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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

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

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CANADA: THE STORY OF US

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first the Acadians were deported, and now they are being written out of history with the Prime Minister's blessing. That is one of the first things one notices upon watching the CBC's revisionist new series, *Canada: The Story of Us*.

Even the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who tried to persuade us that John A. Macdonald was a feminist, a progressive, a Montreal Canadiens fan, and pals with Louis Riel, refrained from commenting on this dreck.

In this new version of history, the French are a ragtag bunch of misfits, while the English are sharply dressed, cunning, and smart.

This is not the story of us. Our history is still being written. This is the story of them, and neither Quebeckers nor Acadians have a place in the so-called multicultural Canada that the CBC wants to ram down our throats.

The worst part is that the CBC paid for this so-called Canadian propaganda with our tax dollars.

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[*English*]

CHARLESWOOD VOLUNTEER

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a constituent from my riding whose hard work has made a difference in the lives of many in our community.

Valerie Christie is a resident of Charleswood, and has always been willing to lend a helping hand, whether volunteering at her children's elementary and junior high schools, or at her church. She has distinguished herself through her work at the Westgrove Family Resource Centre, helping students improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and through her leadership with the Westdale community food bank.

Valerie was justly awarded the Governor General Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers this past January. Valerie's passion to help others reflects the spirit of community in Charleswood. On behalf of the House of Commons, I would like to congratulate and thank Valerie for her years of service. Our community would not be the same without her.

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MALARIA

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, each year, malaria kills an estimated 438,000 people. It remains the leading cause of death of children under five in Africa. Since 2007, Spread the Net has helped protect the lives of almost 32 million people by contributing to the delivery of over 15 million malaria preventing nets to families in Africa.

I am proud to once again have the privilege to rise in the House, and speak about a great group in my riding of Cariboo—Prince George.

Last month, Beverly Elementary School in Prince George took up the Spread the Net challenge. Not only did it take up the challenge, it smashed it. At the end of the challenge, the school had raised over \$27,000. Beverly Elementary was the number one school in the country for fundraising. Rick Mercer, who cofounded the Spread the Net program, personally paid the school a visit to thank the students for their efforts.

I am so proud of what our students have accomplished. I congratulate all of the students, parents, and staff at Beverly Elementary School for their efforts. I am incredibly proud to serve all of them.

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[*Translation*]

CANADA—U.S. RELATIONS

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to meet with my American neighbours from Vermont, including Senator Bernie Sanders' and Senator Patrick Leahy's teams.

Statements by Members

I think it is crucial that we strengthen our ties with our neighbours, since we share so many concerns, including the environment. In fact, we plan to have another meeting in my riding in early June to continue our discussions.

In my region, the water quality of Lake Champlain is a perfect example of the need for co-operation. It is a serious issue that calls for all stakeholders to work together. That is why we will continue to fully support Canadian values when it comes to the environment.

It is imperative that most of the funding allocated to Lake Champlain in budget 2016, that is, \$7.5 million, be spent primarily on the water quality of our lake.

I encourage all my colleagues to reach out to American senators to build meaningful relationships with our neighbours to the south.

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[English]

SCHOLARSHIPS WINNER

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to acknowledge Samantha Giguere who was recently selected as one of Canada's 33 Loran Scholars. This prestigious program provides tuition waivers and is valued at \$100,000 over four years of undergraduate study.

A resident of Thessalon First Nation and a student at Central Algoma Secondary School, Samantha is the only Loran Scholar from northern Ontario this year, and was chosen based on evidence of character, commitment to service in her community, and long-term leadership potential.

Samantha sings, plays the fiddle, has coordinated a musical performance for a literary event, and for the last four years has organized a dinner and talent show fundraiser. Her efforts supported the Rebekahs, have helped send high school students to the United Nations, and assisted a nearby double lung transplant recipient.

Samantha hopes to study archeology and indigenous studies at the University of Toronto, and looks forward to the support she will receive as a Loran Scholar.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Samantha and all Loran Scholars

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● (1410)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the abandoned coal mines of Springhill, Nova Scotia have been sealed off for more than 60 years. However, for the past three decades, businesses and civic buildings in the town have been heated by the warm water that flooded those miles of deserted mines, a very low-cost and sustainable source of heating energy. However, geothermal heat remains largely unexploited, even as we are working to prepare Canadians in every province for a low emissions future.

Even though the potential for geothermal heating in Canada is great, there are few tax measures and programs to encourage this development. Now is the time for the federal and provincial

governments to put forward measures that encourage the exploration and development of geothermal energy sources.

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EASTER

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, freedom of religion is the cornerstone of democratic societies. One of the things that makes Canada great is the freedom we enjoy to follow our consciences, and to live out our faiths in a diverse society.

This year, as Canadians celebrate 150 years since Confederation, it is important to reflect on the Judeo-Christian principles that played such a key role in Canada's formation. These are principles that set the foundation for freedom and diversity of culture and faiths that we enjoy today.

Next week, Canada, and the Christian faith in particular, will celebrate Easter. Easter is a time, as singer-songwriter Chris Tomlin so wonderfully expresses, God's love ran red and He sent his only Son to be crucified to pay the price for our sins.

The really good news is the cross could not hold Him. The tomb is empty. We serve a living saviour, and He is coming back again.

Mr. Speaker, to you, to the House, and to all Canadians, happy and blessed Easter.

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VOLUNTEERISM IN MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all members in this place can attest that whatever we do, whatever impact we make in our capacity as members, constituents we help, events we attend, communities we engage, and discussions we facilitate, we would not be able to do much without the support of our volunteers. These are people who give us their most precious asset, their time.

I rise today to pay tribute to the youth of team Mississauga—Erin Mills for the time, support, and counsel they provide me. They engage in politics and governance, community, and positive impact. They understand that through volunteerism, they empower themselves to take ownership of our country.

Here is to our youth councils, to the youth volunteers at my offices, including: Amna, Ayesha, Fares, Amira, Andrew, Ahmed, Holden, and to the great friends that go above and beyond: Angad, Kazim, Tamer, Abed, Zubair, Ian, and Andy.

Let us keep empowering our youth. Our leaders of tomorrow will thank us for it.

*Statements by Members***POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY**

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Sunday was Pope John Paul II Day in Ontario. As a young man, Karol Wojtyla entered an underground seminary during the Nazi occupation of Poland, and at lethal personal risk, saved Polish Jews. Following the Soviet takeover of deeply Catholic Poland, Stalin scoffed, "How many divisions does the Pope of Rome have?"

It was at this time that Father Wojtyla was ordained, focusing on youth and organizing secret prayers and theological discussions.

Elected pontiff in 1978, Pope John Paul II's experiences as a bishop and cardinal in Communist atheist Poland provided him with the inner strength and experience to catalyze Poles in opposition to the regime. The peaceful Solidarity revolution led to the downfall of Poland's Communist rulers, peaceful revolutions in the Warsaw Pact countries, and the collapse of the Soviet evil empire. Saint John Paul II visited Canada three times, touching the lives of hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

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GEORGE FERGUSON

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, On March 7, Abbotsford lost a servant leader. Legendary former mayor George Ferguson died at the full age of 91.

George grew up in Abbotsford and began his political career in 1969 as alderman. He was soon elected mayor of the district of Abbotsford, where he served for over 33 years. Over that time, George presided over the merger of the districts of Abbotsford and Matsqui and served as president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Union of BC Municipalities.

For many of us, George was a mentor and an inspiration to make public life our calling. He never failed to remind us that we are each called to be a servant of the people. Predeceased by his first wife Betty, George leaves behind 11 children, a host of grand- and great-grandchildren, his beloved wife Ria, and many friends.

He leaves a big hole in our community, but his legacy of servant leadership will never be forgotten. George, well done, thou good and faithful servant.

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• (1415)

DISABILITIES

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians, including those living with a disability, deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. Building inclusive communities is the cornerstone of our government's commitment to fostering fair and equal opportunities for every Canadian. Accessibility may get someone through the door, but inclusivity creates an atmosphere where everyone is welcome and treated equally. One of my goals is to make Halton the most accessible and inclusive region in Canada.

My recent round table discussion with businesses, agencies, and advocates focused on the benefits of inclusive employment and removing barriers that prevent individuals living with disabilities from participating in the workforce. I was thrilled to see budget 2017's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and increased inclusion for Canadians living with disabilities. I encourage my colleagues in this House to encourage businesses to create inclusive employment strategies in their own communities.

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CANADIAN AIRPORTS

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to welcome to Ottawa the Canadian Airports Council. This council is a voice for Canadian airports across this country. Serving as gateways to the world, airports are economic engines in our communities, generating more than 140,000 direct jobs and some \$35 billion in economic activity.

In my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country, under the direction of airport manager Sam Samaddar and his team, Kelowna International Airport is one of the busiest airports in Canada, serving 1.7 million passengers last year and creating more than 4,500 jobs and almost \$800 million in economic output for the province of British Columbia.

I invite all members of this House to join me today from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Sir John A. Macdonald building for a reception recognizing our airports' contributions to the Canadian economy. If members have an airport in their riding, come over to Sir John A.

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CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the world was reminded yesterday of the devastating, barbaric effects of chemical weapons. In northern Syria, scores of innocent children, women, and men were killed in what many witnesses and officials believe was a sarin gas attack.

While chemical weapons in Syria are unfortunately nothing new, this one was different. People who were outdoors immediately collapsed, suffocating, foaming at the mouth, their pupils reduced to the size of pinpoints. These details are horrific, but they need to be read into the record.

Many believe that Bashar al-Assad has now resorted to using toxic nerve agents against Syria's civilian population. The world must respond. There is no question that yesterday's events constitute a war crime. Assad, and his allies in Tehran and Moscow, must be held to account.

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190TH ANNIVERSARY OF GUELPH

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to share with this House that Guelph, the royal city, will be celebrating its 190th anniversary on St. George's Day, April 23.

Oral Questions

The history of Guelph embodies a proud spirit of innovation. In 1827, our city's founding father, John Galt, designed Guelph as a planned town, a Canadian first, to resemble European city centres, complete with squares, broad main streets, and city blocks. This was a radical concept at the time and set the foundation for city planning in Canada. It was also a home for the Canada Company to encourage people to set up business in Canada, even before farms were established.

Guelph has left an indelible mark on Canada's national fabric. It is at the forefront of business, environmental, and social innovation and development. I am truly honoured to represent this vibrant city.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across Canada, indigenous women and girls have gone missing or have been murdered. For too long, this silent legacy has impacted communities and families. The national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is set to begin hearing testimony from families this May.

It is time to take out of the shadows the reality that indigenous women and girls have faced alone for too long. It is time for those voices to be heard. For them and their families, this needs to be done right. They must be heard when they say that the approach feels disorganized and that transmitting families' contact information is confusing.

Our confidence cannot be shaken, because the stories need to be told. Canada must listen, and the government must act. We are faced with an opportunity to shape the lives of indigenous girls. In my riding of North Island—Powell River, I have heard the grieving calls of family members too often.

All voices need to be heard. I ask people to call or write the inquiry and end the silence.

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● (1420)

WORLD AUTISM DAY

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April 2 was World Autism Awareness Day and 19 years since my son Jaden was diagnosed, at two. Jaden is not special because he has autism, nor is he special despite having autism. He is just really and truly special.

When people are with Jaden, he does not require them to be anyone they are not. He simply loves the fact that they are with him. He does not care at all what party people are with, whether someone is the Prime Minister, a backbencher, a staff member, or even a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

He likes people and trusts them. If they do him wrong, he will probably like and trust them all over again before they have completed their next breath.

Too often our society views such naïveté as weakness. Having had the privilege of learning from Jaden for 21 years, I would argue that the opposite is true. If we can adapt our thinking to include and

embrace more of the raw honesty and vulnerability we see in people like Jaden, we will all be better off for it.

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THE TRAGICALLY HIP

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was the mid-1980s in Kingston, Ontario, when five boys, linked together by their love for music, decided to form a band. It was nearly three decades later that I had the privilege, as mayor of Kingston, of renaming a street after them. Last Sunday night, for the third time, The Tragically Hip won group of the year at the Junos.

From winning most promising group of the year in 1990, the Hip went on to win countless awards and to be inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame and the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, but perhaps what is most remarkable about The Tragically Hip is their love for their community. Throughout the years, they have given back immensely to Kingston, most often to very little fanfare. From getting involved in local charity events to raising money for cancer research, they took their fame and used it to make their community an even better place for everyone.

We thank Gord, Gord, Paul, Rob, and Johnny for sharing their work and talent with us. I speak on behalf of all Kingstontians, and indeed all Canadians, when I say we are proud to call them Canada's band.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the world is watching with horror as the unimaginable unfolds in Syria.

Last night the Prime Minister said:

Canada strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons. The perpetrators of the horrific attack in Syria must be held accountable.

We agree. Can the Prime Minister share with Canadians and with the House what specific actions Canada is planning to take to hold the perpetrators to account?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are shocked and appalled by the reports of chemical weapons attacks against civilians in Syria. Many of the victims were children.

It is critical that we hold those responsible to account for these war crimes. We are supporting evidence gathering to achieve that end. In addition, we will provide \$840-million worth of lifesaving humanitarian and development assistance for the region to alleviate the suffering in this conflict.

Oral Questions

As we speak, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is at the Brussels conference on the future of Syria. These meetings will work toward finding a lasting political resolution to the Syrian war and to addressing the critical needs of the most vulnerable.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Minister of National Defence misled Canadians when he said that our allies were okay with Canada pulling our fighter jets out of the fight against ISIS. We now know that this was deliberately misleading, and it was a betrayal of our nation's trust.

My question for the Prime Minister is very straightforward. Did he instruct his Minister of National Defence to mislead Canadians in order to save face?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is proud that we have stepped up in the fight against Daesh by contributing significantly to training on the ground, to supporting the peshmerga, to demonstrate that there are many ways that Canada can have a positive impact in the fight against Daesh.

We continue to stand strongly with our international allies, including in the Iraqi government, as we bring the fight to a positive conclusion alongside our allies.

• (1425)

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Office stated publicly on November 26 that there was absolutely no pressure put on Canada to continue its bombing mission in Iraq. We now know that is not true. Emails from Canadian officials prove that our allies asked the Minister of National Defence, on numerous occasions, to keep our CF-18s in the fight.

Did the Prime Minister deliberately mislead the public, or is he in the dark when it comes to Canada's defence and national security?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on our commitment to continue as a valuable member of the coalition against Daesh, we were very clear in the election campaign that we would look for ways that better suited Canada's capacities. That is what we told our allies and explained to them throughout those months as we were determining how best Canada could help.

I can assure this House and all Canadians that our allies were very pleased with the level of contribution Canadians offered over the past months, a year and a half, to the fight against Daesh.

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[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister is sending taxpayers' money to Bombardier executives, he is taking money away from hard-working Canadians.

New taxes on payroll, small businesses, public transit, taxis, beer, electricity, fuel, just name it and the Prime Minister will tax it.

When will the Prime Minister realize that he was elected to manage Canadians' money properly and not to hand it out to his friends?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her intervention.

Indeed, we are all concerned about the cost of living for all Canadians. That is why we did something about it. We lowered taxes for the middle class and increased them for the wealthiest 1%. We implemented the Canada child benefit, which gives more money to nine out of ten Canadian families every month and as a result lifts hundreds of thousands of young people out of poverty and reduces child poverty by 40%.

We agree with the hon. members across the way that a lot of work still needs to be done, but we are here to keep working for Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today on the Hill there are hundreds of people helping to recognize World Autism Day. They are calling on the Prime Minister to provide less than \$4 million a year to continue the good work of the Canadian Autism Partnership Project, money that was missing in the budget. That is almost equivalent to the bonus hike the CEO of Bombardier gave himself for one year.

What kind of message does the Prime Minister think this sends to parents of kids with autism when the Prime Minister can find money for bonuses for executives from Bombardier but he cannot find money for families with autism?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recognize the passion the member opposite has for this issue and recognize all members in the House who have stood up strongly in talking about autism and celebrating the advancements that have been made and indeed highlighting the work that we continue to do.

On Bombardier, I do need to point out that this was a loan that we were happy to make to invest in specific projects that are going to create good jobs for Canadians, that are going to secure the long-term future of the aerospace industry in this country, which leads to economic growth, innovation, and benefits for communities and the middle-class workers who live in them right across the country.

*Oral Questions***STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government wants to unilaterally change the rules that govern the House of Commons. At first, the Liberals pretended it was just a discussion paper and now they claim that this power grab is necessary to be rammed through here because, well, it was in their election platform. Can the Prime Minister explain then why he used the excuse of a lack of consensus to abandon his platform promise on democratic reform, but now he unilaterally wants to change the way our democracy works?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member opposite to continue contributing suggestions on how we can improve the working atmosphere in the House, how we can better deliver for Canadians. We are happy that we have launched a conversation about how we can modernize this place, how we can improve the service we offer, both to Canadians and to our constituents. I look forward to engaging with all members in the House on improvements that can be made to this place as we move forward.

• (1430)

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, forcing a so-called discussion paper on the committee is a monologue, not a dialogue.

This Prime Minister promised to put an end to the concentration of power that began with his father's tenure, but instead he is preparing to ram through changes that will benefit the Liberals.

Does the Prime Minister understand the difference between making things better for Parliament and making things better for the Liberals?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that we have brought forward proposals to help modernize Parliament, and I look forward to start discussing the various options in committee. I want to hear what our friends in the other parties are going to suggest. I am really looking forward to working with them to ensure that Parliament better serves Canadians across the country and that we better serve our constituents as well.

I believe that everyone knows that we can always do better, and that is exactly what I hope to do, together with the members of Parliament.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to hand out criminal records to Canadians, particularly young people and minority groups, for possession of marijuana.

Every time we propose the decriminalization of marijuana as an interim measure, the Liberals say that we are against legalization, which is not true. We are against the fact that thousands of Canadians are being prosecuted in the meantime, since that affects the rest of their lives.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how many people have been handed a criminal record since the last election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we promised to legalize and control cannabis for two very specific reasons.

First, we want to prevent our kids from having easy access to cannabis, as they do now. We know that it is easier for a young person to buy a joint than a bottle of beer. That is unacceptable. At the same time, we know that organized crime groups make billions of dollars trafficking marijuana, and that is exactly what we want to prevent.

Decriminalizing cannabis will do nothing to protect our kids and nothing to counter organized crime, and I will continue to repeat that until—

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government continues to hide the number of charges and criminal records handed out for cannabis possession since the Liberals have come to power. Charges for serious crimes are being stayed or withdrawn because of a lack of resources, and yet the Prime Minister is fine with overloading the justice system with possession charges. This disproportionately affects young and racialized Canadians and there is quite a bit of hypocrisy to that.

Does the Prime Minister think he would be where he is today if he had been caught when smoking marijuana?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the question and concerns the members opposite have, but our focus on legalization and control of cannabis is on protecting our kids and on getting the money out of organized crime's pockets. We know that happens when we legalize and control and bring in a proper regime. The fact is decriminalization does nothing to protect our kids, nothing to remove the profits from the hands of criminals. Until such a moment as we have a legal framework that protects our kids and stops the criminals from profiting, it will remain illegal.

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[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in just three weeks, our softwood lumber may be slapped with counter-vailing duties. I want the Prime Minister to give forestry industry workers some answers.

Yesterday, we heard that the Americans were refusing to talk about it, probably because nobody ever really explained to them what the system is all about and how rigorous it is. That is from the Resolute Forest Products CEO. He added that he was appalled at the federal government's feeble attempts to stand up for Quebec's forestry system internationally.

What will the Prime Minister do for the hundreds of thousands of families that depend on the forestry industry?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the U.S. government on resolving this issue from the very beginning of our mandate.

We know that thousands of jobs and communities across the country depend on forestry. It is our duty to keep working very hard to protect those jobs and create more opportunities in Canada's forestry industry. We know that Americans do not want their housing and construction costs to go up. Canada is a major supplier of softwood lumber for American consumers.

We will keep working with the U.S. government to resolve this frustrating dispute.

