

January 2012

January 9th

I will never know what public office would have been like prior to the Internet, however I am quickly learning that online information is something that needs to be scrutinized very carefully. Over this past weekend I was made aware of claims that the Jasper National park was soon to be privatized and had been sold to an International company. Further this international company planned on charging all park users an entrance fee in order to help finance large scale private development within the park. Fairly serious claims and fortunately none of them are true. This type of misinformation seems to be occurring on a more frequent basis within certain segments of the online internet community.

I would like to thank those citizens who were sceptical of such claims and forwarded this misinformation to me for further clarification that I am more than happy to provide. What is really occurring is that Parks Canada, back in 2010, initiated a public consultation process to identify a vision for the Icefields Parkway. The goal is to increase learning opportunities and enhance the abilities for park visitors to enjoy the environment and gain insights into the regions ecological and cultural heritage. Brewster, a company who has for many years operated the unique "ice explorer" buses in the area, has proposed to add a new feature to the well known Ice field glacier adventure. The new feature being discussed is a glacial discovery walk, complete with a handicapped accessible 400 meter interpretive boardwalk featuring a glass-floored observation platform extended 30 meters over the Sunwapta Valley below.

Clearly some individuals will not be supportive of this type of a feature within the Jasper National park not unlike those who opposed the introduction of motorized ice explores when they were first introduced over thirty years ago. However since that time over 10 million visitors have utilized the increased access to better understand and enjoy the unique learning opportunities of the ice fields. Many local citizens and tourists the world over have also at one time or another travelled in an ice explorer and can recall many fond memories of that unique experience. Regardless of supporting or opposing increased public amenities in public parks any suggestion that Jasper National Park is being sold or that mass scale development is occurring is patently false. It should also be noted that park user fees remain at the sole responsibility of Parks Canada. In reality when and where private services are offered in public parks those revenues are typically used to offset park operating costs ensuring that actual park users pay an additional share over and above average Canadian taxpayers.

It was not my intention this week to cover the Jasper National Park in my weekly MP report as there are more localized concerns I had intended to discuss. However with such a strong level of misinformation on the topic and many local citizens asking for clarification I felt it was important to relay to the citizens of Okanagan Coquihalla that Parks Canada is not selling parks as some have wrongly suggested. As the House of Commons will not sit again until the end of the month on January 30th I would be interested in hearing from you. If you have time for a meeting or even a phone to relay your concerns I encourage you to contact me to schedule an appointment. I can be reached at 250-770-4480 or toll free at 1-800-665-8711

January 16th

Our Government's economic action plan has been largely credited with helping to create an economic and investment environment that has created close to 600,000 new jobs during one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression. In the context of jobs and job creation we often hear that one of the obstacles for employers is bureaucratic red tape. To date I am realizing firsthand that there is some legitimacy to these claims. Many people would be shocked with how large an impact that Government can have on the bottom line of a thriving business, by the change of a single directive. As elected officials we must always keep in mind that our decisions will often impact the lives of our fellow Canadians. I was reminded of this most recently, as I had an opportunity to recently visit a Service Canada location where approximately 75% of the inquiries are about Employment Insurance. The value and importance of having a job cannot be overstated and as taxpayers we must also be mindful of the challenges that increased unemployment presents to Canadian families.

Recently I have encountered two situations that I believe are thought provoking and worthy of discussion. Investment is a term that many Canadians understand, however when this term is expanded to include foreign investment, often some view non- Canadian investors from a more negative perspective. Although it is not widely reported, many Canadian industries are regulated from an ownership and investment perspective. One particular sector, as an example, limits by percentage the share of foreign ownership in a Canadian company. One challenge that can emerge is when a company in such a sector requires additional investment to survive and only non- Canadian investors respond. If this investment is denied as a result of where capital originates, then potentially hundreds of extremely well paying jobs in a moderately sized community could be lost permanently. Clearly this is a challenging situation and often it is not a hypothetical one but a reality.

In another example a project proposed for a region could have significant positive economic impacts for generations including the creation of hundreds of jobs and also increasing the local tax base. In this example the project in question may primarily require suitable access. However as it not uncommon, sometimes citizens in an area will reject road related projects if they result in increases of traffic and noise. In addition costly and time consuming traffic and engineering studies are also a requirement that even if properly addressed may still not overcome objections from local citizens. As many will be aware, these types of projects and proposals are not uncommon in many different regions.

While there is a debate about the role of government in direct job creation, there is certainly no debate that government has a strong role to play. The examples above demonstrate how the decisions of elected officials at all levels of government can have a significant impact on job creation within a specific region. I have noted in my brief time both as a city councillor and now as an MP that opposing something is often far easier than standing up in support. However after my visit to the Service Canada location I believe we must all take a moment to think of those currently unemployed and in search of a job and ask what we can do in support of job creation. For the record in both of the examples above I will continue to support jobs and our local economies.

January 24th

Never let it be said that Canadians are not a diverse and energetic population when it comes to expressing personal points of view on a range of different topics. This is something that I welcome, as it indicates to me that people are engaged in the discussion of how we can build a better country. Recently I covered the topic of a proposal for the Glacier Discovery Walkway project in Jasper National Park. The intent of my report was not to ask citizens to support or oppose that project but rather to clarify what was being proposed in response to inquiries from constituents. In the days that followed, I heard from citizens who are very strongly in favour of the project and from those who believe there should be no public amenities whatsoever in national parks.

Recently another topic that I am hearing a diverse range of opinions about pertains to the subject of pensions. Currently there are concerns being expressed to me by many public sector employees regarding the future of their pension plans. At the same time I am also hearing from taxpayers with concerns about the costs of public sector pension plans, as well as the costs of pension plans for Members of Parliament. There has been much speculation recently in the media that there may be pending changes to pensions within the public sector. Currently our Government is looking at all forms of public sector spending in order to find efficiencies and savings without raising your taxes. At this point, all options are being considered. I will state for the record that should changes be proposed to the MP pension plan that is more respectful of the taxpayer I will fully support such initiatives. I will note that individuals in the public service pay into and earn them; however contributions and benefits must be fair to the taxpayers who help fund them.

My office also receives on a regular basis questions from many citizens about the different programs that the Federal Government administers, like the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). For your information, here are a few points about these programs:

The CPP is generally funded equally by you and your employer during your working years. CPP can provide benefits for loss of income created by disability or retirement. The benefits are ultimately calculated by how much you have contributed and over what length of time. Currently the maximum CPP retirement pension amount is just under \$ 1000 monthly at age 65. You can start collecting CPP as early as 60 or as late as 70 however different rates would apply. In contrast OAS provides a modest pension to most Canadians at age 65, if you have lived in Canada for at least 10 years. For the record, federal Liberal bill 428 that proposed lowering the 10 year residency requirement was not passed by Parliament. The maximum OAS payment is just under \$ 550 monthly for those individuals with 40 years or more of residency after their eighteenth birthday. Seniors with earnings in excess of roughly \$ 70,000 per year will gradually receive a lesser OAS benefit that ultimately is eliminated for an income in excess of \$ 112,000 a year.

The GIS is specifically for lower income seniors 65 and older with an income of roughly \$ 16,000 annually or less. If you have questions for any of the above programs you can contact Service Canada toll free at 1-800-622-6232 for further information.

While these three programs are generally well known, they certainly aren't the only ones that the Federal Government administers as part of a broader social safety net. In fact, 60% of the money that is spent at the Federal level is in transfers which go direct to individuals or the provinces for their use. With increasing demographic pressures coupled with the backdrop of a fragile economic recovery, the one thing we can count on is a robust discussion of our options, as we look to do our part in the building of a better Canada.

January 30th

The topic of pensions has again been on the minds of many citizens and in particular seniors within the riding of Okanagan Coquihalla this past week and has also been actively covered in many Canadian media reports. I would like to clarify to seniors who current receive the OAS benefit that there will be no changes to the benefits you currently receive. Likewise to the citizens who are very close to reaching retirement age I would also like to confirm that no change would occur without substantial notice and an accompanying adjustment period to ensure that sufficient time is provided to adjust and plan appropriately for your retirement. Our government remains committed to the retirement security of Canadians, however we must also be proactive to ensure that we have retirement security that Canadian taxpayers can afford that seniors can depend on.

Going forward over the next two decades we know that the amount of Canadian citizens over the age of 65 will basically double from roughly 4.7 million seniors today to over 9.3 million by 2030. We also know that today seniors are living longer and healthier lives than ever before, a fact that Canadians can all take pride in. However we must also recognize that more seniors collecting OAS benefits with fewer workers to fund those same benefits will create a very serious situation if ignored. In terms of numbers the total annual payout for OAS benefits is expected to rise from the current amount of \$36 Billion a year today to \$108 Billion by 2030. Today there is a ratio of basically four working taxpayers helping to fund OAS benefits to retired seniors. By 2030 this ratio will be cut in half down to two working taxpayers attempting to fund OAS benefits. This is an unsustainable situation and is the reason why a new balance must be found in order to secure the future of this important program.

Understandably any proposed changes to OAS are a cause for concern to all Canadians, however we cannot ignore the changes to the demographics of our society and run the risk that countries such as Greece are currently encountering with an inability to meet financial obligations. Over the past six years our Government has introduced increases to the GIS, pension income splitting, increase age credit and the tax free saving account (TFSA) As a result of these changes a single senior can now earn \$ 19,000 per year (\$ 38,000 as a couple) before paying any federal income taxes. We have also lowered the GST rate to ensure there is less tax on your after tax spending. The majority of these initiatives were opposed by the opposition. I expect further proposed

changes will potentially also be opposed. While there may be disagreement and debate on how best to secure the long term future for retired Canadians, I am hopeful that we can all agree on the need to be proactive today and not reactive in the future when our options may be limited.

