreak.

The World Health Organization continues to evaluate ethical and logistical concerns about the use of experimental vaccines in outbreak areas, and while the safe transportation of our vaccine is an important consideration, these doses are ready to be transported the moment the World Health Organization requests that they be transferred or deployed.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that question was asked, because I was going to ask it, so I thank my colleague for it.

One of the things we are grappling with is the appropriate response. What I am hearing the government say is that it is ready to go if it is asked for, and I am assuming that all of the stock we have available will be made available. That is to clarify what I just heard.

Second, on the point of the DART, as was mentioned, we know that the DART can be enhanced. I am just wondering if the government has considered or has been asked to not only have the DART but to enhance it for biohazards? As we know, with this horrible disease, that would be smart.

If I can tuck one other question in there, on our Canada Border Services agents, are we training them? Do they have the protective gear that is necessary, because it is obviously a health and safety issue for them.

● (2030)

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his questions, although to tell the truth I cannot remember before the third one, so I will start with number three.

The Canada Border Services Agency officers have available to them protective suits they can wear when required, as do most officers, not only from the Canada Border Services Agency but from the RCMP as well. From that perspective, it has been taken care of.

With regard to the doses, I am being told that they are available and ready to go, and it is up to the World Health Organization.

If I may indulge, I cannot remember the second question, so I cannot answer it.

An hon. member: DART.

Mr. David Wilks: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the DART, again, we remain ready with other countries should we be called upon to utilize them. I am sure that the DART could deal very well with the situation.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I begin I will mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.

As we have heard tonight, the world faces a clear crisis with the Ebola virus. In fact, we are just hearing as of tonight that the United States has asked that a special meeting be convened by the Security Council this Thursday, which clearly shows that it is not just our Parliament but our friends and allies who are seized with this. I thank my colleague for asking for this debate. There will be a Security Council session this Thursday, and I think that is important.

As members know, we are also seized and will be discussing tomorrow night the issue of ISIS and Iraq. These two crises are worthy of our attention and our support. The case of Ebola, of course, is a very different scenario than dealing with what is happening in Iraq, but it requires a well-thought-out plan. It requires Canada to do everything it can as a responsible actor to help out, because this is a global phenomenon.

As we know, viruses travel across borders. We went through that not that long ago with SARS. Hopefully we have learned from that experience that if we have medicines that can help, we make them available and that we have an appropriate civil response. However, in this case, it is really about doing everything we can to help people particularly in West Africa.

We have already heard some of the numbers tonight, but I will underline them, because they are worth repeating. According to the World Health Organization, over 4,200 cases of Ebola have been recorded. We know the countries are Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Senegal, and Guinea. More than 2,200 people have died in a very short window. That is why this is so very important.

I have to give credit to those in civil society, in particular, Médecins Sans Frontières, who called this crisis to the world's attention. I guess I have to say that, sadly, not all of us were paying attention. However, I have to give credit to these people, because they put their lives on the line. They have done splendid work.

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There is a prediction by the World Health Organization that we are talking about up to 20,000 people being infected over the next three months. The proliferation of this disease is massive and clearly needs all hands on deck to do everything we can to contain and stop it.

Further, if the virus does not mutate into an even more dangerous virus, which we hope it does not, because we know what would happen then, and if the international community can work together, we have a chance to contain it and make sure that fewer people will be infected. Clearly, more people will be infected because of the nature of this virus, but if we make sure that we do everything we can to isolate it and help those countries that need the help, then we have a good chance of containing it.

There is an important point that we have talked about in the House many times. We talked about this when we were dealing with the issue of the Central African Republic and the Sahel region. These are countries that cannot afford to respond in the way Canada and other countries can. This is why it is so very important, absolutely critical, that we do everything we can to help support the countries I mentioned. In particular, the countries are already stressed when it comes to providing basic health care, so when there is a crisis like this, we have to do everything we can.

Liberia particularly is severely challenged in controlling the spread of disease. Medical supplies are desperately low, and more and more health workers and doctors are themselves contracting the disease. I do not have to tell members that when we have the people on the front lines infected with the virus, clearly there is a capacity problem and an inability to respond appropriately.

According to the director of the World Health Organization, Margaret Chan, there is not a single hospital bed available in Liberia, not one, because they are all taken by infected individuals. Clearly, there is a capacity problem there that can be dealt with.

● (2035)

Facilities are at full capacity, and all of the resources are presently exhausted, both the human resources and the basic materials they use to respond to health care crises.

This cascades into something else. When the front-line workers and capacity are taken up, it is not just a health issue but a security crisis as well. This is reflected in terms of governance, and we have talked a bit about that tonight. As well, there is transportation. How do they get people who are infected to the appropriate health care facilities? If the health care facilities are not there, what do they do? That is why we have been talking about a DART and the other models we have, and there are others around the world we should be talking to our allies about. Hopefully the Security Council will focus on what each member state can do to help out in a coordinated fashion. It is not just a health care crisis; it is a crisis around security, ultimately.

The way the disease is spread is spontaneous. It challenges the kind of global infrastructure we have. When there are countries that can least afford to respond on the front lines, it is obvious that we must do everything we can to help out, such as reinforcing the infrastructure they have, building more capacity, and providing human resources and infrastructure, such as beds. In a way, it is similar to what we will be talking about tomorrow, which is the

refugee crisis. When I was in northern Iraq, they asked that we build refugee camps. In this case, it is to build hospitals and provide the services. They have that similarity. It needs a global response, and Canada has to do its part. I think that is what we are hearing from the government tonight. I was glad to hear of the \$2 million. Clearly we will have to evaluate things and see if we can provide more.

Global transportation networks are being turned into vectors for spreading diseases. That is why people are quite rightly concerned. The way people travel and move around now, diseases can spread very quickly to more countries and continents. As the disease spreads internationally and encounters new populations, it is increasingly critical to understand the mutations and to monitor what is happening.

As domestic security and transportation networks become less stable because those populations, countries, and continents are affected, governments face real difficulties meeting the broader needs of their people. When a certain region and area becomes paralyzed, everything comes to a halt. They are putting all of their resources into responding to the crisis. Widespread panic sets in, which undermines dealing with it in a calm way, which causes what we have already seen, which is social unrest. This is very sensitive, and we must be smart in how we respond.

In requesting increased international support, the Liberian president said that the epidemic “threatens civil order”.

Dr. Michael Osterholm of the University of Minnesota said, “the Ebola epidemic in West Africa has the potential to alter history as much as any plague has ever done”, so on this note, Canada must help.

I did not know this before doing the work on this tonight, but Malaysia produces most of the world's rubber gloves and has recently committed 20 million pairs for medical use. Canada should use its expertise to show leadership to help.

In closing, not only should we have a DART, we should also provide the other needs that have been asked for, and that is the experts we have, the medical professionals, and particularly experts in public health. If we are to help deal with this crisis, all hands have to be on deck, and clearly Canada has a role to play.

● (2040)

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his, as usual, very interesting speech. I would like to ask him if he is in agreement with many experts who say that given that quite a number of the cases we have seen are new cases that have appeared in the last few weeks, it is as if this epidemic is gaining speed and that if we do not act now, the challenge in a few months will be even worse, which is why we absolutely need to act now.

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Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right to make that point. If we have learned anything from communicable diseases, from viruses, it was back in 2000. That was the last time we had the Security Council seized with a health issue and that was about HIV/AIDS because of how it exploded even though we knew about it in Africa. Here we are again. Therefore, if we are to learn anything from our experience in the past, SARS as I mentioned earlier and others, it is that once we see the takeoff of a virus like this and we see the increase in cases, as the member noted, obviously this is something we have to be seized with and we have to put together. This is where it is difficult and I am glad to see that it is an issue for the Security Council on Thursday. We have to have a coordinated response. This is what Médecins Sans Frontières is asking for, what the WHO is underlining, that we all do what we can. When there are countries that do not have the infrastructure for basic public health that have to deal with this, then clearly we have to do more than just send rubber gloves and masks, which is helpful, but clearly we need to do everything we can to send people and build infrastructure.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his thoughtful presentation. However, it is important to note that an epidemic that turns into a pandemic will affect the entire world.

If we cannot quickly control the spread of this disease in Africa, how much will this disaster cost, both economically and in terms of human lives, if it ever comes here, within our own borders?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who raises an excellent question.

Responding to such an epidemic means stopping the spread of Ebola in the affected regions in order to prevent a pandemic.

• (2045)

[English]

If we are to learn anything, as the member said, going from what is simply a regional context to stop it from being a global phenomenon, which essentially we have now as we are hearing of cases, we have to be very careful not to spread fear but we have to monitor things carefully. It will spread throughout not just West Africa but beyond. Once it takes hold in any particular region, it does disable not only the health resources to an extent where basic infrastructure cannot be maintained as we have seen, but it also undermines the economy. That is something we had a little taste of with SARS.

I am very concerned that the world and the global community have not responded quickly enough. If I may, it is interesting when we see health issues like this. We certainly saw it with HIV/AIDS, where, let us be frank about this, we were self-satisfied that things were not affecting us as much. When it came to sub-Saharan Africa, the world did not do a lot until it absolutely ravaged major populations and then we started to care. That is a lesson that should be learned and we cannot repeat what happened with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. That is why this should be taken so seriously, with all hands on deck doing everything we can.

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouda Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie for requesting that this emergency debate on Canada's response to the Ebola epidemic be held tonight.

Today, three countries in West Africa are facing an exponential Ebola epidemic crisis. These are Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Doctors Without Borders reports 600 new patients every week in those countries. The World Health Organization is projecting that 20,000 people will be infected in three months. Cases have also been identified in Senegal and Nigeria. We must not wait for this epidemic to spread and claim even more victims.

In her speech to the UN on September 2, Dr. Joanne Liu said:

Leaders are failing to come to grips with this transnational threat. The WHO announcement on August 8 that the epidemic constituted a "public health emergency of international concern" has not led to decisive action, and states have essentially joined a global coalition of inaction.

This situation is simply unacceptable. As a doctor by training, I can only be moved by this statement. Canada is a developed country with considerable financial means compared to the countries in the grips of Ebola and yet the government was slow to act. When it did take action, the measures were inadequate.

This epidemic knows no borders. We cannot take action just to protect our borders. We must attack the roots of the epidemic to eradicate it. Releasing funds is not enough for this. This humanitarian emergency needs trained medical personnel to actively detect new cases. It also needs the proper structures, treatment centres and safe isolation facilities.

Doctors Without Borders has pointed out that its personnel had to turn patients away because they had no space. In Sierra Leone, infected people are dying in the streets because they cannot get to a medical centre. In Liberia, the victims are stopped at the hospital doors. Because of a lack of capacity, the hospitals cannot admit them.

We have civilian, logistical, technological and even military capabilities to help the organizations on the ground. That is where the containment action can be taken. That is why the Canadian government should deploy the Disaster Assistance Response Team with the ability to use all the resources it needs. This should be done in close collaboration with the affected countries.

In support of this argument, I would like to remind members that the entire health care system in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone has been undermined. More than 150 health care workers have been infected, 79 of whom have died. These deaths decrease these countries' capacity to respond to the crisis. Some health care professionals are afraid to go to work because they might catch the virus.

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● (2050)

Health care facilities have therefore been abandoned, leaving the population on its own to deal with the virus and other illnesses such as malaria, diarrhea and other common diseases that unfortunately cannot be treated. Providing support on site and increasing the number of secure isolation facilities will help to ease the burden on health care systems that today can no longer respond to the demand.

It is also important to set up an efficient information system. I would like to tell members what I heard at a meeting with the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association. I did not ask permission to share this information, but in the Ivory Coast, people will no longer touch each other. The minister told us that people greet each other without touching. That is because there is a lack of information. It is important that we go and help these people. By so doing, we would also protect ourselves. That is some background on what is happening in those countries, and it shows that an efficient information system must be implemented.

People also need to have access to information, otherwise mistrust of medical personnel will only grow, resulting in more violence. We agree that Canada cannot do this alone. A cross-government response is required.

The UN Security Council is holding an emergency meeting this Thursday. Decisions will be made regarding what action to take and what measures could be implemented. I would like to know how the government intends to get involved in the solutions that will eventually be implemented even if it cannot participate in the meeting.

We have been slow to act, but we can remedy that by taking immediate action. When we hear Liberia's national defence minister tell the UN Security Council that Liberia's existence is seriously threatened, the situation is more than urgent. The longer we delay, the greater the threat to the future of an entire generation.