• (1435)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like many of my colleagues, I was here on June 29, 2016, when former U.S. President Barack Obama was here, and we were promised that this would be resolved within weeks. Now we hear what the Prime Minister is saying in the House today. Why is no one capable of explaining to the Americans that they need to import 30% of their lumber and that 30% comes from Canada? It is not complicated. If they import less wood from Canada, the price of American wood will go up, Americans will build fewer houses, and there will be fewer jobs for carpenters, plumbers, and electricians.

This is not rocket science. Why is the government incapable of explaining this to the Americans?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with the hon. member. He makes a very good point. We need to do more to explain to the Americans just how important free trade between Canada and the U.S. is for jobs and for consumers on both sides of the border.

We will continue with our work and remain united in our desire to resolve this issue. That is why we are so determined and are working so hard to protect Canadian jobs and create economic growth in communities across the country.

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[English]

AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the government quietly tabled a response to an Order Paper question revealing that the \$372-million Bombardier agreement has not been signed or finalized. It is not a done deal, so the Liberals have time to stop this outrageous taxpayer-funded bail-out of incompetent billionaire executives. The Liberals could, for example, reduce the amount they are handing Bombardier by the same amount Bombardier is paying its executives.

Before the Liberals sign this deal and send the money, why will they not ban Bombardier billionaires from pocketing it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the investments we are making in the future of our aerospace industry will lead to good jobs across the country and to economic growth and innovation.

The loan we made to Bombardier that is focused on two specific products, the C Series airplane and the Global 7000, demonstrates

that we believe in the strong future for the aerospace industry in this country, and why we are going to continue to make investments that will lead to good jobs and opportunities for innovation and growth right across the country in high-value industries, like the aerospace industry.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the company is actually cutting jobs, 14,000 of them, while the Liberals hand over millions to billionaire executives, but it is not too late to stop it. We learned today that the deal is not signed and the government still has time to impose new conditions.

Why will the Liberals not tell Bombardier that either it cancels its bonuses and its pay hikes until taxpayers get repaid or it will not get the money at all?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, we believe in the strong future for the aerospace industry in this country, and are happy to make investments that will lead to good jobs, growth and opportunities not just right now but for decades to come. The kinds of investments we are making in innovation, in the growth of the C Series and the Global 7000, will ensure the kind of opportunity and prosperity that Canadians have long been looking for. This is why we are making the right kinds of investments in our future and why we will continue to make investments, like lending Bombardier significant amounts, to be able to create opportunities to grow and succeed and continue our economic—

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

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister took hundreds of millions of dollars from Canadian taxpayers and loaned that money to Bombardier. To show its gratitude, Bombardier cut 14,000 jobs while its senior executives gave themselves tens of millions of dollars in raises. This makes no sense at all, and is quite the departure from the spirit of the company's founder Joseph-Armand Bombardier, who was a great Canadian.

Those people are filling their pockets while the current government is emptying Canadian taxpayers' pockets.

Can the Prime Minister stand in his place and tell us whether he picked up his phone and called the CEO of Bombardier to tell him that what Bombardier is doing makes no sense?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague in that we are very proud of Bombardier and of what it has accomplished in the aerospace industry over the years, the good jobs it has created, and the innovation and economic leadership it has shown across the country.

That is why we were happy to invest in two specific programs by providing a loan to Bombardier that will translate into the long-term viability of these projects and create job opportunities in the aerospace industry across the country.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Prime Minister that Bombardier came looking for money for its C Series. It did not ask for anything for the Global 7000 but, coincidentally, the government accommodates people from Toronto.

Oral Questions

If it is as good as that, why will the Prime Minister not let Bombardier and his minister appear before the parliamentary committee? Given the situation, that is what we want. We, the Conservatives, are inviting the big boss of Bombardier to appear before the parliamentary committee and explain himself.

Does the Prime Minister agree?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to highlight for the House the investments that Canada is making in our aerospace industry because we know that this will lead to good jobs today and in the future, stimulate innovation, and enable us to capture a larger share of the global market. It will help us demonstrate that Canada makes good-quality merchandise and goods and provides services throughout the world.

We know that investments are needed to achieve this success and we are proud of what we are doing to create opportunities for Canadians.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, Brian Mulroney, who is pushing for the government to put an end to our supply management system, is going to advise the Liberal cabinet on the renegotiation of NAFTA. When it comes to international trade and the protection of our supply management system, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party are really just one and the same.

At least the compensation provided for by the Conservatives to producers and processors would have been more substantial once the Canada-Europe free trade agreement took effect.

Can the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister confirm to us today that they will grant tariff quotas to Canadian processors?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that, as a government, we are open to working together, across party lines, to properly represent Canada and build this relationship.

I want to point out the work that we are doing with all of the different parties in the House to properly position ourselves with regard to the new American administration. Many premiers from various provinces and political parties are diligently working with us to present a united front to the United States. It is important that we listen to each other and work together because this goes beyond partisanship—

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

* * *

[English]

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, recent reports forecast that Hamilton steel producer Stelco, which is currently under bankruptcy protection, will soon have close to \$300

million in the bank. Meanwhile, after the company cut workers' health benefits, pensioners have to apply to a temporary fund for emergency prescriptions or health needs on a first-come, first-served basis.

How can we explain to the 20,000 Stelco retirees that the government allows Canadian companies to bank \$300 million while they strip much needed and earned health benefits? When will the government step in and help these retirees?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the challenges that so many people in the Hamilton area and indeed across the country in the steel industry are facing. That is why we are so determined to work with our partners and allies and industry partners here in Canada to strengthen the steel industry.

The issue of steel is one that has come up many times in our engagement with the United States. I can tell the member that we are working in a constructive, productive way to promote and defend our North American steel industry, to highlight the important role that the Canadian steel industry has in markets around the world, and to ensure that we are making the best possible secure future for our citizens and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

* * *

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are trying to ram through substantive changes to see them held less accountable to the people they serve: changes that will see Liberal MPs take Fridays off; changes that will see the Prime Minister show up to work here in question period just once a week; changes that will limit the ability of MPs to hold the government to account on behalf of Canadians.

Canadians work hard and they expect nothing less from their MPs. They expect the Prime Minister to put in a full work week and they definitely expect the government to be held accountable for its actions.

Why is the Prime Minister so afraid of being held accountable by Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to personally answer this question.

The fact is that I accept any suggestions and opportunities the member has. As he puts forward suggestions and opportunities that we can have to improve the tone of this House to make sure that we are working in better ways—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask members to restrain themselves both in their comments and in their reactions.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

●(1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I hear members opposite have many suggestions on how we can improve the functioning of the House. I look forward to listening to that member and to all members of the House put forward their suggestions on improving the way we serve Canadians and our constituents at the same time. I am very pleased to encourage people to participate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he may have stood up every time, but he did not answer a single question.

Like all other MPs, I am answerable to my constituents, and not just those who voted for me. How can I explain to them that not one day goes by that the Liberals do not show contempt for Canadians and their MPs with their unilateral bid for absolute power here in Parliament?

Can the Prime Minister acknowledge that those who speak on Canadians' behalf are not puppets?

When will the Prime Minister get that the Liberals have no right to change our rules without our consent?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his passion and enthusiasm for this issue.

Naturally, what happens in the House matters very much to us all, but the important thing is to ensure that we are serving Canadians well. As I have always said, diversity helps make this country strong. That is why I am very happy to hear the suggestions and contributions coming from members across the aisle. I want to ensure that they can participate fully in this conversation about how we are going to improve this workplace to better serve people in the House and across the country.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Look at that, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister is able to answer as many questions as he wants without unilaterally ramming changes through the House of Commons, which is exactly what he wants to do. He wants to rig the rules in his favour. He wants to cut off debate and silence his critics. He wants to shut this place down on Fridays. He wants less transparency and less accountability. He wants to diminish the voice of Canadians in this place. Now he only wants to show up in question period once a week.

When will the Prime Minister stop acting so arrogantly and stop trying to make his life easier by reducing government accountability?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously the member has very strong ideas about how to improve this place, how to make it better, how to make sure we are being accountable and serving Canadians in the right way. I encourage the member to bring forward those concrete suggestions so we can work together to make sure the House serves Canadians better to the level they expect.

I am happy we are having this conversation, and I look forward to continuing it in committee and in various places where we can

demonstrate our commitment collectively to serve Canadians with everything we have.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is a concrete suggestion. Stop trying to ram these unilateral changes down our throats. Shutting down Parliament on Fridays, reducing debate, having the Prime Minister only show up in the House once a week for 45 minutes does not serve the interests of Canadians. It serves the interests of the Prime Minister. Canadians did not elect us to make this a safe space for the Prime Minister. We are here to do our job and hold him accountable.

When will the Prime Minister abandon his unilateral efforts to make his government less transparent and less accountable to Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be held accountable by Canadians and by people in the House every single day. That goes with the responsibilities I have and we all have collectively in the House. Drawing on—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I had no trouble hearing the question, but I ought to be able to hear the answer as well. Members need to restrain themselves. I know it is Wednesday. Perhaps we need to serve decaf on Wednesday.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am happy to draw suggestions from all sides of the House. The proposal around prime minister's questions was actually made by the member from Halton Hills a number of years ago. It is the kind of thing we are happy to discuss and look at. I think it means we should have a discussion about how to improve the ways we serve Canadians.

Bringing forward positive discussions on improving the way the House works is entirely responsible and entirely in keeping with what Canadians expect. I look forward to hearing many more concrete proposals from all benches in the House of Commons.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are indefinitely postponing the reforms they had promised to access to information, despite the very comprehensive report released by the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada in 2015 and the report by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics in 2016. We would like the President of the Treasury Board to explain this sudden flip-flop to parliamentarians.

Can the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics tell the House what business the committee will be working on next?

Oral Questions

●(1450)

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as vice chair of the committee, I am pleased to answer the question and teach the Prime Minister to do something he has not learned in 18 months, which is to give a straight answer.

The committee did indeed table its report last year. In light of a recent announcement by the President of the Treasury Board that the government did not intend to implement its promised reforms anytime soon, some committee members moved a motion calling on the President of the Treasury Board to explain himself at committee.

For those who do not know, our committee has a Liberal majority. When it came to a vote, the motion was defeated.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, access to information reform has been studied time and again. In fact, one could say in this case it has been studied literally to death.

Despite two recent reports and calls for reform, the President of the Treasury Board announced he was not going to be keeping his promise to introduce new legislation this spring. Instead of explaining himself at committee, to which he earnestly promised reform, he is allowing the Liberal members to run interference.

Why is he suddenly scared to come to the committee, and will he take this opportunity to explain himself to the House?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government was elected on a pledge of openness and transparency, and we are keeping that pledge. We are demonstrating a level of accountability that is going far beyond what any previous government did. We continue to look forward to ways to improve and increase the level of transparency and accountability of this government.

I welcome the hard work done by the committee. I look forward to continuing to work with all members in the House to improve the way government and indeed Parliament functions in a collaborative, respectful way.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the images of yesterday's horrific chemical attack in northwestern Syria. For six years, this war has dragged on. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions displaced. An end to this war is needed. Help for the people of Syria must be made accessible. They are the innocent victims of this tragic conflict.

The international community has a responsibility to help the most vulnerable. What is Canada doing to help the Syrian people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler on the hard work he is doing on his files.

We are outraged by the reports of a chemical weapons attack against innocent civilians in Syria. The use of chemical weapons is a war crime. This is just the latest atrocity in a conflict that has been going on far too long.

Our government is acting. We are providing \$840 million worth of assistance for the region, and are increasing accountability by supporting evidence gathering of these war crimes. Furthermore, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is participating in the Brussels conference on the future of Syria to support lasting resolution to the war and address the needs of the vulnerable.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new appointments process is the perfect Liberal misdirection. Another one of Ms. Stebbing's qualifications for appointment to the Hamilton Port Authority is that she is also the Liberal Party's golden horseshoe regional president.

While the Minister of Transport waxes eloquent on openness and transparency, being a Liberal donor or failed candidate are the qualifications that win the day.

Will the Prime Minister direct the minister to go back to the job posting that is still on Transport Canada's website and nominate someone who is actually qualified for the position?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the commitments we made and are keeping from our election campaign is to renew and modernize the appointments process, to allow Canadians to apply from all different backgrounds and all different walks of life and diversity, and to have appointments across the country that better reflect the full diversity of backgrounds, views and perspectives of Canadians on a merit-based system.

That is exactly what we have done, particularly necessary after too long of successive governments choosing favouritism over objective qualities. That is what we have done, and are continuing to do.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us see if the Prime Minister can try answering this question.

The minister's website states that the requirements for a successful nominee include "extensive experience related to...the operation of a port or to maritime trade". Ms. Stebbing's own law firm's website states that she specializes in "estate planning, administration and accounting. She focuses on ensuring her clients wishes are respected after they pass away."

Could the Prime Minister explain to the House what in Jennifer Stebbing's resume met the requirements of extensive experience in maritime trade?

●(1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her concern about the quality of our appointments.

We are very much focused on the quality and diversity of the appointments we make. We know that the people we appoint into positions of authority should reflect the entire diversity of the country and have a range of experiences and qualifications.

Oral Questions

That is exactly what we have been doing and why we are so proud that we have had more female appointments than male. We have had extraordinary diversity. We have had tremendous indigenous appointments across the country. We have renewed the appointments process and allowed Canadians from all backgrounds to apply.

The Speaker: Order, please. I have no trouble hearing the questions, but I am having trouble hearing the answers. We need to hear both.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite a spectacle today. If only there were a Standing Order that could be concocted that would guarantee the quality of the Prime Minister's answers and not just the quantity of the Prime Minister's answers, we would actually get somewhere.

Speaking of the Prime Minister, unlike hard-working Canadians, the Prime Minister took a lavish billionaire boondoggle vacation at taxpayer expense over the holidays. Now we know the taxpayers also paid to his billionaire friend the money to accommodate the Prime Minister's staff on this lavish holiday.

When will the Prime Minister come down from his sandcastle in the sky and explain why the taxpayers are on the hook?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times, this was a personal family vacation. I am more than happy to continue to engage with the Ethics Commissioner and her office on any questions related to this travel.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's arrogance is killing me.

In Canada, like in other places around the world, the Prime Minister has no problem giving taxpayers' money to his billionaire friends, while simultaneously eliminating the public transit tax credit. Yesterday we learned that the Aga Khan was financially compensated by the state during the leader of the Liberal Party's personal vacation. Once again, Canadian taxpayers are paying for his arrogance and poor judgment.

When will the Prime Minister walk his talk and treat the middle class—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the tax credit for public transit, that measure was introduced to promote the use of public transit. That is what the minister said when she introduced the measure to Canadians.

Sadly, according to the numbers, the measure had no impact on the use of public transit. That is why we decided instead to invest billions of dollars more in new public transit projects, including the Réseau électrique métropolitain in Montreal and the Service rapide par bus in Quebec City. Similar projects exist across the country, and we are pleased to invest in them to help the middle class and those working hard to join it.

[English]

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for taking so many questions today. I would also like to point out, again, that he managed to do this without changing a single rule. No need to unilaterally use the power to ram through the changes. He was able to do it within existing rules.

Will he now commit in this place that he will continue that spirit of co-operation? Will he agree that he will not use his unilateral majority to change the rules in this place and change how democracy works? Will he do that now, today?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question I think we can all agree on in this place is—and I hear the energy, enthusiasm, and passion of the member opposite—what will that change look like? How do we change this place so it becomes better able to serve?

That is why I look forward very much to hearing the suggestions and contributions from the members opposite on how we can better serve Canadians. That is what Canadians—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Speaker: Order. I ask the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier and other members to restrain themselves. I know that members are very interested in the debate, but there need to be questions and comments and I need to be able to hear them.

The right hon. Prime Minister has nine seconds.

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to hear suggestions from the members opposite; even when they are yelled out, their suggestions are acceptable. I want to work with the members in order to improve the situation.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after the way the Prime Minister treated electoral reform, his treatment of parliamentary democracy has about as much credibility as a Pepsi commercial.

[Translation]

I know that the Prime Minister is looking forward to having this discussion. He wants to hear passionate speeches and get our suggestions, but the problem is the process. All it would take to launch the discussion that he so badly wants is to assure us that the changes will not be made unilaterally.

I will give the Prime Minister another chance to give us those assurances today, right now. Will he promise not to make any changes unilaterally, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians made a choice in the last election. They chose a party that was committed to modernizing Parliament.

Oral Questions

I am very pleased to suggest various ways in which hon. members may contribute to the process and to developing our approach to modernization. People expect us to work together in a respectful manner, as we are today, to determine the best way to improve the House of Commons. It is perfectly reasonable to want to work with hon. members and I hope that we can work together.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is what we would call all hat, no horse.

A government email confirms that the Iraqi government asked Canada to continue its bombing mission against ISIS on multiple occasions. Our Kurdish and Iraqi partners in the fight against ISIS describe our air strikes as effective and life-saving and as destroying the enemy.

Our allies repeatedly asked Canada to keep our CF-18s in the fight, but the minister ignored them and told Canadians that our partners and allies were okay with the Liberals' decision.

Canadians cannot trust the Minister of National Defence when he continues to mislead us. Will the Prime Minister make the Minister of National Defence apologize?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like all Canadians I applaud the Minister of National Defence for his extraordinary service to this country and respect the extraordinary work that he has done as Minister of National Defence.

Our allies were rightly interested in how Canada was going to continue to participate in the coalition against Daesh, how we were going to continue to demonstrate that Canada is a valuable partner that contributes in the war against Daesh, and that is exactly what we did.

We demonstrated that we knew that Canadians could help on the ground through training and support for the peshmerga as they advanced toward Mosul, and that is exactly what our allies have most appreciated about us over the past year and a half.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a veteran, I would like to thank the Minister of National Defence for his service. That said, he is now the Minister of National Defence, and no longer a soldier.

For the good of Canada, we should not allow the Minister of National Defence to distort the facts. To say that the Iraqis and the Kurds were pleased with the new mission in Iraq is completely false and to state that the Royal Canadian Air Force has a capability gap is completely false. In addition, the minister is further damaging the reputation of the Canadian Forces by postponing major procurement projects for 20 years.

Can the Prime Minister ask the Minister of National Defence to show some backbone and tell Canadians the truth?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is very proud of what it is doing to give

our armed forces the equipment and support needed to carry out the mandate entrusted to them by Canadians and this government.

We know that Canada cannot do everything, but we will carry out our responsibilities properly with the help of all possible assets. For that reason we chose a mission that supports and trains the Kurds, a mission that has a significant impact in the fight against Daesh.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to double down on the alternative facts. The defence minister said that there were no qualms about pulling our jets out of the fight against ISIS, yet emails from Global Affairs say there were. The minister said there is a capability gap, but the commander of the air force said there is not. The defence minister also claimed Conservatives sent our troops to fight ISIS without tax relief, yet a document with the defence minister's signature on it says the exact opposite.

Canadians need a strong, principled, and trustworthy leader, not another patsy to the Prime Minister. How can anyone trust the Prime Minister and the defence minister? Will they apologize?

● (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that Canadians chose a different approach when they elected us as government. We choose to make decisions based on how Canada can best help in the world. We make decisions based on facts, based on evidence, and based on the best way to move forward. That is the approach we have always taken and will always take, particularly in regard to the brave men and women serving in the Canadian Forces.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent days, residents of southern and central Manitoba have been impacted by rising water levels and flooding, which has resulted in local states of emergency, road closures, and evacuations in several first nations communities. Our hearts go out to the evacuees in their time of need and to others in the communities dealing with encroaching flood waters.

I know all members join me in expressing our concern, as well as our appreciation for first responders. Can the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness tell us how the government is supporting Manitobans as this year's flood season begins?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness takes this very seriously, as does the Prime Minister. The thoughts of all Canadians are with the residents of Manitoba affected by the flooding, as well as with the first responders and others working hard on the ground to keep people safe.

We are ensuring that affected first nations community members are safe, secure, and out of the path of flood waters. For several months now, the government operations centre has been monitoring flood risks and preparing for the spring melt in collaboration with federal and provincial partners. Should we receive a request for assistance from the province, our government stands ready to help.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should be ashamed of the decisions being made by his Minister of Public Services and Procurement. Thanks to the good work done by the member for Edmonton West, we now know that the public servants who worked on Phoenix, either directly or indirectly, received bonuses totalling \$5 million and \$14,000 per employee.