February 2012

February 6th

I was reminded this past week of my relative newness as a Member of Parliament. Although it has been almost eight months since being sworn in to serve, I must confess that I have not developed the kind of 'thick skin' or 'water off a duck's back' attitude that I witnessed by some of the more experienced politicians, particularly when faced with a controversial issue. After hearing some recent comments made publicly about the OAS and pensions in general I feel compelled to respond. I would like to again clarify that there has been no discussion whatsoever about reducing the OAS benefits to retired seniors. For the record our government has been firm in the commitment to retired seniors that OAS benefits will not be reduced in any way. Likewise our Government has also made the same commitment for those taxpayers who are near retirement. Our Government has further confirmed that no changes to OAS benefits would occur that did not include a substantial notice of change to younger taxpayers.

To be clear, the changes coming to Canadian demographics are not a political issue, they are a reality. Over the next two decades the amount of Canadians over the age of 65 will double. When OAS was first created in 1952 the age eligibility was 70. Interestingly enough the average life expectancy at that time was 66 for men and 71 for women. I expect not many Canadians lived long enough to qualify and likely that was part of why the OAS qualifying age was lowered from 70 to 65 in the year 1965. The good news for Canadians is that today the average life expectancy is 79 for men and 83 for women. This is why today OAS represents annual spending of \$ 36 billion and based on the aging of our population is expected to rise to \$108 billion in the year 2030. Critics have pointed out that as a percentage of the GDP this represents a spending increase from roughly 4.5% of current GDP to roughly 6.2% in 2060 (depending on what forecast you follow).

That may not in itself seem like a significant increase; however there is another important fact that must also be taken into consideration. In 1975 there was a ratio of 7 working taxpayers for every retired senior. Today that ratio is almost cut in half and has been reduced down to 4 taxpayers per retired senior. More importantly by 2030 that ration will be further reduced down 2 taxpayers per retired senior. If OAS were the only program funded under Canada's vast social safety net then likely it would be easier to ignore this trend as most critics suggest should be done. However I have also heard from retired teachers and retired members of the British Columbia Government Employees Union who have shared some of the challenges that occur if a long term view is not taken in the funding of pension plans.

I would also like to clarify that I am not suggesting there is a crisis; only that as Canadian taxpayers we need to recognize that in the future we will have fewer taxpayers supporting our vast social safety net at a time when Canadians are living longer. Before I sign off on this week's report I would like to thank the many of you who have taken the time to share your views with me on this important subject. I will continue to take comments and suggestions forward. While I have heard both support and opposition for taking a proactive approach on the OAS, one area where I have heard a consensus is that no OAS reform should occur without similar considerations being applied to the MP pension plan. I have taken your views to Ottawa and for the record I will vote in support of changes to the MP pension plan that are more respectful to the taxpayers of Okanagan-Coquihalla.

February 13th

In my previous two MP reports I have discussed the OAS in context with the changes occurring in Canadian demographics to the extent that by 2030, our population of citizens who are over 65 will double. The fact that the amount of citizens over 65 will double from currently 4.7 million today to 9.3 million by 2030 is not, in itself an alarming concern. However what must also be taken into context is the other important changes occurring to Canadian demographics. As I mentioned in last week's report in 1975 there was a ratio of 7 working taxpayers for every citizen over 65. Today that ratio has been reduced down to 4 taxpayers per retired senior. However by 2030 that ratio will be further reduced down 2 working taxpayers per retired senior. Why does this matter?

Critics have suggested that these pending changes to our population should be ignored and are of no significance. I respectfully disagree. Over the past weeks I have been further researching this subject and I do believe that there is a legitimate cause for concern. Critics have suggested that the future increase in OAS spending, in spite of consuming a larger share of our national GDP, is "manageable" and is really an issue of spending priorities. While this may sound like a reasonable claim, it is also very important to understand where this money will ultimately come from. Many citizens may be unaware of this fact however the single largest source of revenue for the Federal Government is from income tax. Nearly 50% of all Federal Revenue, a total of \$ 113.5 billion, comes off the top of your pay check. By comparison the GST as a revenue source provides just over 10% of government funding at \$ 28.4 billion.

From a revenue perspective the fact that income tax contributes almost half of all federal government funding as the single largest revenue source is significant. When one considers that the ratio of working taxpayer's to citizens over 65 has gone from 7:1 in 1975 and will further decline to 2:1 by the year 2030 it is clear that not taking action today will create problems in the future. I am not suggesting that there is a crisis, however with income taxes comprising nearly half of all government revenues combined with fewer working taxpayers in the years ahead ultimately means there will less people trying to pay an increasingly larger bill. On the spending side it must also be noted that OAS is only one of many benefits provided under Canada's vast social safety net. Total current spending on support for the elderly is roughly 13% of the entire federal budget at \$36.6 Billion. The child benefit program by comparison is less than half of this amount at \$12.7 billion while Health transfers to the provinces are currently \$26 billion. It

should also be noted that currently Canada is paying \$ 30.9 billion a year in debt serving costs.

I have in the past pointed to the challenges that other countries, most notably Greece, are facing from the inability to take proactive actions and maintain public spending within what taxpayers can afford. Even France, one of the most prominent countries in the European Union, faces challenges since its credit rating was recently downgraded, placing more debt pressure on its citizenry. Generally speaking few problems are created overnight and most are decades in the making. Many citizens have rightfully pointed out that Canada is a country rich in resources however it must also be noted that our Government is actively trying to open up alternative markets to those resources and often the very projects that help to achieve these important goals are also opposed. Canada is a country that was build on hard work and if we are to keep Canada strong as a nation we must accept the importance of taking proactive actions to ensure that we have the resources needed to provide the services that Canadians can depend upon but also that Canadian taxpayers can afford. Our Government will continue to work towards these important goals.

March 2012

March 13th

This week is expected to be busy one on Parliament Hill as there is potentially up to ten different votes that may occur in addition to the introduction of new legislation. With every vote recorded in Parliament I have noted back at home here in Okanagan Coquihalla there will be those citizens who are strongly in support of these votes and also those who are opposed. This week I will potentially be supporting a bill that will disappoint some members of our region and I believe it is important to share further information on this topic.

Recent labour negotiation challenges at Air Canada have threatened to potentially ground the airline and create a situation that would adversely impact thousands of Canadians and threaten segments of our Canadian economy. Out of concern for the travelling public and to protect our fragile economic environment our Government will take action. This news will not sit well with some members of our region and in particular with some staff members at Air Canada. However I have also heard from many citizens who depend upon the services of Air Canada and who will be severely impacted if the airline experiences a disruption of services. In addition the economic impact of a service disruption has been estimated to exceed \$20 million on a weekly basis. From a national interest it is clear that our Government has a responsibility to help protect the interests of Canadians and to help keep our economy moving. A shutdown at this point has the potential to lead to layoffs and job losses and that is a situation that must be avoided and is why I will be in support of these efforts.

Also this week the Safe Streets and Communities Act will come back before the House of Commons for the final reading. This has also been a controversial Bill as our Government believes that toughening sentences does not create new criminals but rather helps to keep the

existing ones in jail. Many citizens have shared concerns with me over the revolving door of justice that continues to put the rights of criminals ahead of victims. I have also heard from critics who believe that criminals are the real victims and should not be incarcerated.

I greatly value hearing from citizens and the input I have been getting on a range of topics continues to increase. Citizen engagement in Okanagan-Coquihalla from my perspective is excellent. I have been highly impressed by citizen efforts to promote the West Kelowna entry in the Kraft Hockeyville contest and also to citizens in Penticton who came out in flash mob to support bringing expanded airline service to the community. Citizens have great power when they work in support of an important cause. As next week is a break when the House stands adjourned I will be back in the riding and available to meet with you. Contact my office at 250-770-4480 or toll free at 1-800-665-8711 to schedule a meeting or a phone call.

April 2012

April 16th

As a first time Member of Parliament I often wonder how the role of being a Parliamentarian has changed since the advent of the internet. Although I am active electronically and communicate through mediums such as Twitter, a website and blog along with email I am often amazed that in the era of information just how much misinformation and even fabrication exists online. I have also noted that people in person are generally civil and respectful of others whereas some of the language and tone contained in certain emails is at times well over the top and even alarming in some cases. For whatever reason the most nasty of comments are largely restricted to online emails and anonymous commentary. I have noticed that while one cannot deny that email is superior in terms of speed and immediacy, you cannot beat a phone call or a face to face meeting in terms of interaction and mutual understanding & respect. I certainly appreciate it when people also include their phone number with their email or letter- a good conversation will often cover more ground than a dozen letters!

More recently I have noted a trend of online urban myths where a picture of a fancy jail or a photo of politicians playing electronic solitaire in a democratic chamber is suggested as to be Canadian in origin. In both circumstances these online photographs were taken outside of Canada and are from other countries. While it is unusual to comment on something so trivial the amount of inquires I have received on these two particular photographs has been very significant.