[English]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *The New York Times* is reporting tonight that tomorrow President Obama will be going to the CDC to hear first-hand what the situation is from its point of view and appoint an Ebola czar to coordinate the efforts of the United States internationally.

Does the hon. member think that having the minister of heritage and culture do a press conference on the Ebola virus is an appropriate response by the government, or whether, as was the original understanding of Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, it should be Canada's doctor speaking to the people of Canada explaining what this disease is and the risks? How can we ensure that politics is out of this and information about a serious infectious disease is delivered by physicians and medical people as opposed to politicians?

● (2055)

[Translation]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her relevant question.

She asked a two-part question. The first part has to do with Canada's participation in the Security Council. Unfortunately, we all

know that we lost our seat on that council. Up until now, no application has been made to try to join the council.

As for the second part of the question regarding the possibility of having a doctor who is specialized in these urgent cases, my colleague knows that I am a doctor by training. I think it would be a good idea for doctors to be explaining the Ebola virus, which is known as a hemorrhagic fever in medical jargon. It would make a lot of sense for public health officials and a doctor, as the member said, to explain things and avoid causing panic. As I already explained in my speech, there is a lack of information about this disease.

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since my colleague is a doctor by training, I want to ask her to tell us about the potential risk of this disease spreading exponentially.

She said today that there were 600 new cases a week. However, in a relatively short period of a few weeks, how easily could 600 cases become 6,000 cases or more? At what point is it essential to deal with this problem now when the number of cases is still relatively low? If it grew to 10,000 or 20,000 cases a week, we would lose all control.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for another relevant question.

This is currently an epidemic. As we have heard, this infection is spreading exponentially. I am not an epidemiologist or a biologist—I am a family doctor—but to my knowledge, the best thing to do to prevent this disease from spreading would be to work on the ground. We need to help people by providing information and making people aware of proper hygiene practices. We need to create a system to treat people and perhaps even set up an air corridor so we could send infected patients to regional centres where they would be treated.

Therefore, it is very important to target this disease in West Africa before it becomes a pandemic.

[English]

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development.

About two weeks ago, I went to Nigeria to attend a ministerial conference on security. This was my third visit to Nigeria. As is normal, one enters the country without fear of any issues. However, what was different this time was that as I entered the airport, there was a person with a little machine pointed at my head. I stopped and asked what she was doing. She said she was testing my temperature to see if I was infected with Ebola. Nigeria is one of the countries, regretfully, that is affected by Ebola, although on a smaller scale. It immediately reminded me of the danger of this disease. For a minute it created a fear minute in me that things have changed with this deadly virus.

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As we know, the World Health Organization has declared the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease in West Africa to be a public health emergency of international concern. The Ebola outbreak is putting a strain on already fragile nations. Of greatest concern are the condition of health systems in the most affected countries and the lack of knowledge about Ebola, which have created conditions for its spread. Security forces that have been deployed to deal with the outbreak have little or no experience in dealing with such a threat. The use of quarantine as a preventive measure is causing alarm, and public fears based on misconceptions about the disease have spread to others.

Against the advice of the WHO, regional and international airlines have cancelled flights to affected areas. Border closures are creating supply shortages and impeding the transfer of laboratory specimens, equipment, and supplies necessary for the response. Responses by neighbouring countries and the fears of investors would likely accelerate the economic impact of the crisis.

It is vital for Canadians to be aware of the risks in travelling to the affected countries I just mentioned. As always, the safety of Canadians is of highest priority. We strive to prepare our citizens for international travel by providing information and advice on the safe travel to foreign countries and to help Canadians abroad in handling consular difficulties or emergencies.

The Government of Canada's advice and information on travel abroad can be found on travel.gc.ca. The website should be the first step for all Canadians planning a trip abroad. It offers a wealth of information and tools to help travellers make responsible and informed decisions. This includes travel advice and advisories on more than 200 countries, which gives an overview of the security situation in the country, information on entry and exit requirements, health recommendations, contact information to the nearest Canadian office, and much more. Canadians can also use this website to register with the registration of Canadians abroad service. This free, quick, and confidential service allows travellers to receive updates on any local developments that may affect their safety and security.

Several PHAC travel health notices have been issued to Canadians in the affected areas. The registration of Canadians abroad service alerts them to the changing travel advisories, border closures, and flight suspensions, and it reminds Canadians of where to call if they need assistance. We will continue to work closely with PHAC to ensure Canadians receive the latest information. We also provide public communication and outreach products to educate Canadians on how to travel safely and responsibly. Ultimately, the decision to travel is the sole responsibility of the traveller, who is best placed to make appropriate choices about his or her own safety.

Due to the Ebola outbreak and its impact on mobility and access to quality health care, the Government of Canada recommends against non-essential travel to Nigeria, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. The Government of Canada's ability to provide consular assistance is extremely limited in the affected regions. We urge Canadians whose presence in the region is not essential to consider leaving by commercial means while it is still possible, as it becoming increasingly difficult to do so.

These recommendations are intended to inform Canadian travellers and to make it easier for health officials in these countries

to dedicate their resources toward controlling the outbreak. Greater public education and awareness will alert Canadian travellers and Government of Canada employees to the fact that risks to public health workers are high in the affected areas, as most human infections result from direct contact with the body fluids of an infected patient.

● (2100)

There may also be difficulty in accessing health care services due to an increased burden on the health care system. The WHO has reported that more than 240 health care workers have been infected with the Ebola virus disease and more than 120 of them have died.

While no Canadians have contracted Ebola to date, a growing number of Canadian health care workers are on the front line providing treatment. Their work puts them at an increased risk of exposure, and we must be prepared for the possibility that they may contract the disease. In the event that Canadians are infected, officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, abroad and in Canada, will direct the patient to the closest medical provider and refer them onward as appropriate. These officials would discuss medically appropriate recommendations for the return to Canada of the patient and his or her family, based on advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the patient's treating doctor. Protocols for the treatment or transfer of Canadian health workers are in place based on the level of exposure to the virus, and they would be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Government of Canada will work with allied governments and international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the United States, United Kingdom, and Spain, at civilian and military levels, on the conduct of their medical evacuations in Ebola-affected countries.

Beyond medical evacuation planning, there are necessary security concerns in the affected areas which require more detailed contingency planning. While commercial options for the departure in Ebola-affected areas continue to exist, capacity is significantly reduced from normal levels due to the suspension of flights to European and African destinations. While we are not currently contemplating an evacuation of Canadians from any of these areas, our embassies in the region are monitoring the security situation, verifying the status of flights and land borders, and observing how governments are maintaining medical services and other public institutions, as well as how quarantine measures are being implemented. The goal of WHO is to stop Ebola transmission in the affected countries within six to nine months. This can be achieved with proper and effective infection prevention and control measures.

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The Government of Canada is fully committed to supporting international efforts to control the Ebola virus outbreak. The assistance we are providing to affected countries in West Africa will not only contribute to preventing further spread of the disease, it will also help to safeguard the security and well-being of Canadian citizens, whose safety is of the highest priority.

• (2105)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United States has already contributed \$100 million, and it will spend up to \$75 million more to provide 1,000 treatment beds in Liberia, the worst-hit country, and 130,000 protective suits for health workers. The Obama administration has asked Congress for another \$88 million to send additional supplies and public health experts to develop potential Ebola medications and vaccines. The CDC has 103 staff in West Africa working on outbreak control, and plans to send another 50.

I am wondering if the government accepts that the international response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has been inadequate and that we must dramatically scale up the response. Will the government respond to the WHO's request? It needs \$600 million to respond.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my intervention, Canada is working with the WHO and with our international partners to fight this Ebola outbreak. We all recognize that this is an international emergency and it requires internationally coordinated efforts.

My colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, will shortly be speaking on what Canada and International Development will be doing and has done to date. I can assure the member that Canada will be at the forefront of this international effort and will continue fighting against this terrible disease.

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague spoke during his speech about travel and the travel precautions that Canadians need to take. I wonder if he could restate for the Canadians who are watching this debate the urgency of contacting Foreign Affairs and how they would get in touch with the Department of Foreign Affairs when they are planning to do any travelling. Where could they get the statements on countries that they need to be cautious about visiting?

Hon. Deepak Obhrai: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, for bringing forward this important question.

Let me say again, Canadian advice on information on travel abroad can be found on travel.gc.ca. This website should be the first stop for all Canadians planning a trip abroad.

In addition, Canadians can also use this website to register through the registration of Canadians abroad service. This free and quick confidential service allows travellers to receive updates on any development in affected places, including how to contact, where and when, Canadian officials in an emergency to help them should they require any information, or by very bad luck are infected, or for any other reason.

Again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me repeat that: travel.gc.ca, registration of Canadians abroad.

• (2110)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to join the debate tonight on the Ebola virus disease. I will be focusing my comments on the actions Canada is taking to support international efforts to control its spread.

This is the largest Ebola outbreak in history, eclipsing all the Ebola outbreaks together since 1976, when the virus was discovered. It is the first for West Africa. It is also the first time that Ebola has become widely transmitted in urban areas.

The World Health Organization estimates that more than 4,300 people in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone have contracted the virus since March and over half of those have died of this disease. As one would expect, the global community is on high alert, particularly since the WHO declared in early August that this is a public health emergency of international concern, and rightly so. According to the organization, cases could rise to 20,000 within six to nine months, a development that would be catastrophic.

The developing world is ill equipped to manage a health emergency of this kind. The crisis is evolving in a context of chronic fragility, in places of high poverty, and after decades of conflict and civil strife. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, health systems have simply collapsed as the virus keeps spreading through the population. People are dying of Ebola, but they are also dying of malaria, diarrhea, or of complications during childbirth because they cannot access the health system. It has become nearly impossible to keep up with the growing medical needs of populations that grow more ill by the day and that is not mentioning the strain that the virus has put on economic activities in these areas. The disease and efforts to contain it have disrupted trade and the rain-fed agricultural season, both primary livelihood sources. It is costing jobs, it is stealing incomes, and it is keeping people from supporting themselves and their families.

Traditional cross-border and inter-country supply routes have also been rendered largely impassable as entire geographic areas are cordoned off and other countries in the region close their borders and restrict access by sea, land or air. As a result, financial analysts are predicting significant GDP losses for the affected countries and for the region as a whole. Border closures and service disruptions are also keeping equipment and supplies from reaching the sick and those working to keep them alive. This situation is very serious.

Right now, this outbreak has the world's attention. The fear of the unknown can do that. However, if history has taught us anything it is that few foes can stand up to the might of a united and committed global community. In the face of unprecedented challenge, the world is capable of unprecedented action. That is where we find ourselves, at a time of action.

On August 29, the WHO launched the Ebola response road map. It is not an appeal but a framework quantifying the required response to an outbreak of 20,000 cases over the next six to nine months. It outlines the World Health Organization's requirements, as well as those of affected national governments, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, Médecins Sans Frontières, and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The single greatest need identified remains qualified medical staff, both international and national. These are proving difficult to mobilize or even deploy, due to air option restrictions and issues of medical evacuation. Tragically, already more than 300 health care workers have been infected and just under half of them have died from the disease.

• (2115)

However, this is not just a health crisis. It is now resulting in other humanitarian needs. The World Food Programme and UNICEF are scaling up their operations. The WFP will be augmenting its food assistance operation to help feed some 1.3 million people for an initial three-month period. Canada is an important contributor to the WFP, the third largest in the world.

For its part, UNICEF will be expanding its activities in the affected countries and countries of concern, including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Senegal. UNICEF will focus on social mobilization, health and hygiene promotion, the provision of psychosocial services, the establishment of a system to identify and care for children orphaned by Ebola, and the distribution of soap and chlorine.

As a valued international partner, the Government of Canada is fully committed to supporting the international effort to combat this disease. Ours is a whole-of-government approach, which includes contributions from our embassies in affected regions; the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development; and the Public Health Agency of Canada. To date, we have been among the largest donors to the crisis response, having contributed nearly \$5.4 million to support humanitarian and security interventions to help contain the spread of Ebola through West Africa.

Some of these funds are supporting the WHO, Médecins Sans Frontières, and local Red Cross organizations as they engage in their respective responsive activities. We have contributed medical expertise, an experimental vaccine, and financial assistance. We will continue to assess our contributions as the global push to bring this outbreak under control intensifies.

Canada is fortunate to be among the countries that need not fear Ebola. Our health systems are modern and strong, and medical professionals and experts have said that the epidemic is unlikely to go beyond West Africa. Indeed, the public health risk here remains low, and no Canadians have been infected to date.