How could the Prime Minister possibly want to grant bonuses? Did he not in fact want to set an example for Bombardier executives?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, as we have said repeatedly, it is unacceptable that anyone should have to work without adequate, reliable pay. That is why we are working so hard on the Phoenix system in question; we want to fix this problem that we inherited. The fact is that we will continue to work with public services and with everyone involved to fix this problem, which, I agree, has been dragging on too long.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again flooding has hit Manitoba. There are many evacuees and most are from first nations, including Peguis First Nation, the largest in Manitoba. This is not the first time that this is happening, and every time it happens, first nations are hit the hardest.

The Prime Minister likes to talk about first nations, but what people in crisis on the ground need is immediate action. Will his government work with Peguis and other first nations to provide the long-term flood mitigation that they need now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in our election platform, we put forward billions of dollars toward green infrastructure, which includes flood mitigation, which is so important. We are working indeed with first nations to ensure that they are safe and taken care of through this particular crisis. Our commitment to renewal and to reconciliation means that we will be working with indigenous communities right across the country to build a long-term, stable, protected future with them as full partners

determining how best to do that. That is what the spirit of reconciliation means. That is what this government—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nearly 100 years ago, Canadians from all across the country, including many Quebeckers, fought not only in our country's four divisions of soldiers, but also, for the first time, as part of a united Canadian force at Vimy Ridge. This historic moment not only marked a great victory for Canada and allied forces but also showed that our emerging nation was ready to take its place on the international scene.

How is the Government of Canada going to mark the 100th anniversary of this seminal event for our country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Battle of Vimy Ridge allowed Canada to take its place as a country on solid footing when the four Canadian divisions fought together for the first time to secure a stunning if costly victory.

Canada will mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge with commemorative ceremonies in France, at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, and in major centres across the country.

I hope that my colleagues will join me at these solemn commemorative ceremonies.

• (1510)

[English]

Wherever we may be, this is the time for all of us to remember, recognize, and honour the brave men and women who have gone before us.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to an earlier question on autism from the Leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister talked of his government "highlighting the work that we continue to do." The trouble is, his government is doing the exact opposite.

In 2015, our government funded a world-class Canadian autism partnership working group. The Liberal budget just rejected the request for funding to allow that critical work to continue.

Could the Prime Minister please explain how his government can find nearly \$400 million for a company that says it does not need it, and not find \$4 million a year to help Canadian families living with autism who desperately need it?

The Budget

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his extraordinary advocacy on this file for a very long time. It is one that touches us all, and we all know we do need to work together to do more on it.

On the issue of funding for Bombardier, we made sure that we are investing in the kinds of things that will lead to good jobs—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I invite the hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie and others to calm down and listen to the answer. If everyone talks at the same time, this place cannot function and we all lose the right to do our jobs, so let us finish this.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, we have an extraordinary minister who is working on Canada's first-ever accessibility act, which will focus on ensuring that all Canadians of differing abilities and challenges are able to succeed and move forward in an inclusive country that gives everyone a real and fair chance to succeed.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, since Bill C-38 in 2012, we have been labouring under a broken environmental assessment process. Today we have a landmark report from the expert panel on EA, headed by our former commissioner for the environment. It makes a bold recommendation: get rid of the NEB's Environmental Assessment Agency, have a single authority, give it quasi-judicial powers.

For the Prime Minister, how quickly can we expect this great recommendation to be legislated?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her long-time leadership on environmental issues. We are also very interested in this report that has come forward. We know there is a lot more work to do to improve environmental assessment in this country.

Without public trust we cannot build the kind of infrastructure projects or the future for our communities that we need. We need to make sure we are demonstrating that we understand that protecting the environment goes hand in hand with building a strong economic future for Canadians, and this report goes right to how we can perhaps do that and do even better.

I thank the member for her leadership on this matter.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Right Honourable Ken Macintosh, MSP, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, today's question period was very noisy and emotional. You said that I was being rowdy. I do not profess to be the most circumspect or the quietest—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I am not the quietest member, but I believe this is a case of mistaken identity.

The Speaker: Nice try.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 4 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, April 3, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to Motion No. 10 under ways and means proceedings.

Call in the members.

● (1535)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 244*)

YEAS

Members

Aboulttaif
Albrecht
Ambrose
Arnold
Bergen
Bezan
Block
Brown
Chong
Clement
Deltell
Doherty
Eglinski
Fast
Gallant
Genius
Godin
Harder
Kelly
Kitchen
Lake
Lebel
Lobb
MacKenzie
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Motz
Nuttall
Paul-Hus
Raitt
Reid
Ritz

Albas
Allison
Anderson
Barlow
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher
Carrie
Clarke
Cooper
Diotte
Dreeshen
Falk
Finley
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lipert
Lukiwski
Maguire
McColeman
Nater
Obhrai
Poilievre
Rayes
Richards
Saroya

Scheer
Shields
Sorenson
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Vaugh
Wong
Zimmer— 85

Schmale
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Watts
Webber
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Angus
Arya
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Baylis
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Bossio
Boulerice
Bratina
Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Choquette
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCoursey
Donnelly
Dubé
Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortin
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garrison
Gill
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khalid
Kwan
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Lemieux
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bibeau
Blaikie
Boissonnault
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Brosseau
Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Christopherson
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Di Iorio
Drouin
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Fergus
Finnigan
Foote
Fragiskatos
Fry
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
Laverdière
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Marcel
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino

Routine Proceedings

Mihychuk
Soeurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Nantel
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rioux
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Sahota
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Stetski
Tan
Thériault
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morneau
Murray
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Philpott
Plamondon
Quach
Ratansi
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Saganash
Saini
Sangha
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudeau
Vandal
Vaughan
Weir
Wilkinson
Wrzesniewski
Zahid— 204

PAIRED

Members

Freeland

Moore— 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[English]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, government orders will be extended by eight minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to Orders of the Day.

● (1540)

The Speaker: The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Routine Proceedings

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Before I call in the members, the member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères is rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion: “That, given proposals articulated during the October 6, 2016, take-note debate on the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, a special committee be constituted to conduct a comprehensive review of the Standing Orders and procedure of the House of Commons as follows: (a) that the review be divided into four parts as follows: 1. management of debate, 2. management of the House and its meetings, 3. management of committees, and 4. management of parliamentary groups; (b) that committee members submit their list of proposed witnesses to the Clerk no later than seven calendar days following the adoption of this motion; (c) that the committee may meet outside of regular meeting hours, if any, to complete its review by the date indicated in item (i); (d) that the committee consist of 12 members, which shall include five members from the government party, three members from the official opposition, two members from the New Democratic Party, one member from the Bloc Québécois, and the Green Party of Canada member; (e) that changes to the membership of the committee be effective immediately after notification by the Whip has been filed with the Clerk of the House; (f) that membership substitutions be permitted, if required, in the manner provided for in Standing Order 114(2); (g) that, with the exception of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, all other members shall be named by their respective Whip by depositing with the Clerk of the House the list of their members to serve on the committee no later than 10 sitting days following the adoption of this motion; (h) that the committee be chaired by a member of the government party; that, in addition to the chair, there be one vice-chair from the official opposition and one vice-chair from the New Democratic Party, and that all candidates for the position of chair or vice-chair from the official opposition shall be elected by secret ballot, and that each candidate be permitted to address the committee for not more than three minutes; (i) that the quorum of the committee be as provided for in Standing Order 118, provided that at least four members are present and provided that one member from the government party and one member from an opposition party are present; (j) that the committee be granted all of the powers of a standing committee, as provided in the Standing Orders, as well as the power to travel, accompanied by the necessary staff, inside and outside of Canada; (k) that the committee have the power to authorize video and audio broadcasting of any or all of its proceedings; (l) that, at the conclusion of the review of House procedures and practices, the Committee will only make recommendations to the House that enjoy the support of all the members of the committee; and (m) that the Committee complete its report and present its findings and recommendations to the House no later than June 16, 2017.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1620)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 245*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Bibeau
Bitte	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubourg
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès	Medicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef	Morneau
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough

Ratansi
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Rioux
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 158

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Anderson
Ashton
Barlow
Beaulieu
Berthold
Blaikie
Boucher
Boulerice
Brosseau
Caron
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk
Finley
Gallant
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Hughes
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Marcil
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Nantel
Nuttall
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Rayes
Richards
Saganash
Saroya
Schmale
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Trudel
Vecchio
Warawa
Watts

Albas
Allison
Arnold
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brown
Carrie
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Davies
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseault
Egliniski
Fast
Fortin
Garrison
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Jeneroux
Julian
Kent
Kmieciak
Lake
Laverdière
Liepert
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Motz
Nater
Obhrai
Pauzé
Poilievre
Rankin
Reid
Ritz
Sansoucy
Scheer
Shields
Sorenson
Stetski
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Waugh

The Budget

Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 123

Weir
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Members

Freeland
Moore— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I know the government has its reasons for wanting to move past routine proceedings, but one of the unfortunate consequences is that a particular time of day that allows MPs to represent their constituents gets blown past.

Could we have unanimous consent to return to the rubric of presenting petitions?

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

I have been surprised recently by the comments emanating from Quebec's political circles. People have been criticizing the work of the federal Liberals regarding the budget presented by my colleague from Toronto Centre, the hon. Minister of Finance, Bill Morneau. I would like to begin by reassuring Quebec and all Quebecers—

• (1625)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind the hon. member that we do not mention other members by name in the House. He may continue his speech.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to assure Quebec and all Quebecers, on my own personal behalf as well as that of every Liberal member from Quebec, I am sure, that we are there for them. We fight tooth and nail every day for Quebec's interests, businesses, people and infrastructure projects, whose financing is already in the honourable Minister of Finance's budget for this year, as it was last year.

This year, our government will establish the Canada infrastructure bank. With a budget of \$35 billion, the bank will focus on public transportation networks and electricity grid interconnections. I see on page 120 of the budget that the Government of Canada will provide financial support for REM, the réseau électrique métropolitain, a Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec project.

The Budget

Other projects that the Government of Quebec is eager to move on are the Quebec City bus rapid transit system and the Montreal metro blue line east extension. These projects align well with our government's plan to implement green projects under bilateral agreements. The Government of Canada will pay provinces up to \$9.2 billion for priority projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions or contribute to the development of clean and better-connected electricity grids.

Also, many other projects approved and under way give Quebec access to \$7.2 billion under the Building Canada plan 2014-24. In budget 2016, under phase 1 of the infrastructure plan, Quebec was quick to sign agreements allowing it to receive \$2.7 billion by 2021.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank will also have a \$300-million supplementary fund for creating smart cities in Canada. That should make the mayor of Montreal happy.

In sum, as far as the work of the federal Liberal caucus is concerned, I will say to my fellow Quebecers and those who are concerned about our work that we are defending the interests of Quebec, as evidenced by the very many projects that are currently getting funding from the Government of Canada.

People like me who are naturalized Canadians never stop revelling in the natural beauty of this country. We are blessed to be able to enjoy such a vast and beautiful country. Our government wants to preserve this beautiful nature, eliminate sources of pollution, and preserve natural areas. That makes sense. To love this country is to preserve it and help it flourish.

That is why it is only logical that we invest \$21.9 billion in green infrastructure over the next 10 years. I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance for his vision and national perspective, as well as for his global vision. South of the border, there is a great deal of uncertainty .

• (1630)

The American President intends to make major tax cuts, and we still do not know what impact that will have. We do not know what will happen with NAFTA. We also do not know what impact American infrastructure projects will have on this side of the border.

There is also a lot of uncertainty with regard to Europe. What impact will Britain's departure from the European Union have and how will that affect the comprehensive economic trade agreement that Canada just signed with the European Union? What will be the outcome of the presidential election in France?

At times, it seems the uncertainties never end. The hon. Minister of Finance, however, took all of these things into account in order to develop an intelligent, prudent budget. He also developed a budget that gives hope to our future generations by including more measures to help the middle class and those who want to join it.

It therefore comes as no surprise that this budget benefits young people, workers, and businesses wanting to prepare for the structural changes that are on the horizon. Emerging technologies are going to drastically change the workforce. This upheaval was discussed at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where it was said that the level of job loss will wash over us like a tsunami or an avalanche.

We want to increase the share of green technologies in Canada's GDP. Indigenous peoples are not being left behind. Next year there will be programs with \$4 billion in funding to help build and renovate housing and water treatment systems and make improvements to sanitation facilities and indigenous community infrastructure.

As far as health is concerned, we now know that Canada has concluded agreements with all the provinces to transfer \$10.6 billion over 10 years to support home care and prevent mental health problems.

Budget 2017 would make a \$7-billion investment to create 40,000 child care spaces in Canada by 2027. Countless other tax measures are included in this budget. They affect our way of life and our future. Every one of us as Canadians has reason to be proud when we look at this budget in detail because it looks to the future with confidence. This budget is not driven by numbers, it is driven by a vision, a hope, and a desire to make a positive contribution for future generations.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for the eloquence with which it was delivered.

However, I disagree with the substance of his remarks. The president of the Quebec treasury board, the hon. Pierre Moreau, had some harsh words for these Liberal members. Just two days ago, Quebec's Liberal minister of health and social services, Dr. Gaétan Barrette, had some harsh words of his own for the Liberal members.

The member spoke earlier about the mayor of Montreal. Need I remind him that the mayor still does not understand why the government eliminated the public transit tax credit in its budget. The mayor is wondering why the government eliminated this tax credit when it is trying to encourage people to use public transit and is investing billions of dollars in public transit infrastructure.

The member is well aware that he was elected a year and a half ago on a platform that promised to balance the budget in 2019.

My question is simple. When will Canada balance its budget?

• (1635)

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Mr. Speaker, I thank my opposition colleague for his question.

A single thing stood out to me in his comments, and that was when he said that the government is investing. That is true. We are investing in our green infrastructure. We are investing in protecting the environment. We are investing in the construction of affordable housing. We are investing to improve the situation and lives of our seniors. Yes, we are investing and we will continue to do so in order to improve the lives of Canadians.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laval—Les Îles for his comments on the 2017-27 budget, which makes very few investments now, but announces many investments that will be made by some indeterminate future government.

The Budget

Naturally, I find it hard to share his enthusiasm for how the Liberal members have been defending Quebec's interests. For instance, there is nothing in the budget on Montreal's réseau électrique métropolitain or the high-frequency train project. Furthermore, and probably to pay for those projects, the budget announced the infrastructure bank, in which the government will invest \$35 billion that it does not have.

My question is very simple. Where will that \$35 billion come from? From privatizing our airports?

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I can assure my colleague that we will continue to stand up for Quebec, as we are doing now, and much more than our friends across the aisle did. We take Quebec's interests to heart. Indeed, 40 members from Quebec work day and night to improve the lives of Quebec citizens.

I can give several examples of this. We gave Bombardier a loan to safeguard over 4,000 jobs in Quebec. We are currently working on extending the Montreal metro's green line. We are helping the Government of Quebec by transferring funds to the provincial department of health and social services in order to improve our seniors' quality of life. We announced a 10% increase in the guaranteed income supplement for our seniors. We care about Canadians and Quebecers. The 40 members who represent Quebec are looking out for Quebec's interests.

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question.

Access to the Internet and digital technology remains a problem in Canada. Does the budget provide for initiatives to improve the situation?

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the excellent question.

Many Canadians do not use the Internet very often because they do not have the necessary digital literacy skills. The budget provides \$50 million for measures to improve their skills and help their children learn coding. Non-profit organizations have access to \$30 million to teach basic skills to seniors and the most vulnerable. There is \$22.3 million in the budget to improve access to the Internet for the disabled. We are proud of that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Consumer Protection; the hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, Ethics.

[*English*]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to budget 2017. I want to address key parts of the budget that I know will have an important and lasting impact on my riding of Parkdale—High Park in Toronto.

Since October 2015, I have heard loud and clear from my constituents about the issues that matter to them most, and I know that this budget would go a long way toward addressing those issues.

I want to start with housing. I want to discuss our government's historic investment and plan to address affordable housing. One of the most important issues to residents in my riding is access to housing. Since being elected, I have heard about housing when canvassing at the doors of my constituents, in meetings at my office, and during visits to various co-ops in Parkdale—High Park. We have five such entities: Dufferin Grove, Swansea Village, Howard Park, Spencer Avenue, and the John Bruce Village.

In meetings with the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, I have also heard about the important need for housing, and in particular about the critical need to ensure affordable housing stocks in our cities.

Last week, on March 29, I held a standing-room-only town hall in my riding on this very issue. I heard first-hand from residents about the importance of our government resolving the affordable housing issue and about working with local partners, such as the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, to make that happen.

I have heard these concerned citizens in my community, and I have responded by advocating, together with members of our Toronto caucus and our Ontario caucus, loudly, frequently, and with passion that we must get housing right. Why? It is because housing is foundational. What I mean by that is that if we address Canadians' housing needs, our residents will have better health and better educational and economic outcomes.

I am proud to say that advocacy on behalf of my constituents has produced results. What am I referring to? I am referring to budget 2017 and its historic investment of \$11 billion this year alone in housing. On top of the base funding of \$4 billion, this brings the total to \$15 billion our government has committed over the past two years alone to the much-needed national housing strategy. This will mean access to more affordable housing for residents in Parkdale—High Park.

The \$15 billion would include some of the following investments.

There would be \$5 billion for the national housing fund to address critical housing issues and to prioritize support for vulnerable citizens. This is important, because the priority would be seniors, indigenous persons, survivors fleeing situations of domestic violence, people with disabilities, people dealing with mental health and addiction issues, and veterans.

There would be \$3.2 billion dedicated to a renewal of federal and provincial partnerships on affordable housing. There would be \$2.1 billion dedicated to expanding and extending the homelessness partnering strategy, and there would be \$202 million dedicated to making federal lands available for affordable housing developments.

The Budget

The next thing I want to discuss on budget 2017 is its impact on families and child care. I am a husband and a father of two young children. My riding of Parkdale—High Park is home to countless families just like mine. These families have reached out to me to laud our government for taking as one of our very first actions measures to cut taxes on Canada's middle class. They have also welcomed the Canada child benefit, a once-in-a-generation type of change that targets tax-free benefits, on a proportional scale, to those raising kids who need the help the most.

For those raising children in my community, and communities around the country, our 2016 budget provided an initial \$500 million for early learning and child care. Building on this, budget 2017 would invest an additional \$7 billion to support the creation of high-quality child care spaces across Canada. This would mean up to 40,000 new subsidized child care spaces in this country. I know what this would mean for my riding of Parkdale—High Park. It would mean more options for parents who are fed up with signing up on literally dozens of child care waiting lists the moment they conceive a child. That is what it has come to in my riding and in ridings around this country.

What the budget means and what this investment would mean is a greater supply of much-needed day care spots so that more parents would be able to return to work and return to work sooner. This unprecedented investment would address the supply of spaces and help drive down costs by boosting the number of subsidized spots.

• (1640)

Budget 2017 would do more for families raising kids. We have also fulfilled our campaign commitment to introduce more flexibility and provide greater choice for parents on parental leave. These proposed changes would allow parents to choose to receive their current benefits over an extended period of up to 18 months, allowing them to spend more time with their kids in their early, tender years.

The third area I want to talk about is women and gender parity. The impact of budget 2017 on women would be profound. It is the first budget in Canada's history to include a gender statement. The statement shows the impact of programs, across government lines, on women. It reflects directly, in a clear and tangible manner, our commitment on this side of the House to ensure that the goal of gender equality permeates every single thing we do as a federal government.

On top of our historic child care investment, women deserve to feel safe, supported, and protected in our communities. I was proud to see \$100.9 million allocated in budget 2017 to establishing a national strategy to address gender-based violence.

In the past, I have been involved, in my riding, with a shelter called The Redwood. It is a shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence. In my involvement with The Redwood, I have seen the amazing work being done in my community, but I have also seen first-hand the critical need for investments and resources to end gender-based violence. Budget 2017 is a start in moving toward that important goal.