One other area I have received a number of inquiries pertains to MP pensions on account of some media reports that had wrongly suggested that MP pensions would continue to be protected. Budget 2012 contains provisions that will see changes being made towards MP pension plans that will ultimately result in a 50/50 contribution. As I have stated previously I am in full support of changes to the MP pension plan that will be more respectful to taxpayers and as such I will be voting in favor of this proposal. I will also stand on record in support of further

changes to MP pension plans that continue to be more respectful to taxpayers. I have heard from a majority of citizens who understand that our Government must make some challenging decisions with respect to reducing spending and in some cases consolidating or changing programs but there is also an expectation that as Members of Parliament we should also be involved in this process. Citizens may often disagree on the decisions of Government, however this is one area where I have heard a strong consensus and I appreciate the time many of you have taken in sharing your views with me on this and other topics.

I have also received a surprising number of inquiries regarding the phasing out of the penny. Beginning this fall, the Royal Canadian Mint will no longer be distributing the penny. Although the penny will retain its value indefinitely, our Government encourages Canadians to either redeem them at financial institutions or to consider donating them to charity. In the absence of the penny a process of rounding up or down will be implemented as follows. For transaction between \$1.01 and \$ 1.02 cents the total would be rounded down to \$ 1.00 For amounts of \$ 1.03 - \$ 1.04 the total would be rounded up to \$ 1.05 while conversely amounts of \$ 1.06-\$ 1.07 would also be rounded down to \$ 1.05 and an amount of \$ 1.08 or \$ 1.09 would be rounded to \$ 1.10. If you are a business owner or an interested citizen who would like to have further information on this change please contact me at the email address below. Alternatively, if you have a further question on this or any topic please give my office a call at [1\(800\) 665-8711](tel:18006658711) or local [\(250\) 770-4480](tel:2507704480).

April 23rd

Although I still have much to learn about life in public office, there are a few unwritten rules that I have become aware of. One of those rules is that it is generally considered ill-advised to comment publicly on the actions of other levels of government, and by extension other elected officials. That being said some recent actions within local and regional government are from my perspective, a cause for concern. As elected officials one of our primary responsibilities is to collectively vote and make decisions on behalf of those whom we are elected to represent. At times this can be a difficult process as some decisions can be controversial and as is always the case in every healthy democratic environment there are always those who are in agreement and those who oppose.

Currently I am in support of further changes to the MP pension plan that are more respectful to taxpayers. My position on this is one that is not popular with some colleagues in Ottawa. Conversely I am also supportive of Budget 2012, my position on this is opposed by some citizens within Okanagan-Coquihalla who do not believe that Government should consolidate or eliminate programs and Budget 2012 does call for a reduction in the spending of your tax dollars. My vote in support of eliminating the long gun registry was supported by most citizens I heard from, however it was strongly opposed by others. From my perspective, part of being accountable to taxpayers is to not only to take a position on issues of importance and vote accordingly, but also to explain that position in a timely manner that citizens can be aware of.

Where my concerns arises is that recently I have noted several circumstances where some

elected officials have basically abstained from having to take a vote on controversial decisions. There are legitimate situations arising around a conflict of interest when an elected official can state the reasons for absenting from a vote however in several recent vote abstentions no public reason for not voting was provided to taxpayers and from my perspective that is wrong. Over the past weekend I have consulted with many former elected officials who served in variety of roles on this subject and have learned that my concerns are not alone. As this has not been an issue raised though the local media I have instead decided somewhat reluctantly to raise this issue in my weekly MP report to you.

I believe that as members of the public you deserve to know where your elected representatives stand on issues of importance. If we allow the practice of abstaining from a difficult vote in public to become more common I believe that it will result in more decisions being made behind closed doors and in private. When elected officials of any level remove themselves from discussions for any other reason than a perceived or real conflict of interest, this lack of representation lessens the eventual decision as not all constituencies have their views presented. This is not a partisan issue and not one that I take any enjoyment in raising but I firmly believe that a fundamental obligation of public office is that we make our views known through discussion and debate. Decisions can at times be unpopular and challenging however as public officials we must make these decisions publicly and be held to account for them at election time, that is the very essence of our democratic system. I welcome your views on this or any subject.

May 2012

May 8th

It was roughly one year ago that I wrote my first ever report as your newly elected Member of Parliament for Okanagan-Coquihalla.

Reflecting on the past 12 months and in particular the immense learning curve (that I am currently still on) has shown me the deep passion that Canadians collectively share for our great country. At times we differ in our views and sometimes strongly, but each year on July 1 we come together in celebration to honor what we value most in our country and in ourselves as Canadians. We may sometimes take it for granted but as a nation we are one of the freest, most prosperous and peaceful countries in the world.

When in Ottawa I am often mindful of the importance of our decisions and the challenges that we continue to face in working to keep Canada strong and prosperous. Canada as a country was built on principles of sacrifice and immense hard work. Our vast social programs materialized much later on once Canada had established the wealth to afford the luxuries of a secure social safety net.

However where citizens once worked in consensus and agreement to undertake the projects that helped create prosperity and employment, today many of those same types of projects are

frequently opposed. Regulations that stand as a barrier are often embraced and special interest groups that seek to curtail and derail new investment and infrastructure are on the rise.

Most Canadians believe in the importance of creating jobs here in Canada and lament out sourcing yet if we cannot continue to build and to innovate in a productive and efficient manner this is a challenge that will continue to occur.

You may have heard about Budget 2012 and the Budget Implementation Act. Budget 2012 is one of the most comprehensive budgets in Canadian history. In fact some of our critics have suggested it is too comprehensive and would like to see a simpler more basic budget document being put forward.

It is important to recognize that Canada has a relatively diverse and interrelated economy. Threats to one sector can indeed have repercussions in others. In my discussions with local employers over the past few weeks even in smaller communities like Logan Lake and [Okanagan Falls](#) there are major private sector employers who depend upon a healthy mining industry and special projects as one example. In turn transportation and regulation are also important contributing factors to the viability of these local operations. All of the considerations also create well paying jobs in other related industries.

It is for these reasons that a comprehensive budget strategy is required to ensure that where possible our vast regulatory processes can be made more efficient to ensure that we are putting citizens to work instead of joining the unemployment line.

Recently in Ottawa the opposition critics expressed outrage that debate on the Budget 2012 budget bill had been limited to just seven days. What was often not mentioned was that time closure supporting seven days of debate was only being invoked at second reading debate. In other words, the entire budget debate is not limited to seven days, it was only one stage of the debate at second reading that is subject to a seven day time clause.

It should be pointed out that after second reading is full committee stage review (including an all party sub committee where MP's with expertise in the environment regulatory processes can fully discuss and scrutinize the bill) followed by a third reading debate before being sent to the Senate where this process would occur once again.

In total Budget 2012 will end up having the longest period of debate of any budget in the past two decades, something that I view as positive given the importance of the budget and the spending of your tax dollars. That said, it is also imperative to ultimately pass Budget 2012 in 2012 and more so as many of the budget provisions are essential to moving our Canadian economy forward in a manner that creates jobs here in Canada and supports our local economies.

May 14th

This past week was a very raucous one on Parliament Hill with much of the discussion centered around the subject of debate, or as could be more accurately summarized, debate about debate. At times over the past few weeks I would submit that there has been more debate about the process of debating than there has been legitimate debate and discussion over proposed Bills and related legislation. I will provide some examples of this recent practice.

During the initial debate on the budget, an individual NDP MP consumed three entire days of the debate time. In doing so literally dozens of other MP's from all across Canada were denied the opportunity to speak either for or against various aspects of the Budget. What was more alarming is that in order to continue to take up debate time the NDP MP in question began to read anonymous twitter feed into the record. While it may be an allowable political tactic to monopolize debate time in doing so MP's from other parts of the country and different political affiliations are being denied an opportunity to also speak out on the budget. It is difficult to understand how this political tactic enhances or encourages a healthy debate.

Moving on to the actual debate on the Budget Implementation Act, the Opposition Liberal party instead of engaging in debate initially suggested that there were potentially two different versions of the same bill and used this self created confusion as grounds to further delay the debate. Ultimately the Clerk's office confirmed there was only one copy of the Bill and the Speaker ruled that debate must continue. Unfortunately debate that is delayed in this case means that debate that could have occurred did not. More recently members of the NDP Opposition party have committed to otherwise delay or disrupt debate solely because the Government would not agree as to how the Budget Implementation Bill could best be debated. In others words there is a suggestion that if we cannot agree on how we should debate we should then interrupt the debate that does occur.

In another example members of the opposition have also accused our Government of denying debate at committee meetings by using the practice of going in camera. The Canadian Press using information provided by the non partisan Library of Parliament actually revealed that the Government to most often use this tactic was in fact the Liberals under Paul Martin with runner up honours going to the Liberal Government under Jean Chrétien. As you may have also heard recently the actual debate time at second reading allocated to the Budget Implementation Act is the longest in the past twenty years. That being said, from more recent experience the fact that time is being provided to actually debate does not necessarily mean that the debate time is being used for the purposes intended. More commonly debate time seems consumed about the debating process and how some members of the opposition would potentially prefer a different format.

If I come across as sounding frustrated with these current tactics it is fair to say that I am mindful that some of our most recent debates are not serving the interest of Canadians as well as they could be. If the Opposition believes that our Economic Action Plan is not the right direction for the Country, then let them propose rather than simply oppose. Democracy thrives not only when the people have a voice but when clear ideas can be debated. Ultimately the ongoing delay and disruption tactics should not be used instead of bringing ideas and being prepared to defend them: Canadians deserve nothing less.

This is obviously a somewhat partisan point of view admittedly from an MP who is still very new to Parliament Hill. I certainly welcome your views on this or any other subject.