Still, that does not deliver us from our responsibility to help. Canada prides itself on being there for friends and neighbours in

their time of need. It is, quite simply, the Canadian way. This is one of those times when our experience and expertise can help to save lives abroad. Canadians should be very proud that their government is standing up to help.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and her general understanding of the gravity and seriousness of the situation. It is a situation that is so serious that the UN Security Council is going to meet on Thursday to discuss it.

[Translation]

My colleague said that Canada is one of the largest donors to this crisis, having contributed more than \$5 million. However, the United States, for example, has already announced funding of \$100 million in response to the WHO and UN requests, which is a significant contribution. We know that President Obama will travel to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tomorrow and announce an even more ambitious plan to deal with the crisis raging in those countries.

I would like to know whether Canada is ready to follow the Americans' lead. That is my first question.

I have a short second question. My colleague also mentioned the shortage of health care workers on the ground to deal with the crisis and the transportation issues. I know that we have a small team on the ground, but I would like to know whether the government is considering sending more medical specialists. Will it provide help with transportation? Will it also deploy our Disaster Assistance Response Team, or DART?

• (2120)

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I would like to do is take this opportunity to thank all of those health care workers who are on the ground in the affected areas, people who have taken the risk and put their lives in significant danger to assist people who are in such desperate need.

As I said earlier, Canada has been a major contributor to this effort. It is a World Health Organization lead. We are going to continue to work with all of our partners in this. We will continue to assess on a go-forward basis.

As the Minister of Health announced tonight, there was a call for some additional assistance from the WHO, and Canada immediately announced our assistance. At seven o'clock this evening, the Minister of Health made that announcement.

We will continue to assess. Canada is there. Canada stands ready to help.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization says that every 70 beds devoted to Ebola patients require between 200 and 250 staff to care for them properly. Many of those workers could be local, but there is an enormous need for outside expertise as well.

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Médecins Sans Frontières has facilities throughout the region. It says that the Ebola cases are surging and it cannot keep up, “They were turning [away] between 30-40 people a day in Monrovia alone...This is...untenable”.

Cuba has offered to send 165 doctors, nurses and specialists to aid the outbreak in Sierra Leone. We thank all those who put their life on the line to help.

How many specialists Canada has sent? If medical specialists want to help, what is the government doing to allow them to do so?

Ms. Lois Brown: Mr. Speaker, I again respond by saying that this is lead by the WHO.

The World Health Organization is doing the assessments. It is putting out calls for assistance. Tonight Canada announced its contribution. As soon as the WHO called for the masks and the proper equipment, Canada stepped up to the plate.

We are working very closely with the WHO. We will continue to make those assessments as it makes the call. Canada stands ready to help.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin (Jeanne-Le Ber, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to a number of interventions this evening on this very scary and dangerous event that is happening in the world today.

I remember a number of years back reading a novel called *The Hot Zone*. It was a terrifying true story written by Richard Preston. It is a non-fiction novel recounting the fear that came about when the Ebola virus was found in monkeys in Reston, Virginia and the warning signs that this sent off. I remember the fear I felt when reading the book of Ebola skipping borders and come into the world that I knew. I started looking into it back then. The book was written in 1995 and I read it when it came out. Even back then, Ebola had already done a lot of damage.

The first time that Ebola came into western consciousness, as we know it, was in 1976 with an outbreak in DRC. At that time, it was the Zaire strain. It had an 88% mortality rate. Since then, four other strains have joined the Ebola virus arsenal. The Zaire strain still stands as being the deadliest, ranging from the mid-50% up into the high 90% as far as mortality rates are concerned.

There have been some 24 outbreaks of Ebola on the African continent since 1976 with various strains. There are Sudan, Zaire, Thai and Bundibugyo strains, with the Zaire and Sudan strains being the most prolific.

I have heard much of what we are doing in the here and now. We have talked about what Canada and the World Health Organization are doing. We have touched on what other nations around the world are doing. However, my intervention will be based on a question.

Since 1976, there seems to have been very little research or work done in terms of preparation for the eventuality of an outbreak that we now face. It is an outbreak that has crossed borders. As I understand it, this is one of the first times that we have had a multi-border crossing of this disease. The question I would put out there to ruminate on is why we in the west have not progressed further in terms of our understanding and preparedness for not the possibility but the eventuality of one of these diseases, be it the hantavirus,

Ebola or Reston disease, crossing borders and entering into other countries that up until this point had not seen this disease.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to let you know that I will be splitting my time with the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

• (2125)

In the days of the black plague, this disease ravaged Europe to the tune of two-thirds of its citizens. There was no understanding at the time of how this disease was jumping borders until it was understood that it was being transported by rats that stowed away on the ships doing commerce between the affected countries. This understanding helped curtail the spread of the black death to the point where it only destroyed two-thirds of the population of Europe.

In the days since then the airplane has been developed, even ocean liners, which traverse the world a lot faster. They travel to so-called Third World countries, undeveloped countries, crossing into developed nations from the continents of Africa, Europe and North America.

It seems to me that at least since 1976 there may have been an opportunity to think of what would happen when diseases like this eventually did cross borders. This is the situation we are facing today. We have transcontinental transportation. Individuals who may be infected with the disease in the morning could be on a plane in the afternoon and on a completely different continent. We are not prepared for this. We are finally realizing that there needs to be an ongoing holistic approach to controlling outbreaks of diseases of this sort.

I would venture to guess that many other types of diseases are living in animal populations all around the world and they will eventually be transmitted to humans in one way or another. How prepared are we?

We are now in a situation where the UN Security Council is going to be debating actions on this crisis this Thursday, which I believe is the first time the council has been involved in a health related crisis. We are in a situation where countries where Ebola has happened before are now unprepared to deal with both the containment and treatment of this disease. I applaud the fact that Canada is stepping forward and doing its share and I applaud the fact that other developed countries are doing the same.

I would like to think that this is a warning for the future in terms of small outbreaks. When we see small outbreaks of diseases like this, we should take the opportunity to invest and learn about them so we can prepare for these diseases eventually crossing borders and possibly oceans.

• (2130)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for raising the question about research and development.

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I wonder if he would like to stand and congratulate the people who developed the vaccine in Winnipeg and did trials on the vaccine that is currently being used in the Ebola crisis. There was some deliberation over whether it was ethical to use a vaccine that had not been properly clinically tested, but would he like to congratulate our Canadian scientists on the work that they have done to help find a control for this terrible disease?

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Speaker, I do indeed congratulate the Canadian scientists for the work that has been done in the development of vaccines as well as all the other individuals across the world who continuously work on these types of vaccines.

As the world gets smaller through the Internet and through travel, what are we doing to create a more coordinated effort so the vaccines that are being developed can be tested and ready to use in a larger scale when crises like these happen?

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the World Health Organization issued a plea for more health workers. The key to beating the disease, said the World Health Organization's Margaret Chan, is people power. Pledges of equipment and money are coming in, but 500 to 600 foreign experts and at least 1,000 local health workers are needed on the ground. The number of new patients is moving far faster than the capacity to manage them. We need to surge at least three to four times to catch up with the outbreaks.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague knows how many specialists Canada has sent. I did not get any answer. Is that number enough? If there are Canadian specialists who want to go, is the government helping them to be able to do that?

• (2135)

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague's question would be best asked to the government as it would have the answers as opposed to myself. It stands to reason or logic that if the plea is going out for more bodies, more people, and more experts to deal with this situation, whether all those experts come from Canada or whether Canada has a share of those experts, I hope and trust that everything is being done to make sure that the resources Canada has to offer in terms of expertise and specialists in this area are being put forward and are being put forward swiftly.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very interesting and learned speech, particularly about how diseases can travel. I like to say a virus does not need a visa to travel. Nowadays communications and travel are more and more frequent and this is a big issue. Canada and western countries outside of Africa are not affected right now in this current crisis, but I would like my colleague to expand a bit on the issue that we have to tackle in West Africa before running the risk that it touches other regions, be it Europe, Asia, North America or Latin America.

Mr. Tyrone Benskin: Mr. Speaker, containment of any sort is a must. The issue of containment is a very tricky and troubling one, especially when we inject human nature, culture and practice. Today we had a meeting with representatives from the Ivory Coast, the foreign affairs minister, and we did touch on that question. They have taken very strict measures in terms of border control to stop the influx or the potential for disease coming in, but there is only so much they can do.

A disease is not something that people knowingly get. The culture of embracing one's loved one, a lost member who has died of this disease. This disease lives after a person is dead. The embrace, saliva, tears, anything, this is how we contract the disease. As I said earlier, a person can contract the disease in the morning, get on a plane in the afternoon in whatever country, and we will not know until such time as that person is showing systems that he has the disease.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would first like to welcome everyone returning to the House: staff and MPs, regardless of what party they belong to. There are so many people around that it is like a bustling city.

When I heard the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie request this emergency debate earlier today, I did not wait a second to put my name down to deliver this speech. I will start with a little story about another well-documented epidemic, the Spanish flu.

My mother was 12 years old at the time and lived through the pandemic. She later became a nurse. I am telling you about my mother because she often spoke to us about the Spanish flu and the toll it took. According to the Pasteur Institute, this virus claimed close to 30 million victims around the world. People now say the number is probably higher.

One of the stories my mother told us was about Johan Beetz, for whom the village is named. Johan Beetz raised foxes and lived on the north shore in Quebec when the Spanish flu epidemic became a pandemic. Anyone familiar with the north shore in Quebec knows there were no roads back then. There still are not many.

Everything arrived by boat back then, including food, but Johan Beetz refused to have the boats resupply the small village. There were no cases of Spanish flu in the small village. I am relating this anecdote because one way to avoid a pandemic is to isolate populations. Isolation can occur in two ways. The affected populations can be isolated or we can isolate ourselves. Johan Beetz decided to isolate himself.

Everyone dreams of being rich and healthy, but not everyone's dreams come true. The African population is growing. Average projections by the United Nations indicate that Niger's population may reach 50 million in 2050, compared with 12 million in 2004, and that the populations of Mali and Burkina Faso could reach 40 million, compared with 13 million in 2004. Ivory Coast's population may reach 34 million in 2050, compared with 18 million in 2004.

A rapidly growing population, problems with poverty, and a lack of health infrastructure and drinking water are just a few of the factors fuelling the disease. I want to share with the House my concerns about the spread of the Ebola virus epidemic.

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By the end of July 2014, the World Health Organization had sounded the alarm to say that the virus was out of control in West Africa. Indeed, the Ebola virus is spreading very quickly in West Africa. The virus is deadly in 25 to 90% of cases. The epidemic was first declared in Guinea, then in Liberia and Sierra Leone, two neighbouring countries. At the end of July, those three countries combined had at least 1,200 cases, including 670 deaths. It should also be noted that there is no treatment for this hemorrhagic fever.

As of September 12, according to the World Health Organization's most recent figures, the number of deaths had doubled to roughly 2,400 and about 5,000 people were infected. The WHO predicted that the number of cases would reach 20,000, which is quite worrisome. The data may vary across the different speeches delivered by others, according to the photos taken or the references used. Today, the spread of the disease is such that the most affected countries are now considering taking extreme measures such as imposing a lockdown on their citizens.

In addition, on September 12, 2014, the Cuban government announced the deployment of 165 health professionals to provide care to those with the Ebola virus in West Africa. In Canada, there are no known cases of Ebola, which is excellent news. Border controls are in place, namely the screening of sick passengers and quarantine measures. Those who watch the news have seen the sick being transported to Spain or the United States. People who were working on site were transported in entirely safe conditions.

I would like to know what the Government of Canada plans to do to help the countries that urgently need assistance. Does Canada plan to send health professionals? If so, under what conditions will that be done?

• (2140)

Another concern I have is about the health strategies that Canada has implemented in the event that we should have to treat someone who contracts the virus during their stay in one of the affected countries.

How many Canadians are currently living in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone? Could we get those numbers? Is there a specific process for bringing Canadians who have contracted the virus back to Canada? Is there an emergency health plan in place for health authorities, airlines and the public?

What support does Canada plan on offering to WHO which, according to its road map, aims to end transmission worldwide within six to nine months?

WHO also points out the urgent need to scale up the international response in order to curb the epidemic. What is Canada proposing? How will Canada get involved in this international effort and what role will it play?

I would like to share one last quick word. On behalf of Canadians, I would like to thank the Doctors Without Borders team, our first line of defence against this epidemic.

• (2145)

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my

colleague, and I am sorry that she was not here while I was giving my speech. I would like to outline for her a little bit about what Canada is doing.