Budget 2017 would also dedicate critical funding for women abroad. I am doubly proud that our government has endorsed the

Dutch initiative. We would be dedicating \$650 million in international aid to educating women and girls and to empowering women to maintain control over their reproductive rights. This aid, particularly at this point in time globally, is critical.

Fourth, I want to address the budget in terms of its impact on indigenous persons. The budget would serve the important objective of reconciliation, a goal of our government and of my constituents in Parkdale—High Park. It would build on the significant investments in budget 2016 of over \$8 billion. The budget would continue our important work, making commitments to first nations, Inuit, and Métis that demonstrate a new nation-to-nation relationship.

What would the budget do? Budget 2017 commits to establishing a new fiscal relationship that would lift the 2% cap on annual funding increases. Budget 2017 would provide \$225 million to provide access to affordable and culturally appropriate housing for indigenous peoples living off reserve. It would dedicate \$300 million to the construction of housing in Canada's north, and \$225 million on top of that would be dedicated to housing providers who serve indigenous peoples not living on reserves. We have also dedicated \$828 million to improving health for first nation and Inuit people, including \$305 million for the non-insured health benefits program.

Over the last year, we have lifted 18 long-term drinking water advisories in first nations communities, and we are on track to eliminate all such advisories by March 2021. We would be investing \$4 billion to improve housing, water treatment systems, health care facilities, and community infrastructure, in partnership with first nations and Inuit.

Very importantly, mental health services for first nations and Inuit would get an injection of \$204 million to improve mental health services, \$118 million for mental health programming, and \$86 million for the non-insured health benefits program.

In my remaining time I want to underscore the important initiatives in the budget that would help the most vulnerable. I am most proud of these provisions. I am talking about low-income families.

We would dedicate \$13 million to provide affordable Internet access for low-income families.

Regarding refugees, I served as a parliamentary secretary for immigration. I was very proud to do so. I hear constantly from my constituents about having an open, compassionate, and welcoming system, one that is fair and accessible for all. We would improve that access by dedicating \$62 million to legal aid for asylum seekers.

The Budget

The budget would double the funds for the security infrastructure program. It would serve those people who are victims of hatred. In times of rising division and in a climate of hatred and bigotry, our government would commit hard dollars to protect those who want safety when they are worshipping.

The budget would also protect newcomers, in terms of their integration, by dedicating \$27 million to foreign credential recognition.

Why am I standing here? It is because the budget addresses housing, indigenous persons, women and families, and vulnerable Canadians. I am proud to represent the residents of Parkdale—High Park in supporting the budget. I urge all members of the House to do the same.

• (1645)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate helping those who are less fortunate who need to be assisted. However, I have a few questions for the member.

He focused a lot on the housing initiatives, yet the majority of the housing initiatives do not start until 2022. If this is so critical, why is it not going to be done until five years from now?

Second, there is money being invested in available federal land. We know that the list is not available, yet there is money allocated to this list for work that was supposed to be done in 2016. It is now 2017, and the list is still outstanding. Why is there money being put away for something that does not even exist? Also, on such a critical issue, why are the Liberals not investing the majority of this housing fund for five years?

• (1650)

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I have two responses to the member's question.

First of all, it is inaccurate to portray this budget or this government's commitment as one that is delayed, or speculative, for future years. We started out with a commitment of nearly \$2 billion for housing in budget 2016. The funds dedicated now are for a long-term strategy.

Second, it is critical to underscore that every stakeholder that has approached us has said that we need a long-term plan, that we need a guarantee of funds being allocated on a yearly basis so that planning can occur, so that forward-thinking can occur, on a long-term basis. That is what the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has asked for. That is what housing stakeholders have asked for. That is what we are delivering through a 10-year plan that will help us create a national housing strategy, including \$15 billion in aggregate funding that has been announced over the last two years.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I completely agree with him on the urgent need for social housing. We witnessed it when the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities toured Canada as part of its study on poverty. We went to Toronto, where people told us just how great and pressing the need for housing is.

I want to emphasize this because even though we are pleased with the \$11 billion for housing in the budget, we see that 90% of the funds will be disbursed after 2019, 50% after 2024, and \$1 million will be committed in the upcoming year. That is the proposal that has been made, and it falls short of meeting current needs.

If there are mistakes in the budget as it was presented to us, the Liberals should let us know and correct them.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague across the way and the work that she does here in the House as a member.

I would like to reiterate what I said earlier. We talked to a lot of organizations, residents, and people who work in the field. They asked us first for a national housing strategy and second for a long-term vision to develop that strategy.

They did not want us to invest large sums right out of the gate, but rather to set up a very stable system over 10 years. That is what we heard from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and that is what we delivered in this budget.

If we decided to expand the period, it was so that, for the first time in 25 years, we could have a system to develop a national housing strategy.

[*English*]

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many communities worked hard through the consultations this past year when the budget was about to be announced. We heard loud and clear about the need for environmental strategies. We heard loud and clear about social strategies and the need for a national transportation strategy and an infrastructure strategy to satisfy a lot of the recommendations coming forward at the local level, the grassroots level, for community improvement and growth plans. This year's 2017 budget identifies and recognizes a lot of those comments we heard.

Could the member give us some feedback on how sustainable this funding will be well into the future?

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, the importance of this budget is that it looks at different streams, different government programs, and understands how to synchronize them to work toward the same goal. The sustainability point the member mentioned is a critical part of this goal.

For example, when we look at housing, whether it is in first nations communities or in downtown Toronto, what we are looking at and trying to promote through requests for proposals is green infrastructure housing. We are looking at greener initiatives that are sustainable for the long term to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address all the concerns that have been raised by my colleague.

The Budget

•(1655)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand on behalf of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and the New Democrats to speak about the hits and misses in the 2017 federal budget.

I will be splitting my time with the member of Parliament for Elmwood—Transcona.

On affordable housing, there is a huge built-up demand, a great need, both on pricing and on volume. There is only \$20 million in affordable housing for 2017 and, reading the fine print, 90% of the money for housing will not go out the door until after the next election.

On home energy retrofits, we hear repeatedly that voters, homeowners, renovators, and small businesses want incentives to reduce emissions, enable households to save electricity, and get people to work doing these renovations. This is a good, local, sustainable job-creation exercise. The budget does not include any allowance for the home energy retrofit program.

For 15 years in my seat in local government before I was elected here, I have been advocating for federal leadership on abandoned vessels. There was a big announcement by the federal government in November, but there are zero dollars in this budget to deal with abandoned vessels. This weekend I am meeting with community leaders elected on Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia, the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities. They were hoping I would have some good news specifically about how we will be partnering and funding community work to remove the oil spill risks posed by abandoned vessels. There is zero in the budget for them.

The transit tax rebate is another disappointment in my region. It made the daily use of public transit a little more affordable for bus riders, but it also made public transit a little more affordable in ferry-dependent communities, such as the one that I represent, as well as Gabriola Island, where I live. Lots of commuters go back and forth every day. That was a way to help make ends meet and to accommodate the tremendously high, way-beyond-inflation, fare increases that have been brought in under the British Columbia Liberal Party over the last 14 years. Inflation, in some cases, is almost as high as 10%. That transit tax rebate program has been cut in this budget to save \$170 million.

We say instead that if the government were really serious about closing tax loopholes, it would have kept its election promise and closed the CEO stock option loophole, which would have provided \$750 million in revenue every year. Instead, inexplicably, yesterday in question period, the representative for the finance minister said that this tax rebate was used disproportionately by wealthy people. It boggles the mind, honestly. The transit tax rebate was cut to save \$170 million on the backs of working people. It is extremely disappointing. It is not leadership and not walking the talk on either the middle class or climate change.

There was a huge need expressed for home care that I heard daily when knocking on doors throughout the federal election campaign. The Liberals promised \$3 billion over four years. Instead, this

budget commits \$2.25 billion over four years. It is one year late and 25% short, and that again is on the backs of families.

For coastal communities, I really thought, given the government's election promises, that there would be commitments around salmon enhancement and the implementation of the Cohen commission recommendations, every single one of which the government said it would implement. There is nothing in the budget for salmon, which are at the foundation of indigenous communities on the original settlement pattern on the coast and which, in our modern economy, are so much at the root of tourism and commercial and recreational fisheries.

The opioid crisis has hit the community of Nanaimo particularly hard. There were more deaths per capita than anywhere else in British Columbia in the early part of this crisis, I think, because of drug dealers testing out this bad product and using my community as a test market. It is no fault of the community, but the community and our firefighters and first responders sure are taking the brunt of it.

•(1700)

This budget allocates \$110 million to the entire drug and substance strategy over the next five years. The Conservatives had planned to spend \$556 million on their anti-drug strategy over the same period, and honestly, it is a sad day when the Conservatives are spending more on drug treatment and the opioid emergency than the Liberals are. It is stunning, really.

As well, the budget fails to allocate a single dime in emergency funding for the opioid crisis, as my colleague, the member for Vancouver Kingsway, has pointed out. It is unacceptable. To think that the opioid crisis is over is not supported by the evidence. Let us say it that way. The crisis is getting worse, if anything, and there is nothing allocated. There is \$14 million this year for the entire drug strategy across the whole country, whereas last year \$16 million was spent by the federal government in B.C. and Alberta alone.

Regarding small business, again it is a big disappointment to see the government continuing to dishonour its election promise to lower the small business tax rate. Small businesses are our job generators and are a huge part of the Nanaimo—Ladysmith economy hub.

There is also nothing to reduce the unfair credit card merchant fees that gouge small businesses and raise costs for consumers.

As for people living with disabilities, the Liberals have once again ignored loud and clear calls to make the disability tax credit refundable to ensure that it provides the support that low-income individuals need.

The Budget

Then we move to the gender budget. There were big headlines on this issue, and a lot of expectations were raised. In fact, the budget named dozens of barriers women face, but it did not actually implement very many solutions for them. The budget mentions the word “women” 274 times, but there is very little action taken.

With regard to murdered and missing indigenous women, no money is allocated in the 2017 budget for implementation of the inquiry's work. As for violence against women, the offer is \$20 million a year over the next five years for federal services. This is only a little more than the government is committing to space exploration. NGOs had asked for \$500 million a year, and some of that would go to the operators of domestic violence shelters, who, with no support from the current government, are doing very good work on the part of the country to shelter women and children escaping domestic violence.

For addressing pay equity, there are zero dollars. For child care, there are zero dollars last year and this year for any child care spaces. This is quite different from the New Democrat election promise of \$1.2 billion in new investments that would have happened this year, which during the election campaign the Liberals said was too little and too slow. It is a head-shaker.

I like the idea of extending parental leave. That is good for families and it is good for women. However, the government did not commit any new dollars, so again only the wealthiest families, those who can afford to live on one-third of their salary, are able to take the full benefit.

Regarding unpaid care work, there is also a good general direction, but many female caregivers will not qualify, because they do not have a high enough income to qualify for this tax break. As well, the Liberals are delivering less than they promised in their platform.

We are also disappointed that the Liberals failed to use the budget opportunity to close the problem that we identified around the Canada pension plan expansion. Doing so would have helped women and people living with disabilities so that they would not be penalized.

Indigenous children, again, are left behind. There is just \$155 million, to come into compliance with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Again, it is such a betrayal of the government's promises that it does not specifically allocate money in this budget.

In closing, many Canadians are struggling with part-time and precarious employment, rising costs, and record debt, and they were hoping that this budget would lift them all up. Instead it looks like a tremendous amount of government spending without any effect on people on the ground, in their lives, this year, right now.

I urge the government to reconsider, to make its budget more generous and bring it more in line with its election promises.

● (1705)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, putting aside that in Toronto the transit tax did not do a thing for the lowest 40% of the income earners who had monthly passes, but was a tax break for the highest

60%. It did nothing for the poorest of the poor, those who paid the single fare. What we had was a tax proposed by Jack Layton, and adopted by Stephen Harper that gave tax breaks to the rich, and made the poorest people in Toronto pay full fare. That is their idea of equity. I will not address that. I think it stands on its own merit.

On the housing file, this is an insane analysis of the funding budget. I know it is a new member speaking to the House, but there is \$4.8 billion in the base funding for housing that is present this year. While it starts to phase-out over time, the \$11 billion phases-in, so the entire 10-year program has a steady, predictable, annual funding allotment locked in with the provinces, and it will be passed by Parliament after they sign the agreement.

Why does the NDP not support long-term funding? I realize New Democrats wanted to balance the budget first and then housing. This funds housing now. On that note, we are spending \$30 million on housing this year, and in the city of Toronto \$154 million. That is two years' worth of funding delivered last July. That money is building housing, repairing housing, and subsidizing housing as we speak. It was not there with the Conservatives. It is here with this government. That party voted against the \$154 million, and told low income Canadians who live in Toronto that they could go fend for themselves.

Why will New Democrats not support solid housing programming that pays for housing now and for the next 10 years? It is a historic investment. Why can they not support housing?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, I really wish the member opposite would not patronize members in the House. We are both doing our work for the first time. There is no need for the hon. member to belittle me for only having been elected for a year and a half just as he was.

Regarding the cut of the tax credit, if we were to look at #transitaxcredit, we would see all kinds of people describing, across the whole country, that if individuals bought a transit pass, they would be able to claim it against their income. Certainly, people in my community who were working at the hospital, who were back and forth on the ferry every day, were saving hundreds of dollars every year and more. In my region, the evidence does not support that this was a benefit for wealthy people riding on the bus. It is crazy.

There is no way around the member's argument. The affordable housing offer is not as rich as what the Liberals promised, and most of it is offered after the next election. It is extreme arrogance to make promises with taxpayers' money for a period in which the voters have not supported the government spending their money.

The Budget

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was quite interested in the hon. member's comments on the opioid crisis that is occurring in this country. I sit on the health committee, and we had an emergency study on the opioid crisis. According to the RCMP, 98% of opioids that come into this country come from China, and yet, the government seems to be doing nothing with respect to dealing with China on this particular issue.

I have constantly asked questions, whether it is in question period here or in the health committee, with regard to how the Liberals are dealing with China on this issue.

What does the hon. member think should be done, and perhaps the Liberals can take some advice from you on what you think should be done about China bringing in all these opioids?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am sure the hon. member meant the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith and not me the Speaker.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, our first priority on the NDP side is with front-line responders: ambulance, firefighters, the people who are dealing with this crisis every day.

In my own community, Mid-Island Hiv Aids Society has trained 800 volunteers on how to use naloxone. The human commitment to alleviating the suffering is tremendous. We certainly want to see the federal government doing everything it can to support front-line workers, doing everything it can to keep drugs out of the country, and to keep the drugs from being made illegally with pill presses and so on.

Again, we want to see spending now to get ahead of this crisis. It has a huge human cost. I am stunned to have heard from my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway that this budget offer is an 80% reduction over what the Conservatives had planned to spend. Another real problem is that the \$110 million is mostly backloaded into future spending years. We need to spend it now.

• (1710)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise and address the government's budget. It is a budget that the hon. member for Outremont and leader of the NDP rightly called the “we'll get around to it” budget. In part he called it that because if we look at the budget, the columns for this year for various initiatives are filled with zeros. The government is clearly not doing it now, so presumably it will get around to it. We will see about that. That is from the present.

However, he was also making a historical comment about the typical behaviour of Liberal governments. He cited the example of the Chrétien-Martin era. A lot of promises were made in the red book in 1993, for instance, around a national pharmacare plan and doing something with respect to child care. Come the time the Liberals were ultimately defeated in 2006, they were still saying, “just one more election and we're going to get to it” and “It's coming.” They had the audacity, frankly, to be indignant about the fact that they were defeated after 13 years of government and some pretty unsavoury stories coming out of the Gomery commission saying that there were things that Canadians needed, that they really wanted the

opportunity to do them, and shame on other parties for having observed they were not getting around to it and maybe it was time to replace them.

Therefore, given that historical context, one has every reason to look at that behaviour, and at this budget, and worry that this government is not serious about getting around to the things that need to be done.

A good example is the housing file. If we look down the column, it is filled with zeros for this year. Of course, there are promises of big money, that it is coming but we have to hang on. In 2023 things will be really great, we will have spent multiple billions of dollars, and that by 2027 that will have doubled. I submit to the House that this is not really a good way of making policy. It certainly is not a good way of doing politics. It is sort of starting an arms race of who can announce money further into the future.

What we are concerned about, and I think Canadians and people in Elmwood—Transcona are concerned about as well, is having the government allocate resources and funds to its priorities now, not 10 or 20 years from now. If we make a habit of getting into announcing money further into the future just to have bigger, more impressive numbers, there is no reason why we should not be talking about \$40 billion by 2039 or \$50 billion by 2047. If we wanted to get really polemic, we might announce a trillion dollars by the year 2100.

This game of simply announcing money further into the future to make it look as though the Liberals are taking action on priorities today is not the right way of doing politics. It is not a good way of doing policy for that matter. That is not to say that we cannot have long-term deals, but those deals have to include some action today. There is no guarantee that one, or two or three elections from now the government of the day will honour those deals. Therefore, if the government wants to show its sincerity with respect to taking action on the priorities of Canadians, it is important it spends some money today. That certainly was promised by the Liberals in the last election, but it is not delivering that with this budget.

Child care is a great example. The Liberals talk big numbers on child care. If we look at the amount of aid that will go to working Canadian families that need child care so they can report to work and have confidence that their kids are in a safe place with well-trained staff, the number is zero. That is a strange way for the Liberals to treat their priorities.

Incidentally, I have noticed this is a feature of the government. A number of things have happened, for instance, undermining the lawsuit of Air Canada maintenance workers who wanted to keep their jobs in Canada. That was not mentioned as a priority of the government, but it certainly got done. There have been other examples of things that were done in the House that were not talked about in the election. The things that are not being done are the things that were promised. Therefore, the lesson here is, God forbid we become a priority of the Liberal government because we would wither on the vine.

The Budget

• (1715)

The things that corporate CEOs bring to the government, which the Liberals did not talk about during the election, are going to get the priority. That is the list people want to be on, if they are rich enough to get on it. That lesson is evident in this budget.

Canadian workers who have been laid off in the economic slowdown might be one of the six out of 10 Canadians who cannot access the EI fund. There is nothing in the budget that talks about changing the eligibility rules to allow more workers who have been laid off to access that money to make their mortgage payments, to put food on the table, and to keep a roof over their head while they look for new employment.

Canadians are owed that, particularly when we consider that successive Liberal and Conservative governments stole money out of the EI fund. Workers paid into that fund in case they needed it in these circumstances. It is shameful to see, once again, that ordinary working Canadians are being asked to wait, being told by the Liberals that they will get around to it, maybe if they are elected two, three, or four more times, 15 to 16 years sounds about right.

The corporate lobby bandwagon might have slowed down by then and then the Liberals will get around to the priorities of Canadians. We have seen this with the veterans. There is nothing in the budget about restoring lifetime pensions for veterans, which was a promise of the Liberals during the campaign. They are being asked to wait.

On defence spending, the Liberals are taking money that was allocated for defence spending and back-ending it. It was not enough to just back-end the new money. The Liberals looked at the budget and noted that there was old money that was not back-ended. They could correct that by taking it out of the budget and back-ending it. Never mind the fact that the Canadian military needs new equipment now to do its job properly and safely.

The Liberals have not been content with just back-ending new money. They want to back-end the old money as well. They are doing this in the context where through Bill C-27, and a couple of other examples I would mention if I had time, they are mounting an attack on the pensions of Canadian workers. We saw it a bit with the CPP not including the dropout provisions for women and people with disabilities. Incidentally, if people take advantage of their extended parental leave, which is just extra time with no extra money, the same amount of money they would have had over the course of a year stretched over 18 months, they are then penalized on the next tier of CPP that the Liberals were so proud to have brought in because they did not include the dropout provisions for women and people with disabilities.

Even when the Liberals are trying to do something right, they just cannot seem to help themselves. They have to do something to throw a monkey wrench into it, particularly when it comes to pensions. If people need any evidence at all, Bill C-27, sitting on the Order Paper, is all the evidence they need to know that the government is not committed to real pensions for Canadian workers. Shame on it for that.