May 21st

One of the things I have noticed about Ottawa is that each week there is often a different event that will be the major news story from the parliamentary press gallery and often the opposition parties as well. More often than not these stories will quickly travel throughout Canada and back home to our beautiful region of Okanagan-Coquihalla. What I often find interesting is that sometimes these media stories will generate a fair bit of local interest as citizens request further information or pass on personal points often either in support or opposed to this issue in question. Other times news events that are actively discussed in Ottawa I have heard from local citizens here in the riding who cannot believe some of the media stories unfolding in Ottawa are even considered to be newsworthy at all.

Last week was very unique as it was actually the leader of the official opposition Thomas Mulcair who was the subject of the media spotlight over comments made by Mulcair essentially blaming the challenges in the Ontario and Quebec manufacturing sector on the western Canada based resource economy. Many media pundits were quick to castigate the NDP and Thomas Mulcair for what they called a “war on the west” and a “divisive attack against Canadian national unity” and a “recklessly unCanadian” position that Mr. Mulcair refused to apologize for. For those who suggest that newly minted political leaders enjoy a honeymoon period from the media, suffice it to say Mr. Mulcair’s has been very short lived.

However lost in the media story is another, and I submit more import dynamic that we as Canadians must be very aware of. While it may politically easy for Mr. Mulcair and the NDP to point fingers of blame at the British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan economies for the challenges in the Ontario and Quebec manufacturing sectors, doing so ignores other important facts. The reality is the collapse of the US economy, our largest trading partner, is far more relevant to these challenges then blaming western Canada. It should also be noted that the

manufacturing output since March, the same month our Governments Budget 2012 economic action plan was introduced, production output has actually risen by close to 2%, the largest gain since September with more increases in the forecast.

However there is another more important consideration to be mindful of. Another media event we have recently observed is rioting students in the Province of Quebec. In spite of having the lowest post secondary tuition in North America and a proposed increase that would still see Quebec students with the lowest tuition rates, the students are rioting and taking to the streets. In response to the rioting students, Mr. Mulcair told the media that our Government must spend more of your money subsidizing post secondary education. While this is an expected response from the leader of the NDP opposition here is why we should all be concerned. Where would this money come from?

Here in Canada we have a decades old national equalization program. This program takes money from some Provinces in Canada and gives that money to other provinces in theory to offer comparable services. Here is the problem with this equalization programs from my perspective. This year the Province of Quebec will receive more equalization money than any other Province in Canada with a \$7.4 Billion payment, almost half of the entire \$15.4 Billion equalization program. Ontario, Manitoba and the Maritimes Provinces receive the balance. The Western Canadian provinces, the very same provinces attacked by Thomas Mulcair and the NDP, receive no equalization under this program and in fact help pay for it. From my perspective Mr. Mulcair and the NDP should be thanking the Western Canadian Provinces and not attacking them. Canada needs an equalization program that is fair to ALL of our Canadian provinces and requires a strong economy to do so. As Canada's equalization program is coming up for renewal in 2014 I welcome your views as the taxpayers of Okanagan- Coquihalla on this or any other topic.

May 28th

This week will be an important one for me on Parliament Hill. Assuming the current Parliamentary schedule remains intact, on Tuesday evening my private member's bill will come before the House of Commons for the first hour of debate at 3rd reading. It is possible that should the bill continue to receive strong all party support in the House, that it may well receive a vote during first hour debate. If a vote does occur and the Bill is passed, it will then move on the Senate and history will have been made as Okanagan wineries would soon be able to sell wine directly to Canadians in other Provinces. Currently an Okanagan winery can legally sell wine directly to a customer in Japan but it is illegal to sell directly to customer who lives in Calgary. This is an out of date prohibition era law that we all agree needs to change. However if there is not a consensus in the House to have a vote at the first hour of debate then it would fall to the second hour of debate. That in itself may not sound like a major inconvenience, however the way that our Parliamentary systems functions means that second hour debate would not occur again until likely late October. This would obviously significantly and adversely impact the timing of the Bill and is one of the reasons why I am working hard to try and ensure passage hopefully during the first hour of debate this week.

What is important about this Bill passing quickly is that many of the wineries I have met with have expansion plans. In some cases possibly only minor, and in some cases fairly major. Expanding a vineyard, constructing new outbuildings or a new tasting room all benefit our local construction trades. New stainless tanks, tractors, printing and marketing services also benefit from our expanding wine industry. Currently there are in excess of 3,300 jobs being supported either directly or indirectly by the BC wine industry and locally we have also witnessed the benefits of wine tourism. Last week I was in Toronto and met with several different groups currently planning fall wine tours in large part as they are hoping to purchase BC wine to take back into Ontario legally for the first time in history. I have also had a chance to meet with Federal Express Canada who is very encouraged about the potential for increased shipping opportunities and as a result is in full support of the Bill. Ultimately the ability to legally transport BC wine back to other parts of Canada serves as an open invitation to come back and visit our beautiful region of the province. It is also fairly exciting to hear about a new winery opening in Lillooet and grapes being grown in Merritt. Wine is fast becoming an economic driver in every region within Okanagan-Coquihalla and opening up the Canadian marketplace through my private members Bill C-311 is long overdue. Hopefully I will have some good news on this subject later in the week.

One other activity that I am currently working on is my annual accountability report that I intend to provide to the taxpayer's of Okanagan-Coquihalla in the near future. This report will include information such as my House attendance record, sponsored travel disclosure and the individual member expenditure report as issued by the Board of Internal Economy. I believe that taxpayers deserve to know this type of information and I would like to have the reports made available to you as soon as they are released by the Board of Internal Economy. I also welcome your views and input on this or any other area of concern.

July 2012

July 24th

As much as it is often suggested that we are increasingly living in an era of information, the amount of misinformation that circulates on a daily basis continues to surprise me. Recently I have received a large amount of comments and largely negative feedback from many taxpayers who have viewed pictures of what is wrongly described as a new Canadian jail. Perhaps you have also come across these same pictures in an email that suggests your tax dollars are being misused in the construction of such an extravagant new jailhouse. The reality is that these pictures are not of a Canadian jail, but rather an Austrian detention center. Given that the opposition had suggested getting tougher on crime and ending the revolving doors of justice would result in billions of spending on the construction of new prisons it is understandable that some taxpayers would believe this type of facility was actually located in Canada instead of Austria.

What the true facts have demonstrated is that when you keep criminals in jail where they cannot re-

offend you do not end up with more criminals but rather a reduction in recidivism. There are also costs to taxpayers and victims alike of the “catch and release” system that allows habitual career criminals back out on the streets where they can continue to victimize law abiding Canadians. Tougher sentences that keep career criminals in jail where they belong also has resulted in the Correctional Service of Canada returning \$1.48 Billion back to Canadian taxpayers courtesy of reduced spending. For the record there are currently no Federal Prisons under construction in Canada today.

Another myth I would like to comment on came from a recent letter to the editor from an Olalla resident who suggested that a Member of Parliament is only actually working when the House of Commons is operating in Ottawa. It has been roughly one month this week since the House of Commons adjourned for the summer break. During the past four weeks I have attended or participated in close to sixty different events and logged several thousands of kilometres driving around Okanagan-Coquihalla meeting with local government leaders, employers, taxpayers and various interest groups. This is part of my summer listening tour and does not include responding to emails or phone calls which I also enjoy doing on a daily basis. I view this time over the summer months as being critically important to hearing from the citizens of Okanagan-Coquihalla firsthand and I look forward to the next four weeks and visiting those communities and other events that I have yet to attend.

When I ran for election I made a commitment to bring the concerns of Okanagan-Coquihalla to Ottawa and hearing from citizens directly is a very important part of that process. Ottawa at times can feel like a million miles away from our region and different challenges often require a firsthand understanding in person to both appreciate and fully comprehend. It is my view that Parliament Hill must serve the interests of the taxpayers of Okanagan-Coquihalla with real solutions and common sense. In my travels I often run into other Members of Parliament and also Members of the BC Legislative Assembly, all are working diligently from my experience over these summer months. Although the work that occurs in Ottawa is very different then the riding, hearing and witnessing both the challenges and successes in Okanagan-Coquihalla on a daily basis is something I take very seriously and believe all elected representatives should pay attention to. I welcome your comments and suggestions. Please contact me at [250-770-4480](tel:250-770-4480) or toll free at [1-800-665-8711](tel:1-800-665-8711)

September 2012

September 24th

In light of the recent announcement that the BC Legislature would not hold a fall session I wanted to take the opportunity to define what and how a “sitting” functions on a weekly basis at the House of Commons in Ottawa. When the House of Commons is sitting during a typical week on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, debate will begin at 11 AM and does not normally adjourn until 7 PM. On Wednesday each caucus meets in the morning typically from 8 or 9 AM until noon while debate in the House begins at 2 PM concluding again at 7 PM. On Friday's, debate is moved up and starts at 10 am and typically concludes at 2pm

allowing MP's more time to return to their home ridings. Also occurring are regular meetings Monday through Thursday for Parliamentary Committees. There are currently 28 Parliamentary Committees (not including Senate or joint Senate House of Commons committees) who will typically meet twice weekly for a 2 hour session during each meeting. These meetings usually occur anywhere from 8:30-10:10:30 for the morning session and 3:30-5:30 for the afternoon session and always on different days of the week.