We have given \$2.95 million to WHO to strengthen the field response to the outbreak and mitigate associated threats. We have given \$1.7 million to support humanitarian interventions led by Doctors Without Borders. We have given \$160,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross. We have given \$200,000 to the WHO through the international health grants program. Tonight, not three hours ago, the Minister of Health announced \$2.5 million in protective equipment, which was asked for.

I wonder if my colleague would like me to send that information across the aisle to her.

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, does Canada plan to help with transportation so that personnel can travel to treat the sick?

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

She asked a question that had not yet been raised in this evening's debate, namely the number of Canadians currently living in the hardest hit areas. I think that is a very interesting question.

We know that the WHO and the UN have launched an appeal for \$600 million and that the U.S. has already given \$100 million. We expect President Obama to announce other measures tomorrow.

If we compare this amount to Canada's contribution of a little more than \$7 million at this point, that is interesting.

However, does my colleague believe that we could do more, specifically by sending medical specialists and our Disaster Assistance Response Team?

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the medical teams on the ground are being stretched to the limit and need reinforcements from around the world.

Doctors Without Borders is doing an extraordinary job, but this organization needs additional resources. Canada should be sending doctors, specialists, drugs, equipment and money.

In fact, countries are always thankful for the money contributed, no matter the amount, even when it is small compared to what the U.S. donates. The Canadian contribution is important nonetheless, and we must thank the government for at least thinking to send this aid.

However, vehicles, gas, water, tents and medical infrastructure are also needed so that people can operate and work in safety.

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things the Public Health Agency of Canada does is research on disease prevention. Unfortunately, the Conservative government decided to slash that agency's budget in recent years.

I have to wonder how long that agency's team has really been working on the Ebola crisis. After all, news of the Ebola outbreak has been heard all around the world for weeks, if not months now.

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Does my colleague think that Conservative cuts to the Public Health Agency of Canada may have hurt our ability to properly study this kind of disease?

• (2150)

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day: Mr. Speaker, when research budgets are cut, the results and findings of that research are definitely affected. As the government said a little earlier, we know that vaccines that are not yet ready, that have not been tested, will be used on humans. Ethically speaking, I would rather see an agency like Health Canada carry out research and development at the right place and time. I would prefer to avoid such experiments on humans if they are not completely proper.

Yes, I think that cuts to Health Canada do have an impact on a situation like this, when we run the risk of a pandemic.

[*English*]

Ms. Eve Adams (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to be here. I am pleased to discuss the international coordination effort to address the Ebola crisis in West Africa and Canada's contribution to this threat to international public health.

The World Health Organization has declared this a public health emergency of international concern. My thoughts are with those affected by this tragic outbreak in Africa, with all of their families and all individuals worried for their safety. I take this opportunity to update not only members of this great Parliament but all Canadians on what we are doing, the current international situation, the impact it may have on Canadians, and measures already in place to ensure a consistent and coordinated response to this threat to international public health.

I want to begin by reassuring members of the House and all Canadians that there has never been a case of Ebola in Canada, and according to the Public Health Agency, the risk to Canadians remains very low. The Government of Canada is working closely with our international partners to monitor the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and to support the response, while at the same time reviewing our domestic public health preparedness systems and working with our provincial and territorial colleagues.

I will start by providing the facts we have on Ebola based on the current scientific evidence so that we can all understand what the Ebola virus is and how it spreads. Ebola, as many Canadians are now well aware, is a severe viral disease that causes hemorrhagic fever in humans and animals.

It first appeared in 1976, and outbreaks since then have been primarily occurring in remote villages in Central and West Africa, near tropical rainforests. The current outbreak began in December 2013, and came to the world's attention in early March when an outbreak was officially declared. This outbreak is now the largest in history but remains confined to several countries in West Africa.

Ebola is introduced into the population through close contact with infected bodily fluids. Once contracted, Ebola can spread in the community without proper precautions. However, current scientific evidence shows that Ebola is not airborne and cannot be transmitted through casual contact. This is a very important distinction from

other infectious diseases with which Canadians may be familiar, and the virus cannot spread as easily as SARS or the H1N1 influenza.

The Ebola virus can also be spread through contact with infected animals and medical equipment. During an outbreak, those at higher risk of infection are health workers, family members, and others who are in close contact with an ill or deceased person.

Another important fact is that the Ebola virus cannot be spread by a person who is not showing symptoms of the disease. I think this is perhaps one of the most reassuring facts for Canadians. As we know, the incubation period, the time between infection and the onset of symptoms, varies between two and 21 days.

The countries where there is ongoing spread of the disease are Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. There have been only a limited number of cases reported from Nigeria and Senegal. Those are associated with travellers from Liberia and Guinea respectively. Cases of Ebola have also been reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, these are unrelated to the West African outbreak.

These suffering West African countries have limited resources to respond to prolonged outbreaks, especially in rural areas. I think we have all been captivated by the images that we have been seeing on television. Some of the current challenges and complexities of the outbreak include infections not only taking place in remote and forest areas but also in large cities.

Outbreak control strategies have been met with distrust due to fear and misinformation at times. There are varying health care infrastructures, lack of experience and fear among health care workers, and treatment to date has been supportive, not curative. Some who become sick with Ebola are able to recover, though medical experts do not yet fully understand why.

Ebola outbreaks have had a case fatality rate of up to 90%. Thankfully, this particular outbreak has shown a survival rate of 47%, much better than earlier outbreaks.

• (2155)

On August 8, the World Health Organization declared the Ebola virus disease a public health emergency of international concern. While the situation and media reports from West Africa are dire indeed, I want to reiterate to colleagues, and most especially to all Canadians, that the risk to Canadians remains very low. There has never been a case of Ebola in Canada. The Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person and cannot be transmitted through casual contact. The Government of Canada has already taken action and will continue to take action against Ebola both at home and abroad.

As per the recommendations of the World Health Organization, Canada is already implementing measures, including maintaining our preparedness to detect, investigate and manage persons with the Ebola virus in the unlikely event that a case were to appear in Canada. Canada has the capacity to identify and manage ill travellers and perform the necessary diagnostic testing for Ebola.

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The Public Health Agency of Canada is taking precautions to prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases such as Ebola in Canada through the administration of the Quarantine Act. The Quarantine Act is administered 24 hours a day, seven days a week at all points of entry into Canada. Together with the Canada Border Services Agency, the Public Health Agency of Canada helps reduce the spread of serious communicable diseases and ensures that travellers are aware of the actions they should take if they begin to experience symptoms of illness.

In light of the current outbreak, the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that Canadians avoid all non-essential travel to Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. There are also public health notices that have been issued for Nigeria and Senegal, recommending that travellers take special precautions. This recommendation is to protect Canadian travellers. The risk of infection is low for most travellers; however, the risk may be increased for those who are working in a health care setting or for travellers who require medical care in affected areas as most human infections result from direct contact with the body fluids of an infected patient.

There may also be difficulties accessing health care services due to the increasingly burdened health care systems in these countries. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to provide information to Canadians, such as travel and public health notices, through websites such as phac-aspc.gc.ca, as well as through special and social media platforms. Technical guidance and protocols have been developed and disseminated to partners in the provinces and territories and the transportation sector, including airlines and airport authorities. Front-line staff have been trained to identify travellers who may be ill and to take the appropriate measures to ensure public safety. The Government of Canada has strengthened training programs for front-line staff at the main points of entry and has enhanced working relationships internally and with partners, including public health staff and local health units, first responders, border service officers, and law enforcement agencies. It is important to note that to date there has not been a single confirmed case of Ebola contracted on an airplane anywhere in the world.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is also working closely with its provincial and territorial partners in health. The agency's National Microbiology Laboratory is well-connected with its networks of provincial labs to ensure it is ready to respond quickly should symptoms associated with Ebola be suspected in a traveller to Canada. Our hospitals in Canada have sophisticated infection control systems and procedures in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection, protect health care workers, and provide the best care possible for the patient. As part of the increased vigilance and precautions across Canada, hospitals send samples for persons under investigation to the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg for testing to rule out Ebola.

Canada is also involved in an international early warning system that detects reports of outbreaks and emergencies around the world. This enables our Public Health Agency of Canada, along with provincial and territorial partners, to respond to emerging issues before they arise in Canada.

● (2200)

In recent weeks, there have also been some media reports of suspected Ebola cases in Canada from people who had travelled to West Africa, notably in my home community, in Brampton. In every single instance, individuals were identified, isolated, investigated, and all tested negative for the Ebola virus by the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg. These cases have all demonstrated that our system is working as it should, and Canada has learned and applied important lessons from our experiences with SARS and with H1N1.

Canada is also proactively contributing to international efforts to combat Ebola at its point of origin in West Africa. Canada has also contributed over \$5 million to the World Health Organization and other international non-governmental partners towards this effort.

At the present time, there is no specific licensed treatment or vaccine for Ebola, but as colleagues here may have already been aware, leading scientists at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg have developed an experimental vaccine for the Ebola virus. Currently the recognized treatment options are limited to strict isolation to prevent the infection from spreading, supportive care in an intensive care unit, maintenance of fluid levels and electrolytes, maintenance of oxygen status and blood pressure, and the replacement of lost blood and clotting factors.

That said, our government has offered 800 to 1,000 doses of this experimental, developed-in-Canada vaccine known as VSV-EBOV to the World Health Organization as a global resource to help fight this outbreak. Approximately 1,500 doses of this experimental vaccine, designed by the Public Health Agency of Canada, were produced under licence by a U.S. company to support ongoing research on the subject. Canada will keep a small supply of the experimental vaccine to conduct applied research and clinical trials, such as toxicity and safety studies, which are necessary before the vaccine can be used on humans.

Canada will also keep a small supply of the experimental vaccine in the unlikely event that it is needed for compassionate use in Canada.

The World Health Organization, in its role as an international coordinating body in responding to this outbreak, will help facilitate the distribution and use of the vaccine. I would also like to add that while the safe transportation of our vaccine is an important consideration, these doses are ready to be transported the moment the World Health Organization recognizes or requests that they be transferred or deployed.

The decision on whether the experimental vaccine should be offered for compassionate use is not something that the Government of Canada or its partners have taken lightly. While the vaccine and treatment in which Canada has been involved have not been tested in humans, they have been effective in animals and are potentially life-saving options for people who have been exposed to the Ebola virus.

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There are significant legal and ethical questions around the use of experimental vaccines and therapies in humans. This is why we are working with our partners in the World Health Organization to evaluate the difficult ethical and logistical concerns on the use of experimental vaccines in outbreak areas. While the experimental vaccine is promising, it is very important to remember that it does not replace the need for rapid diagnosis, good infection control practices, and tight coordination amongst partners involved in the response.

Scientists at the Public Health Agency of Canada, at the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, have also contributed to the development of two of three elements of an experimental treatment called ZMapp. ZMapp, owned by a U.S. company, Mapp Biopharmaceuticals, is perhaps the most promising Ebola treatment to date. The treatments enable the immune system to fight an infection following an exposure to the virus. Mapp Bio has indicated that all ZMapp doses in its supply were exhausted after the company provided ZMapp to West Africa.

Another experimental treatment called TKM-Ebola was developed by Tekmira, a Canadian company, under a contract with the U.S. Department of Defense. The Tekmira therapeutic began phase one clinical trials with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in March 2014, before being halted in July 2014 due to safety concerns. In early August, the FDA changed the status to allow emergency use on infected patients. The Government of Canada does not own any intellectual property in this product, but we are monitoring the company's progress in clinical trials and the potential applicability of this therapy to the ongoing outbreak with great interest.

● (2205)

The Government of Canada has also provided over \$5 million in support of humanitarian, security, and public health interventions to address the spread of Ebola in West Africa. We have also deployed experts to West Africa to assist in ground efforts, and the National Microbiology Laboratory's mobile lab and Canadian experts have been deployed to Sierra Leone, since June, to conduct rapid laboratory testing, allowing the early identification, isolation, and treatment of Ebola-affected individuals.

Just last week, a brand new team of Public Health Agency experts were deployed to this mobile laboratory to assist in the ongoing efforts to help fight the outbreak. Their work is a crucial part of the international aid efforts being made by the world community to address this developing situation.

The Government of Canada is taking a whole-of-government approach to aggressively fighting the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, including National Microbiology Labs. It is providing \$2.95 million to the World Health Organization to strengthen the field response to the outbreak and mitigate associated threats to health and safety. It is also contributing \$1.7 million to support humanitarian interventions, led by Doctors Without Borders, to reduce and control the spread of the virus in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and provide care to those affected.