How do the Liberals do all this? How do they go to seniors and say, "sorry, there is nothing in the budget for you", even though a national pharmacare plan would actually save money for Canadian

taxpayers, but they cannot be bothered to do it? They tell seniors that they do not have the money to do it. Meanwhile, a Liberal priority in the election, and as I said earlier, God forbid we become a Liberal priority, was to close the CEO stock option loophole, something worth over \$750 million of revenue to the government each year. It was a priority during the election, so it is not getting done.

Then the Liberals have the nerve to turn around to Canadian workers and tell them that there is no money for them when it comes to pharmacare, expanding EI, investing in child care. They just say that they do not have the money, because Bay Street showed up and said that it did not like the idea of being taxed fairly so the Liberals backed right off.

When it comes to sweetheart tax haven deals with Barbados and other countries that allow corporate CEOs to hide their money offshore, the Liberals are not taking any action. It is easier to go to Canadian workers who do not have the same power and the same say as CEOs and tell them to wait, to tighten their belts. That is what is shameful about this budget.

When we hear about the CRA giving amnesty to Canada's richest and worst tax cheats, when that revenue could be used to invest in those services that working Canadians actually need, it is easier for the Liberals to tell those working Canadians to wait.

Shame on the Liberals for having so little for Canadian workers, because they are not willing to stand up to those who should be paying their fair share. It is not enough to tell Canadian workers to tighten their belt when the money is out there.

• (1720)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if members turn to page 131, they will see that in last year's budget \$500 million was projected into this year for child care. After that, \$7 billion was projected for new federal, provincial, territorial framework agreements with indigenous communities. That is money this year and money for the next seven years, and it is locked in with an accord, just like the housing money that is locked in with an accord.

The Budget

The money is going to last past this election and it is going to be back loaded, according to their math, because 80% comes after the next election. Eight years after the next election there still will be money flowing to cities, municipalities, villages, towns, provinces, territories, and indigenous communities, close to \$20 billion over 10 years. It is not back-end loaded. We have parsed it out in 10-year instalments. There are two years until the next election, so 20% is in the first two years and 80% is in the next eight years. That is the way the math works. The money is here this year. It was doubled-up last year. The money will be there next year and every year thereafter. This is a national housing strategy.

When will the NDP get engaged in debating this budget and not the Chrétien-Martin budgets? If those members want to build a time machine, there is money in the budget for technology and innovation, so they can go build a time machine. We are building housing. Why will they not help us?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, we will stop talking about the Chrétien-Martin government when those members stop acting like the Chrétien-Martin government.

As far as the member's discussion of the budget, I find the budget tables more convincing than the budget prose.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member sees the extended parental leave as a wash, while some people have referred to it as a benefit. I wonder if he could clarify this. If we do the extrapolation of that extended parental leave benefit, 18 months at 33% versus 12 months at 55%, it actually works out to a 10% reduction if the longer term is taken. Could the member comment on that benefit?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to name it a benefit when people will receive less money to get through a longer period of time. The flexibility is nice if the money is already in the bank. However, most working families do not already have the money in the bank and they cannot afford to take a 10% pay cut in order to stay home for an extra six months even though they might like to.

The fact is that on top of that 10% pay cut in the immediate future, people need to think about the long-term cut they will take to their CPP benefits because they do not have dropout provisions for the second tier the government brought in.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:23 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of ways and means Motion No. 10.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Call in the members.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 246*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Foote
Fragiskatos	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendes
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif

Private Members' Business

Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paradis
Petipas Taylor
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 161

O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Philpott
Poissant
Ratansi
Rodríguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Samson
Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga

Sweet
Tilson
Trudel
Vecchio
Warawa
Watts
Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 122

PAIRED

Members

Freeland

Moore— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

The House resumed from March 23 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Louis-Hébert to Motion No. 105 under private members' business.

● (1810)

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

(Division No. 247)

YEAS

Members

Aboultair
Albrecht
Ambrose
Arnold
Barlow
Beaulieu
Bergen
Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boucher
Boulerice
Brosseau
Caron
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cullen
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Falk
Gallant
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Hughes
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Kwan
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Marcil
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Nantel
Nuttall
Pauzé
Poulièvre
Rankin
Reid
Ritz
Sansoucy
Schmale
Sopuck
Stanton
Stewart

NAYS

Members

Albas
Allison
Anderson
Aubin
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Berthold
Blaikie
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Brown
Carrie
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Davies
Diotte
Donnelly
Dubé
Dusseau
Eglinski
Finley
Garrison
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Jeneroux
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Laverdière
Liepert
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
McCaulley (Edmonton West)
Motz
Nater
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Rayes
Richards
Saganash
Saroya
Shields
Sorenson
Stetski
Strahl

Aboultair
Albrecht
Alghabra
Ambrose
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barlow
Baylis
Bennett
Bergen
Bezan
Bittle
Blair
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bossio
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes
Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Choquette
Clarke
Cooper
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Deltell
Diotte
Donnelly

Albas
Aldag
Allison
Amos
Anderson
Arseneault
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Benson
Berthold
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault
Boucher
Boulerice
Bratina
Brisson
Brown
Caron
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chong
Christopherson
Clement
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCoursey
Di Iorio
Doherty
Dreeshen

Private Members' Business

Drouin
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Dzerowicz
 Eglinski
 El-Khoury
 Eyolfson
 Fergus
 Finley
 Fisher
 Fragiskatos
 Fry
 Gallant
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gill
 Godin
 Goodale
 Gourde
 Grewal
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Jeneroux
 Joly
 Jordan
 Julian
 Kelly
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Kwan
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lebel
 Lefebvre
 Leslie
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Long
 Ludwig
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Maloney
 Masse (Windsor West)
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McColeman
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Soeurs)
 Monsef
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Nassif
 Nault
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Oueltette
 Paul-Hus
 Peschisolido
 Philpott
 Plamondon
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Ratansi
 Reid
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Sagamash
 Saini
 Sangha
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan

Dubé
 Duguid
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Easter
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Falk
 Fillmore
 Finnigan
 Foote
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fuhr
 Garneau
 Génèreux
 Gerretsen
 Gladu
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Harvey
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Johns
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Kang
 Kent
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Lake
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Laverdière
 Lebouthillier
 Lemieux
 Levitt
 Lightbound
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 Lukiwski
 MacGregor
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Malcolmson
 Marcol
 May (Cambridge)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Medicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
 Morneau
 Motz
 Nantel
 Nater
 Nuttall
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Paupé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Poilievre
 Quach
 Rankin
 Rayes
 Richards
 Ritz
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Sahota
 Samson
 Sansoucy
 Saroya
 Schiefke
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan

Shields
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sopuck
 Sorenson
 Stanton
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Tilson
 Trudel
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Viersen
 Warawa
 Watts
 Webber
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Wrzesnewskij
 Yurdiga
 Zimmer — 283

Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Sorbara
 Spengemann
 Stetski
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tan
 Thériault
 Trost
 Van Loan
 Vandenbeld
 Vecchio
 Virani
 Warkentin
 Waugh
 Weir
 Wilkinson
 Wong
 Young
 Zahid

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Freeland

Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion, as amended.

[*Translation*]

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion as amended?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

* * *

● (1815)

[*English*]**ROLE OF CO-OPERATIVES**

The House resumed from March 24 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 100, under private members' business, in the name of the member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert.

● (1820)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 248)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albrecht
 Alghabra
 Ambrose
 Anandasangaree
 Arnold
 Arya
 Ayoub
 Bagnell
 Barlow

Albas
 Aldag
 Allison
 Amos
 Anderson
 Arseneault
 Aubin
 Badawey
 Bains
 Barsalou-Duval

Private Members' Business

Baylis
 Bennett
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Bittle
 Blair
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Bossio
 Boudrias
 Boutin-Sweet
 Breton
 Brosseau
 Caesar-Chavannes
 Carr
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chan
 Choquette
 Clarke
 Cooper
 Cullen
 Dabrusin
 Davies
 Deltell
 Diotte
 Donnelly
 Drouin
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Easter
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Falk
 Fillmore
 Finnigan
 Foote
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fuhr
 Garneau
 Généreux
 Gerretsen
 Gladu
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Harvey
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Johns
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Kang
 Kent
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Lake
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary)
 Laverdière
 Leboutillier
 Lemieux
 Levitt
 Lightbound
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 Lukiwski
 MacGregor
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Malcolmson
 Marcil
 May (Cambridge)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
 Monsef
 Morneau

Beaulieu
 Benson
 Berthold
 Bibeau
 Blaikie
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Boissonnault
 Boucher
 Boulerice
 Bratina
 Brison
 Brown
 Caron
 Carrie
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Champagne
 Chong
 Christopherson
 Clement
 Cormier
 Cuzner
 Damoff
 DeCoursey
 Di Iorio
 Doherty
 Dreeshen
 Dubé
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Dzerowicz
 Eglinski
 El-Khoury
 Eyolfson
 Fergus
 Finley
 Fisher
 Fragiskatos
 Fry
 Gallant
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gill
 Godin
 Goodale
 Gourde
 Grewal
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Jeneroux
 Joly
 Jordan
 Julian
 Kelly
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Kwan
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lebel
 Lefebvre
 Leslie
 Liepert
 Lobb
 Long
 Ludwig
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Maloney
 Masse (Windsor West)
 May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
 McColeman
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Morrissey

Motz
 Nantel
 Nater
 Nuttall
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Pauzé
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Poilievre
 Quach
 Rankin
 Rayes
 Richards
 Ritz
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Sahota
 Samson
 Sansoucy
 Saroya
 Schiefke
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Sorbara
 Spengemann
 Stetski
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tan
 Thériault
 Trost
 Van Loan
 Vandenbeld
 Vecchio
 Virani
 Warkentin
 Waugh
 Weir
 Wilkinson
 Wong
 Young
 Zahid

Murray
 Nassif
 Nault
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Paul-Hus
 Peschisolido
 Philpott
 Plamondon
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Ratansi
 Reid
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Saganash
 Saini
 Sangha
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sopuck
 Sorenson
 Stanton
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Tilson
 Trudel
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Viersen
 Warawa
 Watts
 Webber
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Yurdiga
 Zimmer — 284

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

Freeland Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

The House resumed from April 3 consideration of the motion that Bill C-307, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (tamper resistance and abuse deterrence), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-307 under private members' business.

Private Members' Business

● (1830)

[English]

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

(Division No. 249)

YEAS

Members

Aboultair	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brousseau	Brown
Caron	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseau
Duvall	Eglinski
Falk	Finley
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hughes	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmicc
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière
Lebel	Liepert
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Malcolmson
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	Motz
Nantel	Nater
Nuttall	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Richards
Ritz	Saganash
Sansoucy	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Stetski
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Tilson
Trost	Trudel
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viersen	Warawa
Warkentin	Watts
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 122

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains

Baylis	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chan	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Gameau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
MacKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Petipas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sanson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskij
Young	Zahid — 160

PAIRED

Members

Freeland	Moore — 2
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The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Private Members' Business

It being 6:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL SEAL PRODUCTS DAY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-208, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Speaker: I would urge members to continue their discussions outside the chamber.

There being no amendment motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

• (1835)

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Scott Simms moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I know that as a former minister of fisheries and oceans, you spent a lot of time on this issue, and I thank you very much.

The bill for a seal products day was sent to committee for discussion. I noticed during the meeting that it was as much about the culture of my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador as it is about the indigenous community across this country, particularly the Inuit of the north.

I am honoured to have my esteemed colleague from Labrador seconding this bill. She represents the greater part of the province. I want to thank her for her participation at the committee meeting.

I want to thank also the member for Nunavut. He gave a passionate speech at committee about his cultural and traditional ties with seal products in regard to art, food, clothing, and ceremonial purposes.

I recall the unveiling of a memorial in the town of Elliston some time ago. In the town of Elliston, the Sealers Memorial depicted how the massive hunt took place several hundred years ago on a very large ship. It was a large commercial hunt that began for several reasons. It was not just for the skins and the fur to keep warm, but also for the oils for fuel and so on, because in those days petrochemicals were not what they are now, so seal oil played a far greater role in society.

As I mentioned in the first part of my debate, the seal oil was shipped back to the United Kingdom, where it was used to light the street lamps in London. That was one of its first uses. It is ironic, of

course, because London is where the genesis of the protests against it started. No offence to Londoners, and no reflection on the beautiful city of London, but nevertheless, it is a reflection on the issue that some people have over there.

Incidentally, the day that we are proposing matches up with the European Union's Maritime Day. I want to thank Senator Céline Hervieux-Payette, who was the genesis of this particular bill. I give her credit for several reasons, one of which is that she chose the date in line with Maritime Day in the European Union.

Members may recall that around that time, the European Union instituted a ban on seal products because of the cruel nature of how we harvested the seals. At that time, I thought it was fairly ironic. I introduced a motion in the House, which I have not brought back to the House, since my purpose was to make a point, which I think I did. My motion called on the Government of Canada to institute a ban on deer and boar products from Germany.

Why would I do that? The reason was to illustrate the point that the hunting of deer and boar throughout Germany is an unregulated hunt. Why is it unregulated? It is because the politicians do not want to touch it, and the reason they do not want to touch it is that it is tied into their culture and heritage. I have nothing against that, but I wish it was more regulated.

I am sure my ban would not have put the lederhosen industry in jeopardy. My motion illustrated the point that if we are going to talk about the harvesting of one particular animal as being cruel and offensive, then we have to open it up to all animals.

The seal hunt harvest in eastern Canada as well as the north is carried out in a humane manner, despite what people tend to think, and that was illustrated at committee. It is true that a few people disagreed with what we were doing, but we heard some great testimony, including from my colleague from Labrador and others, who talked about how they are tied to this particular culture.

• (1840)

There are two things at play here. There are two areas where we harvest the seals on a commercial basis. They are the gulf and the front. The front concerns my area, the northeastern coast of Newfoundland, up toward the area of my colleague from the Long Range Mountains, and up toward southern Labrador, and my colleague there. However, let us not stop there, because this is a pan-provincial issue. It also sustained the oldest city in North America, St. John's, as my colleague from St. John's South—Mount Pearl knows full well. He knows the history of the province and what the sealing industry meant to his glorious city, both cities as a matter of fact, and how it sustained us for so many years, probably 300 or 400 years.

Private Members' Business

Seal products day would be celebrated on the same day the European Union celebrates European Maritime Day. The reason the Europeans have Maritime Day is to celebrate their cultural heritage ties to what they do on the coastline. They have the seafood industry and other industries in Spain, Portugal, the Basque area, Ireland, and Scotland. They celebrate that day each and every year to talk about their ties to the ocean. By the same token, a month later, they protest the seal harvest here, which is why I congratulate Céline Hervieux-Payette for doing what she did. She wanted to point out the ultimate irony, which I think she has done.

It is one particular day, but as far as I am concerned, it is every day when we celebrate this, certainly for people in the north: Baffin Island, Northwest Territories, Yukon, of course, and particularly Nunavut. Again, I congratulate my colleague, the MP for Nunavut, who brought a very passionate speech and each and every day brings seal products into this House.

It bears mentioning again that when my colleague from Nunavut went to the United States of America, he met then president Barack Obama with a seal tie on. I do not know if many people are aware of this, but many years ago, when Barack Obama was a senator, he actually wrote to the Canadian government protesting the seal harvest. Barack Obama is a great man. His was one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard in this House, but he is not perfect, I realized on that day.

That being said, I like to think that if we illustrate the issue of the harvesting of animals, then we shed more light on this subject. It does not end with the seal products. It is also other products. I mentioned seal oil. I mentioned the seal fur and the meat, of course. We are now hoping to open up markets in China. I have a company in my riding named PhocaLux that is doing some tremendous things in advancing seal products.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that I want to congratulate the provincial fisheries ministry of Newfoundland and Labrador. The ministry has done fabulous work regarding product development for seal products. I also want to congratulate the Government of Quebec, which has also been a fierce defender of seal products and the harvesting of seal products.

I forgot to mention that the gulf is the other area, which is situated toward the Îles de la Madeleine. There they have a thriving industry as well and for centuries have depended on seal products. Those are the mass commercial areas.

What is particularly ironic is that when they introduced the ban on seal products in the European Union, they said that the commercial stuff is what they did not want; it was the indigenous ceremonies we were to protect and the harvesting by the indigenous communities. They said this to my face. Without us in Newfoundland saying a word, the indigenous communities came back and said to them, "That is not fair, because for us to do what you say we can do, we have to have that commercial industry to do it", to which they were met with complete and utter silence.

Since then, we have had challenges at the World Trade Organization, and we have had a great deal of support for that. In a spirit of good will, I want to compliment the former government for going to the WTO with that. The Conservatives fought fiercely

for the rights of sealers, and they also fought for the rights of indigenous seal harvesters, so I want to congratulate them. I thought they did a great job at the time. Nevertheless, we still have some broad misconceptions out there and a lack of understanding.

• (1845)

It was pointed out to members of the European Parliament at the time, if it introduced a seal products ban, what would it do for the harvesting of other animals? I mentioned deer and boar by way of example. It did not have an answer for that at the time. It was the ultimate way of saying that we really have to study something before we step forward, that we should look before we leap, and the EU did not do that within the particular structure of Brussels. That is what happened, and that is why we challenged it at the World Trade Organization. What ended up happening was that the technical group of the committee of the environment that was studying this said that it could not really do this because it would create a slippery slope.

Let us face it, with the seal product ban in the European Union, which started in the member states of the Netherlands, Germany, and U.K., it was one thing to say they would not accept a product ban because of the species itself, the species had to be endangered. For example, bluefin tuna is an endangered species, so in many cases, we would ban these products if we felt they were in danger. We can talk about other products that are endangered, but this was not an endangered species. This was strictly done on the basis of cruel and unusual punishment to a particular animal.

However, steps were taken with the help of the provincial fisheries department. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada created a humane way of harvesting the seals. It was called a three-step process of killing the seals. That was put into place. In the same way that any abattoir, any harvester, any place that harvests domestic animals, like cows, chickens, and that sort of thing, all the same types of restrictions and regulations about the harvesting of such animals was applied to the seals.

Let us go back to what happened. It was far easier to put oneself on a pedestal of what was right for animal rights if one had a good product to sell. It was discovered, back in the 1970s, that it was easy to sell an animal with a very cute way of looking—

An hon. member: It makes for a good poster.

Mr. Scott Simms: It makes a for good poster, as my colleague points out, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. member: Rex Murphy.

Mr. Scott Simms: Yes, that's right, Mr. Speaker. Rex Murphy said the same thing, it makes for a good poster.

The seal face in the ocean, on the ice, the harvesting, the red on the white, if everyone knows what I mean, made a good poster, and that is the problem we had, because we never had a fair shake from the very beginning.

Private Members' Business

I will go back to why we are here, the seal products themselves. We have celebrated so much over the past little while. It is not just the products for wearing or consuming but art as well. We have seen some fabulous art created. My goodness, even in St. John's, there are some great seal products: jackets, hats, and so on and so forth. It is really quite elegant.

My colleague from Labrador makes a valid point. Let me return to the point of the seals used for a good poster. What happened back then, in 1987, was that, first, we were condemned for the killing of baby seals and seal pups. We recognized them as whitecoats. They still use them to make a good poster, and as a result of that, since 1987, we stopped harvesting baby seals, and that is where we stand today. That goes to the responsible part of it. My goodness, we have responsibly harvested seals more than so many other species that are consumed every day.

I will never forget the time a former senator went to Europe with us. He stood and said he could not believe Europe was condemning the harvesting of seals. He looked at everyone in the room and said that everyone had just eaten foie gras. If I were to tell members how foie gras is made, they would never eat it again, and they would be sick as we sit here. He brought up a good point. I am not condemning anybody who eats foie gras. I do not really like it myself and would rather sit down with a nice hotdog. It is probably the same kind of texture; it is just that one is pricier. The problem is that the lack of understanding, unfortunately, inhibits our ability to talk about things like fantastic seal products.

I encourage all members of the House to please support us on seal products day.

•(1850)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member has long been an advocate for a very important industry, not only for one region of the country but many areas of the country. There is a great deal of understanding in terms of its importance, both socially and economically. I wanted to take this opportunity to applaud my colleague's efforts, because I know how important the issue has been to him over the years, and to my other colleagues in the Newfoundland and Labrador area.