Parliamentary committees are made up from MP's representing all parties and typically most MP's (who are not in cabinet) will sit on two committees. Currently I am serving on one of the two joint Senate and House of Commons Committees that in the case of my committee, scrutinizes government regulations while the other joint committee pertains to the Library of Parliament. I have also recently been appointed to serve on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, prior to this appointment I served on the standing committee on the Status of Women. It is also not uncommon for Members of Parliament to have scheduling conflicts from time to time so there are opportunities to cover other members committee meetings. Generally when my schedule permits I volunteer to sit in on other committees as it is a valuable experience to keep informed on some of the many issues of importance that are before the House and are under study. Often when I call constituents in order to discuss their concerns, they regularly ask questions that are being examined in depth by committees and so I find my time substituting for other members to be well spent as these constituents are glad to hear that many of these complex issues are receiving the in depth analysis they deserve.

This week in Ottawa there will be second reading debate on two Government Bills. Bill C43, the Faster Removal of Foreign Criminals Act. It proposes to speed up the process to remove convicted criminals from Canada by limiting appeals options that can add as much as an additional 14 months or more before a criminal can be deported. In addition there will also be increased penalties and greater Ministerial discretion in dealing with those individuals who cheat the immigration system. The other Bill up for debate this week is second reading of Bill C-15 "Strengthening Military Justice in the Defence of Canada Act" This Bill proposes a series of amendments to the National Defence Act that pertain to the military justice system. There will also be two Senate sponsored Bills up for second reading debate this week, Bill S-2 "Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act" and also Bill S-8 "Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act". Aside from debate, there will also be votes on Private Members Bills C-350 "An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act" and on Bill C-293 that also proposes to amend the "the Corrections and Conditional Release Act" from vexatious complaints. Motion 312 will also be voted on this week that pertains to "Studying Canada's 400 Year Old Definition of Human Being".

The topic of MP pension plan reform has also been widely discussed on Parliament Hill over the past few weeks and I would like to re-affirm my position that I will be voting in

support of changes to the MP pension plan that are more respectful of taxpayers. I publicly voiced my support for these changes last year and while I was one of the few to do so publicly at that time there are increasingly more Members of Parliament who are now voicing similar support for these changes. If you would like more information on any Bills or motions before Parliament or would like to share your own views please do so at your convenience. Your input is very much needed and appreciated.

October 2012

October 1st

October 8th

As the House of Commons is currently on the Thanksgiving break week until October 15th there is one area of Parliamentary business that I have yet to discuss in my weekly reports and that is the infamous "Question Period." It is challenging to try and summarize question period in a logical manner given that the parliamentary procedure involved for question period does not, in my view, follow a logical path. Question Period is undeniably an important part of our democratic process; however, it is also a function where many elected members can often demonstrate some of their worst behaviour right at the moment when most of the Canadian public (through the media) are paying utmost attention. The end result often gives members of the public a rather jaded view (to put it mildly) on how our governance is conducted on Parliament Hill.

From my own perspective it is not only members of the public who are frustrated by "QP" (as it is often referred to as) but it can also be equally as trying from the standpoint of being a Member of Parliament. Is there method to this madness? It is important to recognize that question period is largely for the benefit of the Opposition to raise issues of importance and to hold the government to account, at least in theory. However the rules governing question period are not set by the opposition, but rather by parliamentary precedence and

while the rules have slowly evolved over many decades, I am likely not alone to question if further reform is not an idea worthy of investigation.

As it stands currently question period occurs for 45 minutes each day the House is in session– generally starting at 2:15pm in Ottawa everyday save for Friday when it occurs at 11:15 am. Parliamentary procedure generally dictates the question order and what parties, including independents, follow in the order of question allotments. Parties also have control over who asks questions within the allotment they are provided much as Government has the ability to decide who responds. The biggest challenge to question period that many in the public are unaware of is that questions and answers are time limited, currently the amount of time a Member of Parliament is allowed to ask a question is 35 seconds. Likewise for a member on the Government side of the house, 35 seconds is also the time limit for a response. Members can at times ask a supplemental however it is again subject to the same 35 seconds as is the response from Government.

While it is possible to ask a meaningful question in 35 seconds, I am certain most would agree that when it comes to governance, very few answers can be given in such a short timeframe. As a result often questions become comments or statements and the responses follow a similar pattern, all of course with a very political theme. Typically the thirty five seconds in many cases ends up being utilized as an effort to score political points often with quickly delivered commentary that often is more frequently evaluated by the performance of the orator than the actual content. In many ways it is not unlike stand up political theatre however in real terms it only occupies a very small portion of the parliamentary day and effectively overshadows the more important work that occurs in parliamentary committees and during debate on bills. Generally there is far less attention on parliamentary committees and debate unless an individual MP or group of MP's use profanity or otherwise submit offensive remarks in such cases then it becomes more newsworthy.

Fortunately I can confirm that Parliamentary committee work is generally far more productive and unlike question period there is typically much more respect and stronger working relationships between members from all sides of the House. While I do not expect question period to change any time soon it is important to recognize that although it often dominates the media spotlight, the 45 minutes of 35 second questions and answers is only a small part of what occurs on a daily basis in Ottawa.

Sincerely,

Dan Albas

October 15th

With the House of Commons back in session this week there will be a number of different votes occurring largely on Bills that I have referenced in previous reports that continue to move through the Parliamentary process. Bill C-43, "Removal of Foreign Criminals" will be voted on at the conclusion of second reading debate as will Bill C-37 "Increasing Accountability for Victim's Act". There will also be a third reading vote on a Private Member's Bill C-299 "Kidnapping of Young Persons". Bill C-299 is a private member's bill from my Kootenay-Columbia colleague, MP David Wilks. Many citizens may recall the tragic Sparwood, B.C. kidnapping of a three year old toddler who fortunately was returned to his family four days after having been abducted from the family residence. This Private Member's Bill C-299 proposes increased minimum sentences for those who kidnap children unknown to them who are under the age of sixteen.

Also occurring early this week will be an opposition private member's motion, M-385, calling for a special all-party committee of MP's to study and develop a national bullying prevention strategy. There has been some confusion as it has been suggested that this motion was drafted quickly in response to the recent bullying related tragedy occurring in the lower mainland late last week. This particular motion was actually drafted back on May 30th of 2012 and illustrates the ongoing impact of bullying in our society. I believe if we are to take further action against bullying we need to also consider bullying that exists online. As the use of the internet has increased so too has disturbing incidents of cyber-bullying, which in many cases has become almost rampant in some areas on the internet. Social media sites, online discussion forums, comments on media stories are often filled with hate related comments, personal insults and attacks and even at times threats. These types of actions are almost always from those individuals who hide under the anonymity of an internet IP address.

As many of you recall, Bill C-30 proposed that those individuals who use the internet for purposes that include crime, fraud, to engage in child pornography, identity theft, or use of threats and violence could have their basic IP contact information made available to law enforcement to assist in an investigation. Contrary to what was stated often in the media, Bill C-30 did not authorize individuals to be "spied on" without judicial oversight. What Bill C-30 did propose was that law enforcement would have access to the same basic

contact information in the cyber community as is currently available in the real world from something like a licence plate on a vehicle. As the internet continues to play a more prominent role in all aspects of our society, and in particular with our youth, we must also ensure that we have measures in place to safeguard our most vulnerable from those predators and criminals who use the internet for illicit and illegal purposes. As it stands today there is little accountability online and increasingly the interests of Canadians are being compromised as our means to safeguard the internet are not keeping pace with technology.

One point that I would like to emphasize is that no Member of Parliament that I have met is looking to politicize a very important issue. However as a society we must also recognize the need for a balance that we can help to achieve through our democratic process. While we as Canadians greatly value our current online freedoms that include anonymity we must also ask how long we are prepared to stand aside while that same anonymity is increasingly being misused to victimize others through online cyber bullying, fraud, identity theft and other illicit and illegal acts. I am not suggesting for a moment that we create a “big brother” environment online, only that we ensure that law enforcement has the same basic abilities in the cyber community as they do in the real world helping to ensure our streets and communities are safe. As it stands today, a RCMP officer can more readily access the contact information for a hit and run driver than they can access the contact information for an IP address of someone who is posting inappropriate pictures of a minor online. We must also recognize that for many of today’s youth, being victimized in the online community can be just as devastating and harmful if not more so than anywhere else. I believe it is time we increased accountability online and I welcome your views on this topic.

October 22nd

Never let it be said that democratic diversity is not alive and well in Okanagan-Coquihalla. Each week I am fortunate to receive a significant amount of feedback from many of the good people who live in our amazing region. I appreciate all the phone calls, in-person meetings, chance encounters at a coffee shop or at community events; these are all venues where meaningful comments and feedback can be exchanged. It should be recognized that there is a huge variety of differing opinions on many issues, however at times there can also be a relatively widespread consensus. One of these issues is the topic on the need for MP pension reform. Much like the opposition to former Liberal Private Members Bill C-428 (a bill that died at the call of the last election and has no standing in this Parliament), the Pension issue has strongly united an overwhelming majority of Canadians.

When I was first elected last year one of the first comments I heard was "congratulations" often followed by "something needs to be done about those MP pensions". It was a message I heard loud and clear and was one that I publicly committed to support both here and in Ottawa and can now say that action has finally been taken. Last week, changes to the MP pension plan were voted on and approved that will be more respectful of Canadian taxpayers; these changes will also apply to Senators and ultimately to the public service. The Jobs and Growth Act of 2012 will see the pension contributions for the above groups begin to move towards an equal 50/50 cost sharing model. In addition the retirement age to collect those benefits for MP's, Senators and newly hired public servants will also be increased to age 65. These changes will ultimately save taxpayers some \$2.6 Billion over the next five years.