It has contributed a total of \$160,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to support the response to the outbreak in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone through its emergency disaster assistance fund, which is managed by

the Canadian Red Cross society. I sat on the board of the Canadian Red Cross society for well over a decade throughout southern Ontario and in Toronto, so I can tell the House how excellent its work is.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is providing \$200,000 to the World Health Organization through the international health grants program to support a request for assistance toward operational costs in West Africa, and the coordination and deployment of international technical expertise. We are also supporting the deployment of four Canadian Red Cross delegates to Guinea and Sierra Leone to support the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' response efforts through this strategic partnership.

It is important to reiterate that there has never been a case of Ebola in Canada and the risk to Canadians remains very low. I do not want to leave anyone with the impression that there is an imminent threat to this country. There is not. The Government of Canada has a number of systems in place to identify and prevent the spread of serious infectious diseases in Canada. Precautions are being taken to prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases, such as Ebola, in Canada, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at all points of entry into Canada.

Our health care system in Canada is state of the art, with infection control systems and procedures in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection, protect health care workers, and provide the best possible care to patients. Promising Canadian research has already made a number of early contributions to developing experimental vaccines and treatments for Ebola. We are actively engaged internationally with the World Health Organization and other non-governmental organizations to combat the disease at its point of origin in West Africa and to get the outbreak under control to protect international health and security.

I personally think we are very fortunate to live in a wonderful country that not only effectively guards our health and security, but contributes Canadian expertise to the international response to the situation in West Africa and leads cutting-edge research that is applied internationally.

I would like to end by identifying what individual Canadians can do. We have been asked by many what they can do personally to help take up the fight. Aside from medical professionals, the most meaningful contribution that Canadians can make is a financial contribution to an international relief organization working in this area. Details are available on the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.

Standing Order 52

• (2210)

[Translation]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for the member.

First of all, how many Canadians live in the three countries we are talking about here this evening: Guinea, Sierra Leone and the third, whose name escapes me just now?

Second, the member pointed out that she sat on the board of the Canadian Red Cross in Toronto for 10 years. Could she tell us about the protocol followed when the Canadian team returns from West Africa and is replaced by another team? What is the protocol for ensuring that those people are not infected and that they do not bring the epidemic here to Canada?

[English]

Ms. Eve Adams: Mr. Speaker, those are excellent questions. We have asked all Canadians who are currently in the three affected countries to leave if possible. We have also indicated to all Canadians that any non-essential travel to those countries should be avoided. We think this is first and foremost in the interest of their health and safety. It is also in the interests of evacuation teams. If something should arise, we obviously need to ensure that Canadians can leave promptly. Finally, if they should happen to have some other medical problem take place while they are travelling to these affected countries, those health care systems are under a great deal of stress currently.

The member's second question dealt with health care workers who are currently assisting these affected regions and what precautions are taking place. She may have heard in the news that there was a team that was evacuated. That team was brought here and was immediately put into isolation as a precautionary measure. I am delighted to share with the House that the team will be returning to work tomorrow. Another team has gone over to West Africa and is continuing to assist in any way they possibly can.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her comments, but, yet again, I want to remark that reassurance from a parliamentary secretary is not the same as the reassurance from a medical officer of health.

Tomorrow, members of Congress are slated to hear from the federal health officials who are leading their nation's efforts. President Barack Obama is scheduled to visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in Atlanta, where he will be briefed. As we know, Samantha Power and the Americans have insisted on a Security Council debate on Thursday. This is a week after this disease was designated out of control. Today, the Centers for Disease Control drew up a six-point action plan that says now is the time to prepare. They are saying it is only a matter of time before the disease arrives on home soil.

I heard the member say many times that we have not yet had a case in Canada. That is true, but having lived through 2003 when we had not yet had a case of SARS in Canada, it is no time for complacency. I would ask the member when parliamentarians and Canadians at large will hear from the acting chief medical officer of health. That was the lesson we learned from SARS. We must be hearing directly from medical people, not from politicians, if we are

going to expect Canadians to have confidence in our public health system in Canada.

Ms. Eve Adams: Mr. Speaker, the member may or may not be aware that her colleague, the critic for health, received a direct briefing from the chief medical officer. It was yesterday, I believe. It was also offered to the NDP critic. I do not believe that meeting has taken place yet.

To answer the question, we have been communicating. We have been hearing a great deal throughout these debates that the risk to Canadians remains very low. This is something that has been issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It is fully independent from Parliament and fully independent of any politician. Its assessment is fully in line and in lockstep with the World Health Organization's assessment for the risk to Canada, which is the same risk, by the way, to the United States or other developed countries.

• (2215)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health made an announcement tonight at 7 o'clock. I wonder if the member could inform the House what that was.

Ms. Eve Adams: Mr. Speaker, in fact Canada will be contributing additional equipment. This is in addition to over \$5 million that we have already given, and in addition to the wonderful work from the Department of Foreign Affairs that I detailed in my speech.

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Conservative colleague for her speech. I learned some new information from that speech. This is what is important when we are in the House of Commons: having a dialogue, sharing information that others do not know, and raising the level of debate.

However, I find one thing absurd, and my colleague mentioned it briefly in her speech. The Public Health Agency of Canada has a laboratory in Winnipeg that has worked, and is perhaps still working, on Ebola. It produces a vaccine that has the potential to help us.

I would like to ask my Conservative colleague whether, in retrospect, she believes that making \$60 million in cuts to the Public Health Agency of Canada over the last three years was a good idea. We know that money is the sinews of war and that research needs a lot of money, not only in order to be able to conduct experiments but also to attract highly qualified researchers.

Does the hon. member believe that, with those \$60 million that perhaps we ought not to have cut, we could have made more progress and responded more quickly to the crisis?

[English]

Ms. Eve Adams: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government, under Conservative leadership, is the single largest investor in research across Canada. It invests about \$1 billion each and every year, for critical things like cancer research, Alzheimer's research, and emerging health for women and children.

When it comes to this vaccine, I think we are all very proud of the leading role that Canadians have taken in fighting Ebola. What members of the House and Canadians need to recall is that prior to this outbreak, there were fewer than 2,000 cases of Ebola. While we have carried out groundbreaking research in developing the crux of these vaccines, it is not for the Public Health Agency of Canada to commercialize them and run them through trials. This has always been done with the assistance of private sector companies, which then invest millions of dollars to take these medicines and vaccines to trial. That is exactly what is taking place here.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to U.S. scientists, the Ebola outbreak may last a further 12 to 18 months, although the WHO is standing by its original numbers. The director of CDC, Dr. Frieden, has said that the situation is worsening and is spiralling out of control.

The U.S. said that it will build a 25-bed, \$22-million field hospital in Liberia to care for health care workers, with 100 staff and 50 more coming. France will deploy 20 specialists to Guinea. Britain will build and operate a 62-bed hospital in Sierra Leone.

We have a critical shortage of trained health professionals. I wonder if Canada will help with the field hospital. How many specialists has Canada sent, and will Canada do more?

Ms. Eve Adams: Mr. Speaker, Canada has always been a leader in providing assistance to countries in need, especially during emergency or disaster times. I am very proud of the investments we have made as a nation.

The \$5 million to date includes almost \$3 million to the World Health Organization, to strengthen field response specifically. Another \$1.7 million has gone to support humanitarian interventions, led by Doctors Without Borders, to reduce and control the spread. We have given \$160,000 for the emergency disaster assistance fund. In addition, there is today's announcement for new equipment, and of course we have just sent a new team directly to the affected areas.

• (2220)

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be back in the House and to see you again.

I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord who certainly has some good insights to share on this issue.

I am not sure whether I am the only one to notice this, but it was a strange summer. Summer is normally the most festive season in our respective ridings; this may well be, but as they say, in the summer every day is a slow news day. However, this summer, the events caught up with us night after night, casting a dramatic pall over the festivities going on in our ridings.

This summer, we saw numerous armed conflicts going on, one air tragedy after another, a lot of political tensions, unresolved economic crises, and young women being abducted. I am thinking, for example, of Boko Haram, a name that was unfortunately on everyone's lips for all the wrong reasons.

So here we are back for another session of Parliament where a number of issues will clearly divide us. In our emergency debate this

evening, I would prefer to do away with the word “debate” and talk instead about a discussion on an urgent matter to which the Government of Canada must say “present,” while constantly reasserting or updating that presence as the situation develops.

I dare hope that this issue will bring us closer to each other and to the international community. Indeed, the crisis the people of some West African countries are going through speaks to our solidarity, but also to our desire to be safe wherever we are.

At a time when our planet has become very small and it is possible for almost all of us to go around it in about 24 hours, when our means of transportation allow us to travel back and forth as if globalization had erased all borders, we must act responsibly at home. Ultimately, our home is everywhere.

Before I continue, let me give a heartfelt salute to my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie who requested this emergency exchange, or this debate as it is more commonly referred to. It enables us not only to learn more about this tragedy, which is far from over, and how various countries are trying to deal with this crisis, but also to put additional pressure on the Government of Canada to do more. Far be it from me to criticize the actions already taken by the Government of Canada. However, in a crisis such as this, we clearly need to follow its progress daily, even hourly, and adapt our response according to the needs.

What about this situation, this Ebola crisis? Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Senegal are grappling with an epidemic confirmed by the World Health Organization. We are talking about more than 4,000 confirmed cases since the infection was first identified in 1976. There have been a few multiple cases over the years, but nothing like the crisis we are currently facing. Research has made great strides in trying to develop a vaccine, but about 50% of people who contract the virus one way or another will still die from it.

Of course, we need to continue focusing our efforts on this research. However, we also need to put in place everything we can to confine this crisis to the smallest possible area in order to fight it as effectively as we can.

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● (2225)

Why is the epidemic now being described as “unprecedented”? First, it is because of its magnitude. Over 2,000 people have now contracted the virus, and the geographic distribution is quite different. In fact, when the virus affects people living in a relatively modest village, or it is brought under control quickly, or the disease decimates a large part of the village, it is relatively easy—I am weighing my words carefully because there is nothing easy about this—let us say, it is easier to beat a virus like this. What we are seeing now is that the virus has also moved to large centres, to the cities where people live much closer to one another and where spreading a virus, even without intending to, has perhaps become much easier.

That is one explanation that may help us understand the extent of this crisis.

As well, since the number of victims is increasing, there is a direct impact on the health system itself. Doctors, nurses and health care workers are doing the best they can to the best of their knowledge as they work with those afflicted. Sometimes, as a result, and despite all the protections that have been put in place, they contract the virus and die. Their death rate is no different from that of the general population, which is to say approximately 50% of those who contract the virus. If the medical team is reduced, it is clear that there will be a downward spiral.

The fight is increasingly difficult. It is so difficult that in some particularly underdeveloped regions that have less well-equipped health infrastructure, we are now seeing collateral damage. If there is no staff or infrastructure to treat diseases that could be dealt with, stopped, controlled and treated with relative success in the past—such as diarrhea or malaria—that, too, has a direct impact on the mortality rate of the population in general and infants in particular. That is yet another catastrophe.

Fear is also taking hold. When so many health care professionals die because they wanted to give their all to the people, that obviously deters other health care professionals who would certainly want to help and apply their knowledge to help curb the crisis, but who want to be 100% sure that they can do so in completely safe conditions. That also slows the process down.

Those are a few reasons that provide some explanation.

What is the World Health Organization saying? According to its roadmap, there is a need for \$600 million. So far, the various countries that want to help find a solution to this crisis have committed approximately one-third of that. The goal is still far from reach. It is very easy to imagine that the sum of \$600 million will increase if this epidemic grows exponentially. It will require additional funds.

In other words, time is of the essence. We have to make decisions quickly while making the best choices and providing the necessary funds to win this fight.

What are the top priorities? Perhaps expanding isolation centres. In some cases, these have to be built in the first place before they can be expanded. We also have to be able to deploy mobile labs to

diagnose people with the disease on site and even faster so that they can be isolated even faster.

● (2230)

We need to be able to create air bridges for the safe international transfer of personnel who want to help handle the crisis and for the transportation of necessary equipment and supplies. Lastly, we need to build a regional network of field hospitals.

There is no doubt that all of these measures will require a significant contribution from each participating country in addition to the \$5 million that Canada has already pledged. That is good, but I think it is not nearly enough.

I would like to close with two short quotes.

The first is from Margaret Chan of the WHO:

In the three hardest hit countries, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the number of new patients is moving faster than the capacity to manage them.