Would the member give us a historical perspective of some of the things that have happened in the House with respect to the debate today?

Mr. Scott Simms: Madam Speaker, my colleague is from an area that knows full well the traditions of harvesting seals out on the deep ocean of Winnipeg North. I am sorry, I do not mean to be sarcastic. The member's ability to be in the House, and to know every issue that is being talked about is laudable. He does know a lot about this issue and it astounds me. Nevertheless, that tells me that Winnipeg North is being served well, and Canada for that matter.

I forgot to mention that my colleague from northern Quebec is here. He knows full well how important this issue is and he celebrates it just like we do. It is tied to traditions that date back 500 years on the commercial side alone. Before that, we go back to the Beothuk of Newfoundland and Labrador who harvested this. Unfortunately, the Beothuk are no longer with us, but nevertheless

seal harvesting played a crucial role to their survival as well, predating us of course.

When we look at the situation now, that is why seal products day means so much, because of the cultural and traditional ties that we aim to celebrate.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the subject debated by my hon. colleague and friend is something we are all passionate about. Could the member give the House an estimate of the number of seals on the east coast of our country? What does he think could be sustainable, and what does he think the impact of such a number of seals would be?

Mr. Scott Simms: Madam Speaker, that is a valid point and my colleague from Long Range Mountains certainly shares in that tradition. As far as harp seals are concerned on the northeast coast, I mentioned the Gulf and the Front, there are 8 to 10 million harp seals, although I just received a picture from a friend who shows a polar bear eating a seal off the northeast coast of Newfoundland, so it is 8 to 10 million minus one.

Nevertheless, it is not a species in decline. It is not threatened or endangered, which is why some of the protests lack the sincerity and lack the information. That is why we have to fight with initiatives like this and talk about seal products. Again, not just for us on the east coast but for all indigenous communities and not just Canada. There is northern Finland, the Arctic Circle into Russia, Greenland, and even into western Alaska. For all of these indigenous communities, this is a big deal for them to celebrate their culture and traditions.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise in support of Bill S-208, a bill to designate May 20 of each year as national seal products day.

I am so pleased to speak in this debate that I went to my closet this morning to retrieve one of my several sealskin ties. I realize that my hon. colleague from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame sported a snappy bow tie when he introduced the bill that was passed in the other place, and is now here for consideration in the House. I have chosen a more substantial piece of neckwear, in square centimetres at least, wonderfully fabricated from the pelt of a harp seal.

I wear it because I am proud that the Conservative Party of Canada is the only party to explicitly state its support of the seal harvest in its official declaration. I recall fondly the first policy conference of our reconstituted party in Montreal in 2005, a conference that I attended as a journalist. The conference so impressed me that barely three weeks later I was a fledgling candidate for the election that followed, which elected the first mandate of Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Members will recall that it took me one more try to join my Conservative colleagues in this House, but that is another story for another day.

The point I was making before interrupting myself was the construction of the sound Conservative policy platform I witnessed at that first policy convention in Montreal in 2005. The policy that was passed, now included in section 123 of the Conservative Party's policy declaration, states unequivocally:

Private Members' Business

We believe [the Conservative Party of Canada believes] the government must continue to support the Canadian sealing industry by working to eliminate unfair international trade bans on Canadian seal products.

Those unfair international trade practices have taken a terrible toll on Canada's sealing industry, which is a historically important cultural and economic driver in Canada's eastern Arctic and northern communities. It has been, for centuries, an integral part of Canada's rural culture, and a way of life for many thousands of Canadians. Indigenous people have a constitutionally protected right to harvest marine mammals, including seals, as long as the harvest is consistent with responsible conservation practices.

As recently as 2004, seal products in their different forms: meat; oil, which is rich in omega 3 fatty acids; pelts, not only sold as neckties but as jackets, coats, boots, slippers and mittens, all of these products accounted for about \$18 million in exports to markets around the world.

Today, unfortunately, seal product exports amount to only several hundred thousand dollars, because of ill-informed, misguided, in some cases, blatantly hypocritical, discriminatory regulations, and outright bans.

In 2010, using justifications built on seal harvest practices that were outlawed decades ago, the European Union banned the import and sales of all seal products. The Fur Institute of Canada, along with successive Canadian governments, Conservative and Liberal, have countered the myths and misrepresentations with clear and accurate facts.

Since 1987, seals have not been hunted until they reach maturity. No other young animals receive the same preferred treatment. Lambs, pigs, calves, and chickens all are slaughtered before maturity.

I used the word myth advisedly. Let me offer a few of the classic myths about the seal harvest along with the realities. The most flagrantly argued and propagandized myth is that the Canadian government still allows sealers to harvest whitecoats, seal pups. In fact, that practice has been illegal since 1987, as is the harvest of adult seals during breeding or birthing times of the year.

● (1855)

Another classic myth is that seals are skinned alive. In fact, a 2002 study carried out by independent veterinarians proved that to be false.

Yet another myth is that Canada's traditional and commercial seal fishery is unsustainable and endangering seal populations. Again, this is absolutely false. Scientists and researchers at Fisheries and Oceans Canada have all the evidence. In fact, the seal population is very healthy and growing, in some cases in overabundant numbers that are seen to be threatening the recovery of overfished, depleted, saltwater, Atlantic groundfish populations, such as the cod.

Harp seals alone, for example, are said to consume more than 12 million tonnes of fish every year, the equivalent of more than 10% of the world's annual commercial wild harvest. As well, the overabundant grey seal population off the Maritimes is also a particular threat to Atlantic cod and salmon, and it is not because they are consuming all that they kill. In fact, the grey seal very often eats only

a few bites of an 80 to 100 pound cod, leaving the large wounded fish to die and to waste.

It is also relevant to point out that since the European Union imposed its misguided, misinformed ban on seal product imports and sales, a number of EU member countries have actually authorized the culling of their own seal populations to protect their national fisheries. A spokesman for Canada's fur institute pointed out the cost of those contradictory policies several years ago, saying that the culls in Europe are both hypocritical and wasteful because the killed seals can only be used under EU laws for personal consumption, which is unlikely, and cannot be used as commercial products because of the EU's own ban.

There are two final myths I would like to address. One is that Fisheries and Oceans Canada, which we know well in this House by the acronym, DFO, provides subsidies for the seal hunt. Again, that is outdated. Sealing is, as many of my colleagues have argued, an economically viable industry. All subsidies were ended in 2001, and even that economic assistance was for market and product development. In fact, the Canadian government has provided far less in subsidies to the sealing industry than was recommended by the 1986 Malouf Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry in Canada.

The final myth that I would like to dispel this evening is that the Canadian seal hunt is rife with brutality and inhumane practices, and that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans does not adequately police or punish illegal hunting activities. The reality is quite the opposite. Fisheries enforcement officers conduct surveillance of the hunt by air and by sea, and with dockside inspection of landing vessels returning from the hunt. As well as this close monitoring of the hunt, infractions of the regulations draw severe penalties, which can include not only very significant fines, but the seizure and forfeiting of fishing vessels and their gear, of catches, and of the sealers' licences.

I know my time is short, so to wrap up, I would like to express again that across Canada's remote northern and coastal communities, sealing is an important traditional way of life and a critical source of income for thousands of families. The seal fishery contributes to the often inconsistent range of income sources in remote fishing communities, and in some years, seal hunt revenues offset poor catches in those other fisheries.

Bill S-208 would impose no direct cost to the federal government and would not create a legal holiday, but designation of May 20 as national seal products day every year would provide invaluable symbolic support of a legitimate, humane, and sustainable fishery. It would provide an annual opportunity for me and my colleagues to once again wear this tangible evidence of a historic past, a worthy present, and a highly sustainable future.

Private Members' Business

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I am honoured to take part in the debate on Bill S-208, particularly because there are people in my riding, especially in Nunavik, who rely heavily on seals.

• (1905)

[*English*]

Over this past week, it has been obvious for us here in the south to feel the changes of spring returning to the land. For indigenous peoples, in our languages, the names marking the passage of time are interconnected with the environment and wildlife surrounding us. Our traditional cycles of yearly activities are closely tied to what the animals and plants are doing.

In Nunavik, for instance, this time of year is called *Tirilluliuti*, which is the season for bearded seals to have babies. How fitting that we are here at this time recognizing the importance of these animals to northern communities, as the member for Thornhill just said.

I would like to quote Sheila Watt-Cloutier, who comes from the community of Kuujjuaq in my riding. While writing about the social and cultural importance of the seal hunt, she said:

It's hard to describe the excitement that would flash through Kuujjuaq when word came that hunters were returning with a large harvest, like a seal.... Word spread from neighbour to neighbour, from house to house, and everyone headed to the home of the hunter.... Sitting or squatting on the floor, the men and women would begin to cut up the carcass with sharp knives or an *ulu*.... Everyone else, including the children, would sit circling the seal. Pieces of meat would be passed around...to eat.... The liver was one of my favourites. But the best moment was when we would [all] reach into the...seal and dip our hands, coating our scooped fingers with sweet, rich blood, which we licked off like honey.... Those precious moments, sitting on the floor with my grandmother and mother, my brothers and sister, my uncle and his family, and so many members of my community...were treasured times.

But the importance of country food to my community goes far beyond taste.... Country food is the fuel we need to thrive in the Arctic.

That passage comes from her book *The Right to be Cold*.

Besides her description of sharing with her community the product of a hunt, what I love about this memory is the message she teaches us, which is that Inuit need seal to thrive in the Arctic. Inuit hunt seals for food, clothing, and many other products, and they market the by-products of the sustainable hunt internationally today. Recognizing and honouring the Inuit seal harvest and products with legislation that would mark May 20 as national seal products day also recognizes and honours the traditional Inuit way of life.

Article 20 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the right to maintain and develop indigenous “political, economic and social systems or institutions, to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their traditional and other economic activities.” For many Inuit, this means a continuation of the seal hunt, and the diversification of traditional uses toward commercial markets and new products.

Colonizing society, organizations, and governments violates that inherent right when it attempts to place misinformed restrictions on seal products, restrictions that have caused immeasurable harm to

indigenous communities across the north. Inuit originally joined the commercial seal market due to pressures from colonization. They were herded into permanent settled communities and actively prevented from living traditional lifestyles. Sled dogs were shot by the RCMP. The Inuit people turned to the monetary economy to buy fuel for their snowmobiles and to survive.

The banning of products from the Inuit hunt caused economic devastation, and I can attest, personal humiliation among Inuit communities. The seal skin market is so important because it allows Inuit to maintain a piece of their traditional lifestyle, and in doing so, assert autonomy and control over their social systems.

Nunavik Creations is an example of the tremendous entrepreneurship in the north of my riding. The award-winning company employs Inuit women from various communities in Nunavik as seamstresses, designers, creative analysts, sample makers, pattern makers, and in administrative roles promoting Inuit culture through their unique garments.

Creating a day each year when all of Canada supports the inherent right that Inuit have to participate in the economy, take care of their families and communities, and thrive in this millennium would go a long way toward truth-telling and making amends for previous wrongs done to indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples, as stewards of their territories, have the obligation to care for the land and waters. For Inuit, the right to maintain and promote spiritual practices is closely connected to hunting seal. Throughout the Arctic, stories are told about an aquatic female character, sometimes called Sanna. She controls the sea mammals and determines the fate of surface dwellers. She is someone to beg when a hunter is hopeful, and someone to blame if a hunter fails. If we are to advance our understanding of Inuit-defined sovereignty, the first important entity we must recognize is the sea. In doing so, we must respect all Inuit practices connected to the sea and Sanna's children, the sea mammals.

The relationship between humans and seals, which has developed over thousands of years through precise observations while out on the sea ice waiting to harpoon a seal, while monitoring seal breathing holes, birthing dens, and migration patterns, is central to Inuit culture.

I am proud to stand in the House and say that I fully support Bill S-208, legislation that supports the inherent rights of the Inuit to maintain their social, cultural, political, and economic relationship to the seals, to Sanna, and to the sea.

Private Members' Business

●(1910)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe that the seal hunt is something people will have a better understanding of, in terms of what is being proposed, through education. As was pointed out by a Conservative member across the way, the designation of a day does not necessarily mean it is a holiday. However, it is a wonderful opportunity to ensure that there is a higher sense of education in terms of how important this industry is.

We often underestimate why the seal industry is so important. We can talk about heritage and the economic benefits. I would like to spend a little time on those issues but also bring a bit of a different perspective on how important seals are to the north.

I have had many discussions about wildlife, in particular about polar bears and how they are very much dependent on seals, so there is a wildlife element.

I want to go to the economic and heritage sides. When we look at the communities that have been dependent on the seal hunt, we can get a better appreciation of the remoteness of the industry and what the individuals who are engaged in the industry have to do to sustain themselves.

We often take things for granted, whether it is clothing or food or economic survival. In larger municipalities, or even in rural areas, we can find grocery stores and economic opportunities. Once we get to the more remote areas, it takes a great deal of effort. I made reference to Newfoundland and Labrador, but it affects more than one province.

My colleague made reference to populations of between six million and eight million, minus the one that was possibly killed a little earlier today by the polar bear, as was referenced. There is a healthy population of seals.

We can think of the economic benefits. Without that seal hunt, there would be many communities whose existence would be more challenged. For others, it is their livelihood. Often it provides a supplementary income. Many individuals will be involved not only in the seal hunt but in other aspects of our fishery industry.

It is something that is often driven by heritage. Over the years, indigenous people, and even some non-indigenous people, have taken to heart the importance of the industry and the heritage aspect of it. As has been pointed out, it is something that has been going on for literally hundreds of years.

●(1915)

I look at it in two ways. One is from the heritage point of view and the other is the economics.

I started off by talking about education. Often, whether it is motions or legislation that will ultimately designate a day, and often even a month, we want to recognize something of significance for Canada. That really is what we are debating today. Bill S-208 would designate May 20 as a day when we would show appreciation of the importance of the seal hunt and seals to our country.

There are different ways we can deal with those designations. It is really going to be driven by members across the way. The member for Thornhill talked about his tie. We have seen a number of members around the House wear the seal tie. If we talk to members such as the member for Thornhill, they will express a sense of pride in the tie, because it is a very symbolic yet very important gesture that supports the seal industry. I know there are members of the Liberal caucus who have the same sort of seal tie. I am not part of that club as of yet, but I recognize that there is a very high sense of pride in those seal products.

My colleague from Labrador has brought seal meat to the lobby on occasion. I have had the opportunity to try some. I thought it was different, but interesting. I understand there are different ways of cooking it. I would not hesitate to try it again, perhaps cooked a little differently. I understand some people even eat it in the raw form.

The point is that there are ways we can celebrate the importance of the industry. I would like to think that we could even look at ways we could take it into a classroom. We can imagine how a school trustee, an MLA, or a member of Parliament could look at ways to highlight what we believe are important issues to the communities that we represent, even though, as my colleague pointed out, we do not see many seals around Winnipeg North. However, I recognize what it is and the industry as a whole, and I would love to see some class time dedicated by a teacher who has taken an interest in the industry, because it is about education.

There has been misinformation. We have heard that throughout the debate from individuals who really are not necessarily thinking of the well-being of the industry as a whole but are approaching it with a bias. The bias is to stop the seal hunt, not appreciating the heritage and the fact that we have a healthy seal population. There is not only a role for us to recognize the history of the seal hunt and what is happening today, but as has been pointed out, there is also a promising future.

When we talk about the importance of recognizing a single day, I suggest we allow members to appreciate it and recognize it in many different ways, from bringing it into the classroom to debating the issues and bringing them up in future S. O. 31s here in the House to sharing our ideas with members of the media. As with many different industries throughout the country, we need to appreciate and value those industries that have really touched the hearts and souls of so many, not only today but throughout the years. In particular, I focus on how important it is for our indigenous communities in recognizing and supporting the very strong leadership that has come to the table on this particular issue.

●(1920)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, for the first time I find myself in violent agreement with the member for Winnipeg North. This is surely unprecedented. When I first saw the title of the bill, I thought we might be speaking about trained seals, which we have spoken a lot about in recent days, but instead, we are talking about actual seals. I would not want to insult seals by comparing them to any members of this House.

Private Members' Business

I want to thank my friend from Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame for bringing this motion forward. We have had a chance to get to know each other quite a bit in recent days with time spent at PROC. I have not always supported initiatives the member has brought forward, as he may recall from some of the brief comments I made at that committee. I am very pleased to be here to support this important proposal from a member who happens to be part of the government, but certainly this is something that all members of the House should be able to get behind. This is a common-sense proposal. It reflects a recognition of our heritage, but also real common-sense when it comes to appreciating what hunters do in this industry and in other industries across the country.

Really, this represents a coming together of Canadian voices in opposition to, sometimes, some of the misinformation that we hear, albeit from celebrities, and voices internationally who do not really understand what the seal hunt is all about, and do not really understand the realities of it. Sometimes, this happens on certain kinds of issues, environmental but other issues as well, where people get a specific image in their mind about it, and it is very hard to remove that image even if that image runs completely contrary to the facts and realities of the issues.

There are a lot of things that we and I think many members of this House know about the positive, effective management of seal products in this country, of seals as a resource, and yet, that information does not always get out there. Therefore, we have an opportunity, through this initiative, to start to push back against that misinformation, to have a vehicle for pushing back against that information.

In that context, I want to make a few comments here about what happens in this industry in general, and first to read a position statement. This is from 2012. It is a comment made by the WWF, the World Wildlife Federation. It said:

WWF recognizes that hunting seals is an important part of the local economy, culture and heritage of many coastal communities in Atlantic Canada, the Arctic, and many other maritime nations. Most importantly, from the perspective of a conservation organization such as ours, the harp seal population is at a near record high with more than 5 million individuals and current harvest practices pose no apparent threat.

This is pretty clear from a wildlife organization. It recognizes in that position statement that there are different points of view on this issue, perhaps within its own community, but members of the organization said that clearly it is not a management of the resource issue, and there is no danger to this population. Of course, all of us would recognize that when there is a danger to a population, a risk of endangerment or extinction, that needs to be managed in a completely different way, but that is not the case with this particular resource. Very clearly, there is no reason to be concerned with respect to that when that is very clearly the information and the evidence that we have, and that members have seen.

At the same time, we know, in terms of the hunting methods that are used, that there are humane methods. Recognizing the effective management of the resource and also the humane methods of hunting, there is not really a coherent basis on which to oppose this unless perhaps, as some people do, they take the view that all hunting and all killing of animals is somehow wrong or immoral. Certainly, there are some people who have that perspective, but

unless we go to that extreme, there is absolutely no reason to oppose the humane and environmentally effective and efficient, culturally, socially, and economically beneficial use of our seal resources.

• (1925)

In spite of what I have just presented and in spite of what we know to be these realities, we see these challenges come sometimes from people in Canada, but also internationally. It is important that we stand up to that. In 2009, for example, the European Union banned import and trade of seal products other than in cases of hunting by indigenous communities.

As Canada moves forward with our free trade agreement with Europe, certainly an important trade initiative, I hope we will be able to persuade our friends in Europe, recognizing the facts that I have identified, how much they could benefit from being able to import seal products that come from Canada.

Europe does not ban hunting. Europe does not ban livestock. People kill and eat animals in Europe as well as they do here. There is no consistent basis on which to have this limitation in place. I hope, coming forward from this motion, there will be international advocacy from our government's trade representatives around the importance of countries taking a consistent approach with respect to these issues at the very least.

Europe should not ban the importation of products from one kind of animal from one other country in a way that is not consistent with its own domestic approaches to the management and use of animals. There might be a spectrum of opinion philosophically with regard to what ways it is and is not appropriate to use animals, but those distinctions should be coherent. They should not be made on the basis of banning animals from a country that somehow would not apply that same standard in its own country.

As we talk about this legislative initiative, this is about having a national seal products day, and we support that. It is a positive step in recognition. We do this a lot in the House, especially around private members' business. We have these moments of recognition, where we all come together and affirm something that is important, whether it is a heritage month, a day of recognition, sometimes a week, sometimes simply a point of affirmation. These moments are important because they can provide an opportunity for awareness, for recognition, perhaps for particular communities to understand the affirmation and support they receive from legislators. These things are important.

