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Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 28, 2018

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

NATIONAL LOCAL FOOD DAY ACT

The House resumed from May 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-281, an act to establish a national local food day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to promote the introduction of national local food day, as proposed by my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia, directly to the west of my riding.

This is an outstanding opportunity to celebrate our farmers, ranchers, beekeepers, U-pick berry farmers, craft brewers, distillers, and those who operate our farmers' markets. It is our chance to thank those who work so hard with incredible passion, innovation, and creativity to ensure that Canadians can put incredible, wholesome, and delicious food on their tables each and every day.

Celebrating local food is an opportunity I hold close to my heart. I am blessed to have a wide array of premium locally sourced food products in my riding, Foothills. This is an amazing time of year that I am sure many of my colleagues in the House will share with me as we get ready for farmers' market season. Even now, I can almost taste the fresh vegetables of the renowned Millarville market, the pies of the Saskatoon Farm, the blackcurrants of Kayben Farms, the fresh honey from Greidanus or Chinook Honey Company, Taber corn, and, of course, amazing Alberta beef.

It is clear that this is a topic every single one of us in the House can speak to. We can see the amazing colours, and we can smell the aromas of grandma's kitchen. Most important, when it comes to our local food, we can taste it. Locally produced food is something we can share with every single Canadian.

The idea of this private member's bill, to designate the Friday before Thanksgiving of each year as national local food day, would provide plenty of opportunities and positives for Canadians throughout the country as we promote local agribusinesses. It also

gives us a chance to highlight and showcase our incredible premium homegrown cuisine.

In our roles as shadow ministers for agriculture and agrifood, my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable and I have had a fantastic opportunity to talk to farmers, producers, and business owners almost every day, not only in our ridings but across the country. These people are restaurant owners who feed Canadians every day and challenge themselves to highlight Canadian products in new and exciting ways; farmers who maintain the finest crops; and the ones who prepare and deliver our food to our door and our local markets.

The proposed idea of creating a national local food day is not necessarily about what we are eating. It is also about the products provided by our local producers, who, for many of us, are our friends and neighbours.

Today, many Canadians, especially those in urban communities, are generations away from the family farm. Many of them do not understand where their food is grown, how it is grown, where their food comes from, or the love and care our farmers put into growing healthy, nutritious, and quality food each and every day.

It is my hope that national local food day would be an opportunity for us to reconnect urban and rural Canadians, to reintroduce ourselves to where our food comes from, and to introduce our children to the farmers, ranchers, and beekeepers in our communities. It is also an opportunity to dispel some of the myths out there about what happens on the Canadian family farm. It is an opportunity for us in the House and as Canadians to introduce the city mouse to the country mouse.

Certainly, food is grown on the farm, but the definition of a family farm has changed from what many of us think of as the traditional family farm. When we talk about the family farm, we have a picture in our mind of grandma and grandpa, mom and dad, a couple of kids, maybe a chicken and a cow, and a dog running around in the field.

Private Members' Business

However, today the family farm could be a major, 10,000-acre business, a multi-million dollar business. Certainly the family is still involved, but those family members are shareholders. A family farm could be a garden in the backyard or a community garden plot, a community project in downtown Calgary. These could all be defined as products and producers of local food. This is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate all these different innovations and opportunities to showcase local food.

When we talk about local, I want us to focus on food products that are coming from the local farm, but also from within our region, our towns, our neighbouring communities, and across the country.

When we talk about food, I do not want us to forget about some of the incredible opportunities happening across Canada. We can go to a local brewery, many of which are in rural communities, and taste its craft beer. I hope that this would be a significant part of our national local food day. I have had the opportunity to visit and tour many of these local breweries across Canada, and I believe a national local food day would provide a catalyst for Canadians to not only test these locally sourced foods and drinks, but get a better connection with the hard-working producers who live and work near them.

For example, just over the last few years in my riding, Foothills, there have been six craft breweries in various stages of construction. There are two award-winning craft distilleries, Highwood Distillers and Eau Claire Distillery. There are even two honey meaderies, which is something I had never tried before. This is an outstanding opportunity to support our local producers. All these innovations have brought new economic opportunities, especially to our rural communities. They are supporting our local farmers, towns, and villages with economic opportunities and new jobs.

One of the big highlights is that this has become a significant tourism industry. Local food has become an opportunity for these communities to highlight some of the things they are most renowned for.

For example, the community of Turner Valley has literally hundreds of people coming from the city every weekend to visit the Fahr brewery or Eau Claire Distillery and have a Hefeweizen on the deck or a glass of prickly pear vodka. They can then head further down the highway to Longview and enjoy an Alberta beef steak at the Longview Steakhouse, or continue down the Cowboy Trail, along Highway 22, to Crowsnest Pass and enjoy the Huckleberry Festival. The Castle Mountain range has some of the best huckleberries in Canada.

This is an incredible opportunity for us to highlight and showcase not only our local food and producers, but certainly our local communities. Anytime we have a chance to bring new economic opportunities to these communities, this is something we need to embrace, and I am excited that national local food day would bring an opportunity for us to highlight what our local communities are doing.

The options are incredible. These businesses are supporting our local farms, but also offering a new twist on our locally grown products. Not surprisingly, our producers are a diverse bunch. Like Canada itself, our culinary heritage is as colourful as a summer salad.

We should not be surprised, because for generations, when it comes to immigration, agriculture was the gateway to Canada. When many new Canadians broke ground for their new homes, they brought their recipes and produced those ingredients in Canada's fertile soil, and they have passed those recipes on for generations. These items all fall under the umbrella of locally produced foods. Whether those dishes originate here at home, or in Jamaica, Korea, the Philippines, England, or Ukraine, as long as those foods are produced locally, they should be considered homegrown products. For myself, anytime I have an opportunity to have homemade perogies, I am going to take it.

Producers are using incredibly different products as well. For example, a local craft brewery outside Regina, Rebellion Brewing, uses lentils to make its beer, something most of us have probably never taken the opportunity to try, and it is successful in using these new products. I was at a craft distillery in Lumsden that was using dill pickles to make vodka, also something I never thought I would try in my lifetime, but it was definitely an experience. Two weeks ago, when we were at our branding meeting getting ready for the summer season, we all enjoyed Prairie oysters. If my colleagues have not had the opportunity to try that, they should take the chance to do so. There is nothing like a little Prairie oyster after a hard day's work.

We also have to understand the importance of agriculture and local food to our communities and to our economy. This is a multi-billion dollar industry for the Canadian economy. We should take any opportunity, such as national local food day, to highlight what our Canadian producers are doing across the country, but also, perhaps most important, to introduce to Canadians where their food comes from, how it is grown, and the heart, soul, blood, sweat, and tears our farmers put into it every day.

● (1110)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today in the debate on Bill C-281, introduced by my colleague, the member for Kootenay—Columbia. I would like to thank him for bringing forward this bill, because it gives all of us in this chamber, no matter what our political affiliation is, an opportunity to talk about the great things that are going on in our ridings.

I am proud to be standing here, not only as the NDP's agriculture critic and as the member of Parliament for an amazingly rich and vibrant region, especially in food production, but also as the owner of a small-scale farming property. I would not go so far as to call myself a farmer; I have a very tiny property. However, it gives me peace of mind to be out there with our sheep and our chickens, as well as putting my hands in the soil and watching things grow from it. Seeing the results of the harvest in the fall is something many of us in this chamber can appreciate. When we talk to the farmers in our regions and get an understanding of the hard work they do on their individual farms to bring that amazing produce to market, it makes a bill like this so much better, because it would give official recognition to something that we all very much enjoy.

Private Members' Business

I like the fact that Bill C-281 would designate as national local food day the Friday before Thanksgiving. The Friday and Saturday are the days when people are starting to put together the menu for Thanksgiving. If we all recognize the Friday as national local food day, I hope that it would encourage more Canadians to pay attention to local food markets to bring some of that produce, which local farmers have worked on so hard, to their own respective tables and make Thanksgiving that much more special. We already have Canada's Agriculture Day, which we celebrated earlier this year, in February, but I like the appreciation that, in addition to celebrating agriculture as a whole, we would bring it down to the local level.

We all realize that food is not just a commodity. All animals and humans require food to survive, and food is very much a social determinant of health. We know there are a lot of people in Canada who suffer from food insecurity. Food security and food sovereignty have always been key issues to me. Canada is one of the countries that are very blessed, with the amount of arable land we have. Given the relatively small size of our population and the huge variety of growing regions we have in this amazing country, we should be a country that is able to produce food locally for everyone who needs it, not only the bare minimum amount, but also good, quality food. That is really what the conversation needs to focus on.

I am proud to belong to a party that has long had this as part of its mandate. In 2011, we ran on committing to introduce a Canadian food strategy that would combine health goals, environmental goals, and food quality objectives. In 2014, Alex Atamanenko and Malcolm Allen, former members of Parliament, brought together a landmark strategy paper called "Everybody Eats: Our Vision for a pan-Canadian Food Strategy", focusing on going from the farm to the factory to the fork. The strategy was very comprehensive, and I am glad that maybe in some small part we have brought this conversation to the government, because the government launched consultations on establishing a national food policy. Last year, when I held consultations with the farmers in my region, the farmers were very vocal and involved, and we produced quite a comprehensive report based on all that feedback.

The other reason I like this bill is that it has to do with the concept of food miles. I remember going into a supermarket a few years ago and seeing apples from New Zealand and oranges from South Africa. I know that Canada is not much of an orange-growing region, but we do have a lot of apple orchards. It surprised me that there was actually a market for an apple to travel thousands of kilometres across the Pacific Ocean to Canada and actually be sold, when we have all these amazing local apple growers right here in Canada, and even in neighbouring Washington state. From where I am in British Columbia, Washington state is only a stone's throw away. Given the fact that we have amazing local food farmers who are able to meet this demand, we should try to focus more on making sure that food does not have to travel so far to get to our kitchen table.

• (1115)

I am also proud to come from a province which probably has the most diversified agricultural sector in the country. British Columbia has a variety of different climates given our mountainous province, and we are able to grow a lot of different things in many different regions. Depending on which valley and which part of the province people are in, they will always find a little niche market somewhere.

I want to bring it home and talk about some of the amazing things going on in my riding. Down in the southern end, we have the Goldstream Farmers Market, which is going to be held from May through to October this year, as it is every year. It celebrates all of the amazing agriculture that is going on in the west shore communities.

We have the Cowichan region, which is, believe it or not, Canada's only maritime Mediterranean climatic zone. We have the highest mean average temperature in all of Canada. This allows our farmers to get a head start on growing some amazing food.

We have the amazing rainfall in the winter and amazing sunshine in the summer. It produces an amazing agricultural bounty. This is on display. People can go to the Duncan Farmers' Market and find over 150 vendors. It is one of the largest markets in all of B.C. People can find everything from organic fruits and vegetables; local honey, cheese, and eggs; sustainably harvested seafood; meat from grass-fed and ethically raised animals; homemade jams, jellies, chutneys, and sauces; artisan breads, pies, pastries, and cookies; locally grown and produced wines and spirits; and even gourmet treats for pets.

To cap it off, we have amazing organizations like the Cowichan Green Community, which is very much focused on local food security. It has worked on initiatives such as the Cowichan food charter and the Cowichan food security plan; projects like FruitSave, which tries to get people, like those who have a 100-year-old apple tree that they never eat all the apples from, to take that fruit to local markets; and, of course, getting kids involved in the joys of farming and educating them all about it.

They produce a local food map that identifies all of the farms in the Cowichan region. It identifies 58 unique farms and businesses, all with something distinctive, fresh, and delicious to offer consumers.

We have the Alderlea Farm Café, people who have been involved in a farming venture. We have the Cowichan Valley tea farm; the Cowichan Valley actually grows its own tea. We have Farmer Ben's Eggs, and the Quist family farm.

There are a number of breweries wineries, and of course I cannot leave out the amazing community of Port Renfrew, which I will say is probably home to the best wild Pacific salmon anywhere in the country. I love the people of Port Renfrew. They have a real can-do attitude. It is very much driven by the amazing tourist opportunities and the amazing seafood they are able to produce.

With that, I will conclude by saying that I appreciate the member for Kootenay—Columbia bringing this bill forward. It is an important day to celebrate, and I certainly hope all members can get behind this amazing bill to help celebrate national local food day.

Private Members' Business

• (1120)

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I too would like to applaud the work of the member for Kootenay—Columbia for introducing what I think is an amazing bill. It will support our farmers and food processors, and all those Canadians who are part of or impacted by the agriculture and food sector in our strong economy.

Our country is a food superpower, and I do not say that lightly. In fact, we are the fifth-largest exporter of agriculture and agrifoods in the world. We are blessed to have the land and resources needed to help the world meet its ever-growing need for food, by producing more than we need to feed our population.

Our exports are known in the global market to be reliable, safe, innovative, and above all sustainable. That is all part of our Canada brand, our narrative.

The vast size and complexity of our food systems are worth consideration. The industry generates one in eight of our manufacturing jobs, over \$110 billion of our gross domestic product, and over \$64 billion of our exports. From gate to plate, agriculture is one of the key growth sectors of our economy.

Canada's innovative processing industry supplies approximately 70% of all processed food and beverage products available in Canada, and it is the largest customer for our farmers.

[*Translation*]

All Canadians can share their beloved local foods with the entire planet to help feed the growing world population with sustainable foods. That is why the objective of the new Canadian agricultural partnership is to build a strong agriculture sector. The Canadian agricultural partnership is Canada's five-year agricultural policy framework. It outlines a bold new vision that will help the agricultural and agrifood sector innovate, grow, and prosper.

On April 1, ministers of agriculture from across Canada launched the partnership as a shared vision for the future of Canadian agriculture. Over the next five years, our governments will invest \$3 billion in the partnership. Over \$1 billion of that investment will support federal programs and activities to revitalize Canadian agriculture. These programs will focus on the following three key areas: growing trade and expanding markets; innovation and sustainable growth of the sector; and supporting diversity and a dynamic, evolving sector.

• (1125)

[*English*]

In supporting this bill, let me begin with the observation that a robust local food industry does not need to compete with farmers who export to world markets. In fact, many farmers do both. All production is local, whether it is consumed locally or on the other side of the world. As the member of Parliament for Steveston—Richmond East, I have berry farmers who produce for the local market, be it in Vancouver, Richmond, or Kelowna, but who also export to Asia, be it in Japan, China, or Korea.