The second is from Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in a letter to President Barack Obama:

I am being honest with you when I say that at this rate, we will never break the transmission chain and the virus will overwhelm us.

Canada's help during this crisis is of the utmost importance, and we must be unwavering in our support.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his kind words.

I would also like to thank him for his approach, when he said that today we should be having less of a debate and more of a discussion in order to come to an agreement on the need to take immediate action. As he so aptly said, time is of the essence.

Everyone appreciates what the government has done to date. However, as my colleague so clearly demonstrated, the health care systems in the countries in question are simply not up to the task and neither is the aid being given to those countries. The needs are enormous.

Does my colleague think it would be appropriate for Canada to send specialized personnel and our Disaster Assistance Response Team? We send it in when natural disasters occur. For example, we sent this team to the Philippines because it is accustomed to deploying quickly in crisis situations.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her question, to which she provided part of the answer.

One of the suggestions I was going to make involved deploying this team, which is able to intervene quickly. The team is always ready and just waiting to be told the time and location of its mission so that it can go there and work with its partners to find solutions to the crisis.

We could also think about deploying military personnel who specialize in health care. In every garrison, there are a certain number of doctors, nurses and health care professionals who chose a career in the military. They are still health care professionals. They therefore have all the skills required to intervene.

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What is more, you need to be familiar with the army to understand how great a capacity military personnel have to isolate themselves and create a safe environment before intervening.

All members of the House could consider these two options so that Canada could take further action in this crisis.

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his excellent speech. I will gladly follow him in a few minutes, but I have a question for him first.

He was just talking about the Canadian government aid that will go to the WHO's road map. The WHO needed roughly \$600 million and appealed to all its global partners for support. The United States gave \$100 million, the United Kingdom gave \$40 million, and Canada gave \$5 million. According to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health's latest version, Canada may have possibly given slightly more than \$5 million.

In any case, \$5 million is a paltry sum in a \$100-million budget, especially considering that Canada apparently weathered the recession best, according to the Conservative government.

If this government is in the best position economically, then why is it giving barely \$5 million to a cause that needs \$600 million worldwide in order to eradicate the problem?

Personally, I think this is no time to be burying our heads in the sand. If we do not manage to deal with this problem quickly, this could go beyond the five countries mentioned.

• (2235)

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord.

We have to be careful when we talk about numbers and compare Canada's \$5 million to the United States' \$100 million. Let us not forget that in the United States there are 250 million people contributing to the public purse, while in Canada there are 34 million. In this type of situation, we have to understand that if the problem we are discussing this evening changes exponentially, then the aid provided by each country, while remaining proportionate to each country's weight and finances, must change exponentially as well and not just mathematically, slowly and always keeping the relative proportions of each country's finances. We cannot ask Canada to invest as much as the United States. I think that is easy to understand.

This progression must follow the scope of the disaster.

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here this evening. I did not expect to be working until 11 p.m. on my first day back in the House, but it is always a pleasure. When I was elected three and a half years ago, it was to give a voice to the 100,000 people I represent in Chicoutimi—Le Fjord here in Ottawa.

I am so glad my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie asked for this emergency debate to discuss this transnational crisis, which has the potential to become a worldwide crisis. I would also like to thank the government for allowing us to talk about this issue.

I listened carefully to the speech given by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, which was meant to reassure Canadians. I am relieved to hear there has not been a case of Ebola in Canada. I also understand that the Ebola virus is transmitted differently than the H1N1 virus and other kinds of infections that have frightened Canadians in the past.

However, we live in a world in which the spread of viruses and bacteria can be disastrous. Throughout our long health history, humans have developed antibiotics and vaccines to prevent certain diseases. However, the resistance of these viruses and bacteria means that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find the right cure for these problems. What worries me about the Ebola crisis is that this problem should have been solved already.

I will come back to this later in my speech, because I do not want to jump from one subject to another, but we have reached a pivotal moment in the spread of the Ebola virus, and Canada must play its part. Basically, that is my conclusion.

I am the deputy health critic for the NDP, but I am not an Ebola expert. We must rely on the real experts who have been studying this virus for many years. I have complete confidence in the World Health Organization, or WHO, which has a plan that includes all of its global partners. I would really like to see the government play its part in different ways. I will expand on that a little later.

Canada's assistance should include increased efforts in the short term to eradicate the current epidemic, as well as a study of why this epidemic has been so difficult to control. I believe the Ebola virus has been around since the 1970s. In the past, the disease spread very much at the local and rural level, and the problem could be eradicated with quick, very localized intervention.

Now, we are seeing that this approach no longer works, which is why we need to move to the next stage, which involves increasing efforts in the short term to put an end to the current epidemic and looking at why this epidemic has been so difficult to control. The Ebola virus affects developing countries, and the environment there makes it more difficult to eradicate the disease.

I am very pleased with our Canadian researchers and health care personnel who are working in Canada and in the countries affected to eradicate the problem. All Canadians and all parliamentarians are grateful. The government needs to help them do their work. Many caring men and women are working passionately and compassionately and sometimes putting their own lives in danger to fix the problem.

• (2240)

We cannot forget that. There are a number of things that bother me, and one fact I mentioned in my question for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health was that the government has cut \$60 million from the Public Health Agency of Canada's budget.

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The agency has a laboratory in Winnipeg that is working on Ebola. It is working on a vaccine that could potentially combat this problem. We still do not know whether it will work. However, I think it is a bad decision for the government to cut \$60 million from a research agency. This could be debated at length. I do not necessarily want to debate too long over \$60 million, but I think that the Conservative government needs to do some serious soul-searching.

I also think that the government should deploy the Disaster Assistance Response Team to respond to this epidemic. That was one of the priorities set out by our critic, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie. She spoke at length about why the government should do this. The ball is in the government's court now.

We are once again asking the government to move forward with this. I hope that it will listen to the member, who is very familiar with the file and is up to date on the situation, in order to help people in difficult situations around the world. We should not wait any longer than necessary to send the team. I hope that the government will move forward with this.

Even though there have been no confirmed cases of Ebola on Canadian soil, the epidemic is spreading in other parts of the world. If the epidemic does spread beyond the five countries currently affected, I do not want Canada to be the next step for this disease. Honestly, we must attack the root of the epidemic to eradicate it. It is important to put in place mechanisms and barriers to prevent the virus from coming to Canada, and it is important to have good protection and teams to isolate the victims if Ebola does arrive here. However, beyond that, the government must play a role in West Africa, where the epidemic is raging and becoming increasingly uncontrollable. Unfortunately, I do not believe that the government is doing enough.

I would like to talk about the aid that Canada has promised. According to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, to date Canada has promised a little over \$5 million on behalf of a population of 35.5 million people. The government is donating 14¢ per capita to the cause. I think it is being cheap. Fourteen cents is much less than the U.S. donation of 31¢ per capita, or \$100 million for 318 million people. The United Kingdom is donating 62¢ per capita. For 64 million people, it is donating \$40 million. Our 14¢ is a good start, but the government should loosen the purse strings in order to tackle this problem. As we often see with the Conservative approach, the government is sitting on its laurels. The situation gets worse and then we go into crisis management mode. Then we have to pay a high price in order to fix the damage that has been done.

Obviously, the Canadian Public Health Association is concerned about the budget cuts imposed on the Public Health Agency of Canada. I mentioned the cuts that were made over three years. In practical terms, the agency's budget was reduced by 14% over this period. The portion of the budget that is set aside for health promotion, disease prevention, public health infrastructure and health security, or in other words for monitoring and assessing populations, enforcing regulations and responding to emergencies, dropped by 26% in three years. We also know that the agency cut 483 jobs in 2012.

Not only could the government do more, but it has been slow to respond. More aid should be given. This was a result of the Conservatives' decisions and the savage cuts they made to health.

• (2245)

We see it in the cuts to health transfers to the provinces. Basically, Canada needs to get back on track and invest heavily in research, including research to fight the Ebola virus.

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very thoughtful speech. Money and materials are important, but these two things alone cannot stop Ebola virus transmission. The World Health Organization said that human resources are clearly the most important need. Doctors and nurses are needed. The World Health Organization is hoping that Cuba's offer of 165 people will catalyze additional offers of support from other countries.

The government has heard all night that more needs to be done. Will Canada provide more money? The \$5 million is not enough. That is the most recent investment. We have asked many times how many people, specialists, the government has sent. We have yet to get an answer tonight. Will the government send a field hospital?

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my Liberal colleague, whom I have always liked a lot and whose comments and questions reflect a unique perspective. It is likely a result of the profession she had before she became an MP. She is a nice addition to the House of Commons.

It is true that in my 10-minute speech, I focused heavily on the financial aspect, and it is true that money is not the only solution. I would like to mention four other measures before my time is up. It is important that Canada scale up the isolation centres and deploy mobile laboratories to improve diagnostic capabilities. We must set up air bridges to move personnel and equipment between West Africa and other parts of the world. It is also important to build a regional network of field hospitals to treat infected or potentially infected medical personnel.

I do not know whether the Conservative government will want to move forward with these measures, but they are practical measures and Canada must implement them.

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the comments of my colleague on the opposite side. I think that one of the things Canadians need to know is that the World Health Organization is the lead agency on this issue. At the request of the WHO, Canada has sent the Public Health Agency of Canada and has deployed a team of scientists and a mobile lab to Sierra Leone to contribute to the ongoing efforts to stop this Ebola crisis.

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Canada has been long involved with Africa. About 80% of our foreign aid goes to Africa. We need to strengthen health care systems so that these kinds of things do not happen in the future. We have untied our aid. We have put money toward the Muskoka initiative to help with maternal, newborn, and child health. The Prime Minister announced more money in May that Canada would contribute for the post-2015 to 2020 development goals. We need to strengthen the health capacities of these countries.

Right now the World Health Organization is the lead agency on this. Rather than saying that Canada should deploy, would it not be better to work in conjunction with the agency that has the lead on this and work with our partners together to ensure that we beat this disease?

• (2250)

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my Conservative colleague that WHO is co-ordinating everything. However, WHO has clearly expressed its needs. On August 28, it presented a road map to prevent the spread of the virus, and the UN determined that fighting Ebola in West Africa would require at least \$600 million.

As I mentioned, a number of countries have committed to contributing money. I will try again to send a message to the government party. Canada pledged 14¢ per citizen, the United States pledged 31¢ per citizen, and the United Kingdom, 62¢ per citizen. Clearly, Canada could give more than 14¢ per citizen.

[English]

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to join the discussion on Canada's efforts to address the Ebola crisis in West Africa and to update the House of Commons on the government's actions to date.

I was listening to the speeches and questions. We should make it clear to all here in the House and to those who are listening to the debate that this crisis cannot be resolved by financial contributions alone. There have been numbers thrown out, such as contributions of x number of dollars and that it is only 30% of what is needed. This may give people a picture that if we raise \$600 million, it would be fine, and the issue would be resolved. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is not the number of dollars. It is not only financial resources that can be put toward the efforts to deal with the issue. The issue is much deeper. It requires research, medications, and other things. It cannot be resolved by financial means alone. This is what I would like to make perfectly clear before I start talking.

We can throw numbers around. We can have a political debate. This is not a political issue. If we want to address the issue that exists in that part of the world, we should all work together and focus on what needs to be done, not on what we would like to gain on the political side.

This is a very serious situation. Our thoughts are with those affected by this outbreak. Although outbreaks have appeared since 1976, they have primarily occurred in remote villages in Central and West Africa, and they have been easily contained.

Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, has described this current outbreak as the largest, most complex, and most severe we have ever seen. It is out-pacing

control efforts in West Africa and requires a coordinated global response.

We understand that this is a public health crisis with grave humanitarian, economic, and security implications. The health and safety of Canadians has always been, and continues to be, our top priority. We are monitoring the situation closely, sharing information directly with Canadians throughout the outbreak, and actively working with provincial, territorial, and other partners to maintain preparedness to detect, investigate, and manage people with the Ebola virus in the unlikely event that a case were to arrive in Canada.

We are also working with other national and international partners, including the World Health Organization, to assist in the overall international response. The reality is that there has never been a case of Ebola in Canada. The risk to Canadians remains very low.

The Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person. It is not like a flu. It is spread through direct contact with infected body fluids, not through casual contact.

The Government of Canada has a number of systems in place to identify and prevent the spread of serious infectious diseases like Ebola. We have the capacity to manage ill travellers at their points of entry. The Quarantine Act, which was introduced to prevent the introduction of infectious and contagious diseases to Canada, is administered 24 hours a day, seven days a week at all international points of entry into Canada.