This week in Ottawa there will be continued debate on two bills originating from the Senate. Bills S-7 "Combating Terrorism Act" proposes that holding investigative hearings when required would allow the Courts to compel a witness who may have information regarding a terrorism offence to appear in court and provide that information. It also proposes the creation of new offences that would apply to those leaving Canada, or attempting to leave Canada, to commit an act of terrorism. This legislation is intended to deter persons from leaving Canada to attend terrorist training camps or engage in other terrorist activity abroad. The other Senate Bill is S-11 "Safe Food For Canadians Act". This act proposes a number of actions that include instituting a more consistent inspection regime across all food commodities, implementing tougher penalties for activities that put the health and safety of Canadians at risk, providing better control over imports and exports, and strengthening food traceability. Increased fines are also proposed raising the current maximum fines amount from \$250,000 up to \$5 million. Later in the week debate will begin on the second budget bill, C-45. If you have any comments, questions or concerns on these or any other Bills before the House of Commons please do not hesitate to give me a call

On a more personal note, I would like to thank everyone who has extended their kind wishes on the birth of my daughter. My wife, kids and I are thrilled with our newest addition to the family and we are grateful for all of your supportive calls, emails and cards that we have received.

October 29th

If you believe everything you read on the Internet and in some letters to the editor, you have likely heard false and erroneous claims that Canada is essentially being given away to China as a result of a secret FIPA (foreign investment promotion and protection agreement) that has been hastily put together solely to give away our Country's natural resources. Let me state for the record that such claims are complete nonsense, and in many cases are

intentionally fabricated falsehoods that use fear-mongering and misinformation in order to mislead others. While stating personal opinion is an important and fundamental aspect in our free and democratic society, I remain concerned how online information, or in this case misinformation, is increasingly being used in an effort to deliberately deceive Canadians. My report this week is not in any way intended to seek support from those who oppose measures that encourage trade but rather to provide factually correct information so citizens can have a more informed point of view.

What is a FIPA? Contrary to what you may have read, a FIPA is not a formal trade treaty but rather is an agreement between two different countries that outlines the rules, obligations, administration and dispute resolution mechanisms that can both protect and promote foreign investment in each other's respective country. In essence a FIPA agreement establishes important guidelines that promote a fair and transparent process for those investors looking to do business in another country. FIPA agreements are not new, in fact the current proposed FIPA agreement with China actually began negotiation almost twenty years ago back in 1994. Further, these agreements are not "secret"! The current 31 page proposed Canada-China FIPA is publicly posted online with 24 other FIPA agreements that have been reached with various countries over the past two decades. Please contact me if you are interested in viewing any of these agreements.

Does a FIPA agreement "hand over" Canada's Natural resources? Absolutely not and any claim that it does is patently false. Acquisitions of Canadian resources by foreign investors are subject to the Investment Canada Act that cannot be over ridden by a FIPA agreement. Further, it is specifically written into the Canada-China FIPA agreement that decisions made under the Investment Canada Act cannot be subject to the dispute settlement provisions in the FIPA agreement. I will be happy to share the exact language directly from the FIPA agreement on this or any point to confirm this information to anyone who is interested. With respect to the Parliamentary process on a FIPA agreement, these agreements must be tabled in the House of Commons for 21 sitting days of Parliament. During this time the Opposition, through Opposition day debates, has the opportunity to debate a FIPA agreement or any other issue. To date the Opposition parties have decided not to debate this particular FIPA agreement. I should also add that this particular FIPA agreement was brought forward and reviewed by the Standing Committee on International Trade at request of parliamentarians.

Why pursue a FIPA Agreement with China? Canadian exports to China have increased more than 27% since 2010 and as a result, China is now Canada's third largest export merchandise market. Over the past five years Canada's exports to China have increased by 77%. This past year British Columbia actually exported more lumber to China than to the United States. Several large scale employers and

even some small business operations in Okanagan-Coquihalla are now exporting into the Asian marketplace. As China has one of the fastest growing economies in the World there are increasing opportunities for Canadian companies to grow and expand into China. However agreements like FIPA are necessary to protect Canadian investments and business dealings in foreign countries such as China to ensure our interests are protected by due process. I spoke to an owner of an industrial company several weeks ago as I wanted to know if he saw China as a potential market for his Canadian made specialty equipment for mining. He said that he thought it was a big opportunity but due to what he viewed as a lack of patent and investment protection, he wasn't interested at this time. Currently Canada has an excellent reputation internationally for a safe place to do business and invest, largely due to our stable way of life and commitment to the rule of law. If we are to expect Canadian companies to grow and expand on their expertise, Government must build that certainty so our we and future generations can benefit from increased investment and expanded trade. I appreciate that there are always those individuals who oppose trade, however it should not in my view be overlooked that we have employers throughout Okanagan-Coquihalla who depend on access to foreign markets that help provide jobs locally and support our regional economy.

November 2012

November 8th

This week I would like to submit my annual accountability report. It was my intention to do this earlier in the year however it was only late last week that the Board of Internal Economy tabled the audited individual members' expenditure reports. The following information is for the period from April 1st of 2011 up to March 31st of 2012 in accordance with the Board of Internal Economy reporting periods. Although much of this information is publicly available, it is often difficult to find and may exist within several different areas of government. I believe it is important for citizens to have an annual summary on the activities of elected officials in public office and the following information is based on the most common requests that I receive from constituents.

Without question, spending and travel are typically the most scrutinized areas. In the context of a Member of Parliament from British Columbia, our travel expenses are higher than those of MP's from other areas in Canada as a result of the fact that we fly the farthest distances between B.C. and Ottawa. My personal travel expense for the time frame was just over \$49,000 – in my case this represents roughly 400 hours in an airplane and I would estimate close 98% was regular coach class – I didn't fly first class before being elected as an MP and I continue to make every effort to fly economy class as a Member of Parliament. Total spending for both my offices here in Okanagan-Coquihalla and in

Ottawa including all staff, leases, advertising and travel was \$316,625. Currently the average total spending of an MP in British Columbia is roughly \$ 445,000. Closer to home NDP MP Alex Atamanenko from B.C. Southern Interior has posted spending of \$516,131 as a comparison.

Sponsored travel falls into a different category as Members of Parliament are invited from time to time to travel to other destinations both within and outside of Canada for a variety of different reasons. These invitations often include airfare and accommodations being paid for by the Host provider and not taxpayers. When Members of Parliament accept these invitations they are required to disclose and report such trips to The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. I can confirm that I did not accept any complimentary trips or travel since being elected.

House Attendance: At some point over the years you may have heard about MP's who rarely venture into the House of Commons while they are in Ottawa unless votes are occurring. From my perspective I try to be in the House of Commons for a portion of each day the House is sitting. During my first year as an MP, there were only three sitting days that I was not in attendance for votes in the House of Commons. In each of these circumstances I was asked to represent the government at an announcement here in Okanagan-Coquihalla. When not in the House of Commons, I am most often in one of the two Parliamentary Committees I sit on or another Parliamentary Committee covering for an MP who may have a scheduling conflict. In total I attended over 915 different events between Ottawa and Okanagan Coquihalla, that included nearly 300 different meetings and roughly 130 community events with the remainder being other Parliamentary or constituency related functions. Not included are unscheduled events or daily phone calls.

The above information is intended to provide a brief summary of the most commonly asked questions regarding my activities for the first year as a Member of Parliament working on your behalf in Ottawa. If there is other information that you are interested in, please do not hesitate to contact me with your request. Likewise if this annual accountability disclosure is not of interest to you, please let me know otherwise I will look to post a similar report this time next year.

November 19th

A lot has been said around the discussion of natural resource development over the past several weeks. Whether it is a letter to the editor, a newspaper column or the subject of conversation at your local cafe, it is clear that there is a diversity of opinion. It is important to first recognize that our riding benefits substantially from these projects. In Okanagan Falls, the largest local employer develops and creates world class mining components. In Merritt, a long term employer has recently announced the permanent closure of a mine, where the negative impact on the local economy has yet to be fully realized. While out door knocking, I heard some of the views on resource development from long time Logan Lakers. They spoke about the hard times that followed when the nearby mine was closed for a time and the accompanying impacts on the local school and house prices as families moved to find work elsewhere. Since the mine resumed operations, they pointed to the positive impacts to the

tax base and by attracting young families to work in the mine. Pointing to the flood of children walking home after the three o'clock bell and to the many ATV's and snowmobiles in driveways of local families, one can certainly recognize their point.

During my time as a Member of Parliament I have yet to meet anyone who has suggested that the re-opening of the Copper Mountain Mine in Princeton has not been an extremely important and welcome support for the Princeton and area economy. In fact I have met many small business owners throughout Okanagan-Coquihalla who have both directly and indirectly benefited from the increased economic activity from this mine that represents an investment in excess of \$400 million dollars. More importantly than the dollars is that this mine will directly employ close to 300 people in a resource community much in need of well paying jobs and of course the related spin off jobs will also benefit other sectors of the small business community.

Why do I mention the importance of the Copper Mountain mine to a community like Princeton? Because this critically important project for the economy of the Similkameen region was made possible through foreign investment. The Mitsubishi Materials Corporation invested a significant amount of capital into this project so that it would become a reality. This investment has created hundreds of well paying jobs in our region and in turn the resource royalties paid to the British Columbia Provincial Government help cover the costs of important services such as healthcare and education. In fact the B.C. Government forecasted roughly \$400 million in revenues from the B.C. mining sector alone in 2010, not to mention that the average wage in this sector is in the \$100,000 range annually. As mentioned earlier, Okanagan Falls, Logan Lake and Merritt also directly depend upon the mining sector to help provide jobs that support local families and local economies.