If we think of our vibrant organic sector, it is so much more as well. For example, today the market for certified organic products in Canada is over \$5 billion, making us one of the largest markets for

organics in the world. Two out of three Canadian consumers buy organic. That is very good news for the many supporters of Bill C-281, both in this House and across this country, who believe in the merits of a national local food day. We are not just talking about small producers; increasingly, we are seeing large-sized, more traditional operations that are gradually converting from conventional to organic production. In Saskatchewan, a 40,000-acre grain farm is converting to organic. In my neck of the woods, in Steveston—Richmond East, a significant organic blueberry farm just converted from traditional blueberries. It is also setting aside a section for traditional farming, once again proving that farms can do both.

I am pleased to say that our government over the past two and a half years has invested nearly \$20 million in this innovative, dynamic sector. Bill C-281, an act to establish a national local food day, is an excellent initiative, and a special tribute to the great success of Canadian farmers, our responsible stewards of the land.

The government also recognizes the importance of strengthening connections between consumers and producers of food. Canadians are increasingly building bridges with local farms and the hard-working farmers they often meet in the colourful farmers' markets across this country. I have the same situation in Steveston—Richmond East. We have the Steveston farmers' market, where the local farmers, be they organic or the more traditional farmers, such as the May family, the Savages, produce food internationally. They also provide good, healthy, sustainable food, sometimes organic and sometimes not, for the local farmers' market. When I head over there and say hi to a farmer, or Canadians say hi to a farmer, we start to build trust because we know where our food is coming from. Local food is about increasing agricultural awareness among our consumers.

[*Translation*]

The future is bright for Canadian agriculture. We are lucky enough to live in a country with abundant high-quality farmland and a variety of local climates. We have some of the best icewines in the world. For superior-quality grain, we need look no further than the Prairies.

• (1130)

[*English*]

We are happy to support Bill C-281, because when Canadians shop locally, they are supporting the local economy and creating jobs locally, nationally, as well as internationally. Local food helps consumers build lasting relationships with local food producers. It also opens up economic opportunities and employment. It fosters community involvement and also creates a culinary tourism industry.

Private Members' Business

In supporting this bill, we are supporting the future of farming in this country. Heading down to a farmers' market, which I often do on a Saturday morning to the Steveston farmers' market, national local food day will not just be a way of enjoying solid organic vegetables, or wonderful blueberry ice wine, as enjoyable as that is, it will also be a great way to make the choice for a stronger agriculture and food industry in this amazing country that we call home.

That is why today I am supporting this bill.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia and his private member's bill, Bill C-281, which would designate the Friday before Thanksgiving each and every year as Canada's national local food day.

When Canadians hear that we are debating a national day, the first thing that comes to mind is the associated costs that come with any national day. Fortunately, this bill spells out exactly that this designated day would not be a legal holiday or a non-judicial day. Furthermore, any costs, even at the promotional and awareness level, I believe, would easily be countered by the good this day would do in promoting our local producers' farm products.

What are the other provisions in Bill C-281? One of the things that the bill focuses on in its preamble is Canada's national sovereignty and how it is dependent on the safety and security of our food supply. Fortunately, our agricultural industry is thriving and our unique Canadian brand, for the most part, is recognized around the world, and will be as long as the Prime Minister avoids another disastrous trade trip.

In our grain and pulse industries, for example, we have an advantage from our cold climate, which minimizes the risk of pests and other food contaminants. Canadian grains and pulse production is usually given a waiver when it comes to applying decontamination treatments when we ship these products abroad. Our strict regulations makes our food not only safe to eat here at home, but also a prime product for our international customers and trading partners.

The bill also speaks to "strengthening the connection between consumers and producers of Canadian food" and looks at the relationships within our nation's social, environmental, and economic well-being. To this point, I have always said that the true environmentalists are those who live off the land and work tirelessly to maintain it for generations to come. They are not easily influenced by the numerous vested interests of local and international eco-activists who see Canada as a social experiment to be manipulated, because there is money to be made from both rising and falling markets. We need to stand up and fight back against this manipulation.

The foreign money and influence that decimated our oil and gas industry tend to see our other resource sectors as just as vulnerable. We need to shift the focus back on what makes us great. Local farmers, ranchers, and producers have long contributed to our world-renowned sustainable Canadian agricultural industry, long before the Liberals or the so-called progressives co-opted the words "green" and "innovation". It is about time that we recognize the contributions of our hard-working local growers and producers.

To advocate for our farmers and producers was one of the reasons I decided to run for office. As a farmer myself, and coming from a multi-generational family farm, I know first-hand the passion and the hard work that goes into this very important profession. In my riding, I am always proud to talk about some of our own local producers, from local nurseries, to beekeepers, produce growers, ranchers, farmers, and the community markets that feature our local products. Local farmers' markets are abundant throughout the entire growing season and people from all over the riding make a point of stopping by to get fresh off-the-farm products. As the farmers who supply these markets expand their brands and businesses, consumers feel a closeness with the producer that is very rewarding for both parties. Local abattoirs have fresh meat for sale, produced by local farmers and ranchers, which adds to this unique relationship from farm to fork.

Some may point out that we already have a nationwide celebration of local Canadian cuisine in early August known as "Food Day Canada". That specific awareness campaign is certainly important from a culinary perspective, but the celebration of harvest, which I believe is the purpose of a national local food day in early October, would give us the opportunity to concentrate on our local growers and producers.

I find it fitting that my colleague strategically aligned this national food day after the year's bountiful harvest and close to our Thanksgiving holiday when Canadians take some time away from work and come home to reflect on everything that has made them thankful. This would be a great way to support our agriculture industry. A nationwide celebration of local food would also encourage Canadians to appreciate and buy more locally grown and produced food.

• (1135)

As we continue with the subject of appreciating our local food, I also want to draw upon my childhood growing up on a mixed farm, where I learned about the importance of the family garden and the many realities and practicalities when it comes to dealing with livestock.

For example, one is taught the concept of timeliness and freshness when it comes to freshly butchered chicken or the importance of properly feeding and caring for the swine and cattle that would eventually find their way into the deep freeze. Picking and preparing berries and vegetables to be made into jam or pickled goods for the winter was also another common chore on the family farm. I remember certain practices and foods that some Canadians would most likely question, like harvesting and preparing certain garden weeds that took the place of spinach, or in making an effort to use all parts of an animal by boiling or pickling. That was simply our way of life.

My late mother was also able to make wine out of anything, no doubt thanks to her Saskatchewan heritage and ingenuity. Most members may have heard of elderflower wine, but Mom had some pretty colourful recipes, like dandelion wine. It was commonly said that "If God grew it, she could brew it." It was certainly a great way of getting us kids to pick dandelions.

Private Members' Business

Let me quote my colleague from Kootenay—Columbia when he stood in the House to debate the bill for the first time. He said that “Food is at the heart of our homes, our communities, and our economy.” I could not have expressed that sentiment better myself.

Our agriculture and agrifood sector is not only vibrant and innovative, but also a huge part of our economy, contributing more than \$100 billion in revenue. This all too important industry provides one in eight Canadian jobs and employs 2.3 million people. The food and beverage processing industry is one of the largest manufacturing industries in Canada, and is Canada's largest manufacturing employer. Our farmers, ranchers, producers, and manufacturers are not only responsible for the food on every Canadian dinner plate nationwide, but also for the world-class food products in markets and on dinner tables around the world.

Why is this knowledge of food preparation and production so significant when it comes to recognizing the locality of food?

I submit that it is more than just about trying to come up with some geographical recognition, or figuring out the length of time that a product stays on a truck on its way to the grocery store. It has to do with understanding how important Canada's food production system is, not only to the local community but also to the entire world, as more and more Canadians become further removed from the humble family farm.

Generations of kids now have little or no connection to the practicalities that come from growing up on the farm. It becomes easier for them to get confused and persuaded by contradictory marketing and certain political messaging until they either have no idea what to believe or they start to lose faith in our locally grown food and products. This is such a shame when Canada is known for growing and producing some of the world's best and safest food.

This is not to say that the choices people make should be criticized, but people should at least be given proper information so that their decisions and convictions are at least informed and based on scientific fact.

Canadians should be connected to their food and need to understand why a certain practice exists and why certain things have to be done to make sure that their food is safe to eat. This could come from a national local food awareness day. If we start to understand our farmers and the food they grow, we become better advocates for ourselves and our food wherever we are in the world. I am sure that every member would agree with me when I say that we should all know and understand where our food comes from, how it is grown, produced, and manufactured.

I am proud to give my support to the member for Kootenay—Columbia and Bill C-281. A national local food day would be a great chance for communities across Canada to come together and celebrate their local farmers, producers, and, of course, their local food. Such a celebration would be a great opportunity for everyone to appreciate the work that our Canadian farmers and producers put into ensuring that the food on our tables continues to be the best in the world.

• (1140)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, because local foods are delicious, nutritious, and good for

the local economy, and in every way help inoculate us against the impacts of climate change, and employ young people who demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit, it is such a pleasure to stand up to laud some of the successes in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and the local foods movement.

I think first of Eric Boulton. Mr. Boulton is well into his 80s. He is a long-time farmer from my island, Gabriola Island. He still drives his tractor. He still fights the province on meat slaughtering regulations. He went all the way in fighting the previous Liberal government on that. He and his daughter, Alexa, donate beautiful, locally grown turkeys to the People for a Healthy Community spirit feast at Christmas every year. They are major donors and players in the community. Village Food Market, the local grocery store, especially under the leadership of the McCollum family, always has Alexa and Eric Boulton's beautiful grass-raised beef in the aisles of our market's shelf. It is great to have local foods so easily available.

Nanaimo Foodshare is teaching local people how to buy food in season, how to cook from scratch, how to reduce food waste, and how to compost. Funded by a provincial grant, it has a gleaning program that has saved over 400,000 kilograms of fresh produce in one season alone. That gets local food on the tables of people who need it the most.

Then there is Gabriel's on Commercial St in Nanaimo. Members must try their roast vegetable eggs bennie. It is fantastic. The place has doubled in size. It is a restaurant fully committed to local foods and sustainability. With compostable, takeout containers and all, it really walks its talk.

The Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce celebrated local foods with a massive “festival”, headlined by chefs and vintners. This year, on June 21, it is carrying on that tradition in its commercial street market, the night market.

COCO Cafe employs persons with disabilities. They cook and cater. This is in Cedar, B.C. It is the centre of the Cedar community. These fantastic young people are learning skills like cooking soups and baking breads and pastries from scratch. They develop these skills then take them home to their own lives. It is creating employment opportunities for people who might not otherwise get them. COCO is a place we are all really proud of.

The Farmship Growers Cooperative grows ethical, healthy, and natural produce for our region, and its co-operative model is creating more opportunities for farmers, protecting farmland, and increasing local food security.

Since 1961, St. Jean's has been doing value-added seafood. It does custom sport fish processing. It has natural hardwood smoked and hand-packed seafood that is distributed across North America. Even better, in 2015, the Nuu-chah-nulth Seafood Limited partnership became the majority owner. St. Jean's is headquartered in Nanaimo. It continues to prosper and grow as one of Canada's leading quality seafood producers. Again, that is right in Nanaimo.

Loaves and Fishes' food bank has a program called Food 4U. It is a food recovery program that is run with the help of 700 volunteers in our community of Nanaimo. In partnership with local grocery stores, it ensures that perishable foods that would otherwise go to landfill are utilized by other food banks, faith organizations, and people in need throughout the community. It rescues what would cost more than \$2 million at grocery stores every year. People who might otherwise go to a food bank are getting real quality local food. It is such a point of pride for us. Forty non-profits and schools use its Port of Nanaimo food centre store every week.

If folks at home want any more details on any of those last four groups I highlighted, they can look at my little MP's calendar for 2018, where we have profiled each of these groups. They can call my office in Nanaimo if they did not get one in the mail.

● (1145)

From the Canada summer jobs grant, this year we got over \$65,000, or 10% of the Canada summer jobs grant, which in our riding went directly to local food and sustainability groups. That supported 17 summer jobs with some of the businesses and NGOs I have already mentioned as well as the Small Scale Food Processor Association, the Vancouver Island Exhibition, Farmship Growers Cooperative, Generation Farms, and Meal Exchange.

Craig Evans, from the Growing Opportunities Farm Community Co-op, said that it "will help expand our programming on our five acre urban farm and support meaningful skills training and experience for youth with disabilities in our community. It's opening up opportunities to strengthen food security and urban agriculture in our region."

There is more local food flavour in our riding, such as Cedar Farmers' Market, Lantzville Farmers' Market, Gabriola, Nanaimo, and Bowen Road.

We drink alcohol locally, too. Mike, from Arbutus Distillery, in Nanaimo, is raising the bar, with 100% B.C.-sourced products from the distillery's own herb garden. Tyler, from White Sails Brewing, Harley, from Longwood Brewery, and Kevin, from Wolf Brewing, are all award-winning brewmasters. They also curate local festivals to highlight the benefits of buying, drinking, and eating locally. It keeps the money and employment in our community as well as all the health benefits that comes with that.

What do all these local success stories have in common? They are all part of the burgeoning local foods movement. The Council of Ontario Universities tells us that 96% of campuses have local food initiatives, 86% have a community or teaching garden, and 77% have a local farmers' market. There is big appetite for this.

Farmers' markets alone are estimated to contribute over \$3 billion to local economies annually, and we really need it on Vancouver

Island, where 95% of our food right now is imported from off island. Therefore, it is a security issue for us as well.

The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance has recognized this and is promoting local foods in a new and innovative way. It has an "Island Good" tag, and in co-operation with Thrifty Foods, Country Grocer, Quality Foods, and the 49th Parallel stores, in a pilot started this March, they label local foods to make the local products easier to find. I hope I am not scooping VIEA, but I have heard that in just three months, it has created a lift in sales of 17%, and this is a brand new pilot.

Let us do more of these, and let us support the legislation from my colleague, the member for Kootenay—Columbia. His Bill C-281 would designate the Friday before Thanksgiving Day every year a national local food day. This is following in the great tradition of New Democrat MP Malcolm Allen and a long history of New Democrats who have stood up for the environmental, economic, local economy, and youth employment benefits of local foods.