• (2255)

Government of Canada front-line staff at the Canada Border Services Agency, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Transport Canada have been trained to identify ill travellers. In addition, Canada's health care system and front-line medical staff are well prepared to deal with the identification and treatment of Ebola cases. In Canada, hospitals have sophisticated infection control systems in place to limit the spread of infection, protect health care workers, and provide state-of-the-art care for Canadians.

The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to provide relevant information to Canadians, including on travel to affected countries through its website, phac-aspc.gc.ca, as well as through social and other media platforms. The agency has developed, updated, and made available key technical guidance documents and protocols so that provinces and territories, physicians, hospital staff, conveyance operators, and airport authorities are well prepared. Internationally we are supportive of the leadership role being played by the World Health Organization, and we remain committed to working effectively with it and other key partners, including Médecins Sans Frontières and the Red Cross, to respond effectively to this public health emergency.

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To date, the Government of Canada has provided over \$5 million in support of humanitarian security and public health measures to address the spread of Ebola in West Africa. We continue to assess the needs identified in the World Health Organization road map and to explore what else Canada can do to support the global efforts in response to the outbreak.

Canada has also been on the front line of the response efforts. The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory, which is an internationally recognized leader in infectious disease diagnostics and research, has sent Canadian experts, a mobile laboratory, and supplies to Kailahun, Sierra Leone, to conduct rapid diagnosis. Our experts are working alongside local health officials, Médecins Sans Frontières, and the World Health Organization. Early diagnosis helps to ensure that those infected with Ebola are isolated, to reduce the risk of transmission, and that they receive the supportive care they require.

In addition, the agency's National Microbiology Laboratory has provided laboratory diagnostic materials to support Ebola laboratory testing to other African countries, such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Liberia, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Algeria, and Uganda. It has also shared its expertise and materials with the Caribbean Public Health Agency in Trinidad and Chile as part of the worldwide effort. There are currently no specific licensed treatments or vaccines for Ebola, and patients are treated for their symptoms. The National Microbiology Laboratory research scientists have been at the forefront of research to address treatments and vaccines and are recognized as international experts.

Given the seriousness of the outbreak, the Government of Canada has offered a donation of 800 to 1,000 doses of the experimental vaccine developed at the National Microbiology Laboratory known as VSV-EBOV to the World Health Organization as part of the international response.

• (2300)

The World Health Organization, in its role as an international coordinating body responding to this outbreak, will help facilitate distribution and use of the vaccine.

Canada will also keep a small supply of the experimental vaccine in the unlikely event that it is needed for compassionate use in Canada, and a small supply of the experimental vaccine to conduct applied research in clinical trials, such as those related to toxicity and safety studies.

In support of international partners, in May 2014, the Public Health Agency of Canada also donated 10 doses of its Ebola vaccine for pre-positioning in the University Hospital, in Geneva, for evacuated health care workers if they had been exposed. In August 2014, a further 10 doses were pre-positioned at Emory University, in Atlanta, after the return of two infected Americans to the United States.

The decision on whether the experimental vaccine should be offered for compassionate use is not something that the Government of Canada or its partners are taking lightly. While the vaccine and treatment in which Canada has been involved has not been tested on humans yet, they have been effective on animals and are potentially

life-saving options for people who have been exposed to the Ebola virus.

Significant legal and ethical questions exist around the use of experimental vaccines and therapies in humans. While the VSV-EBOV experimental vaccine is promising, this does not replace the need for rapid diagnosis, good infection control practices, and tight coordination among partners involved in the response.

Scientists with the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory have also contributed to the development of two or three elements of an experimental treatment called ZMapp, owned by the U.S. company Mapp Bio, which may be one of the most promising Ebola treatments to date. The treatments enable the immune system to fight an infection following an exposure to the virus. Mapp Bio has indicated that all ZMapp doses in its supply were exhausted after the company provided ZMapp to West Africa.

Another experimental treatment, called TKM-Ebola, was developed by Tekmira, a Canadian company, under a contract with the U.S. Department of Defence. The Tekmira therapeutic began phase 1 clinical trials with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, FDA, in March 2014, before being halted in July due to safety concerns. In early August, the FDA changed the status to allow emergency use on infected patients. The Government of Canada does not own any intellectual property in this product, but we are monitoring the company's progress in clinical trials and potential applicability of this therapy to the ongoing outbreak with great interest.

I would also like to focus my contribution to this evening's debate on the Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Laboratory, which has been pivotal to Canadian efforts to address the Ebola outbreak. This lab, the NML for short, has been at the forefront of every infectious disease outbreak for many years, including West Nile virus, SARS, listeria, and the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic. Many colleagues will remember how Mexico called on the NML for assistance during H1N1, and how the lab was the first to sequence viruses from Mexico and Canada, proving that it was the same virus in both countries.

• (2305)

As Canada's leading public health infectious disease laboratory, the NML is responsible for the identification, control, and prevention of infectious diseases.

The NML is located at the Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health in Winnipeg, the first facility in the world to have high-containment laboratories for human and animal health in one building. It is recognized as a leader in an elite group of centres around the world. It is equipped with laboratories ranging from biosafety level 2 to level 4, designed to accommodate the most basic to the most deadly infectious organisms.

I would like to describe the five main roles that the NML fulfills on an ongoing basis.

As the lead public health infectious disease laboratory in Canada, the NML provides diagnostic support to provincial and front-line laboratories. This primarily involves performing tests for rare and emerging diseases that other labs would not be able to provide, performing confirmatory tests and further characterizing viruses and bacteria. As an example, 10% of influenza samples received by provincial laboratories are forwarded to the NML to determine the exact strain. This information is used in the development of the seasonal vaccine every year. In the case of Ebola, the NML is well connected with its network of provincial labs to ensure that it is ready to respond quickly should symptoms associated with Ebola be suspected in a traveller to Canada.

The second role of the NML is surveillance of infectious disease. The NML plays a role in approximately 50 surveillance systems.

A third role is applied and discovery research. This work results in an increasing understanding of viruses and pathogens, but also includes the development of better diagnostic tests or vaccines and treatments.

As we have heard this evening, the leading scientists at the NML have developed an experimental vaccine for the Ebola virus. They also contributed to the development of two of the three elements contained in an experimental treatment that enables the immune system to fight an infection following an exposure to the virus.

The fourth role is leadership and training. This includes leading networks of other labs, transferring the technology for new diagnostic tests, and providing extensive training to people across the country and around the world. The NML hosts international high-containment laboratory workshops every year, bringing in people from as far away as Nepal and Morocco to learn about biosafety and safe lab operations. Along with this, there is considerable training for international scientists and technicians.

To conclude, we recognize that this international response will need to be sustained over the coming months. We will continue to work closely with our national and international partners to protect the health and safety of Canadians, to be prepared in Canada, and to continue to be an integral part of the coordinated international effort required to respond to this public health crisis.

• (2310)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the start of his speech, my colleague said that it was not just the financial contributions that would help us deal with this huge crisis. This is an urgent crisis. It is not something that can be fixed in six months; we need to deal with it now.

My colleague said that it was not just the financial contributions that would help us deal with this crisis. I fully agree with that, and a number of us here tonight have suggested various ways to take action, including sending in experts, sending our disaster assistance response team and all kinds of other things, aside from financial contributions.

However, would my colleague not agree that financial contributions are also necessary? There was a reason why WHO requested \$600 million. The hon. member gave the example of the importance of medication, but medication needs to be bought and transported,

and requires personnel to administer it. A location is needed to isolate the patients. Indeed, it is not just about money, but does the hon. member not agree that money is also part of the solution?

[English]

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, I spoke of the money because listening to speeches and comments from across the aisle, one would think that if we were able to raise x number of dollars the problem would be solved. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, money is needed. Financial resources are needed to contain the disease, to contain the problem, but money would not solve the problem we have. Research needs to be going on to make sure that we eventually find a treatment to prevent the disease.

I am not a medical doctor; therefore, I am not an expert in the field, but since the disease is not spread easily we have to make sure that those places where it occurs have the tools to deal with it. Improper hygiene is the core of the problem. Running water, proper hygiene and other things are necessary so the disease will not spread so easily.

• (2315)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right. Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, said the Ebola outbreak is “the largest, most complex and most severe we’ve ever seen” and is racing ahead of control efforts. The UN coordinator for the Ebola response estimates the cost to respond at \$600 million and will require several thousand people to scale up our response three to four times.

The WHO assistant director-general for global health security said, “We don’t have enough health workers, doctors, nurses, drivers, and contact tracers” to handle the increasing number of cases. Insufficient health personnel and facilities to care for the growing number of cases is fueling the spread of the epidemic, as families are forced to care for patients at home.

In light of this being the most severe outbreak, as he points out, will Canada provide more money and additional health personnel?

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, as I already stated, financial support is required and Canada is taking its part and contributing to the effort.

I would mention a few numbers: \$2.95 million to work sharing organizations to strengthen the full response to the outbreak; \$1.7 million to support humanitarian interventions led by Doctors Without Borders to reduce and control the spread of the virus in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone; \$160,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross to support a response to the outbreak; \$200,000 to the WHO through the international grants program to support a request for assistance toward operational costs in West Africa.

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Therefore, there is a contribution and Canada is not on the sidelines. Canada is taking an active part in helping the affected regions to deal with the efforts, which have to involve both partners. We have to ensure that everybody contributes and eventually that we are successful in dealing with this deadly issue.

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been many interventions in the House tonight that have talked about Canada striking out on its own and sending things or people.

Could my colleague talk from his life experience about the need to have a health agency like the WHO to be the lead agency on this and to coordinate all of the efforts from our international partners?

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, as I stated before, this is a problem that requires an international and coordinated effort. As we stated many times in the House, the World Health Organization is the one that is coordinating, and should be coordinating, all the efforts of the international community to deal with this terrible Ebola outbreak.

I truly hope that through research we will develop a vaccine that will prevent people from getting a disease, but where we are right now, we do not have the vaccine. It is still in clinical trials and we all hope that through coordinated efforts, through coordinated work, we will get there and will defeat this terrible disease, which is what Ebola is.

• (2320)

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I like numbers. In his response to my Liberal colleague, the hon. member listed numerous government initiatives. He spoke about the hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been invested. At the end of the day, the fact remains that Canada is investing just over \$5 million in the fight against Ebola. For Canada, \$5 million equals a mere 14¢ per person. The United States is investing 31¢ per person while the United Kingdom is investing more than 60¢ per person.

Will my Conservative colleague put pressure on his own government, on cabinet, so that Canada will give more than 40¢ per person?

[English]

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way and I have been working together for a few years now at the health committee. I do not know whether we will continue that work together.

However, I did provide some numbers of financial support provided by Canada to this effort to fight Ebola. If we add all those figures together, it is more than \$5 million. Also, let us not forget that the experimental vaccines that were provided to this crisis did not come out of nowhere. This was developed because there were financial resources that we should add to this effort. These were the contributions of Canada. These were financial resources that were allocated to develop these experimental vaccines.

Therefore, if we add all the figures together, I do not think we are in the back of the till in international efforts. I think we are in the forefront.

[Translation]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for requesting tonight's debate.

[English]

I have been listening this evening, and I think none of us want this to be a political issue. However, all of us, as members of Parliament, are asking the same question: Is Canada doing enough, or should Canada be doing more? That is what Canadians are asking us, particularly those who come from the countries so desperate at this moment. They are pleading.

This infection is not contained. Without containment, everyone in the region is at risk. As we are learning today, even the United States of America is preparing for the possible eventuality that the disease could come to us.

We learned a lot in 2003 from SARS, because we were not prepared and because we really did not have the structures in this country to speak to one another. From Dr. Naylor's report, "Learning From Sars", we know that we had to do better on collaboration, co-operation, communication, and clarity as to who does what and when.

The Public Health Network has now been set up, as has the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Public Health Network is doing an excellent job across the country with its weekly calls and letting one another know what it is doing, what is at risk, and what it believes can happen internationally.

The Public Health Agency, unfortunately, is still without a permanent chief public health officer of Canada. It means that at times like this, there is not the trusted voice speaking directly to Canadians. Dr. Greg Taylor, as the deputy chief public health officer, has done his best, but when the lessons were learned from SARS, it was extremely explicit that there needed to be a trusted voice of public health speaking to Canadians at times like this.