If you have been following area newspapers as of late, you will know that critics including some of the opposition parties both provincially and federally oppose trade and foreign investment. Yet these same critics frequently ignore that foreign investment is what helps to create important jobs right here in Okanagan-Coquihalla and at the same time provides important revenues to Governments at all levels that in turn pays for important services that citizens depend upon. Crown resources will always be owned by British Columbians and in turn Canadians, no agreement proposed today alters that fact. This is why the crown receives resource royalty revenues when the opportunities to capitalize on resources extraction are made available with further revenues benefitting throughout the process. For taxpayers to receive the highest possible return for the rights to engage in responsible resource development, a competitive bidding process is often involved to ensure the highest price is realized. Opening up this market to foreign investors not only has the potential to directly benefit Provincial resource royalty revenues, it can also directly benefit local economies as evidenced in Princeton.

FIPA agreements, as mentioned in a previous MP report, are not full scale trade agreements but rather are agreements that help to provide certainty to investors that outline the rules, obligations, administration and dispute resolution mechanisms that can both protect and promote foreign investment in the respective countries party to the agreement. In the event that foreign investment seeks to gain ownership of a Canadian resource company, this decision is not subject to a FIPA agreement but rather is subject to the Investment Canada Act. The Government of Canada will either approve or reject an application based on the six clear factors that are laid out in detail in section 20 of the Investment Canada Act. These decisions will only be made after very careful review and extensive scrutiny. The Conservative Government is the first in recent history to reject foreign

ownership of Canadian owned resources as was recently done with the rejection of the Malaysian Petronas proposal and was also done with the rejection of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan in 2010. Our Government will continue to make decisions that build on our track record of encouraging economic growth, job creation and prosperity in Canada.

November 26th

Last week was an interesting one on Parliament Hill as trade and foreign investment discussions remain an active topic in the House of Commons as well as in many Parliamentary committees. The Opposition NDP remain opposed to foreign investment and the vast majority of trade agreements that have come before the House to date. The NDP have also taken aim at the record of the Liberals when in Government pointing out that, and I quote directly from an NDP statement in the House “there were 10,000 foreign investment applications approved when the Liberals were in power, all of them rubber stamped. They never rejected a single one and never attached conditions”. In contrast and as I reported in last week’s report, our Conservative Government is the first in recent history to reject foreign ownership of Canadian owned resources as laid out in section 20 of the Canada Investment Act. Rejections of the recent Malaysian Petronas proposal and the rejection of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan in 2010 are examples of this. This discussion became more animated recently when current Liberal MP and the front running candidate for leader of the Liberal Party, Justin Trudeau announced strong support for the CNOOC Nexen deal calling it “good for Canada”. I reference this to point out that in spite of what you may sometimes hear, the diversity of opinion and democratic debate is certainly just as lively in Ottawa as it is in many coffee shops and letters to the editor throughout Okanagan-Coquihalla.

In last week’s report I also provided a real life example of how foreign investment creates well-paying jobs right here in our region- specifically the investment by the Mitsubishi Materials Corporation that led to the opening of Copper Mountain Mine in Princeton. Last week’s report focussing on the importance of rural resource communities and mining generated a large amount of feedback as many citizens were aware of the importance of mining to communities such as Princeton, Okanagan Falls, Merritt, Logan Lake and elsewhere but in many cases were not aware that foreign investment was involved. That being said, I also hear from citizens who do not support mining, trade and foreign investment as well as hearing from citizens who would be more supportive under different circumstances.

Many of the points raised are of great interest to me. Some have rightly asked; why do we need to rely on foreign investment? While many people can recognize the economic benefits and jobs of these kinds of projects, one has to be mindful that although Canada is blessed with natural resources, our comparatively small population makes it challenging to fund all of these projects with Canadian investment alone. Even the Canadian Pension Plan, like many large funds, diversify the holdings internationally in order to protect the investments and generate a return. To encourage those who wish to diversify and invest in Canada, it is important to offer protection and certainty overinvestment capital. The need for transparent environmental processes that are straight forward

and timely is important. Likewise is the importance to have international agreements in place that outline administrative process and dispute resolution mechanisms. These have all been topics of debate in the 41st Parliament and ones that we have addressed or continue to work on. While government certainly has a role to play in creating a strong and accountable regulatory environment, it is not the government that puts forward potential projects- it is up to the private sector to propose projects whether a refinery, smelter, mine, production facility or otherwise.

A secondary and equally important consideration is that in order to increase value added exports, Canada must have international markets to sell into, which is why our government has put such an emphasis on expanding trade. Whether it be in blocks of countries such as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the European Union or bilateral agreements like Canada-India free trade agreement that is currently under negotiation. This is why since 2006 our Government has concluded trade agreements with nine different countries and has initiated negotiations with 60 other countries. Using the example of India, few are aware that Canada and India have a rapidly growing commercial trading relationship – last year the bilateral trade between our two countries generated roughly \$5 billion in revenues, a 23% increase over the previous year. While many have suggested these numbers are based on imports into Canada, in reality more than half of this amount, \$2.6 billion, is actually based on Canadian exports into India. At a recent Diwali event at the temple in Summerland, I heard a tremendous amount of support for the Prime Minister's efforts to expand our trade with India. It should also be pointed out that it is not just those that have familial ties with India that would benefit from a free trade agreement. Dried vegetables, fertilizers, paper, paperboard, aircraft and related parts are some of Canada's most common exports into India- coming from all across this great country. India has a market that exceeds 1.2 billion people and has forecast annual economic growth of 6.3 per cent between now and 2017. India is one of many countries that represent an important opportunity that can be filled by Canadian expertise, products and services that create local jobs and support our regional economies. I should also add the International Trade agreements do come before the House of Commons for full debate, much has occurred recently in the debate on a trade agreement with Panama. For more information on any free trade agreement or to share your comments, questions and concerns please do not hesitate to give me a call. I can be reached toll free at [1-800-665-8711](tel:1-800-665-8711).

December 2012

December 3rd

There are currently two weeks left for debate on Parliament Hill before the end of 2012 and as was the case last year, it is widely expected that filibusters and procedural tactics will be at a premium as Government seeks to have legislation passed that the Opposition opposes. Most prominent will be Bill C-45, the Jobs and Growth Act. For those unfamiliar with the Jobs and Growth Act, it is the second act to implement provisions of the Budget for 2012 and as a result our Government will introduce time allocation this week to help ensure that the Budget for 2012 is actually passed in 2012. Time allocation is often confused with closure, a different Parliamentary procedure. Time allocation sets a fixed period of time that is available in the House of Commons to debate a specific

stage of debate during a Bill. Closure differs from time allocation in that closure in effect ends debate and calls for a vote. Interestingly enough from a Parliamentary perspective, closure is a long term procedural tactic that will be one hundred years old in 2013 while time allocation is a far more recent Parliamentary procedural phenomenon that was created as an alternative to closure and has continued to evolve over the past few decades.

One area of the Jobs and Growth Act that I believe many in Okanagan-Coquihalla would be supportive of but has not received a great deal of attention is changes to our tax policy as it relates to the environment. The phasing out of the Atlantic Oil and Gas tax credit is one such policy. Our Government is committed to improving the neutrality of the tax system as it currently exists in different sectors of the economy. In part this is a result of a commitment by G-20 Leaders to rationalize and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies over the medium term. Another measure in the act is the addition of a capital cost allowance that would incentivize those who would like to generate renewable energy. This would include a variety of equipment that would generate or conserve energy by using a renewable energy source such as wind, solar, small hydro, or using fuels from waste like landfill gas, wood waste, manure; perhaps making more efficient use of fossil fuels with high efficiency cogeneration systems. Given that there has been a fair amount of interest in communities such as Merritt, Penticton and Princeton in these kinds of projects and the accompanying jobs both in construction and ongoing operations, it is my hope that these kind of initiatives will be well received and help create opportunities in these and other communities.

Another initiative that our Government recently announced were regulatory changes in the automotive sector that will harmonize recent similar changes in the United States that promote increased fuel economy for cars and trucks sold in Canada. This not only keeps our auto sector competitive and in sync with the large US market, but will also conserve fuel. The new regulations will begin implementation in 2017 and by 2025 will see vehicles that consume 50% less fuel and at the same time emit 50% fewer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to a vehicle sold in 2008. Collectively in the period from 2017 to 2025 these new regulatory changes are estimated to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 162 MT. As some of you may be aware, our Government also announced heavy duty vehicle GHG emissions regulations earlier this year that will begin to take effect in 2014. Also announced in September of this year are final regulations to reduce emissions in the coal-fired electricity sector. This sector by sector approach does have critics however the 2012 Canada Emissions Trends report shows that combined efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada are working. Currently Canada is at the halfway point in reaching a targeted reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 17% from 2005 levels by 2020. It should also be noted that a previous Government who signed an international agreement but then took no further action actually saw an increase of greenhouse gas emissions by 27%. Although jobs, the need to support our local economies and responsible resource development are frequent topics of discussion, it should be noted that there are a number of initiatives like the ones mentioned previously that are often overlooked. Although you may not hear about some of these environmentally related measures in the Jobs and Growth Act, it is important to recognize that this act proposes to not only keep our economy strong but also to promote diversification and innovation in our great country.