To conclude, I will give special thanks to the farmers of Gabriola who feed me personally, including Watercliff Farm, Stephen Levesque, and Tamaya Beale; Graham, for all his pep talks on the ferry; and Rosheen Holland, for her dignified and big-hearted support of young farmers, me, and other activists in the community. I am grateful to be fed by all of them, and I look forward to celebrating them more.

● (1150)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will advise the next member that I may have to interrupt her to allow the sponsor of the bill to have his five-minute response.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I too am rising to support my colleague, the MP for Kootenay—Columbia, on declaring the Friday before Thanksgiving national local food day. That would be very celebrated in my province of Alberta.

Among those I count as heroes of the planet are the agricultural producers of Alberta, who have fought valiantly to protect agricultural land. They have battled urban sprawl, industrial projects, and the paving over of prime agricultural land, including my city's most frost-free, productive market garden land.

Private Members' Business

For many decades, I have been honoured to provide legal representation and advocacy support to many of these farmers trying to protect their productive lands. I wish to single out just a few of the names of the Alberta farmers who I honoured some years back for their personal dedication in protecting Alberta's prime agricultural land.

There was the Bocoek family, which donated their leading-edge dairy farm to the University of Alberta for research; and George Friesen and Jim Hainsworth, who founded the Preserve Agricultural Land Foundation. George put a covenant on his own productive land to say that he only had the right to grow and produce on his land, not profit from putting a pipeline through. Jim Visser, the Kuhlmanns, the Vriens, and Wayne Groot, the potato farmer, fought valiantly to protect the northeast market gardeners. Doug Visser has mounted a major campaign to protect Lady Flower Gardens, run by and benefiting the homeless and the disadvantaged in Edmonton, who go out and grow the vegetables and take them back for their sustenance. Many hundreds of Edmontonians attended hearings on calls to preserve our northeast market gardens to produce healthy local foods for Edmontonians.

Many Edmonton restaurants now feature locally produced food. Many bakeries produce baked goods using local grain, including my favourite, and very popular, neighbourhood bakery, the Boulangerie Bonjour.

Among the greatest tributes I have received in my life is a lifetime membership to the Preserve Agricultural Land Foundation. Since childhood, I have accompanied parents, grandparents, and now friends and constituents to the downtown market, and now the Strathcona market in Old Strathcona and at La Cité Francophone, the quartier francophone of Edmonton, the only one in Canada.

I not only try to visit my market each Saturday, I regularly buy local organic carrots, parsnips, and berries and put them in my carry-on luggage, which really throws off the security officers every week.

A growing number of community gardens across my riding and the city are growing local produce for Edmontonians. The Green & Gold Community Garden, at the University of Alberta south campus, for 10 years has been producing local produce, and the funds go to global benefit, with the profits going to a women's collective in Rwanda.

Another garden close to the University of Alberta provides fresh produce to the food bank. Last year, Danielle Munroe worked with Youth Empowerment and Support Services, persuading the city to let them plant vegetables on a large empty lot across from the project, and it became a popular drop-in centre for everyone in the city to come to.

Now the Edmonton Food Council has created support for urban beekeeping and hens, promoting local plot cultivation, including across the street from me in an empty lot. There is now competition for who can grow the most local vegetables. That is not to mention provincial support for local craft breweries and distilleries, many of which are in my riding and that people are enjoying, particularly the locally crafted gin.

We must also recognize the importance and acknowledge the treaty rights of indigenous peoples to harvest their local foods. I

work closely with first nations adjacent to the lake where I spent my summers, where they are concerned that they are losing the ability to harvest their local medicines. It is very important to consider that in projects being proposed.

The Province of Alberta has actually taken new steps to raise the profile of local food production, supported with one billion dollars toward local food industries. It tabled the supporting Alberta's local food sector act to raise the profile of the local food industry, strengthen consumer confidence in local foods, identify solutions and challenges faced by local producers and processors, and support sustainable growth in agriculture and food processing. It would establish a local food council and declare a new Alberta local food week, during the third week in August, which could lead into the Friday before Thanksgiving. It would provide a level playing field for certified local organic farmers and processors and build trust in the purchase of local food.

● (1155)

Local food sales in Alberta from farmers' markets and through direct-to-consumer channels have more than doubled since 2008, exceeding \$1 billion last year alone. Now we have several companies in Edmonton that are delivering this local produce to my constituents' doors.

It is important to recognize that what is considered local food is now very diverse. There are many in my constituency who have actually established community gardens for new immigrants so they can grow the vegetables and produce they are used to.

With that, I will close so that there is plenty of time for my colleague to give his final comments on this very important bill.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am proud to wrap up the second reading debate on my private member's bill, Bill C-281, an act to establish a national local food day for Canada.

I want to thank all the hon. members for their speeches, for their support, and for making me very hungry and thirsty. I want to thank my staff for their amazing work on this important initiative.

When I last spoke in the House on Bill C-281, I highlighted a number of local food producers and initiatives in Kootenay—Columbia. Over the recent break week, I had the opportunity to visit the beautiful Creston Valley, which in many ways is the agricultural heart of my riding. As I noted in my previous speech, the Creston Valley grows virtually every variety of vegetable, wine grapes, apples, and other kinds of fruit. The Creston Valley is also home to Tabletree juice, whose black cherry juice was recognized as the world's best pure juice product at the World Juice Awards in 2012.

I am not sure if members are old enough to remember a time when milk came in glass bottles. Thanks to Kootenay Meadows Farm, it still does in much of the Kootenays. The Harris family dairy farm produces fresh organic milk that is delivered in reusable glass containers.

Remember those wine grapes I mentioned? For an amazing Kootenay—Columbia culinary experience, try pairing a vintage wine from Skimmerhorn Winery and Vineyard, Wynnwood Cellars, or Baillie-Grohman Estate Winery with any of Kootenay Meadow Dairies' organic hard cheeses.

I have to say that I love the saying, “If God grew it, I can brew it.”

I know that just as I am passionate about local food in my riding, Canadians in every region are passionate about local food in their communities. I have heard from many Canadians across the country about what local food means to them.

Jolene, from Aldergrove wrote:

I think the most simple way that can put it is connection....

I am certain that through the generations, we've lost our connections to food. What food is, how to prepare and how it is grown. I changed because I don't want my children growing up to think that food is something frozen, that you buy at a grocery store and put in the microwave.... I want them to know that a lot of people work very hard for the food we put on our tables and some of them grow so much food and still can't put food on their own tables to eat. I also want them to know what a clean, healthy, sustainable farm looks like....

I can't imagine a better place to change the world for the better than helping people who've lost touch with their food, come back into connection with it.

Hélène, from Brossard, wrote, “Eating local food is important to me as it encourages people here who work hard to make a living.... When you consume food from the other side of the world, it takes longer, it pollutes the planet more”.

John, from Sudbury, wrote that national food day:

is a good idea on several fronts—economic, social, health and environmental. It would be a boost to the local economy for farmers. Rural communities and surrounding towns and cities would be more socially connected....

This idea is a winner and should be supported.

The Surrey/White Rock Food Action Coalition wrote:

Focusing attention on healthy, high-quality locally grown food will support our farmers and fishers, keep jobs in our communities and strengthen the local economy....

We envision an integrated and resilient local food system that enables physically accessible, culturally acceptable and affordable food for everyone, supports a sustainable food economy, and empowers food literacy and capacity building within the community. Let's celebrate these values with a National Local Food Day this October.

Whether people's local food is the caribou and arctic char of the north, the seafood of the coasts, the artisan cheeses of Quebec, the ice wine of Ontario, the pork of Manitoba, the beef, grain, and prairie oysters from the Prairies, the traditional foods of indigenous people across Canada, or anything in between, a national local food day is for them.

I have always said that it is easy to love Bill C-281. It is my sincere hope that all members will vote in support of this bill at all stages. We all know that food matters, from farm to factory to fork or from gate to plate. Let us make national local food day a reality.

● (1200)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 12:02 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired.

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

Points of Order

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 yea.

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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 30, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ACCURACY OF MAY 25 JOURNALS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising today on a point of order to dispute the correctness of the records of the House of Commons related to Friday's proceedings. Specifically, I disagree with the entry at page 3282 of the unrevised *Journals*, concerning government Motion No. 22 that “Debate arose thereon.”

Page 1225 and 1226 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, informs readers that:

The daily *Journals* are verified and corrections or changes are incorporated prior to publication of the revised Journals. The accuracy of the record has rarely been questioned, but possible errors or omissions have on occasion been brought to the attention of the House. Errors are corrected by those responsible for the publication

On Friday, the government had scheduled consideration of government Motion No. 22. It is my respectful submission that the motion was not, however, actually debated.

Personally speaking, I do not think the calling or reading of the orders of the day on Friday morning was legitimate, but I will not dwell on that point. Suffice to say, the Chair has ruled that the motion was properly proposed to the House.

Turning to page 536 of Bosc and Gagnon, one reads, “Once a motion has been proposed to the House by the Chair, the House is formally seized of it. The motion may then be debated....”

Erskine May's *Parliamentary Procedure*, 23rd edition, at page 393 says, “When the question has been proposed by the Speaker, and, if necessary read to the House, the House is in possession of the question, debate begins....”

Government Orders

The authorities are clear. The act of calling an order of the day and the act of reading a motion do not constitute debate. The use of the word “then” by Bosc and Gagnon reflects a critical understanding that these are not sequential steps; they do not overlap. To be clear, debate had not yet started when the Speaker called upon the government House leader to speak. What she had to say we do not know because she could not be heard.

Members hoping to hear her remarks in French were totally frustrated. I am told that listeners to the French audio feed of the government House leader heard no fewer than five times an interpreter announce “inaudible”. When we check the record for the length of time the House leader spoke, she spoke for a total of about 91 seconds. In that 91 seconds, “inaudible” was stated at least five times. At one point, the English audio feed also heard the announced quote “the hon. leader is inaudible”. This was pointed out by the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga Friday and also by several journalists following.

Subsection 4(2) of the Official Languages Act reads:

Facilities shall be made available for the simultaneous interpretation of the debates and other proceedings of Parliament from one official language into the other.

The French version is even more pointed:

● (1205)

[*Translation*]

Il doit être pourvu à l'interprétation simultanée des débats et autres travaux du Parlement.

[*English*]

Interpretation shall be provided. It could not be clearer. In fact, it is quite common in the House that whenever there is a glitch with the interpretation system, we take a break, we pause, we even suspend sittings.

Pages 408 and 409 of Bosc and Gagnon refer to this:

In recent years, the House has suspended its sittings for a variety of reasons: ...to rectify a technical problem with simultaneous interpretation in the Chamber.

That passage's footnote cross-references to the case found at page 18,516 of the *Debates* on June 18, 2013. Page 3,433 of the *Journals* for that sitting records that the sitting was suspended for eight minutes while the interpretation system was fixed.

The Standing Orders and usual practices of the House were breached. The Official Languages Act was violated. No one could hear the government House leader in her language of delivery. No one could hear an interpretation of the government House leader.

There have been many times in the House, whether during question period, during members' statements, or during debate, when we recognize that something is wrong with the interpretation or the microphones we get your attention, Madam Speaker, and everything is stopped until that is clarified and corrected. Then that member then starts again. According to the records, because it was not heard it, it did not happen. It cannot reasonably be said that on Motion No. 22 anyone has ever engaged in debate.

To conclude on my point of order, I ask that when we look at the *Journals*, there has been no debate on government Motion No. 22,

and therefore page 3,282 of the unrevised Journals requires correction. I look forward to your ruling, Madam Speaker.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I greatly appreciate the information provided by the official opposition House leader. I will certainly take it under advisement and will get back to the House if required.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-47, An Act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code (amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are two motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of C-47. Motions Nos. 1 and 2 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 and 2 to the House.

● (1210)

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-47, in Clause 8, be amended by adding after line 12 on page 5 the following:

“(2) If, subsequent to the issuance of the permit, the Minister becomes aware of any information that could affect the determination made under subsection (1), he or she shall reconsider whether the risk that the export or the brokering of the goods or technology specified in the application for the permit would result in any of the negative consequences referred to in subsection 7.3(1) and, if applicable, amend, suspend or cancel the permit.”

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, when the Liberal government announced that Canada would finally accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, I was very happy, and I congratulated the government at that time. For years now, the NDP has been asking Canada to join this important, life-saving treaty that addresses important issues such as gender-based violence and the illegal arms trade, which is a major destabilizing force internationally.

This boils down to one more broken Liberal promise. They say they want to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, but Bill C-47, which is before us today, respects neither the spirit nor the letter of that treaty.

Government Orders

[English]

The current bill was described by an expert to whom I spoke as making a mockery of the Arms Trade Treaty. Even though we in the NDP wanted, and have pushed for years, Canada to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, we cannot support the bill because it does not respect the treaty. It does not respect either the letter or the spirit of the treaty.

[Translation]

In fact, this bill is full of holes. It might as well be a sieve that lets everything through, even the important bits. The first hole, a massive one, is that this bill does not cover any of our exports to the United States.

[English]

We have to take into account that over 50% of our arms exports are to the U.S. When I say over 50%, I do not mean 51% or 52%; I mean it could be 55%, 60% or 65%. In fact, we do not even know. Officials tell us that it is over 50%, but we do not know what the actual percentage is because those exports are not tracked and are not reported. In committee, when I said we should at least report on our arms exports to the U.S., one of my Liberal colleagues answered that it was difficult to report on something the government did not track. That is a problem.

It should be tracked, especially right now when President Trump is lowering the bar for export to countries like Nigeria. This risk that arms or components produced in Canada find their way to a range of countries where we would not want to see those arms is even greater.

[Translation]

Members will recall when the sale of helicopters to the government of the Philippines hit the news. When this news became public, everyone remembered that the President of the Philippines had boasted about throwing a man from a helicopter and said that he would do it again. Everyone was busy trying to stop the deal. The Philippine authorities were a bit insulted, and the plan was dropped. However, there are reports that the company in question now plans to send helicopter parts to the United States, assemble them there, and send them to the Philippines. They found a good way to get around the act. This poses a practical problem in that we have no control over more than half of our arms sales.

This violates the letter and the spirit of the Arms Trade Treaty. The treaty calls for universal adherence. We cannot pick and choose, saying that exports to one place will be covered by the treaty, but exports to another place will not. This is not how treaties normally work, and this is not how this particular treaty works.