However, it is not good enough to just stop at these points of recognition. If we have a national seal products day and then we close the file at that point, that certainly is not good enough. There is a need for ongoing advocacy, ongoing activities of recognition and to continue that dialogue domestically and internationally, and not shy away from that. Recognition alone does not have that much of an impact on the ground. It is really what we do after that, what we do with a particular day, how we proceed going forward. This is something that all members should take on board. It seems we will move forward with this and support it, so there should be constructive, clear action that comes out of this.

Routine Proceedings

Coming from Alberta, the seal industry is not particularly important for us. However, we deal with questions of weighing out environmental criticisms that may not always be based on fact. Perhaps a comparison would be some of the images of ducks from our oil sands. A couple of images get sent around the world and there is such misinformation that comes out of that. In reality, there are all kinds of reclamation activities that take place, when there are risks to birds associated with many energy alternatives such as wind farms, yet we see one image and people run with it. We sometimes see that happen with the seal issue. People look at one image and they draw conclusions from it without looking at the facts. This is an important proposal that calls for us to focus on the facts. Let us move forward on that basis.

• (1930)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(2), the motion to concur in the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, recommendation not to proceed further with Bill C-226, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (offences in relation to conveyances) and the Criminal Records Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, presented on Thursday, March 9, is deemed moved.

• (1935)

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor.

I would like to remind everyone tuning in that the bill we are debating today takes aim at repeat offenders and the leading criminal cause of death: drunk driving. I would like to point out that Parliament has brought the bill to second reading.

Today, I would like the House to vote on sending this bill back to committee so that it can continue its work for one simple reason. This bill gives us three ways to reduce the number of traffic accidents caused by drunk driving.

First, the bill brings in minimum sentences for drunk drivers who repeatedly cause fatal accidents. Sadly, there have been several such incidents lately. Second, it will prevent the courts from getting bogged down in cases that go on forever because people invoke irrelevant provisions. The third is very important because it has to do with a measure that Canada should have adopted a long time ago: routine screening. This measure was introduced in Finland in 1977, more than 40 years ago, so Canada is lagging far behind. After it went into effect, the number of impaired drivers dropped by 58%.

In Ireland, where this measure was introduced around the same time, the number of fatalities dropped by 19%. This means that this measure works. It is based on scientific evidence. Many countries, including France, Switzerland, Finland, and New Zealand, have adopted this measure, as have most European countries and Australia. This is a remedial measure that we must take, because impaired driving is the leading cause of death in this country.

This measure allows a police officer to screen for the blood alcohol level of someone behind the wheel. Of course, no one is going into people's dining rooms or bedrooms, just public places. When one is driving, one has certain responsibilities: having a driver's licence, obeying the rules of the road, and abstaining from alcohol. As Senator Boisvenu said, when someone drives while under the influence, it is as though he or she has a gun and could fire at any second. It is the same thing.

As parliamentarians, we have a duty to introduce legislation that will save lives. I was lucky enough to appear before the committee with representatives of victims associations, including Families For Justice and MADD, or Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

[English]

All of them are supportive of this measure, as well as security and safety groups. Some people in the House have personally experienced the horror of impaired driving and we have an opportunity as parliamentarians to reduce the number of deaths in the country related to impaired driving.

[Translation]

I am asking for a recorded division and for the three parties in the House to ask the committee to continue its important work. This bill was crafted with great care.

Now, without further delay, I will table three documents. The first is in response to the comment made in committee that there is no legal basis for the bill. This is the legal opinion of one of the leading authorities on the Canadian constitution, Peter W. Hogg, who wrote the two-volume *Constitutional Law of Canada*, which is in its fifth edition, and who also serves as a constitutional adviser. I will quote the conclusion by Mr. Hogg. By the way, this letter can be downloaded from my website.

[English]

“My opinion is that, if the Criminal Code were amended by Parliament to replace breath testing on reasonable suspicion with random breath testing, the amendment would be constitutional.” Let us say this clearly and loudly. This amendment is constitutional and is saving lives.

It is important for members to look at this clearly. I want members of the committee to invite the constitutionalists to hear for themselves that this is sound legislation that will save lives.

In the very last line he says, “I am confident that a constitutional challenge would be unsuccessful and that random breath testing would be upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada.” We do not need to be lawyers to know that this law would pass the constitutional test, and as I said earlier, would save lives.

Routine Proceedings

The most important thing we can do as parliamentarians in the House is to make laws that are legal and can save lives. We have a choice that is clear. There are victims, there are families of victims, there are criminals, and there are people who are addicted to alcohol. The choice is clear. We have a bill that will save lives and it is constitutional. This is the first document I table.

I have a second document to table and this is a letter written from the member for Papineau. This letter talks about a bill that has mandatory minimum sentences for drunk drivers. He says, "That bill will increase penalties against anyone who drives while severely intoxicated, and will also increase the penalties for impaired driving causing death". What is the member for Papineau saying? He is saying that this is a heartbreaking story. He says, "I will also be supporting Bill C-590", which was tabled by one of my colleagues, "a second private member's bill coming before the Justice Committee".

Who is the member for Papineau? The Prime Minister of our country. One of the pillar's of this legislation is mandatory random breath testing, mandatory minimum sentences, supported by the Prime Minister of our country, and streamlining the judicial process at a time when justice delayed is justice denied.

This legislation would bring those important issues forward. It has been prepared with the help of officials in the justice department, who have put their hearts and souls into drafting the bill.

We as parliamentarians have the responsibility to go thoroughly through every clause of the bill. The committee should send it back to the House so we can vote on it with our conscience. That is the second document I am tabling.

Now I have a third document to table. I have been working on this bill with families, justice officials and my colleagues from beautiful Abbotsford and Langley. How many lives will have to be taken so that we as parliamentarians enact legislation that can save lives?

This third document is a picture of a young woman who lost her life.

• (1940)

[*Translation*]

I am tabling in the House a photograph of Kassandra Kaulius.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would like to remind the member that he cannot use props in the House. I know that it is a photograph and that this is a very personal issue. The member was a minister previously and knows that he is not supposed to do that in the House. He can talk about it, but he cannot show the object in question.

[*English*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: I am going to table the picture, Madam Speaker. You should know that I have permission from the family. I had the privilege to stand in front of the committee with the mother of this young woman who lost her life. How many other lives will have to be taken before this Parliament stops its partisan politics and starts to stand up for victims? The bill is about that.

I happen to be a Conservative but this bill is for all Canadians. As a private member's bill, members of the House have the

responsibility and the privilege to stand and say whether they are in favour of saving lives with robust legislation or to just let Canadian lives be lost because we do not enact legislation that we know, on both a scientific and legislative basis, is sound policy.

I ask for a vote so the committee can finish the work it has to do for all Canadians.

• (1945)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the documents?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Since there is no unanimous consent, the documents cannot be tabled.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but I have here a legal opinion, a letter from the Prime Minister of Canada, and a photo of a young victim of drinking and driving. I am asking the House again, so that my colleagues do not look like a bunch of morons, whether I can table these—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. Unanimous consent was sought and denied. By doing what he just did, the member is continuing debate. He does not have unanimous consent to table the documents. I can ask the question a second time.

Does the member have the unanimous consent of the House to table documents?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but there is no unanimous consent.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to join the debate on the motion related to private member's Bill C-226.

I would like to begin, first of all, by acknowledging the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for his efforts, his passion, and his commitment to this important public safety issue.

I also wish to acknowledge the eighth report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, which recommended that Bill C-226 not proceed further. It also recommended that our government introduce robust legislative measures to reduce the incidence of impaired driving at its earliest opportunity.

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Bill C-226 is an ambitious proposal that seeks fundamental reform not only to the impaired driving provisions of the Criminal Code but other transportation-related provisions of the code as well. Although the standing committee was not opposed to the intent of the bill, it had concerns that I share with some of the elements of the proposed bill. As the committee noted in its report:

The Committee recognizes that impaired driving, either by drugs or alcohol, is a serious issue in need of robust and comprehensive federal action. The Committee recognizes the crucial need to support victims and public safety officers in these cases, and to do so in a way that appropriately balances the public safety of Canadians with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I believe all members would support that statement. Impaired driving continues to be the leading cause of criminal death in Canada. In 2015 alone, there were 72,039 alcohol- or drug-impaired driving incidents reported by the police. In 2013, 480 Canadians died needlessly in accidents involving a drinking driver. In that same year, 31% of fatally injured drivers had been drinking, and 76% of those were over the legal limit. In addition, we know that it is our youth, those aged 20 to 24, who show the highest rates of impaired driving.

In my view, this bill includes a number of excellent measures aimed at addressing these concerns. For instance, the bill seeks to modernize and simplify the language and structure of this complex area of the law. Impaired driving cases are the most litigated provisions of the Criminal Code, and they take up a substantial portion of trial court time. Reducing the complexity of the impaired driving laws would make a substantial contribution to freeing up court time and reducing delays, which is a continuing priority for our government.

In addition, the bill clarifies what the crown is required to disclose to the defence for the purposes of proving a driver's blood alcohol concentration. It also proposes to simplify how blood alcohol concentration is proven. These elements would further contribute to efficiencies in our criminal justice system.

In addition, Bill C-226 proposes to remove the bolus drinking defence, also known as the "drink and dash" defence. Bolus drinking is a reckless practice where a person consumes alcohol, quickly drives to another destination, and then argues he was not impaired while he was actually behind the wheel. The Supreme Court of Canada has commented negatively on the validity of this defence, and I agree that this type of irresponsible behaviour should be eradicated. Legislation on this point could eliminate needless litigation and, again, improve the efficiency of our courts.

In spite of the bill's very positive elements, I nevertheless am compelled to support this motion not to proceed for several reasons.

On June 9, 2016, during second reading debate, I raised a number of concerns with the proposed legislation. First, I have serious concerns with the new and higher mandatory minimum penalties proposed in the bill. In particular, I would draw members' attention to the proposed five-year mandatory term of imprisonment for impaired driving causing death, which can raise serious charter concerns. As members may already be aware, the Minister of Justice has indicated her intention to bring forward reforms to the area of mandatory minimum penalties in the very near future.

Also on June 9, I raised concerns with the proposed mandatory consecutive sentencing provisions in the private member's bill.

Both of those issues are problematic from a policy and charter perspective, yet remain in the bill. I maintain the view that these provisions cannot be supported.

In addition, since the introduction of this bill in February 2016, there have been a number of intervening events that impact on the criminal justice system, which necessitates further analysis.

The June 2016 Supreme Court of Canada decision in Jordan highlighted the need for a thoughtful examination of the efficiency and efficacy of the criminal justice system. In the impaired driving context, the provinces and territories have raised very serious concerns with some of the measures contained in Bill C-226, particularly that a reform of this magnitude could create significant trial delays and invite unnecessary litigation if it were not supported by a robust parliamentary record.

• (1950)

Unlike during the private member's bill process, the parliamentary record for a government initiative would far more effectively articulate some of the policy and charter rationale of the proposed measures.

Another intervening event since the introduction of Bill C-226 was our government's timeline to introduce legislation to legalize cannabis in the spring of 2017. In its election platform, our government also committed to stronger laws to punish those who drive under the influence of cannabis.

There are elements in Bill C-226 that address the current drug-impaired driving framework, such as the presumption to better link the existing drug recognition evaluation with the observed signs of impairment. It also includes a provision to codify the Supreme Court of Canada's recent decision in Bingley, which held that a specially trained drug recognition officer does not need to be specifically qualified to give expert opinion in a trial. This would be better placed, in my opinion, in a comprehensive government-led drug-impaired driving initiative.

Finally, a reform of this nature would have substantial implications for the provinces and territories, as they are responsible for the administration of justice. I understand that some provinces have expressed very serious concerns about how the reforms proposed in Bill C-226 would work in practice. For example, some provinces have raised concerns with a very short coming into force date, given that these reforms would require amendments to provincial legislation and in some cases new or modified information technology systems. It is essential that provincial concerns be considered, as the provinces are responsible for enforcing the Criminal Code.

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In light of all of these circumstances, I am pleased to reaffirm that the Minister of Justice intends to introduce legislation this spring that will carefully address both drug- and alcohol-impaired driving. The new legislation will take a thorough, comprehensive, and strategic approach, having regard to the minister's overall mandate with respect to criminal justice reform. In this way, our government is working to keep our communities safe, protect victims, and hold offenders to account.

Taking into account the recommendation produced by the standing committee, as well as our government's plans to address impaired driving in upcoming legislation, I will be voting in support of the motion not to proceed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again the member who sponsored Bill C-226 by bringing forward what I believe to be a very well-intentioned private member's bill. This area of law is highly complex, and I agree completely with him that it is deeply in need of reform. The past few decades have seen impaired driving provisions modified in a piecemeal fashion, and overwhelmingly a more comprehensive approach is required.

I would also like to thank the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security for its thoughtful and thorough consideration of the bill. Its members heard from numerous expert witnesses and carefully analyzed the evidence placed before them. Their dedication and concern for striking the right balance between charter rights and improving the safety of our roads is to be highly commended.

In conclusion, I will be voting in support of this motion, but I sincerely look forward to further discussions in the area of impaired driving with all members in this House, including drug-impaired driving, as our government moves forward with a comprehensive response on this important issue.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to speak about a matter that impacts thousands of Canadians every year. Alcohol impaired driving is an issue with devastating effects, and despite the overall decline in impaired driving rates over the past 30 years, drunk driving remains among the leading criminal causes of death in our country.

We can all agree on the need to decrease the number of drunk drivers on our roads and the devastation they cause, so I commend my colleague from Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for the good intentions, I believe, that underlie his bill. However, legislation addressing impaired driving must strike a balance between public safety on the one hand and our precious charter rights on the other. In my opinion, Bill C-226 tips the scale in the wrong direction.

Because Bill C-226 was submitted as a private member's bill, it did not have the kind of scrutiny that is provided by Department of Justice counsels. It did not have the constitutional review that normally occurs. As a result, it contains certain aspects that I do not believe would pass constitutional muster. I understand that view is shared by the committee that studied this bill earlier.

I will be speaking about its provisions for random breath testing, a practice with immense potential for abuse. I will also discuss the bill's excessively punitive mandatory minimum sentencing provisions.

Bill C-226 is an excessively reactive bill. It focuses on penalties as opposed to prevention. As such, it has a very limited scope for addressing impaired driving, and should not pass through the House.

Currently, under provincial laws, police are able to stop any vehicle on the road to check licencing and insurance. They cannot, however, request a breath sample unless they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the driver has alcohol in his or her body. Bill C-226 would introduce random breath testing to these stops, allowing police to ask any driver, at any time, to provide a breath sample at the side of the road. Simply put, this policy of random testing raises several significant constitutional issues.

Ms. Abby Deshman of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association testified at committee that random breath testing is an unjustifiable violation of section 8, arbitrary search and seizure, and section 9, arbitrary detention, of the charter.

We must also consider the strong precedent for policies of random selection to disproportionately affect visible minorities, including indigenous Canadians. My friend, Ms. Micheal Vonn of the BC Civil Liberties Association stated that there is considerable evidence in Canada of discriminatory policing, particularly based on race.

The disproportionate arrest and charging of visible minorities for cannabis offences demonstrates this point, and this fact alone should be grounds to reassess random breath testing as a just means of addressing the scourge of impaired driving.

The second point I wish to raise concerns the use of mandatory minimum penalties. Bill C-226 follows in the footsteps of the last government's failed tradition of mandatory minimums, which have high economic costs for the accused, the courts, and by extension, Canadian taxpayers. Mandatory minimums place undue burdens on the correctional system, clogging it with time-consuming cases that, due to minimum sentencing laws, result in excessive sentences. Bill C-226 would significantly increase both maximum and minimum penalties, as well as intensify sentences for repeat offenders.

However, one of the most troubling aspects concerns cases that involve multiple losses of life, where a judge could apply consecutive sentences, which would have a compounding effect. This means, for example, that with a mandatory minimum of five years for impaired driving causing death, one accident that tragically results in the deaths of more than one person would result in 10, 15, 20, or more years of mandatory jail time.

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•(1955)

A sentence like this leaves little opportunity for rehabilitation or second chances. We need to recognize that these harsh policies do not increase public safety, they only put accused persons at increased risk of injustice. It has been proven time and time again that mandatory minimums simply do not lower the incentive for criminal activity, nor do they reduce crime rates. Harsher penalties are a reactive approach that do little to deter future criminal activities. They devalue the principles of judicial discretion, and force our judges to hand down costly and ineffective sentences that remove the opportunity for their independent thought that we expect of our judiciary.

Mandatory minimums fail to provide deterrents for crime, and instead sacrifice fairness and proportionality in favour of a one size fits all approach for our criminal justice system. This approach simply is ineffective. Abby Deshman went so far as to call it a failed public policy experiment. Under the Harper government, which championed mandatory minimums, there was actually an increase in impaired driving rates. Instead of focusing on longer sentences and measuring progress by how many years people serve in jail, we should concentrate on smarter deterrents and judge success through prevention instead of simply punishment.

Future legislation should consider options such as introducing a mandatory alcohol ignition interlock device in vehicles which would be a proactive solution to prevent drunk drivers from getting on the road in the first place. Legislation to reduce rates of impaired driving is greatly needed, but Bill C-226 takes the wrong approach.

We are now mere days away from the introduction of legislation to legalize cannabis. While alcohol impaired driving rates have been steadily decreasing over the past few decades, drug impaired driving is a growing issue across our country, and one that must be addressed as we take steps toward legalizing cannabis. The onus is now on the government to introduce comprehensive legislation addressing drug and alcohol impaired driving in a just manner. We need to look forward, through this legislation, to the most effective means of preventing impaired driving instead of a backward, and at best, punishing manner to deal with this problem.

As we parliamentarians have the responsibility to hold each bill that passes through the House up to the same rigorous standards, it is my judgment that Bill C-226 falls well short of the mark. I hope we can all agree to take an alternative approach to address impaired driving, and not proceed further with this bill.

•(2000)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was not planning on speaking tonight, but after hearing the words of the parliamentary secretary, I felt it was necessary to respond to some of the things that were said.

I am very pleased to be supporting this initiative by my colleague. I spoke in favour of it at second reading. The arguments that are being used against this bill so badly miss the mark and yet more subtly reveal a very troubling attitude of the government and, unfortunately in this case even the NDP, toward private members' business and toward the way in which we should work together in this House.

It has been pointed out that this bill would make substantial changes to our legal framework. Well, I would like to see more private members' bills that make substantive changes. We have a lot of private members' bills that simply recognize things without changing laws, and that is okay, but let us celebrate the fact that a colleague actually took the time to have detailed legislation. That is what private members' business is for. It is the one avenue where individual members of Parliament can put their ideas before the House that reflect things that they are hearing.

It is not sufficient for a parliamentary secretary to say that this is complex so we need a government-led initiative. We are here representing our constituents. Individual members should use this channel for important, substantial proposals, and it is just not good enough to dismiss it that way. If the Liberals do not like it, they should argue against the substance of it, not simply say that they are going to come up with a government-led initiative later on. This is just disgusting, divisive partisanship. Members should argue against the bill if they do not like it, but they should not dismiss it on that basis.

The parliamentary secretary went through and identified all of the different positive aspects of this legislation without seeming to appreciate the fact that he could have proposed substantive amendments to the legislation, rather than just proposing that it be dismissed in its entirety.

Members of the government and of the NDP have argued against higher mandatory minimums. I only have 10 minutes, so I am not going to go into the mandatory minimums debate. I know it is a complex one. It speaks to deeper philosophical ideas about criminal justice, and yes, that is something addressed in this bill, but there is a critical part of this bill which is mandatory screening that is so important, that we know will save lives. If the government members have an issue with the mandatory minimums section, they could have proposed an amendment in committee, or they could propose a report stage amendment to strike the relevant clauses, but let us have the discussion. Let us move forward on mandatory screening.

Let us remember that this is something that was supported in a previous Parliament by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. It recommended mandatory screening because that committee was able to, through its study, identify that this is an initiative that saves lives. We know that mandatory screening would save lives. We have seen the evidence from a wide variety of jurisdictions. This has been studied by various committees. Now let us move forward with this because we know the impact that it would have.