December 14th

Recently Private Member's Business has been the subject most frequently raised by a large number of constituents here in Okanagan-Coquihalla. For those of you unfamiliar with Private Member's Business, better known in Ottawa as PMB, all Members of Parliament (with the exception of Government Ministers, Parliamentary-Secretaries and the Speaker) have the ability to introduce either a Private Member's Bill or Motion into the House of Commons. I have also noted that there is often a misunderstanding about PMB's and how they differ from Government Bills in many significant ways that can often lead to further confusion. A private members Bill is different from a motion in that a Bill contains actual proposed legislation that if ultimately passed would potentially change a law. As a result Bills are very time consuming and often complex documents to construct and require an immense amount of background research and resources as would be expected for any change to the law. For an individual member it can be very challenging to propose a PMB without having the availability of large scale resources that Government has at its disposal. There are often multiple potential solutions to any single issue, all with their own strengths and weaknesses. A potential Bill might seek to amend more than one statute, increasing its complexity and potential unintended consequences. Drafting can also be an issue that an individual parliamentarian may have to wrestle with.

The alternative to a Private members Bill is a motion. Private member's Motions are essentially a draft resolution that if passed by a majority vote in the House of Commons, will form the opinion of the House and in turn can require the Government to take action on an issue as directed by a motion. There are also a few additional points to be aware of with Private Member's Business. Although the process of debate for a Private member's Bill follows the same pattern as a Government Bill, the Government does not have any standing in the selection or approval of private members business. Often I find that there can be confusion between a private member sponsored bill or motion as compared to a Bill proposed by government. It should be noted that ALL Members of Parliament (with the exception of Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentary-Secretaries and the Speaker) have a right as Parliamentarians to submit a Bill or motion on virtually any subject they choose, even topics that the Government is not in support of. The one caveat is that if a Bill or Motion ultimately proposes an additional expenditure by Government, that Bill or Motion in turn requires the sponsorship of a Government Minister. It should also be noted that a lottery process is used in order to determine the order that MP's can see their Bills and Motions debated in the House of Commons.

As I am a strong believer in accountability, I always encourage citizens to contact me directly to speak about any private members business that comes before the House that is of concern. Although there may not always be agreement on the outcome of a particular vote and many citizens may have differing points of view even on the same topic, increased information can in my view always lead to a better understanding. There are also times where a subject we may be generally supportive of will end up being opposed if a Bill is not properly constructed in a way that will achieve the proposed outcome.

As an example, I have recently heard from a large number of local citizens regarding last week's introduction of a Private Member's Motion that proposes to condemn sex selective abortion practices. For the record I believe that almost all citizens in principle condemn the idea of terminating

a pregnancy for reasons solely pertaining to sex selection. However the subject of pregnancy termination is also one that our Prime Minister made a commitment during the campaign period to not introduce into the House of Commons if elected into Government. It is also a commitment that I shared in response to questions that I was asked in all candidates' forums. Although there are times when new information arises and situations may change that require elected officials to reconsider a previous position, in this case I believe that the commitment made to oppose the introduction of this issue into the House of Commons must prevail. As the Member for Okanagan-Coquihalla, I publicly condemn the practice of gender based termination of pregnancy without reservation and would suggest that the majority of citizens in our riding and country would as well. In this instance I believe we can publicly condemn this practice without the further need to do so within the House of Commons and while I do continue to condemn this practice I will not be supporting this issue moving forward should it appear before the House of Commons. I welcome your views on this or any subject of concern.

December 17th

I have always been a strong believer in the principle of accountability. It is why I make every effort to ensure that my MP expenses are amongst the lowest in Western Canada, why I spoke out in favor of changes to the MP pension plan that were more respectful to taxpayers, and is why I do not use over-the-top rhetoric or profanity in the House of Commons. Since being elected, another belief I continue to act upon is personally returning phone calls, emails where possible, and compose weekly reports on events that occur in Ottawa and in the riding. As taxpayers, you provide significant resources to all levels of government and I believe firmly that your calls and concerns deserve to be heard. We may not always have agreement in a democratic country as diverse as Canada but I submit that one thing that sets us apart from others is that we are respectful of our differences and tolerant, at times even open minded, to the views and values of others.

With the final sitting of the House of Commons for the year of 2012 now concluded this will be my second year in Ottawa representing the citizens of Okanagan-Coquihalla in Parliament and I would like to take a moment to reflect on this milestone. For me the past two years have been an immeasurable learning experience, and a great honour serving as your MP. There is one overarching issue that continues to concern me and that is the lack of accountability in information that is presented online. To be clear, there are many justifiable reasons to disagree on policy and decisions of our elected representatives at all levels of government. However I am certain that most would agree that a genuine disagreement should be based on factually accurate information. More and more frequently, information being presented is not only factually inaccurate; at times it is even intentionally distorted in an effort to mislead. Frequently this misinformation is located online and often authored by "internet experts" or other "anonymous sources". At times even conventional media sources can report on a story that may leave out important factual information, an example of this I will share:

Many of you have likely heard media reports of our Government "committing" to purchase the F-35 stealth fighter aircraft. The reality is that not only have no F-35's been purchased to date, the decision to commit Canada to the joint strike fighter program (JSF) was actually made by the Liberal

Government of the day back in 1997. In 2001 after a design competition the Lockheed Martin F-35 was awarded the contract over a rival aircraft design proposal from Boeing.

My reason for pointing out that the Chrétien Liberals made this commitment is not a case of pointing the finger of blame at someone else but rather to illustrate just how far back this issue originates. We must also not forget that this is not the first time Canada has had to replace a strategically important aircraft that have become obsolete. Senior taxpayers will recall that we paid \$ 478 Million in cancellation penalties when the Liberals cancelled the \$4.8 Billion EH-101 helicopter order that was to replace the aging Sea-Kings. It should also be pointed out that cancelling the replacement for the Sea-King did not negate the need to replace this aging helicopter, it only delayed it further, and as we would ultimately discover at much greater cost to taxpayers. In fact it was the same Liberal Government who was subsequently forced to turn around only a few years later and purchase fewer replacement helicopters at an increased cost now estimated at \$6.2 Billion. With the replacement Sikorsky helicopters behind schedule we still rely on 40 year old Sea-King helicopters which require 35 hours of maintenance for every hour in the air. It is important that we not repeat the mistakes of the past and that is why the "reset" button has in effect been announced by our government to ensure that whatever aircraft replaces the CF-18, we avoid following the expensive and costly lessons that we should not forget occurred with the replacement of the Sea-King. While I recognize that few taxpayers rejoice at the thought of replacing soon to be out of date aircraft, this does not, as we have learned in the past, negate the need to do so.

As always, I welcome your comments and concerns and would like to wish all citizens of Okanagan-Coquihalla a Merry Christmas, and a prosperous New Year.

December 31st

As 2012 comes to a close I would like to highlight some of the political milestones that occurred during the past year. While some of these events may not have received much media attention, they are in my view important to take note of and are presented in no particular order.

The House of Commons held debate in 10 out of 12 months in 2012. As much as there is often media and opposition claims about the lack of debate on Parliament Hill in reality here in Canada your elected Members of Parliament were in the House of Commons debating bills and participating in committee review for the vast majority of the year. At a time when some countries are engaged in unrest or deeply divided conflict the wheels of Government here in Canada continue to turn as MP's collectively from all sides of the House work hard to keep Canada strong. With some Provincial legislatures across Canada currently shut down now is the time to continue to keep Canada moving forward in order to ensure that we can attract investment that keeps Canadians employed and support our regional economies. At the same time we must also protect Canadians from those who would do us harm and ensure that we create a regulatory environment that is firm but fair and promotes innovation and prosperity. In my view it would be difficult to achieve these things if the House of Commons were not in session and it is an honour to work collectively in the House with such a diverse group of Canadians who represent the great diversity of our nation.

While MP's continue to work hard, I am also proud of the fact that we have shown leadership and finally unanimously voted in favor of changes to the MP pension plan that are more respectful to taxpayers. I know that many Canadians work hard and struggle at times to pay bills and provide for their family. The MP pension plan was not something that taxpayers in Okanagan-Coquihalla considered fair or equitable and that is why I was one of the first on Parliament Hill to publicly call for changes that I was pleased to vote in favor of late in the fall. As Members of Parliament we cannot expect Canadians to make sacrifices that we would not also be willing to share in.

Another highlight of this past year for me was my second annual summer listening tour. Traveling throughout Okanagan-Coquihalla and meeting with people first hand and hearing comments, questions and concerns is something I view as critically important in the work that I do as an MP. The bills we pass in Ottawa must help keep people working and at the same time we must continue to help fund and provide services that citizens depend upon and partner with local and provincial governments to build infrastructure. Having my own private members bill passed was also a great honor but we cannot overlook other challenges in other industries that also need attention. This is something that I am continuing to work on daily. As an example in one local community within Okanagan-Coquihalla is a large scale private employer who provides hundreds of very well paying jobs. These jobs are currently threatened in large part as a result of industry specific regulation. As much as some oppose foreign investment the reality is that there are situations and circumstances when there is no Canadian based investment ready or willing to invest within certain sectors of our economy. In this case, without foreign investment there are up to 600 workers who could be unemployed. I believe that we must not overlook the importance of well paying jobs in our communities and I will continue to fight for these jobs and if necessary will introduce another private members bill to propose regulatory changes in this sector. As the year comes to a close and this is my final report for 2102 I would like to wish all citizens a prosperous and healthy 2013 New Year.