I would like to get back to the sale of helicopters to the Philippines. People are asking how this could have happened and how the minister approved an export permit for these helicopters to the Philippine government.

The problem is that an export permit was not needed. The agreement between the two defence departments was brokered by the Canadian Commercial Corporation. That is another gaping hole. These are nevertheless exports of a sensitive nature made without the requirement to obtain the minister's approval or an evaluation of the

risk of these arms being used to commit human rights violations. This a gaping hole in how we manage Canadian exports.

What does Bill C-47 do to solve this problem? Guess what, absolutely nothing.

• (1215)

[English]

Bill C-47 does not even cover the activities of the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Commercial Corporation, so there is a huge loophole, and we do not know whether that loophole will still be wide open. Export to the U.S. is not reported on, not covered by the treaty. DND and CCC are not covered by the treaty. What is left is shrinking all the time.

This legislation should be sent to the shredder, because it is basically flawed. I am not the only one to say this. All of the experts are saying it as well, but, of course, the Liberal government will not listen to them. The government will ram through this legislation even though it could weaken the actual treaty. I always wonder where Canada is in the world. To me, it is not back on the world stage.

That would be the ideal solution, but the Liberal government will not do it. However, at least we are trying to improve it a bit. This amendment would close another crucial element of the Arms Trade Treaty that is not covered in the current bill. It would make sure that if an export licence has been given and new information comes to light, the minister has to reassess the export permit. I hope that my colleagues will support that. It is part of the treaty and it should be in the bill. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the minister refused to do so.

Here I will rest my case.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her work in committee.

I find it unfortunate that she is now expressing her opposition to Canada's accession to the ATT. The NDP once took the principled stance that Canada should be a leader in regulating the sale of conventional arms around the world. I am not surprised that, once again, NDP members have abandoned their principled position in favour of partisan opposition in their stance.

I do want to correct the record, though. Bill C-47 will see the entirety of the Government of Canada accede to the ATT. All of the organizations and departments which the member referenced will be a party to ATT standards. It will allow Canada to play a leadership role in regulating the sale of conventional arms worldwide.

Why is the NDP once again proposing to abandon its principled position that will help Canada play a leadership role in the world?

Points of Order

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

He may have missed my speech because I was very clear: we fully support the ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty, but it has to be done properly. We cannot just say that we have signed the treaty, we have to abide by it.

However, we are completely opposed to this bill, which makes a mockery of the Arms Trade Treaty and does not comply with it.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for taking the stand that she did and for presenting it on behalf of our party.

The Liberal government has a propensity to say one thing and do another. The Liberals say that Canada is back internationally. They say that we are acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty like they say they will put UNDRIP into Canadian law, but they drag their heels.

Would it not be nice if the Liberals genuinely acceded to the treaty and we set an example for the world in the treatment and sale of arms?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. She does tremendous work on the nuclear disarmament file, which is a major concern for the NDP. I am pleased to have this opportunity to rise in the House today to congratulate her on the extraordinary work she is doing.

My colleague made a key point about something that we are unfortunately seeing on a number of files. The government members give great speeches, and I must admit that I often agree with what they say about foreign affairs, but I completely disagree with what they are doing. There is in fact a contradiction between what the government is saying and what it is doing.

The Liberals often say one thing and then do the opposite, and not just when it comes to foreign affairs. Two good examples are electoral reform and climate change. Sometimes, they say one thing and then do nothing, much like when they acceded to the optional protocol on torture, which was announced two years ago. There has been complete silence in that regard.

I would like the Liberals to walk the talk, as the saying goes. I am sorry I cannot translate that expression for the interpreters.

[*English*]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for all the work she did at committee on the Arms Trade Treaty, but I would like to ask her this.

We know that once this bill has passed, the Arms Trade Treaty will be legally binding to Canada both in Canadian law and in international law. I am therefore very surprised to hear that now she is stressing that we not ratify and not pass this bill. In fact, when we went to the United States, we spoke with the office of regional security and arms transfers in the Department of State that said the

American rules, in many ways, are even stronger than Canadian rules, including on brokering controls and end-user agreements.

Therefore, if my colleague could please explain why now, after all this—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will give her an opportunity to answer, because we have run out of time.

The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, my Liberal colleagues do not seem to understand the difference between supporting the idea of acceding to the treaty and supporting this very weak bill.

[*English*]

That makes a mockery of the Arms Trade Treaty.

[*Translation*]

I rarely refer to my experience as a diplomat, but when I worked in that capacity, I never would have expected an American diplomat or anyone from the American administration to admit that they have extremely weak rules. We need to face reality. We are not in control of the situation and the Trump administration is further weakening the American export rules.

* * *

• (1225)

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

ACCURACY OF MAY 25 JOURNALS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order in response to the opposition House leader's point of order a few minutes back.

I want to point out that Friday's *Hansard* has a clear transcription of what the House leader said. It is all there in black and white. The Speaker read the motion, and the minister debated the government's Motion No. 22. There is absolutely no ambiguity about that whatsoever. I would draw the House's attention to the *Hansard*, on page 19675, which clearly shows that in fact the debate had begun.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his intervention this time. We will certainly include it with the previous intervention of the official opposition House leader, and we will come back to the House if need be.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-47, An Act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code (amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments), as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to debate Bill C-47, a bill that would implement an international arms control treaty. Bill C-47 lays bare a fundamental difference in the foreign policy approach of the Conservative official opposition and the Liberal government. I agree very much with my NDP colleague that the difference is that the Liberal government is primarily concerned with optics as opposed to real results for Canadians, lots of nice fancy window dressing with little or no results.

Previously, my colleague on this side of the House formally laid out the practical problems we have seen with this legislation, and the practical reality that we already have a strong system of arms control in this country that achieves the stated objective.

We oppose the bill on the grounds that it complicates existing arms control mechanisms that are working extremely well at present, and that, in the process, it introduces substantial problems for responsible, law-abiding Canadian firearms owners. I want to take this opportunity to discuss some issues we have in terms of this proposed legislation.

In real terms, Canada already has a strong and effective system of arms control that in practical effect exceeds the system proposed by the UN treaty. The current system includes the Trade Controls Bureau, which, through the responsible minister, has the ability to prevent us from supplying military equipment to countries where those exports might threaten Canadian security, or in cases where the weapons could be used in an internal or external conflict in general. The current system also includes provisions that allow a complete ban on trade with high-risk countries. Further, it is currently set that the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA, and Statistics Canada collect all such information on goods exported from Canada.

Some might argue that signing on to this UN treaty is important to aligning Canada with other nations. In previous deliberations on this legislation, though, one of the members opposite referenced the nations that had initially signed on to this treaty. However, if we look at the ratification record of countries, we note that the countries accounting for a majority of the sales of military equipment have not signed on to it. Therefore, in actual fact, this treaty is not at all about establishing an effective international regime that we can all align with.

At best, despite amendments, we are in a place where Canadians know one thing for sure, that they cannot trust the government on firearms legislation. We are at that point yet again. Despite earlier attempts through Bill C-47, the government has failed to recognize the legitimacy of lawful firearms ownership and has moved to create all sorts of unnecessary problems and red tape for responsible firearms owners.

Government Orders

This legislation effectively recreates the federal gun registry by requiring the tracking of all imported and exported firearms, and requires that information be available to the minister for six years. Firearms groups and individual owners have repeatedly expressed concerns about the implications of this. They want a strong system of arms control, but they point out that we already have one.

Beyond that, firearms owners are generally frustrated by a constantly shifting classification system that does not provide any meaningful certainty to law-abiding gun owners in Canada. A firearm that is considered legal today could be considered illegal tomorrow, without even the due process of an order in council.

Let us address the trust issue that many law-abiding Canadians have with the government. With respect to the Liberals' new gun legislation, Bill C-71, it does nothing to address real crime and gun violence. It is essentially a regulatory bill, not a public safety bill. What is apparent is that it was drafted without any thought of what it would do to law-abiding firearms owners, like farmers, hunters, collectors, and sport shooters. There is nothing in that proposed legislation that addresses any of the real gang and gun problems facing Canadian families, police, rural communities, first nations, inner cities, border agents, or the issue of rural crime.

Legislation should be about the values and merits of what Canadians need to improve their quality of life, what they need to protect their communities. Legislation should be about empowering people to prosper, not the Liberal Party.

● (1230)

We have heard what Canadians need for safer communities. In ridings like mine with vast rural areas, police can sometimes be hours away. Rural Canadians often feel they are left to fend for themselves. With crime rates increasing by 41% in rural parts of Canada over the last few years, the bill would do nothing to address the needs of rural Canada. However, it has the potential to turn rural Canadians into criminals if they own a firearm.

The reality is that many Canadians have firearms because of where they live and because their livelihood depends on it. Many need a firearm to deal with aggressive predators and to protect their livestock. Others need it for their work, like farmers who might have to put down an animal or control rodents. Sadly, in some rural communities, due to excessive crime, some Canadians feel they need firearms to defend themselves. There are many reasons that rural Canadians need firearms, and they own them legitimately.

Government Orders

Recently at a summit on guns and gangs, police referenced the increasing number of gangs involved in gun violence. This violence often stems from drug related crimes, with shootings often related to gangs protecting their territory. Guns acquired by drug dealers and gang members are almost always acquired through the black market, via smuggling and theft. We know that those involved in gang related shootings do not register their guns; they do not get a licence to own a firearm. They will not show a licence to buy a firearm; they do not go through a background check. They do not submit to police scrutiny. The only people who do that are law-abiding Canadians.

Adding more processes and background checks for law-abiding citizens would do nothing to effectively combat gang related gun violence. Nothing the Liberals have proposed will deal effectively with gangs and their acquisition of illegal weapons, and there is no mention even of gangs, organized crime, or smuggling in the bill.

I talk about all of that because we have a piece of legislation before us that is supposed to work to ensure that international dealings and trade in arms is done responsibly, and that when Canada is exporting weapons or other types of military equipment, we ensure that it is done in a responsible way.

However, there are three problems. The UN treaty does not do that. In fact, what we currently have in place in Canada is extremely effective, and we have already discussed a number of times the already effective way that we export firearms. One wonders, therefore, why are the Liberals so intent on ratifying this agreement.

There are six main arms dealers in the world and three of them have not even signed onto this. We know that the government is quite fascinated with doing things the UN wants, not always thinking about what is in the best interests of Canadians or people who are affected by what the UN says and does. We know that the Liberals like to take their direction from the UN.

In this case it is going to have a negative effect on law-abiding Canadians. Indeed, because of what we have previously seen in Bill C-71 and from the Liberal government generally, members will know that the Liberals introduced the wasteful and ineffective long-gun registry and that firearms owners in Canada have been battling with the Liberals for years and years. Liberals think that law-abiding gun owners are criminals.

The bottom line is that Canadian firearms owners just do not trust the Liberals when it comes to any kind of legislation around firearms. In this case, our regime has been adequate. Fulfilling a political promise is one of the reasons I think the Liberals want to do this, because the Prime Minister said he would ratify this particular agreement. However, we know that he made a whole lot of promises without actually thinking through the implications and that he has broken the majority of them.

The NDP have their reasons and we have ours, but I do not think anybody would be heartbroken or surprised if the Liberals just scrapped this. This bill is not a good bill. It is not going to do anything to effectively combat illegal parts of the international gun trade with our best interests in mind.

The big six arms trading countries are Russia, China, the United States, France, Germany, and the U.K. I will wind up by noting that the countries that are not part of the arms trade treaty include North

Korea, Syria, Iran, Russia, and China. Here, I would say that there is sort of theme with the government in who it likes to challenge and who it just kind of lets go to do their own thing.

I thank the House for this opportunity. I believe very strongly that we just need to scrap this piece of legislation and get on with the business of actually doing things to control illegitimate, gang related gun crime.

● (1235)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it does not surprise me that the Conservatives do not want to see Canada play a leadership role in the world. They never aspired to do this in their time in government.

I heard the member use the word “adequate” to describe our export control system. Our government aspires to something much more than adequate in the way we portray ourselves domestically and abroad.

Finally, this bill will do nothing that affects law-abiding gun owners. I will have the chance to explain more in my coming intervention.

This bill does three things to an already adequate export control system for Canada. It codifies in legislation the criteria by which decisions must be made, including peace and security considerations, human rights, and things like gender-based violence. I would hope that my colleague across the way would see the value of Canada considering such things. The bill also regulates the brokering of arms sales so that brokers must maintain that same level of scrutiny. As well, it adds a substantial risk test to make sure that when arms are sold into conflict zones, there is not a substantial risk that the criteria I just mentioned are contravened.

I would hope that she would agree that these are valuable regulatory aspects that Canada should take a leadership role in.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, let me begin by saying that everyone in this House, regardless of gender, is opposed to gender-based violence. It is time we moved on from the identity politics thing that somehow a woman should be standing up for gender issues. I think we would all definitely agree that when we look around the world and see where people are being victimized, we want to see that stopped, whether or not it is with respect to firearms and weapons being sold and traded.

Government Orders

Here is the problem. My colleague had a problem with the fact that I said our system is adequate. If the Liberals were proposing something would have a global effect on the arms trade and would be a better system, we would all be for it. However, as the Liberals normally do, this is not making our system any better. Therefore, if they want to improve our system, they should have come forward with real suggestions, like maybe talking tough to Iran or China, or using some levers that we have to address some of the horrible things that are going on internationally, rather than penalizing Canadian gun owners by using the system with a UN declaration. Here we have the UN again telling a country like Canada, which is extremely responsible, what to do.

I would welcome improvements. However, there are no improvements in this legislation. It will just affect and hurt Canadian men and women.

• (1240)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member across the way said that Russia and China are not part of the agreement or pact. It is interesting that she would be pointing that out and suggesting that Canada should join Russia and China and not be a part of it. I take no offence to what it is she is trying to infer, but from where I was sitting, it sure sounded like that was what she was trying to imply. She might want to reflect on those particular comments.

The other thing I want to raise is this, and maybe the member could provide a response. If we look at the record-keeping requirements in Bill C-47, they are the same as those when Brian Mulroney was the prime minister and the requirements that were in place prior to him. Would she not agree that those records are actually positive things to keep?

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, let me begin by asking my hon. colleague to reflect on this. Canada in no, way, shape or form can ever be compared to Russia or China in terms of our freedom, rule of law, and human rights.