Going through the arguments that we have heard, it is unbelievable to me. The government said that the process for a government bill involves a more robust parliamentary record and this requires the involvement of government lawyers. There is the opportunity for all kinds of different people to provide that same kind of evidence through the parliamentary process envisioned and created by a private member's bill.

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Let us remember also that the member proposing this is a former public safety minister. He is not somebody who is new to this House, although if he were, I still would say the member has a right to bring forward substantive legislation. He is a member who has experience in this area, who has worked with bureaucrats and public servants on these issues. He has more experience in cabinet and more experience directly being responsible for these files than the parliamentary secretary has, who denounced this bill with his mealy-mouthed bureaucratic words that do not actually deal with the substance of the legislation. Let us actually dig into this discussion. Let us actually talk about the bill and let us move it forward.

The best thing the government can come up with are these small, around-the-edges arguments, such as the coming-into-force date is too soon. Well, change the coming-into-force date if that is such a big problem. We are talking about legislation that all the evidence shows will save hundreds of lives. If the government's problem is the coming-into-force date and that is its basis for wanting to tear up an opposition private member's bill, I do not think that is the real reason. What we heard from the parliamentary secretary is that the Liberals are going to have a government-led initiative later on. If this is about taking the political credit for it, then this makes sense from the Liberals' way of thinking. They want to throw out an opposition bill so that they can bring forward government legislation. I do not care who gets the credit for this bill; let us just get it done.

• (2005)

The government has not proposed any legislation yet. If it was in such a hurry on this, if it thought mandatory screening was a good idea, it should have proposed legislation by now. If not, let us move forward with this bill. Let us expedite this bill. We will give the Liberals full credit for supporting this bill if they do the right thing. It is not about who gets the credit. This is too important. It does not matter if it is a government-led initiative or an initiative led by a private member. This is something that needs to get done, because it is going to save lives.

We heard an argument from the NDP that I want to address. My friend from Victoria expressed the concern that added police powers may have a negative impact on minority communities. These are concerns that need to be considered and taken seriously, but there is absolutely nothing about mandatory screening that in any way fundamentally affects those concerns one way or the other. There is the concern now of the possibility of profiling. There will also be a concern afterward about the possibility of profiling, but I would argue that we are better off, even on that score, under this legislation.

Right now, a person can only be legally asked for a Breathalyzer if an officer has a certain degree of suspicion. Is there a worry that certain perceptions, certain negative stereotypes, might inform whether officers think they have probable cause? There is that possibility, but if there is mandatory screening, and everyone who goes through a checkstop is screened, that actually creates a much greater level of equality. That creates an equal playing field. Notwithstanding the importance of those concerns and the need to discuss them in an ongoing way, this bill is actually a positive step with respect to those things. In any event, it certainly does not make things worse. Yes, we need to talk about concerns about profiling, but there is no way in which Bill C-226 changes those dynamics whatsoever.

These are just fundamentally bad arguments we are hearing from the other side, not just arguments I disagree with but poorly formed arguments that talk about issues that are completely unrelated to the substance of the issue. That the parliamentary secretary says the things he says is dismissive of the role of private members, of the legitimate channel of private members' business, and of the real experience of this private member, who is a former public safety minister. He understands these issues. The parliamentary secretary clearly is either not understanding the issues or is glued to talking points he has been given by the minister.

We have to move forward. Again, I do not care who takes the credit here. This is about lives. If there is a government-led initiative, it should have proposed it by now, and if there is not, let us move forward with a piece of legislation that is already on the table. Let us have a vote. I call on members of the government. Clearly, the cabinet members are not going to change their minds, but members of the government, members who have exercised their legitimate rights and independence before, have this opportunity to stand up for the legitimacy of using private members' business to make substantive legislative changes but also to stand up for a simple initiative that is constitutional. Peter Hogg says it is constitutional. It is effective, it is efficient, and we know it will save lives. When this measure comes to a vote, it is up to those members to decide whether we take the action we need to take or not, because lives will depend on how those members vote.

• (2010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since I am the one who moved the motion before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security recommending that the House not continue the study of Bill C-226, I would like to submit my arguments to the House out of respect for my colleague, the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, and to inform the House of the debate that took place in committee.

Driving while under the influence of either drugs or alcohol is a serious problem. Road crash victims and public safety officers need our support. The provisions on impaired driving are the most frequently challenged provisions of the Criminal Code. We therefore need a robust and comprehensive plan to strike a balance between public safety and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The intent of Bill C-226 is very commendable. However, the bill's legal problems heavily outweigh its potential benefits. I want to talk about three problems with this bill.

First, there was the minimum sentences. The only group of witnesses who supports this measure in the bill is the group that helped the hon. member draft it. The other group that contributed to drafting the bill, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, testified against minimum sentences during review in committee. I would like to quote what some of the witnesses had to say about minimum sentences.

Andrew Murie, Chief Executive Officer at the National Office of Mothers Against Drunk Driving said:

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We also base our whole organization on evidence and policy. We can't find any deterrent effect for minimum mandatory penalties. That's one. The other issue is that in our legal analysis we don't believe it would withstand a charter challenge.

Michael Spratt, from the Criminal Lawyers' Association, said, "there are sections of the bill that are unquestionably unconstitutional".

Abby Deshman, from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, said the following:

First, simply put, mandatory minimum sentences do not work. They are ineffective and unjust. Decades of research has clearly shown that stiffer penalties do not deter crime.

Lastly, Micheal Vonn, from the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, who was quoted by members across the way, said the following:

While failing to provide a benefit in deterrence, mandatory minimums create significant risk of harm. These include excessively punitive and unfair sentences....

The second problem is random breath testing, the centrepiece of this bill. There are two problems with this measure. We have no clear sense of what good it would do, and it, too, presents a constitutional risk. In most places where random breath testing has been introduced, there were few or no legislative measures to combat drunk driving beforehand. That was the case in Australia and Ireland, two countries that are mentioned frequently in random breath testing studies.

Here in Canada, we already have a system in place to combat drunk driving. We have all been stopped at roadblocks, and there is a legal framework in place for the use of Breathalyzers. That is why studies of the benefits of random breath testing are not really valid in the Canadian context. We do not know if this bill will have the intended effect because there are no studies that look into implementing random testing in places that already have measures to combat drunk driving.

In addition, what we need to remember about the studies in Australia and Ireland and the success of random breath testing is that it must be paired with a major education and awareness campaign. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the bill to address education and awareness.

One of the constitutional problems related to random breath testing is that it is not truly random. It is being referred to as "random" only because the word appears in one of the bill's headings. That same mistake was made in the Australian legislation, and we need to avoid repeating it here in Canada.

In fact, under the proposed system, police officers would have the power to stop anyone on the road and subject them to testing. I have a great deal of respect for our law enforcement bodies, but near-absolute power such as this only invites abuse. We need to find a real solution, testing that really would be random. For instance, one out of every ten vehicles could be selected, or a binary light system could be used that would translate into a truly random, and also potentially more dissuasive, measure.

Lastly, I want to comment on support for victims. The third reason we recommend not sending this bill to committee is that it contains nothing for victims.

● (2015)

δWe heard one truly heartbreaking testimony during the course of our study. I want to thank Sheri Arsenault and Markita Kaulius from Families for Justice and Patricia Hynes-Coates from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, who testified in committee. All three lost people near and dear to them to traffic accidents.

Ms. Arsenault, director of the Alberta chapter of Families for Justice, said:

Someone over there said that victims are given so little consideration, and that is very true. Offenders have every right in the world. They have a right to an expert defence. They have a right to appeal. The victim has one right. My one right is to prepare a victim impact statement and present it.

My colleague from Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel has very personal experience with this. I would like to take this moment to commend his daughters who, on behalf of the Government of Quebec, chair public consultations on road safety. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the bill to help the victims. I think it would have been useful to include measures against the phenomena of victimization during court testimony, for example.

In closing, since it was introduced as a private member's bill, it was not subject to the Department of Justice's examination under the Department of Justice Act in order to determine if it is consistent with the charter. The members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security would have liked to have had the chance to read the opinion on the constitutionality of Bill C-73, the version of the bill introduced when the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis was still the minister, but we were not able to access it.

Furthermore, with the exception of random breath testing, representatives of MADD told the committee that even if all these measures were found to be valid under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, they would not have much of an impact on impaired driving and the resulting collisions, deaths, and injuries.

For all these reasons, I encourage the members to support the committee's report and not proceed further with the study of this bill.

Nevertheless, I would like to draw members' attention to one part of the report that we tabled. Even though we are proposing not to proceed with the study of Bill C-226, we recommend that the government introduce solid legislative measures in order to reduce the prevalence of impaired driving as quickly as possible.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to an order made on Monday, April 3, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 3, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (2020)

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise again on the issue of pipeline capacity in Canada. I asked this question way back in November, after the government had gone with its Goldilocks approach to approving one pipeline and denying another in the northern gateway pipeline.

That was the question I asked. The Prime Minister, in his comments at the press conference where he killed northern gateway, said that he would not accept any political arguments against the Trans Mountain pipeline, which was approved, but then based entirely on political arguments, he killed the northern gateway pipeline and the thousands of jobs that would have gone along with it. Why was the regulatory process that was so good for the Trans Mountain pipeline that allowed the government to approve it, so bad for northern gateway? Why did the government kill that pipeline and the thousands of the jobs that would have gone along with it?

Since that time, we have seen a degradation of the investment climate in the country, certainly in the energy sector. An article in the *Calgary Herald* on March 31 stated:

ConocoPhillips' \$17.7 billion selloff of most of its Canadian business to Cenovus Energy Inc. accelerates the Canadianization of the oilsands. This isn't an international retreat any more, it is a vote of non-confidence in Canadian energy versus other opportunities.

It went on to say:

It was not the intention of Canadian policy makers to scare off so much foreign capital, yet they wear a big part of the blame because they made it harder to get anything done in the oilsands, by stretching out pipeline reviews, imposing carbon taxes, capping oilsands development.

That is exactly what has happened. We have seen a flight of foreign capital, foreign investment, from the oil sands just in the last number of weeks. Major companies like Statoil, Shell, and

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ConocoPhillips have abandoned the Canadian oil sands to the tune of tens of billions of dollars.

What does that mean? That means the recovery in the oil sands is more difficult. That means the hundreds of thousands of out-of-work energy workers are going to find it harder to get jobs in the energy sector in Alberta. We have seen again in the budget, which has been tabled since the question was asked, that the government went out of its way to kick the energy sector when it was down. It went out of its way to eliminate important incentives for oil and gas exploration. It went out of its way to kill exploration tax credits which helped drilling companies expand and hire Canadian workers. That is what this is all about, getting Canadian workers back on the job.

This decision to kill the northern gateway pipeline was not based on evidence, was not based on science, and was not based on anything other than the government's political ideology.

I hope we will not hear the same prepared talking points about all that the Liberals have done in one year compared to the previous government. They have done nothing but issue a press release. They have not built a single metre of pipeline on the Trans Mountain or Line 3 pipelines. I hope the prepared talking points from the parliamentary secretary will not simply repeat those talking points, but will say why the government killed the northern gateway pipeline and all the jobs that went along with it.

• (2025)

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House once again to debate these important issues with my colleagues, particularly the member for Chilliwack—Hope, natural resources critic for the official opposition.

However, I am surprised by the position of the member opposite. After all, we are acting, doing more in one year than the previous government did in a decade: protecting our oceans, pricing carbon pollution, and putting middle-class Canadians back to work by approving the pipelines we need to reach those new markets.

In November of last year, we announced our government's balanced approach to new pipelines. We approved the Trans Mountain expansion and Line 3 replacement pipelines, creating thousands of jobs, with almost 200 binding conditions to protect the environment.

We rejected the northern gateway project, and we announced a moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic along the northwest coast of B.C., and took action to protect our oceans. Our decisions were based on science, extensive consultations with Indigenous communities, and the best interests of Canadians. Decisions that balanced strong environmental protection will create thousands of good paying jobs and will help get our resources to market.

However, since our announcement, the official opposition has been erratic with its response. For example, compare what the member opposite has said to what his leader said after we announced our pipeline decisions. The response of the leader of the official opposition? She said that she did not feel optimistic. Why?

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The first reason she gave was the 157 binding conditions attached to the approval of the Trans Mountain expansion, conditions designed to, among other things, ensure we protected our environment. She did not explain her cause for pessimism. Perhaps she does not support protecting the environment and our coastlines, or perhaps the party opposite thinks 157 conditions to protect the environment is too onerous for a pipeline operator.

Whatever the concern, it just does not square with the fact that the previous government imposed 202 conditions on the northern gateway project. The only members in this House who are not opposed to the northern gateway project are those seated immediately around the member for Chilliwack—Hope. Those members had their chance to build pipelines to tidewater but simply could not get it done.

The Federal Court of Appeal ruled against the northern gateway project because it found the previous government, his government, failed in its responsibility, in its duty, to consult Indigenous communities on the project.

As we have said time and time again, the Great Bear Rainforest is no place for a pipeline, and the Douglas Channel is no place for crude oil tankers. Those environmental concerns were central to our decisions, as were the findings of the ministerial panel report, the views of Indigenous communities and those of other Canadians.

Our government concluded the project was likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects that could not be justified. It was a good decision, a well-reasoned decision, and the right decision.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Madam Speaker, obviously the prepared remarks were too good to pass up. The 157 conditions the member spoke about and was so proud about were actually imposed by the National Energy Board when we were in government, and they embraced them wholeheartedly. Therefore, of course we supported that.

We also supported 31 aboriginal equity partners. They supported the northern gateway project because for the first time in Canadian history, they had secured an equity position in the pipeline, a 30% equity position that would bring \$2 billion to their communities. What did the Liberals do? They threw it all away.

In an Order Paper question, I asked, “Did you consult with those 31 aboriginal equity partners?”. The Liberals said no, that they did not have to. They only talk to people when they want them to know. Therefore, when there are \$2 billion for aboriginal communities on the table, the Liberals tear it out of their hands without a word of consultation. They should be ashamed of that decision.

Ms. Kim Rudd: Madam Speaker, our government is taking action to create the prosperity we seek while helping to protect the environment we cherish.

After the Conservatives' mandate of idle talk and empty promises, our government is making real progress. The Trans Mountain expansion and the Line 3 replacement pipelines will create 22,000 new jobs during their construction, and 440 ongoing jobs to operate them, good, well-paying jobs for Canadians.

We are protecting the Great Bear Rainforest, which is the world's largest intact temperate rainforest.

This is the sound decision-making Canadians want, a balanced approach that ensures Canada's energy industry remains a source of good, middle-class jobs, while continuing to tackle climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Canadians can be proud of the leadership role our government is taking. In fact, it is just what they elected us to do.

● (2030)

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today about the dynamic, entrepreneurial culture we enjoy here in Canada. Small business is the real economic driver in our country. More than three-quarters of all new jobs across this land are created by small business. In fact, more than one-third of the GDP in our country comes from small business. One would think that with that kind of economic impact on our country, the government would listen to small business.

Small business owners have been asking the government to reduce and regulate credit card merchant fees. Why? It is because credit card merchant fees in Canada are among the highest in the world. Only the United States pays more. Other countries, such as Australia and the U.K., have regulated credit card merchant fees because they recognize that small business needs government support.

In 2013 the Competition Tribunal of Canada ruled that the fees charged by credit card companies were excessive, and the tribunal called on the government to regulate the industry. What is the government doing? The Liberal member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles introduced a private member's bill that would empower the Minister of Finance to limit credit card merchant fees, but the government keeps delaying debate on the bill. In fact, it is now eight times that debate on Bill C-236 has moved.

When I raised this issue in question period, the Minister of Finance said: “The previous government put in place an agreement with the credit card companies that we have reviewed. It appears to be working.” It is clear from his response that the minister and his Liberal government have no intention of bringing fairness and transparency to the payments industry in Canada.

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Each month, small business owners review their credit card statements from the bank to see how much money they paid the bank for credit card transactions. Meanwhile, banks are enjoying record profits. This March the Bank of Montreal said it had made about \$1.5 billion in the first quarter. Royal Bank profit is up 24%, at \$3 billion, and CIBC profits were up 13%. Banks also compound the impact of merchant fees by relentlessly pushing consumers to use credit cards for their everyday purchases, enticing consumers with offers of double and triple reward points. Perhaps the Minister of Finance was referring to the banks when he said credit card merchant fees are working.

These merchant fees raise the price of goods for consumers and prevent small businesses from growing and creating jobs. Instead of paying these exorbitant fees, small business owners could and would use that money to pay higher wages and invest in innovation and recapitalization. The evidence is clear: credit card merchant fees are too high in Canada.

I urge the government to immediately move to cap credit card merchant fees to a reasonable rate. We must protect our small retailers. I will continue to press the government to live up to that responsibility.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from Courtenay—Alberni for his excellent question.

The government is making smart, necessary investments that will strengthen and support the middle class and those working hard to join it. As part of that support, we are guaranteeing a fair and competitive marketplace for merchants and consumers. Trust in the soundness and smooth operation of the financial industry is crucial to ensuring that the economy runs smoothly for middle-class Canadians. Canadians expect their government to review and monitor the financial sector so that it remains stable, efficient, and attuned to their changing needs.

• (2035)

[*English*]

To that end, one of the steps that our government has taken is on credit card fees.

In November 2014, Visa and MasterCard made separate and voluntary commitments to reduce their fees which are known in this industry as interchange fees. Interchange fees influence the cost of credit card acceptance for merchants. The commitments made explicit recognition that the reduction would be focused on small and medium-sized enterprises and charities. Their respective undertakings were to reduce their interchange fees to an average annual effective rate of 1.50% in each of the next five years. Those voluntary commitments took effect in April 2015.

The code of conduct, which was updated in 2015, includes a requirement that any interchange rate reductions be fully passed on to merchants, or merchants may cancel their contract without penalty.

Last year the government received independent audit findings that both Visa and MasterCard have met their respective commitments, which include reductions for small and medium-sized enterprises and charities.

[*Translation*]

In order to ensure that there is, in fact, adequate competition and transparency for Canadian businesses and consumers when it comes to the fees they incur when using credit cards, the government announced in September 2016 that it will conduct a further assessment of the fees charged by credit card networks and review the effects of the fee reductions.

The review that is currently being conducted will take into consideration the impact of recent developments, the adoption of the code of conduct for the credit and debit card industry in Canada, the financial sector framework objectives of competition and utility, as well as approaches in other jurisdictions.

Of course, the review will also take into account the recently received third-party verifications of the respective voluntary undertakings of Visa and MasterCard.

[*English*]

Department of Finance officials are currently undertaking consultations with various stakeholders as part of the assessment, including with small businesses.

Earlier this year, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and MasterCard announced an agreement that would help reduce the cost of credit card acceptance for CFIB members. This deal will provide relief for small businesses.

The government's continued oversight of the financial services sector aims to ensure that it remains stable and competitive, and that it meets the needs of consumers and businesses in a way that supports our belief that when we have an economy that works for the middle class, we have a country that works for everyone.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, voluntary is not good enough. Other countries have looked at it. They have studied the issues and determined that rates of 0.5% in Australia and 0.3% in the European Union are more appropriate.

Small business owners simply do not have the negotiating power of large multinational corporations like Walmart, which recently cut a deal with Visa to reduce its credit card bills. When MasterCard and Visa report to the federal government on the results of self-audits on voluntary reductions, the preferential fees that they are providing to large retailers are incorporated into their results. In other words, smaller businesses are subsidizing preferential deals for large multinationals.

Will the government take immediate action in support of small business or will it continue to allow the banks and the payment industry to gouge our middle-class job creators?

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Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor: Madam Speaker, the government is assessing the marketplace, taking into consideration the impact of Visa's and MasterCard's separate and voluntary fee reductions, the adoption of a code of conduct for the credit card and debit card industry in Canada, the financial sector framework objectives of competition and utility, as well as approaches in other jurisdictions.

[*Translation*]

The government's continued oversight of the financial services sector aims to ensure that it remains stable and competitive, and that it meets the needs of consumers and businesses in a way that supports our belief that when you have an economy that works for the middle class, you have a country that works for everyone.

● (2040)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:40 p.m.)

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