Frankly, it has been over a month since Canadians have had any conversation about this from any public health official of Canada. At that time it was merely an announcement of the expert and exciting news about the possible vaccine. Again, when it is delivered by the Minister of Canadian Heritage in her home town, it unfortunately smacks of politics instead of being a clear message to Canadians about what they need to know and what they should be telling their families and friends about this exponentially increasing disease around the world.

It has only been ten days since the excellent CBC post by Amber Hildebrandt, which talked about the "...dire predictions of 20,000 people — more than six times the current toll". In the article she talked about Médecins Sans Frontières, saying that its "1,800 staff are overwhelmed" and that it is turning to "governments capable of rapidly deploying military units and running self-contained field hospitals". That is what MSF is asking for, and that is what we have not heard tonight.

We have not heard once tonight from the government side that it will assess and do more if necessary. Canadians want to know that Canada will step up. They have not heard that message.

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The parliamentary secretary said that the critics had had a briefing. I have to say that the briefing deck I just looked at is pretty thin gruel when we look at the international assistance, co-operation, and collaboration. There are three bullet points that start with the \$5 million we have heard about countless times tonight.

The NML, or the national microbiology mobile lab, was sent, but then the three staff were brought back because there was an infection in the hotel, which is again a mixed message Canadians are hearing. They have not had an explanation. If it could only be contracted through bodily fluids, human to human, people did not know why those staff came home.

● (2325)

Those are the questions that Canadians are asking parliamentarians, and it is the reason that parliamentarians need proper briefings, in order to contain the fear. We do not want to fearmonger, but we do want to have specific answers, and also the donation of the doses of experimental vaccine.

There are three bullet points in a deck, and then unfortunately the closing remarks merely say that the Public Health Agency of Canada will continue to monitor the situation in West Africa and keep Canadians informed as the situation evolves.

What Canadians want to know is whether we are doing enough, and should we be doing more? That was supposed to be the point of the debate tonight. It is upsetting that we end up with this political defensive response instead of learning. We actually want to hear from medical professionals. That is why it is extraordinary that in Canada we have this approach, which unfortunately is inadequate information from people who are not medically trained or able to instill confidence in Canadians. From the articles in the *Lancet*, to all the things that should have, could have, or would have happened as proposed by the WHO, in 2011, this is now being called an international response that is fractured and delayed. Everyone is now scrambling as this thing is getting worse and worse. As Dr. Cornish from MSF Canada has said, the international response has been “lethally inadequate”.

The past deputy chief public health officer to Canada, Dr. Paul Gully, in that same article, talked about how a unified and coordinated response should work with other member states, hopefully led by the WHO. He is concerned that the deployment needs consular response, the ability to evacuate workers if needed, money to pay health workers and insure them, plus training, food, lodging, and travel. A lot of coordination would be required, and Canada probably has some capacity that it could share. However, he agrees that it is not that simple. He is saying that it is our responsibility.

It was Dr. Cornish who said that the world has to step up to this emergency, and if the call is unanswered, this could turn into a disaster and an outbreak of cataclysmic proportions.

Even as we have experienced the debate tonight, things are changing today. Already in the U.K., they are reporting the CDC decision to issue a six-page action plan on how to tackle Ebola for U.S. hospitals. Now is the time to prepare. They warned a week ago that the disease was out of control, as a CDC worker contracted the illness. World leaders are pledging to invest millions, particularly

with the President of Liberia's urgent plea to the President of the United States.

It is an urgent issue and call to action today from the CDC. This is the first time we have heard experts saying that it is only a matter of time before the illness is widespread across America. This is really different, and it is hugely important to us here in Canada to understand that if we do not step up and help to contain this infection on that continent, we are going to be very sorry. I think that Canadians have been saying to me over the last little while that we could and should be doing more.

● (2330)

Today we learned that the UN Security Council is going to hold its emergency debate on Ebola on Thursday, and it will get attention in Washington, as we talked about earlier in one of my questions, as members of Congress are slated to hear from the federal officials who are leading the nation's efforts. Of course, President Obama is scheduled to visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters in Atlanta and will be briefed. Tomorrow it is expected that President Obama will detail his plans to boost the nation's efforts to help West Africa battle the Ebola outbreak, and *The Wall Street Journal* is just recently reporting today that the plan could include sending more portable hospitals, medical staff and supplies, as well as training health workers in the outbreak countries.

As members know, Congress is currently considering Obama's \$88-million request for the Ebola response, which is included in the resolutions to fund government for three more months, past the end of its fiscal year, and that the U.S. House of Representatives has already introduced a bill that includes the amount the administration requested. Also tomorrow federal health officials will testify before a joint Senate committee hearing on Ebola and the response change. Health officials on the witness list include the CDC, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and the director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

It is urgent that Canadians hear from the Public Health Agency of Canada directly and that journalists and others are able to ask the really important questions, which are the core of this debate. Could and should Canada be doing more? That is what tonight's debate is about. Are we doing enough? In order to sleep soundly in our beds at night, I think that across all party lines everybody needs to know that we have asked and had good answers to those questions. Otherwise, we are not doing our jobs as parliamentarians.

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We want Canadians to hear from the medical authorities as to what is possible from our international development authorities, what is possible in terms of foreign affairs in terms of consular support, what we are stepping up. Those same places that the protective equipment announcement came from tonight also have the portable hospital units. Should and could we be at least considering that? How do I answer when I am asked: should we be sending portable hospitals, should we be sending some of our beds, should we be sending some of the things that we have in depots all over this country where the protective equipment came from? Should we be digging deeper into what is possible? It is a hugely important issue.

During SARS we were really reeling because we did not have the structures in place at the Public Health Agency of Canada, or the Chief Public Health Officer of a public health network. We are asking the government to let those people do their work and let them speak directly to Canadians and brief parliamentarians. A call to brief the critics of the two opposition parties is not speaking to our party. Are they supposed to then brief their caucus on this? Surely not. They have to come to committee, tell us what is going on and then tell us what could be possible. Then, after we are given the menu of choices and have it costed out, it is up to Parliament to decide whether we should do more. Then we will do the risk assessment and be able to make good decisions as a Parliament in the same way as tomorrow night we will debate the contribution in terms of Iraq.

As Dr. Keith Martin said, this should be dealt with as a natural disaster. We have to have that mentality of disaster response as opposed to being able to just say that the \$5 million is enough and here is a little bit more equipment.

• (2335)

This is not what I am hearing.

I have to say, as I asked earlier in the day, we lived in Toronto with the ill effects of a travel advisory for a disease that actually, evidence-based, could not be contracted in the community. I am hearing from many people that the travel advisory to those very vulnerable countries is perhaps dangerous. Again, people can only get the disease through human-to-human contact and by bodily fluids. It is difficult for people to understand why this travel advisory was advised when many other countries have not done that. What I am hearing is that this travel advisory may well impede some of the assistance getting into these countries.

One of the other things we are hearing is that there are many doctors and nurses, health professionals across Canada, who are thinking about joining the amazing Dr. Eilish Cleary, New Brunswick's chief medical officer of health, who felt called to go and help. Obviously, there is Dr. Theresa Tam from the Public Health Agency. There are other people with skills who want to know if they can help. It is too difficult for them to find out how to do that in the current configuration of websites and in CANADEM or in the ways that this is structured, because most of our processes are not done for emergencies like this, and not for this specific kind of medical assistance.

We hope that the government will listen to what the President of the United States decides to do tomorrow, including appointing an

Ebola czar who will be the person who Americans can listen to as to what is going on.

It is extraordinarily important that Canadians have confidence, and that as they see what the CDC has rolled out in terms of all the American hospitals, the handbooks, and the buddy system to make sure people wash their hands and to make sure that all the basic public health rules that are sometimes not observed are followed. This is a teachable moment for even the upcoming winter flu. We could do a better job now in preparing for this.

It is clear that President Obama's announcement is to "underscore" just how extraordinarily serious the administration has been in confronting what they call a top national security priority. What a senior administration official has said is that what is needed is on a scale that is unprecedented.

I think that Canadians think that \$5 million and some special equipment is not an unprecedented contribution. This is business as usual in terms of \$5 million here and \$5 million there for a whole myriad of problems that countries in the world are facing.

We need a risk assessment as to what is the appropriate contribution for Canada to contain this epidemic and prepare Canadians for any eventuality in this country so that they feel confident. However, that can only come if they stand up, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the public health leadership in this country, and we let them speak directly to Canadians, let them speak directly to parliamentarians. We have to stop this game of politics and defensiveness, where everything we are doing is perfect, when too many Canadians have too many questions and too many parliamentarians have too many questions. Frankly, tonight's debate was very helpful in terms of getting some of this out.

However, the answers to the questions are not being given by people who actually have the medical knowledge to be able to give reassurance to Canadians or even to parliamentarians.

• (2340)

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Liberal colleague for her speech, which was a heartfelt appeal.

She is absolutely right. During tonight's emergency debate, which was more of a discussion, information was shared by both sides. I concur with my colleague that the next step is for Canadian experts to explain the situation to parliamentarians and outline Canada's next steps. As parliamentarians we should listen to what our experts have to say rather than just saying that Canada should give more money and do certain things.

The Standing Committee on Health will resume its work this week or the next, and therefore we still have time. I am sure that my Liberal colleagues and all the other members who are just as passionate as we are could attend and hear what the experts have to say. You have to be passionate about this debate in order to remain in the House of Commons until midnight. I repeat that we are at a critical juncture of the evolution of the Ebola crisis. We must take the next steps.

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Does my colleague agree that experts must appear before the Standing Committee on Health as early as next week, if possible, when the committee resumes its work? Although there are many worthwhile issues to be examined by the Standing Committee on Health, which does great work, we could make this issue a priority for one day so that Canada's parliamentarians could be advised by real experts who have been working on this file for many years.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree. Inviting Canadian public health experts and international experts in order to support parliamentarians as part of a proper study in committee is a good idea. However, all parliamentarians must be briefed immediately.

• (2345)

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for truly an excellent speech that outlined the issues. It could not have been better.

She mentioned that another urgent need was opening up air routes that had been closed to affected countries. These closures have a huge impact, impeding the flow of experts and supplies into Africa, and the outbreak itself is having a negative impact on the economies of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. People need medical supplies, food, fuel, charcoal and other provisions. The World Health Organization does not recommend any travel or trade restrictions be applied except in cases where individuals have been confirmed or suspected of being infected with Ebola virus disease, or where individuals have had contact with cases of Ebola.

Could she talk about travel bans as well as how the government might provide leadership? We have medical professionals who might want to contribute. Is there something the government could do to make this easier for them?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, some of the public health experts have suggested that in lieu of the travel ban, which was not recommended, that there could be a better approach, whether through CBSA or the airlines, such as information being given at airports as to where one would be and then to list the symptoms that one should look for. We know that with this disease people are not infectious unless they have symptoms. Again, it is very important that people who have been to these areas know what symptoms to look for and know how to get help.

Again, it is a bit controversial that these travel bans were put on. We need to hear from the experts to find out if they think they are appropriate or whether they have complicated efforts in the region. It is also important for the Public Health Agency and International Development to have a look at the website to try to make an easier on-ramp for Canadians who might want to go and help in the region.

As my colleague from Mississauga said, this will not ever just be about money. Right at the moment, people need personnel and

equipment. Experts and people who can actually go over and know how to work safely and teach and train other personnel will be hugely important.

In the U.S. there has been a specific call, which was very eloquent and easy. We have not seen that in Canada, the just asking for people like we did in Kandahar where so many amazing people were able to go and work in the hospital there, in X-rays and doing all kinds of things. I think Canadians would be generous with their time if they knew exactly how to do it.

The government needs to have a multifaceted approach because this crosses many government departments such as International Development, Foreign Affairs and Health Canada. We talked and heard about a whole-of-government approach to this, but we need to effect it. Just studying this at the health committee will not be enough.

• (2350)

[Translation]

Mr. Dany Morin: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to ensure that the people still watching the debate at home at such a late hour understand the magnitude of the crisis and where we are heading. According to the World Health Organization, 4,293 probable or confirmed cases of Ebola have been identified in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Senegal. The WHO is projecting that 20,000 people will be infected in the next three months. When I said that this is a pivotal time, I was not joking.

My question for my Liberal colleague is this: does she believe that the situation will be as serious as the WHO's projection if the government does not provide more assistance, be it financial or technical?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his difficult question.

The projections are suggesting that there will be 20,000 people affected. It is very important that Canada contribute as much as it can. As always, an expert analysis is needed. After that, it is very important that parliamentarians determine the extent of our contribution.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Resuming debate.

[Translation]

There being no further members rising for debate, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:52 p.m.)

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