The Liberals want us to sign onto agreements that would penalize our law-abiding firearms owners, as well as dumb down what we already have in place, just because the UN said we should. This is something I know the Liberals find hard to figure out. They just want to join agreements because then they can say that we are in an agreement, even though this does nothing to help the global problem because all of the people who are causing the big problems are not part of the agreement.

The Liberals always want to put Canada in a tough situation where we look bad, which is hard on us, just so they can say we are in another agreement. It is not good governance.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak today to Bill C-47. Through this bill, our government is going to move forward on an important commitment that we made to Canadians to ensure that Canada fully accedes to the Arms Trade Treaty. The ATT sets an essential standard for the international community to contribute to international and regional peace, security, and stability, and to promote co-operation, transparency, and responsible actions by countries.

I am also proud of the amendments that the foreign affairs committee has made to the bill. We heard from committee members and civil society that they would like to see the ATT criteria placed directly into legislation, including the considerations of peace and security, human rights, and gender-based violence. Therefore, the government supported the committee in making these changes.

We have also made a significant change to the proposed legislation by including a substantial risk test. That would mean that for the first time there would be a direct legal requirement for the government to refuse export permits for items where there is a substantial risk that they would be used to violate the criteria. Bill C-47 would strengthen our arms export system and finally allow Canada to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty.

During its study of Bill C-47, the committee considered the issue of the NDP motion. It chose not to accept the amendment. The amendment we are discussing would require the minister to reconsider the risk of arms that have already been issued export permits, based on “any information that could affect the original determination”. The fact of the matter is, this power already exists. Under the current law, if new information emerges after a permit has been authorized, and before all of the goods and technology covered by that permit have been exported, the minister already possesses the power to amend, suspend, cancel, or reinstate any permit issued. Global Affairs Canada has even released a recent example of this power in action.

[*Translation*]

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs told the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development on February 9, Global Affairs Canada conducted a thorough investigation last summer into the state of security in Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia.

The committee found no conclusive evidence that Canadian-made vehicles were used to commit human rights violations. That was—

• (1245)

[*English*]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. As a result of the fire alarm, the House will now be suspended to the call of the Chair. Therefore, I would ask individuals to exit the Chamber.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 12:45 p.m.)

• (1310)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 1:15 p.m.)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We are ready to continue.

Government Orders

At the point where we were interrupted by the fire alarm, the hon. member had seven minutes for his speech.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Madam Speaker, as I was saying before the interruption, as part of its investigation last summer, Global Affairs Canada found no conclusive evidence that Canadian-made vehicles were used to commit human rights violations. That was the independent and objective finding of our public service.

Export licences for these vehicles were immediately halted on receipt of information shared by the Canadian Embassy in Riyadh.

[*English*]

I can assure the member opposite that this power of suspension would be used again if and when necessary.

The proposed amendment by the member also does not reflect the text or spirit of the ATT. The text of the ATT states:

If, after an authorization has been granted, an exporting State Party becomes aware of new relevant information, it is encouraged to reassess the authorization

That is the authority that the Minister of Foreign Affairs currently has and exercises.

The motion before us is broader than anything contemplated by the treaty. It would also significantly create additional administrative risk and could impact the competitiveness of Canadian industry. This is in contrast to the current approach, which employs an evidence-based risk assessment, allowing resources and attention to focus on higher-risk export destinations, and sensitive goods and technologies.

[*Translation*]

Imposing a legislative requirement in order to call for a review every time without first considering the veracity or reliability of the information could burden export control operations, cause uncertainty, and impose an extra administrative burden on both the Canadian industry and government, which is responsible for the regulations.

[*English*]

This amendment could also have the detrimental effect of resulting in higher-risk cases not receiving the proper attention they require. In that sense, not only would it be redundant but it could also be harmful.

Let me turn now to the deletion motion put forward by the Conservatives.

I will state clearly that Bill C-47 would not impact domestic gun laws, it would not affect gun controls in Canada, and it would not create a new gun registry. In fact, the ATT preamble recognizes the “legitimate trade and lawful ownership, and use of certain conventional arms for recreational, cultural, historical, and sporting activities”.

The objective of the ATT is to ensure that international trade in conventional arms does not contribute to international conflict and instability or to violations of human rights. It does not target the lawful, responsible use of firearms, nor does it prevent the lawful, responsible sale, export, or import of weapons.

Of course, it should come as no surprise to anyone on this side of the floor that the Conservatives are choosing to ignore the reality of Bill C-47 and are instead seeking to scare Canadians by pretending that this bill would do something that it would not in fact do, and it will come as no surprise to Canadians that the Conservatives are once again placing partisan politics above human rights. This is exactly the sort of politics that Canadians voted to get rid of in 2015.

The reality is that parts of the Export and Import Permits Act dealing with record-keeping have been in effect in Canada for years. In fact, they were in effect under the former government and under governments preceding that. Why did the former government not try to change it during its 10 years? It is because the reality is that Canadians have no issues with these parts of the Export and Import Permits Act.

Greg Farrant of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters said that:

...the keeping of and retention of records by importers, exporters, firearms dealers, and end-users for defined periods of time that is referred to in the bill, without being required to turn these records over to the government on demand, is something that most in the industry already do for insurance and other purposes.

• (1320)

All clause 11 would do is add the term “organization” to the existing authorities to ensure that organizations would also be subject to existing record keeping requirements. This clause would simply remove the clarity that organizations would also require permits. In fact, the committee inserted a “for greater certainty” clause into the bill to make it crystal clear that the changes to the EIPA would not affect domestic gun use or control.

However, here we are, once again, with the Conservatives trying to delete this clause, which directly addresses the very concerns they are raising.

Our government is proud of the important commitment we have made with Bill C-47. The bill would amend the Export and Import Permits Act to allow Canada to accede, finally, to the Arms Trade Treaty.

[*Translation*]

This treaty is the first to address the illicit trade in conventional arms. It establishes an essential standard for the international community. It is high time that Canada joined the many NATO and G7 partners by acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty.

[*English*]

The bill before the House today would place Canada at the forefront of our allies and partners in implementing the spirit and letter of the Arms Trade Treaty, and it would allow Canada to hold itself to a higher standard on the export of arms.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I disagree completely with what the parliamentary secretary is proposing in the legislation.

Government Orders

We have to remember that Canada already has a very vigilant system of export permits on any military equipment and security weapons that are exported. What the Liberals are planning to do is add more bureaucracy. I would like to give an example.

Right now in Winnipeg, we have a company called PGW Defence. It is one of the best firearms manufacturers in Canada, if not the world. It builds the best sniper rifles in the world, which are sold to our allies. The company is already in real crisis because Global Affairs Canada has been dragging its feet on signing export permits, so it can export firearms to our allies and friends around the world to strengthen their military. Essentially, it is pushing them to the financial brink.

The Liberals want to add more red tape, which is not in the best interests of this company, not in the best interests of people who work for that company in Winnipeg, and it is definitely not in the best interests of the Canadian Armed Forces that depend on that company for a supply of sniper rifles.

Will the parliamentary secretary admit that the Liberals are just going to put more red tape on Canadian manufacturers, putting them at a disadvantage to competitors around the world?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Madam Speaker, I certainly will not do that.

This bill in no way suggests or actually in reality leads to what the member opposite is claiming. We recognize, fully, the industrial base that the manufacturing and sale of conventional weapons has in Canada. Significant consultation with that sector has been undertaken in the drafting, and in some of the revision, that has gone into the bill, after we heard from committee members and witnesses at the committee stage.

What the bill would do is add to an already robust import and export realm in Canada to ensure certain criteria dealing with peace and security considerations, the upholding of human rights, and important things like gender-based violence are taken into consideration and encoded right in the legislation when the minister makes decisions about issuing an export permit.

I would hope members opposite support that sort of goal and aim, to ensure that human rights are upheld, that sexual violence and gender-based violence committed to vulnerable populations around the world is taken into considerable account, with a substantial risk test on top of that, including brokers, to ensure that Canada takes a leadership role in areas of conflict around the world.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, robust export and import rules that enable us to export to Saudi Arabia, have Canadian producers sell arms to South Sudan or send helicopters to the Philippines, we have a different definition of strong.

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

The main point I wanted to make is that my colleague seemed to suggest that we would be voting against this bill for partisan reasons. Our reasons echo the reasons given by experts, who are all saying that this is a botched bill and it should be thrown out. Project Ploughshares, the Control Arms Coalition, and the Rideau Institute,

to name just a few, all agree that this bill does not reflect the spirit or the letter of the treaty.

The Liberals say they prefer evidence-based policy, so why are they ignoring the opinions of experts?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Madam Speaker, on the contrary, we took expert input into account. They told us in committee that they thought the criteria should be inserted directly into the legislation, so that is what we did. They told us we need stricter controls over arms exports in order to determine the potential risk of these arms being used to violate human rights or commit atrocities. This bill provides those stricter controls.

[*English*]

We are hearing the NDP, which stood on principle and said that Canada should adhere to the ATT, now suggesting it is going to vote against a bill that would allow Canada to live up to both the letter and the spirit of that treaty.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to address this very positive legislation. Once again, we have before us another legislative initiative that will put in place a commitment we made to the Canadian people back in the last federal election.

We now have been in government for just over two and a half years. Every week it seems we are fulfilling another aspect of the platform that was presented to Canadians and voted on by them. We are putting these things into place.

It was interesting listening to the debate from the Conservatives and the New Democrats. The words that come to mind are “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”. The Conservatives are very clear; they do not like the legislation. For whatever reason, however misguided they might be, they have decided they are not in favour of this legislation. That does not surprise me. What does surprise me is what my New Democrat friends have had to say. In listening to the member, the critic, speak on this, one could draw the conclusion that they too do not support the legislation.

This reminds me of that unholy alliance that we see time and again between the New Democrats and the Conservatives. They do not want to see progressive, positive legislation pass through the chamber. If they were listening to what Canadians expect and want to see of good government, they would recognize this legislation for what it is. It is very positive and it will have a positive impact not only in Canada but around the world.

Canada is such a fortunate country. We live in such a privileged place, with opportunity for our population base of between 36 and 37 million people. We carry a great deal of clout around the world. Many countries from around the world look at the types of policies Canada develops and the kind of leadership we demonstrate.

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On this file, the arms trade treaty, it is disappointing how long it has taken for us to see it come to fruition. Contrary to what the Conservatives and the New Democrats will say, I believe this legislation will pass. Why? Not only did we make a commitment to it in the last federal election, but we have the support of Canadians in all regions of the country who want to see Canada continue to play that strong national leadership role.

Other G7 countries have already signed onto the Arms Trade Treaty. I think Canada might be alone on that. As well, we could talk about the NATO countries. We are way behind in what other NATO countries have already done in recognizing the value of this agreement.

With the passage of the legislation, in essence we are signing onto an agreement that will make a difference. It is not to take anything away. My friend from across the way, a Conservative from Manitoba, talked about an industry in the city of Winnipeg. It is not only snipers or weapons that are made in Canada or, in this case, in Winnipeg. Many other aspects of military hardware are developed and put into factories, which produce fantastic middle-class jobs that provide all sorts of economic opportunity. In many areas, we are world leaders on some of that production, development, and research in this whole field.

● (1330)

That said, we also have a responsibility that goes beyond just exporting for the sake of exporting or importing for the sake of importing. To me, in good part that is what this legislation is about. We have had import and export legislation for many years.

The Conservative opposition House leader, the member for Portage—Lisgar, talks a great deal about the issue of guns and restrictions, and tries to give a false impression. Again, just listen to what the Conservative Party is saying here in Ottawa, which appears to be that their concern and primary objection is that there are too many restrictions being put in place on possible gun ownership by an expanding bureaucracy. However, the legislation has not really changed what already exists. There might have been a word changed from the way it was when Brian Mulroney was the prime minister, but it is non-consequential. In fact, it was Brian Mulroney who put in a lot of those regulations we are talking about and reinforcing today.

The Export and Import Permits Act actually came into force back in 1985. When the Conservatives try to give a false impression to legitimate gun owners that somehow this government is trying to put into place some form of registration or bureaucracy, it is just not true. The member across the way said that it was 100%, and it is just not true. It does not bother them to stand in their place to state something that is not true. Not only will they say it inside the chamber, but also outside of it, even if we point out that it is not true. Irrespective of whether or not ministers and others who have been very clear on the issue point this out, the opposition members continue to spread these myths and untruths because they have turned it into a political issue. For them, it is not as much about public safety or even providing more peace and assurances throughout the world, but all about politics and raising money from an issue they believe they can stay on top of and thus make money from via fundraising. I find that somewhat sad.

At the end of the day, I do not really understand what specifically it is about the legislation that the Conservatives believe Canadians would oppose. They say it is the bureaucracy that will result, but they do not substantiate that in any tangible way. They are simply going to oppose the legislation.

On the other hand, my New Democratic friends are criticizing us in terms of consistency. I remember the former leader of the New Democratic Party saying to a crowd of people that he would honour the agreement with Saudi Arabia. Today, New Democrats criticize the government about Saudi Arabia, but during an election period the leader of the New Democratic Party said he would do the very same thing. There are inconsistencies within the New Democratic Party on this very important issue.

I am suggesting that members should recognize this legislation for what it is, that it will have a profoundly positive impact. It will demonstrate that Canada can provide world leadership on the Arms Trade Treaty through import and export legislation. That is a good thing.

● (1335)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoy it when my friend speaks extemporaneously because it is usually based more on hyperbole than on fact. The challenge we face with the government is that we have two bills, Bill C-47, which we are debating today, and, I would suggest, its companion, Bill C-71, the Liberals' way for reintroducing the long-gun registry via the backdoor. He claims he is not doing that, but Bill C-71 requires record taking, this time not at the home, but at the store, and record retention.

Now by bringing in brokers with respect to Bill C-47, the Liberals are essentially allowing for a UN-led long-gun registry. Several Liberal members, such as for Kenora, Northumberland—Peterborough South, Peterborough—Kawartha, know that people did not like the divisive approach of the Allan Rock gun registry. Now the Liberals are bringing it back by stealth through two pieces of legislation.

If the member is sincere with respect to Bill C-47, will he use his immense influence in the caucus to pull back Bill C-71 so we can say that they are not tied together?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my colleague across the way is fairly knowledgeable about House proceedings and today we are debating Bill C-47. That said, we have told the Conservative members that what they are saying is just not true. It is factually incorrect. One would think that our bluntness would make them stop telling those untruths, but they do not. A case in point is the question by the member opposite.

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I do not know what more the government can do to try to say to the official opposition that if they listened to what Canadians are saying, that the type of legislation we are passing today is based on the fact that we made a commitment to bring in such legislation, they would recognize the value it provides. It provides Canada with an opportunity not only to protect a very important industry in different regions of our country, but also allows us to continue to be strong advocates of human rights and peace initiatives around the world. There is so much more that Canada can do in terms of world leadership, and this is one of those pieces of legislation that feeds into that.

• (1340)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree that the Conservatives tend to stand on this and many other bills and speak about the myths of pieces of legislation and to base most of their argument on how they can best incite fear in Canadians. It is a sad state of our democracy that we are likely to go into the 2019 election with the Conservatives intending anywhere and anyhow they can to try to instill fear in the minds of Canadians. It was not successful in 2015 and I know that Canadians will likely be inclined to reject that again in a year and a half's time.

Does my hon. colleague think there is significant value in codifying into legislation criteria around the import and export of arms that would make sure that when we sign an export permit, the current foreign minister and all future foreign ministers will take into consideration issues of peace and security and stabilization in countries, human rights, and things like gender-based violence, and the diversion of conventional weapons—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, I do have to allow the member to answer. I would ask members to keep their interventions short when asking their questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has about 35 seconds to reply.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, absolutely, I think the parliamentary secretary is right on. When we think of Canadian values and the issues of peace and security, human rights, and gender-based violence, the way forward is to pass this legislation with its legal obligations and risk test, which reflect the types of things I have mentioned. That is why I would encourage my New Democratic friends, in particular, to rethink their position and possibly support this legislation.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoy debates because sometimes I have a few notes prepared for them. However, if Canadians are watching this debate, it is better for me to rebut some of the ridiculous positions just outlined by the deputy House leader for the Liberal Party and so ably and ridiculously outlined by the parliamentary secretary.

If Canadians are concerned about why Bill C-47 is before this House and perhaps why Canada did not sign onto the UN Arms Trade Treaty, I will explain why that did not happen under the former Conservative government. I will also explain our concerns about Bill C-47 and its companion bill, Bill C-71, which has sports shooters, lawful gun owners, and hunters concerned about a return to an Allan Rock style of gun registry of the past. These are valid concerns, and I am going to show why reasonable questions have been asked of the

current government by Canadians, but have been ignored. Not only have they been ignored, but the Liberals are also trying to create a wedge between urban and rural Canada, the same old things we saw from Allan Rock and Jean Chrétien decades ago.

In their remarks, the Liberals have said that the Conservatives are saying things that are not true. My friend said it is crystal clear that the lawful use of firearms would not be caught up in Bill C-47 and Bill C-71. I am going to explain why the former Conservative government did not sign onto the UN ATT. I would note that several other countries have not done so either.

As we heard at committee from Steve Torino, who was involved at the time with the Canadian delegation and the advisers to the government on the UN Arms Trade Treaty, Canada was consistently asking for a carve-out for the lawful and cultural use of firearms by hunters, aboriginal Canadians, and sports shooters. Canada was consistently advocating for a specific carve-out in the body of the treaty. Canada under the Conservative government did not just roll over. We expressed our desire to see an outcome that was fair to our citizens. We could not get that, so we kept pushing. The current government rolled over, and there was no such provision in the UN treaty. In fact, the only reference to the lawful use went in the preamble to the treaty, which states:

Mindful of the legitimate trade and lawful ownership, and use of certain conventional arms for recreational, cultural, historical, and sporting activities, where such trade, ownership and use are permitted or protected by law.

Unfortunately, a reference in the preamble is not a specific treaty provision or section. It is insufficient. In fact, I quoted University of Toronto law professor, Kent Roach, at committee and I will quote him to this House to say that it is a mug's game to rely on a preamble. The parliamentary secretary seems to think it is sufficient. Professor Roach said this about preambles:

Preambles can oversell legislation either by expressing unrealistic hopes that are not always supported by the fine print or the text of the law or by suggesting that "we can have it all".

Therefore, only fools rely on preambles, and we have heard a good dose of their perspective here this morning.

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As a lawyer, I want to see something in the print of the treaty. That is what Canada was pushing for, and we should not sign treaties until we are satisfied that aboriginal use of firearms, hunting, and traditional and cultural uses are considered to be fair and that some of the most lawful Canadians who do so are respected. These same Canadians have asked the parliamentary secretary and the Liberals to provide that same specific exemption in Bill C-47. In fact, Greg Farrant from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and Steve Torino, as I mentioned, were working on these. Our committee acknowledged that it would be reasonable to put this provision directly in Bill C-47, because we cannot rely on the preamble at law. That did not happen. Indeed, the Conservatives were prepared to work with the government on Bill C-47 if we could get that bare-bones, reasonable assurance. Therefore, when the Liberals stand in the House and suggest that we are misleading Canadians or that we are not telling the truth, I will go to any of their ridings and have this same conversation there, because I am not using talking points from the Prime Minister's Office.

• (1345)

I know this bill and the history of it, and what Canada was asking for is reasonable. It is reasonable to say that first nations can continue to use rifles and to do their traditional hunt. That is protected by Supreme Court decisions. With respect to lawful ownership in Canada, some of our most law-abiding citizens use their right responsibly.

Once again, Bill C-47, with its companion Bill C-71, sets up this dynamic in which the Liberals are trying to portray some Canadians as being unreasonable or as being risks, and that is divisive.

What is also divisive is the suggestion that without the bill, we would be able to sell arms to countries where there is gender-based violence or human rights crimes. In fact, Wendy Gilmour, who is the director general of the government department that manages the country control list and these controlled goods, said clearly at committee that the ability to control exports based on sanction, human rights abuse, and violence, and therefore to preclude arms sales, has existed since 1986. In fact, she referred to the memo from Joe Clark on the ability to stop arms sales in these circumstances. Last I checked, he was a Conservative member of Parliament at the time.

It is misleading Canadians to suggest that without Bill C-47, we are suddenly going to be selling arms in situations where there is ethnic cleansing or gender-based violence. Once again, that is misleading and unfair, and I would invite the parliamentary secretary to look at the committee transcripts wherein his senior official acknowledges that this has been true since 1986.

In fact, in my last speech on this issue, I noted that since the 1940s, Canada has had a superior arms control regulatory regime compared to the ATT. It is superior on many fronts. In fact, the area control list right now only contains one country, which is North Korea. However, for decades, through legislation and regulation, we have had the ability to stop all trade of all goods with any country. Wendy Gilmour, the deputy general, acknowledged this in committee, when she said:

Indeed. The purpose of the area control list is to give the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Canada the ability to control, but not necessarily restrict, the movement of any items to a country listed on the [area control list].

For decades, we have been able to responsibly control the movement of military goods and nuclear materials. Canada has actually been a leader in this.

Since 1986, with the Conservative government of Brian Mulroney, we have also been able to restrict based on concerns with respect to human rights abuses, and a range of other things. Canada is a responsible player. Therefore, when the government puts up Bill C-47 and its companion Bill C-71 to once again sow division, it is doing so based on a premise that is not only false, but it is misleading. If it thinks that a preamble provides the appropriate protection for the lawful use of firearms by Canadians and indigenous Canadians, it is showing it does not understand that it should fight for Canadian interests when it is negotiating an international treaty. Furthermore, since Bill C-71 is being brought in shortly after Bill C-47, there are real concerns by some Canadians that the government is bringing back the gun registry of the Chrétien-Rock era and it will be providing for the provision of records, or this same approach to the United Nations.

That is terrible. Canada should be very proud of the fact that we have one of the most responsible regimes for the trade of military-type goods and controlled goods, and we have had it since the 1940s. In fact, this week in Ottawa, we are going to see the defence and security industry at the CANSEC show. It will include tens of thousands of Canadians who work in the defence and security industries. We have been a world leader on satellite technology and aerospace. We were the third or fourth country to have controlled nuclear fission. We are leaders in these technologies, and we are also leaders when it comes to regulation.

I would like to see the Liberal government stop this divisive, inaccurate, and biased approach to legislation. I would be happy to come to Liberal ridings to debate these things, and not just in the House of Commons. These are the facts, and this is why we have concerns about both of these bills.

• (1350)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is disinformation laden throughout the member's speech. Let me try to deal with a few pieces of it. First, it is clear in the ATT itself, and in Bill C-47, that in no way would this affect law-abiding gun owners domestically in Canada. Everything that the member opposite spoke about, the use of guns by law-abiding gun owners for recreation and social purposes in Canada, is not affected in any way by our accession to the ATT, and the Conservatives should stop spreading misinformation about that to Canadians.

Statements by Members

Second, with respect to the aspects of the export and import permits act that allow the minister to consider certain criteria, they have been around since 1986, but they have not been codified in legislation, and there is no legal requirement. Does the member opposite intend to tell me that he does not think it should be a legal requirement for a minister to consider grave atrocities, peace and security situations, the upholding of human rights, and aspects of gender-based violence in the export of conventional arms? Should that not be a legal requirement for this government and any future government?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I am glad that the member started with reference to disinformation just before he acknowledged I was right when it comes to 1986 provisions that can prevent the sale of any of these controlled goods to countries for all those reasons.

I was very offended by the fact that he suggested Canada could be selling weapons to countries gripped by gender-based violence. He is making that emotional appeal, which is what the Liberals do, based on a faulty and misleading record. Since 1986, this has been policy of the federal government.

I also mentioned the area control list. If they were concerned about a country, or several countries in particular, they could ban all trade with those countries under existing regulations now. We did not have to wait until the United Nations told us how to do this. We were doing this before the United Nations was even created.

When it comes to reasonable concerns that lawful firearms owners, first nations, hunters, and all these people, have had, they have made a reasonable request for a specific carve-out in the legislation. That is why the Conservatives did not sign on to the treaty. We want a black and white carve-out. The preamble is a fool's game. The member represents Fredericton. There is a great law school, UNB, located there. I would refer him to some first-year law students at the law school to tell him whether a preamble is enough when he is negotiating on behalf of Canadians.

• (1355)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Durham for his excellent speech, and for pointing out the reality of what is in the bill. The preamble is nothing but window dressing, and we cannot have best wishes working their way into the substance of the bill. When this becomes law, the judges and courts are going to be looking at the meat and potatoes, which are the clauses of the act. They clearly outline that anyone who is buying a firearm in our country will not only be subject to having its serial number registered with the Government of Canada, but it will be registered with the United Nations. It clearly outlines that anyone who wants to import firearms may not have that ability to do so, because American companies in particular would not want to mark their firearms in the way that the UN treaty demands.

It also would put our military defensive weapon manufacturers at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the world, because it is about more bureaucracy, more red tape, and an inability to move their firearms to our friends and allies, who are often fighting for the same democratic values that we hold as Canadians. I would ask my colleague, who is a veteran himself, if he could comment on how this could undermine our own Canadian Armed Forces.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my friend's comments, because I think the Conservative government's concern with the UN ATT was related to the fact that cultural and lawful uses by indigenous Canadians and licensed Canadians was not being respected by legislation. For Canadians to think about this, would they like the protection on their home sale to rely just on an email that the lawyer sends the contract with, or on the contract itself? They would want that provision in law. That is why I cited Professor Roach from the U of T law school saying that preambles cannot be relied upon.

However, what is concerning is that all the federation of anglers and hunters and sports shooters wanted was a reasonable provision saying that the cultural and lawful use would be excluded from the bill. Not only was that ignored by the government, it then brought in Bill C-71, which is creating a new registry through the store system. Not only has the goodwill of all groups that wanted to pass Bill C-47 with these assurances in place been ignored by the Liberals, but they set up Bill C-71, which they premised upon guns and gangs; however, there is nothing in there for illegally smuggled weapons. At the same time, they are hurting our defence and security industries, as my friend from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman pointed out, in stopping lawful sales by our suppliers, at a time when if we lose this ability, we will lose suppliers for our own military.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

NOTHERN ECONOMY

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Madam Speaker, in the past, the Government of Canada has used a one-size-fits-all approach to decision-making, seemingly believing that what works in the south will work in the north. In fact, this is not the case. The north, in particular my riding, Nunavut, has its own unique challenges, which require a different approach.

Carbon pricing and flight duty time regulations are two examples where this uniqueness must be considered.

For carbon pricing, it is no secret that Nunavut already has the highest cost of living, unemployment, and poverty in the country. Without exemptions, the financial burden would only increase and the struggles continue.

The proposed changes to flight duty time regulations may not be a big issue for large airlines operating in the south. However, these changes, if implemented, would threaten the very survival of the small airlines that service the people of my riding.

Statements by Members

The government has repeatedly indicated that Nunavut's unique nature would be taken into account when making decisions. Now is the time to act on this commitment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FABROSE SOCCER CLUB

Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Fabrose soccer club was founded 50 years ago and has over 2,600 players. I am very proud to announce that a semi-professional Laval team is now part of the Quebec premier soccer league. Young people from the riding of Marc-Aurèle-Fortin now have a place to pursue their careers.

I would also like to congratulate the club on the 17th edition of its Minotaures tournament. From June 9 to 11, our recreational tournament will reward teams that demonstrate sportsmanship and discipline throughout the year. Everyone wins at the Minotaures tournament. Way to go!

* * *

• (1400)

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, people keep telling me that pipelines matter only to Alberta, but all of Canada is affected by pipelines.

Since the Liberals took power in 2015, the level of active rigs in northern Alberta has dropped from 1,800 to 400, dramatically reducing the need for drill stem.

This impacts a community like Sault Ste. Marie, where I recently met with the mayor, the chamber of commerce, not-for-profits, small business owners, first nations, and shift workers. They told me that steel ore is mined in northern Quebec and shipped to Sault Ste. Marie, where it is heated up with natural gas from the west and turned into drill stem to be used in the northern Alberta oil patch.

Instead of championing pipelines, the Liberal government has repeatedly blocked and undermined them, putting at risk jobs across Canada and in Sault Ste. Marie.

I have a message for all these communities today. While MPs like the member for Sault Ste. Marie will not stand up for pipelines and the jobs that come with them, Canada's Conservatives will always stand up for workers. We have their back.

* * *

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Madam Speaker, May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month. Lyme disease continues to be a serious concern for the residents in my riding, New Brunswick Southwest, and increasingly across our country.

That is why, in addition to my continued advocacy on education and prevention of Lyme disease, I organized a Lyme disease round table this month, bringing together for the first time representatives from New Brunswick's universities, research institutions, medical

professions, and patient advocacy groups. We specifically addressed Lyme disease research projects in New Brunswick and the opportunities for these groups to further collaborate. Although there are a number of separate research projects currently being undertaken in our province, this gave participants a better understanding of what is being studied and how we can work together for opportunities to collaboratively advance this research.

It was a unique concept to bring these groups together, and I am confident that the collaboration will make a difference in New Brunswick Southwest and across the country for Lyme disease research.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ARMENIA

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago today, on May 28, 1918, the first independent Republic of Armenia was born. It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today in honour of this anniversary.

After a horrific genocide, the collapse of the Russian empire, and the misery of the First World War, Armenians declared themselves to be an independent state thanks in large part to the heroic resistance of Aram Manukian, who fought at the gates of Yerevan for Armenian independence.

A hundred years later, Armenians are once again making history. Just last month, a grassroots movement led to peaceful democratic change. After an 11-day-long peaceful protest for leadership change, the people forced the prime minister to resign. I wish the new Armenian prime minister, Nikol Pashinian, the best of luck.

Long live the independent Republic of Armenia!

* * *

PARENTS

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, I have been thrilled by the renewed popularity of our favourite superheroes on the silver screen. As a father, I am so pleased to share the stories of Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Peter Parker, and Clark Kent with my children, Ellie and Anderson. Now, as an adult, I realize that the real superheroes in our lives are our parents. Our parents seem to defy gravity, time, and space, despite the challenges they face. This is certainly true of my own mother, Louisa, and my mentors, Jean-Paul and Alan.

[*English*]

With Mother's Day just behind us and Father's Day on the horizon, on Saturday, June 2, I will be hosting a barbecue to celebrate the tireless work of all parents in my community, Vaudreuil—Soulanges. Parents can bring their kids and enjoy some well-deserved barbecue at my office, served up by none other than Spider-Man and his friends.

Until then, may our spidey senses serve us well, may there always be a phone booth nearby, and may the force be with us, always.

*Statements by Members***NEW HAMBURG MENNONITE RELIEF SALE**

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 1967, I attended the very first New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. The sale was organized in response to the worldwide need for relief from hunger, poverty, and natural disasters.

This past weekend's sale, marking 52 years, raised over \$300,000. Since 1967, over \$16 million has been raised to meet human need and to work for peace and justice in the name of Christ.

Handcrafted quilts continue to be the main attraction, drawing bidders from around the world. This year's highest bid was \$6,600. However, there are many other high-quality items for sale: fresh strawberry pies, garden plants, antique tractors, apple fritters, and ethnic food specialties, including my favourite, Salvadoran pupusas.

I want to thank the hundreds of volunteers, the sponsors, and the auctioneers who donated their time; the New Hamburg Independent, which printed the program; and all those who purchased an item. The success of the sale is a wonderful reflection of our community's heart for assisting those in need. God bless all of them for their sacrificial service.

* * *

● (1405)

MANITOBA WILDFIRES

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with 183 fires in Manitoba, 57% more than the average over the past 20 years, the safety and well-being of the 1,800 people from Sapotawayak, Little Grand Rapids, and Pauingassi are of utmost importance.

The seriousness of fire emergencies is presently the subject matter of the indigenous and northern affairs committee. We know from hearings that more steps need to be taken.

We would like to thank the indigenous services department, the Province of Manitoba, Public Safety, the Department of National Defence, and the Red Cross for taking the necessary steps to stabilize the fires and evacuate residents safely.

This year, fires were dealt with more effectively. We thank the chiefs, councils, and local volunteers for stepping up and improving the evacuations. Nonetheless, there is still more to learn, and much more to do.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL ACCESSABILITY WEEK

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the second edition of National AccessAbility Week.

[English]

From May 27 to June 2, we are highlighting and promoting the valuable contributions that Canadians with visible and invisible disabilities make to our great country.

[Translation]

Our government is committed to promoting equal opportunities and the full inclusion of Canadians with disabilities.

[English]

In light of our commitment, our government will soon be introducing accessibility legislation that would help eliminate the barriers that people with disabilities still face in sectors under federal jurisdiction.

We know that this new legislation would get us closer to where we need to be, but new laws alone are not enough. We must all work together to build a more inclusive, accessible, and resilient Canada.

[Translation]

Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating National AccessAbility Week all across the country. Quite simply, Canada is at its best and all of society benefits when we all make an effort to be more inclusive.

* * *

[English]

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is Tourism Week, a chance to celebrate all things tourism-related and to recognize the tremendous impact that tourism has on our country. It is a \$91-billion industry that supports over 1.8 million jobs across Canada. Our tourism industry is also one of the top employers of youth across Canada.

Last year, Canada welcomed a record number of international visitors, nearly 21 million people. This is thanks to the hard work of all the tourism operators in Canada, from the small business owners and the workers who make up the beds in hotels and lodges to the chefs in restaurants.

There are so many great things about our country, from the breathtaking mountains in the west to the majestic coastlines in the east. Tourism makes it possible for Canadians to introduce Canada to the world in a stunning way. In my constituency is Banff National Park, the most visited national park in the country, drawing in millions of Canadian and international visitors each year.

We should all take some time this week to recognize the hard work of all those in our tourism industry.

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DOG GUIDES

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about my dog, Walnut.

Walnut is an adorable five-month-old yellow lab. However, he is not really my dog. Deirdre and I are fostering Walnut as part of the dog guides program run by the Lions Foundation of Canada. Members can see Walnut on my social media.

Statements by Members

Because of the foundation, Walnut and hundreds of other dogs will go on to make a difference. Those who live with disabilities benefit from this program at no cost because it is all done through private donations.

This past weekend, the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides took place in 300 communities across Canada. It was organized to increase awareness and funds. I walked with Walnut, other canines, and their human friends. One hundred per cent of the money goes to the program and, to date, \$15 million has been raised. I salute every participant who walked, on two or four legs.

In six months, Walnut is going to leave us to go into training, but he is going on to help somebody and change somebody's life. He has certainly changed mine.

* * *

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

ACADIE-BATHURST TITAN

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to announce that the Acadie-Bathurst Titan have won the 2018 Memorial Cup.

[*English*]

Last night, Titan defeated the Regina Pats 3-0 to bring the cup home to northeastern New Brunswick for the first time since their move to Bathurst in 1998.

This championship victory comes on the heels of their QMJHL President's Cup win on May 13 against the Blainville-Boisbriand Armada. As with all great victories, this one was a team effort.

[*Translation*]

First I want to congratulate these young players on their determination and their extraordinary efforts during both tournaments. Congratulations also to the head coach, Mario Pouliot, his entire coaching staff, and the general manager, Sylvain Couturier, whose leadership and support all season long were crucial to those victories. Thank you also to the group of local owners who purchased the team in 2013 to keep it in Bathurst. Last but not least, thank you to the fans for their constant encouragement. Well done, Acadie-Bathurst Titan. We are all proud of the team and their victory.

* * *

[*English*]

SMALL-TOWN HOCKEY

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, small-town hockey leaves a lasting impression on everyone involved. Each season sees great expectations, amazing triumphs, and heartbreaking loss. This spring, we have seen, up close, all of these things.

The Humboldt Broncos suffered a horrible tragedy. The wrenching agony of losing 16 young people was overwhelming for families, friends, and the province. Stories of courage and generosity underscored the Saskatchewan sense of community.

A much more positive event was the Swift Current Broncos playoff run. A team transformed at the trade deadline defeated the best teams in western Canada to win the WHL title and, for the first time in 25 years, went to the Memorial Cup. They never quit, even after playing 25 playoff games and with several players hurt. They brought Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan together. Manny Viveiros, the coach of the Swift Current Broncos, said, "It's not just about the game; it's more about the community and the passion."

Congratulation to all Broncos. They made us proud.

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EXPLOSION IN MISSISSAUGA

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to the victims of last week's heinous act in Mississauga. On Thursday evening last week, two birthday parties were being held at the Bombay Bhel restaurant. At a time when families and friends should be celebrating, the atmosphere of joy was quickly turned into an environment of panic and pain.

Hate has no place in Canada. What the perpetrators did last week was nothing more than a cowardly act that achieved nothing to divide and weaken our community spirit. While the attackers ran away from the scene, people in and around the restaurant ran toward those in need and responded with compassion and care. This is the Canada we know and love. This is the Canada that stands up against intolerance and violence.

We stand together in solidarity and strength. I wish to give special thanks to the emergency services and the local businesses that lent a hand.

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITH POLITICS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year I launched the Create Your Canada contest, which invited students in grades 11 and 12 to come up with an idea for a private member's bill.

Over the course of the last two months, I have been busy visiting high schools in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and talking with students about how Parliament works. Our youth are our country's most valuable resource, and I believe that their positive introduction and engagement with politics are key to our future ability to effectively deal with the major issues of the 21st century.

I am incredibly proud of all the students who submitted ideas, and I commend them for their hard work and thoughtful ideas. It is my sincere hope that by working together, thinking about the issues affecting Canada, and providing an idea for legislation, they have become authors of their own empowerment and will stay engaged with the Canadian political process in the years and decades ahead.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, keeping Canadians safe should be the priority of every government and a serious crime should never be taken lightly, yet the Liberals are pushing ahead with legislation to reduce sentencing for serious crimes.

Human trafficking is a despicable crime, with a devastating impact on its victims. It is a crime that is growing in Canada. We need to be sending a clear message to perpetrators that modern-day slavery is unacceptable in our communities and carries a severe penalty. Instead, through Bill C-75, the Liberals are eliminating consecutive sentences for human traffickers.

Canadians are right to be concerned. This misguided legislation could result in lighter sentencing for a long list of serious crimes. The Liberal government is not taking criminal justice issues seriously. The rights of victims should always be the priority, and sentencing should always match the severity of the crime.

* * *

● (1415)

TOURISM IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, winter has come to an end in most of the country and the tourism season is upon us. What better place to visit than my home province of Prince Edward Island, the garden of the gulf?

In Cavendish, as many thousands have done before, people can tour the famous Green Gables grounds, visiting areas that inspired the classic novel. Along the 1,100 kilometres of coastline are local fisheries. Inland the farms grow food as fresh as the fish caught on the coastline. Experiential tourism is taking off. On a sunny day, people can kayak out to a clam bar, harvest some clams, and then return to shore and make some fresh clam chowder. Maybe some people would prefer to build a sensational sand castle in the iconic red sand of North Rustico Beach.

Whether people want to spend a day relaxing on the beach, touring the birthplace of Confederation in Charlottetown, or golfing on courses with views like no other, as summer is near, they should come and find their island.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister about the illegal border crossings in the country. As many already know, this is a serious issue we have in this country. Over 25,000 people have crossed over since it began, and indeed there were 600 over this past weekend alone. There are strains within our own federal system, and now we are seeing strains on housing in local municipalities.

What I would like to know from the Prime Minister is this: what is his plan to deal with this situation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to a compassionate asylum system, all the while ensuring that only those who should be in Canada are allowed to stay. In contrast, the Harper Conservatives cut \$390 million from the CBSA and cut refugee health care. They created massive backlogs and processing delays which we are still working to fix. We have invested \$173 million, which includes \$74 million to ensure faster processing of claims. While Conservatives continue to vote against funding for our security agencies, we will make sure they have the resources they need.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has three different stories spinning at this point in time. The first one is the one that was unleashed on Twitter, and it did not say that only those eligible to stay would stay. In fact, it was quite an open invitation. The second is the minister of immigration will not even say the word “illegal border crossing” and instead is travelling around trying to convince other people not to come to this country. The third is something that the minister for international development said, wherein she posed the possibility that it is a good thing this is happening because it is helping a job shortage in her area.

Can the Prime Minister tell me which story is the story they are going to go with?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives' approach is to muddy the waters and play up divisions and fear. We have made it very clear that we are an open and welcoming country, but we are also a country of rules and laws. Anyone who arrives in this country, whether it be through regular or irregular migration, gets the full process of Canada's immigration system applied to them, from security checks to analysis of their files. We are signatories to international conventions that make us welcome refugees, but we do need to ensure they are actual refugees or they get sent home.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the apparent inability of the Prime Minister to understand the topic in front of us is gravely concerning. He opened up the floodgates when he tweeted out, he has done nothing to stop the floodgates since it has happened, and now he wants to rely upon playing some kind of blame game for things that he brought on this country himself.

Will they do something concrete to stop this flow of illegal migrants across the border this summer?

● (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, despite all the fearmongering by Conservatives, I can reassure Canadians categorically that our immigration system continues to be applied rigorously and to the full extent of all the rules and principles that Canadians expect and indeed are reassured by.

Oral Questions

Yes, there is an increased flow of irregular migrants, but we are capable of dealing with them. We are capable of processing their files, and that is despite the backlogs left to us by 10 years of mismanagement of our system by the Conservatives.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, On Sunday, on Global News, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship said, “We do not appreciate or welcome irregular migration”. Now we are starting to hear something that might be closer to the truth.

A few days earlier, the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie told her local newspaper that immigration on Roxham Road was legal and better than following immigration rules.

Can the Prime Minister tell us who is right, the Minister of La Francophonie or the Minister of Immigration?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the Conservatives are fearmongering and dividing Canadians.

We do indeed need immigration in Canada. We have labour shortages. We welcome people from around the world because we know that this leads to economic growth and better quality of life for all Canadians.

At the same time, we are enforcing the immigration system strictly and with integrity. We have a process that applies to everyone, whether people arrive through the regular channels or in an irregular manner. We can assure Canadians that our system continues to be enforced in accordance with the rules.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians know that under the Conservatives, immigrants followed the rules. They obeyed the law. There was no Roxham Road under the Conservatives. Under the Conservatives, 19,000 people did not enter illegally into Canada. Under the Conservatives, 7,612 people were not acting illegally.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Does he regret his infamous tweet?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify something for the member opposite. Our country has dealt with irregular arrivals every year for many years, even under the Conservative government. It is even more difficult to understand why they cut nearly \$400 million from the Canada Border Services Agency budget and why they cut health care services for refugees, from vulnerable people. They caused slowdowns in our immigration system that we are now trying to fix. We are enforcing the act, our—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, Kinder Morgan Canada reported \$164 million in net revenue and should have paid \$64 million in taxes. However, that did not happen. Ultimately, this company took advantage of all loopholes and did not pay a cent in taxes. Zero.

In light of that, can the Prime Minister explain why it would be in the national interest to give a blank cheque for \$500 million, or \$1 billion, or \$5 billion to a company like Kinder Morgan Canada, which has the means, and certainly the motivation, to avoid paying its fair share of taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the NDP does not understand is that choosing between the environment and the economy is a thing of the past. We have to create jobs while protecting the environment. The fact that we are losing \$15 billion a year because we do not have a secondary market for our oil resources costs every Canadian something. We reviewed and approved this Trans Mountain project with a better and more sound process. It is in the national interest. That is why this pipeline will be built.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister is saying is that he is not overly concerned that a company could be making \$164 million in profit without paying a cent in taxes.

In fact, the problem goes deeper than that, because over the past three years, the total net revenue declared by Kinder Morgan was more than \$340 million. Can anyone guess how much tax it actually paid on those profits? Over three years, the company paid \$1.1 million in taxes.

I will repeat my question: why would it be in the national interest to give a blank cheque for \$500 million, \$1 billion, or \$2 billion to a company like Kinder Morgan Canada, which has the means, and certainly the motivation, to avoid paying taxes in this country?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the NDP is bent on looking for excuses to block this pipeline, which is going to create jobs in Canada and help us export our resources to new markets where we can get better prices. Furthermore, we are going to show leadership on climate change by putting a price on carbon pollution across the country and by protecting our coasts with a world-class oceans protection plan. We are going to keep showing that the economy and the environment go hand in hand.

[English]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Kinder Morgan Canada has avoided paying its fair share of taxes. The result? Kinder Morgan Canada has only paid 0.004% of what they should have paid over the last three years. That is over \$180 million of tax avoidance. Now the Liberal government wants to use Canadians' money to subsidize Kinder Morgan Canada against any future losses.

Why is the Prime Minister willing to use taxpayer funds to help an oil company that refuses to pay its taxes here in Canada?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year Canadians lose about \$15 billion because we do not have access to a new market for our oil resources. Getting this pipeline built will fix that, will lead to better jobs, and will also allow us to continue to achieve our carbon reduction targets by bringing in a national price on pollution.

These are things that Canadians understand go together. We grow the economy. We protect the environment. We do them both together. That is what makes a difference for Canadians.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants all Canadians to take on all of these risks and then give this company all of the profits. That is not fair and that is not balanced.

The Prime Minister promised to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. What has he done? Nothing. Instead he is offering a big, fat blank cheque to a company that refuses to pay taxes here in Canada. If regular Canadians do not pay their taxes, they do not get a bailout from the federal government. Why is it giving one to Kinder Morgan Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just to correct the record, we have committed to and are on track to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies by the year 2025. To do this, we announced in our first budget the expiration of the tax writeoffs on capital investments in LNG facilities. In budget 2017, we announced the elimination of certain tax credits for exploration expenses in the oil and gas sector.

We are developing our resources while protecting our environment, including safeguarding our oceans and combatting climate change. Our government understands that a clean environment and a strong economy must go hand in hand.

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DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to try to rig our democracy. They have tried to silence the opposition by changing the Standing Orders. They have tried to change the electoral system to one that would only favour them. They have used Canadians' hard-earned tax dollars to campaign during by-elections, including over \$60,000 in Lac-Saint-Jean and almost \$70,000 in Markham—Thornhill. That is just the beginning of the shady spending.

It is clear that the Liberals want to use tax dollars to campaign. Will they commit today to banning taxpayer-funded ministerial announcements and travel in the entire pre-election period?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member opposite is referring to a former minister who wore a partisan shirt while announcing the universal child care benefit.

We have committed to ensuring that we have a pre-electoral period where we do have regulated spending. I hope that the member opposite, along with all members in the House, can get behind ensuring that we have a fair and level playing field when it comes to our democracy.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I am actually referring to is the \$300,000 the Liberals spent campaigning in by-elections to date. We all know that the Prime Minister favours dictatorships, but I hate to inform him that here in Canada we have a democracy and that he actually has to listen to Canadians. They are speaking loud and clear by not donating to his Liberal Party.

Since he cannot now use his cash for access scheme, what does he do? He responds by using thousands of taxpayer dollars to campaign in by-elections. Would the Prime Minister commit today to banning this practice by his government in all future elections?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-76 does a lot to ensure that we have integrity in our elections. In fact, it returns the commissioner of Elections Canada to Elections Canada, something the previous government took away. It also enables the commissioner of Elections Canada to lay charges, something the previous government took away. In addition, it also gives the commissioner of Elections Canada the power to compel, something that might have aided his investigations of previous scandals.

• (1430)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in their arrogance, the Liberals are trying to impose their electoral reform on Canadians before Parliament votes on the bill. That is completely unacceptable.

The Prime Minister decided to cut the process short by skipping the democratic vote on the new bill by all members from all parties in the House, even though that is their responsibility and right as elected officials.

On behalf of Canadians, will the Prime Minister ask Elections Canada to halt the implementation of this bill until Parliament passes the version—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said in the House many times, the Prime Minister did not tell Elections Canada to put this bill forward. What happened is that this government, like every other previous government except the former Conservative government, consulted Elections Canada when drafting Bill C-76. Do members know why? It is because we, on this side of the House, are not afraid of Elections Canada.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have consulted with Elections Canada, but they have forgotten to consult with Canadians, the very people who are represented by the elected officials in the House who have since been shut down and not given a voice on behalf of Elections Canada.

Oral Questions

My question is simple. For once, will the Prime Minister do the right thing? Will he give a voice to the Canadian people? Will he allow the House to debate in fair conscience? More so, will he call off Elections Canada and tell it to put a halt to the changes until the House has had due process on this issue?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the party opposite that is misrepresenting the facts.

Elections Canada was consulted on this, and in fact said that it would of course be respecting the will of the House. However, it is also this government that indeed believes in giving Canadians the right to vote and a voice in their vote during elections, something the previous government decided to take away when it got rid of vouching, something the previous government decided to take away when it got rid of the voter identification card.

This government believes in Canadians voting, and guess what? We are not afraid of their voting either.

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FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Democratic Institutions should know that there is no such thing as a voter identification card. It is called a voter information card. There is a difference, and the minister should know that.

However, there is also great suspense. We just learned that the deficit last year was twice what the government promised in the last election. I found a quote on the Liberal website today:

the deficit will decline and our investment plan will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019.

It is still on the site today. I am going to end the suspense.

Will the Liberals keep that promise?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the plan we put in place in 2015 is still on track.

What we have seen is the lowest unemployment rates in 40 years. We have seen growth rates that are the fastest among the G7 countries.

We are going to continue to make investments in Canadians to ensure that our economy does well, to ensure that Canadians do well, and to ensure that Canadians have jobs today and tomorrow.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I expect members to understand that if they do not have the floor, their microphones are not on, and people back home cannot hear what they are saying. They hear the noise, but they do not know what their argument is. They want to hear the arguments from both sides. I would ask members to wait until they have the floor before speaking.

The hon. member for Carleton now has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he says that the Liberal budget plan is still on track, but there are two tracks.

There is the track that is on the Liberal Party website, which says that the budget will be balanced in 2019, and then there is the track of the finance department that says it will be balanced in 2045.

The question is, if the finance minister's plan is still on track, which track?

• (1435)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think by now Canadians understand what we pay attention to. We pay attention to them.

What we have done over the last few years is to ensure that more Canadians are working. There are 600,000 new jobs and the lowest unemployment rates we have seen in 40 years. We are able to do all of that while having a lower level of debt to GDP than we saw during the entire time of the Harper government.

We will remain on our track, which is invest in Canadians, to grow our economy, to create jobs, to create confidence for the future in our country.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the White House announced it would start yet another investigation by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and this time our auto industry is in Trump's crosshairs, with the threat of massive 25% tariffs.

This type of threatening tactic is becoming all too familiar, with a Canadian exemption on aluminum and steel expiring this week, and three of our largest industries being slapped with unfair, baseless tariff threats. The minister has done nothing to defend our auto sector.

Canadians who work in the auto sector want to know what this minister's specific plan is to protect their jobs.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want Canadian auto workers to know that our government stands firmly behind and with them.

As regards the section 232 investigation, mooted by the U.S. administration yesterday, into cars, let me be extremely clear. The idea that Canada and Canadian cars could pose any kind of security threat to the United States is frankly absurd. I have made that clear to the U.S. administration.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Liberals and the Prime Minister have shown their defeatist attitude on manufacturing from the start.

In fact, the largest Liberal investment in the auto sector was a \$525 million loan to Volkswagen for operations in the southern U.S. and Mexico. It is an absurd and reckless approach to Canadian taxpayers.

What we do not need is a list of isolated one-off hail Mary agreements. Since 2002, companies, suppliers, and workers have all asked for a specific national auto strategy.

Oral Questions

When is the government going to table what that specifically means for Canadians, companies, and workers, and defend their jobs for a change?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member is very excited about this topic, because he was at the announcements we made when we invested over \$5.6 million in the automotive sector since forming government. This has helped create thousands of jobs in our economy. We are going to continue to focus on the automotive sector. It is absolutely critical to our economy. It represents close to half a million jobs, both part-time and full-time. We have a plan. We are investing in the automotive sector and are seeing significant and historic investments in the sector.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are now three days away from the deadline for Trans Mountain. In April, the Prime Minister promised that the government was “actively pursuing legislative options”. On Friday, the Minister of Natural Resources said there was no guarantee they could keep the project alive. On Sunday, the justice minister would not even confirm when or if legislation is planned. Can someone, anyone, on that side of the House please tell us where is the legislation that Canadians were promised to save Trans Mountain?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been saying in this House now for many months that the pipeline is good for the country, not only for the many thousands of jobs that it will create but for getting a better price for our crude internationally and expanding our exports. We have, with \$1.5 billion, established a world-class oceans protection plan and we understand that many Canadians, and more Canadians all the time, realize that the Trans Mountain expansion is good for—

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. member for Abbotsford to come to order. I have heard a lot from him today, but he has not had the floor.

The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has had a year and a half to develop a plan for Trans Mountain and now, three days short of the deadline, as the country turns to its Prime Minister, we see that there is no plan. The Minister of Natural Resources admitted it; the Minister of Justice confirmed it. This national crisis never needed billions in taxpayer money to be solved. What it needed was a prime minister to lead. Unfortunately, we have run out of time. Can the Prime Minister confirm for Canadians that there is no legislation coming forward to save the Trans Mountain expansion?

• (1440)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have said for a number of months now that there are legislative options that the government will consider. The government has also said that courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada, have already said in no uncertain terms that when we move resources in this country from one province to the other, it is squarely within federal jurisdiction. This is a pipeline that has been approved by the Government of Canada and, by the way, by the

Government of British Columbia. It is good for Canada and good for British Columbia too.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the minister's talk, the obstacles, roadblocks, and challenges remain. With only three days left until the deadline, the natural resources minister said, incredibly, “There's no certainty in these things.” However, certainty is precisely what Kinder Morgan and all energy investors need, not tax dollars or pension-funded insurance. Stability and predictability are necessary for economic confidence.

Weeks ago, the Prime Minister said that the Liberals would introduce a law to reassert federal jurisdiction over the expansion. Where is the legislation the Prime Minister promised Canadians?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that there has been quite a bit of uncertainty associated with the project, and that uncertainty comes from direct and indirect threats by the Government of British Columbia, which would use every tool in its toolbox to stop the project. Understandably, that means that those who are investing hundreds of millions of dollars and more in the project want more certainty than there was. That is precisely what the Prime Minister has asked the Minister of Finance to do. We are in the process of doing that right now.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): However, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have used no tools in their toolbox to ensure that the expansion would go ahead in the past year and a half. This crisis is a result of their lack of action and failure of leadership. This weekend, the justice minister even said they are still “considering all options”. However, the time for consideration is over. Canada needs action.

With only three days left, the Liberals are still failing Canadians, with no law and no plan. It is a disaster. The Prime Minister is damaging Canada's reputation and risking future energy development. The Liberals have already killed four major energy projects worth \$84 billion and hundreds of thousands of Canadians have lost their jobs.

Again, where is the law they promised?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants to talk about a disaster, it was the Harper Conservative disaster. Not one kilometre of pipe built to new markets, an inability to consult with indigenous peoples that led to failure in one court case after another, and the worst economic performance since the Great Depression, that is a disaster.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I guess that imitation is the best form of flattery as the Liberals are being sued by a first nation.

Oral Questions

When it comes to paying for oil spills, many Canadians want to know who picks up the costs of the environment and the economy. The City of Vancouver has been waiting three years for the federal government to show up and force the company to pay for the damage done there.

Rather than blowing billions of taxpayer dollars subsidizing more pipelines and more risks, will the Liberals finally show up and force the company to pay or is this actually the Liberal oil strategy, to simply privatize the profits while socializing the risk?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government believes in world-leading marine safety. That is why we put in place the oceans protection plan. As part of that, we believe we should use a polluter pay principle. That is why we are using the ship-source oil polluter fund as the mechanism by which compensation is provided for oil cleanup. This is an important fund that is industry-funded so we make sure that middle-class Canadians do not pay for this.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, an increasing number of people are rallying against Kinder Morgan and voicing their discontent with the project. Even people who live 5,000 km away from British Columbia are angry. Yesterday, in Montreal, thousands of people took to the streets to answer the call from environmental groups, artists, and indigenous groups. People do not understand how the government can take their money and give it to an American oil company.

Since when has it been this government's policy to write blank cheques to foreign companies? Since when?

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, these major energy projects are controversial. They are controversial among provinces. They are even controversial within political parties. There might even be members within the New Democratic Party, maybe even from Alberta, who think it is good for Canada. I do not know.

We also know there are 43 indigenous communities, 33 of which are in the province of British Columbia, that think it is a good idea, because they believe that the future of our energy resources should be a shared prosperity and indigenous peoples should be part of it.

* * *

• (1445)

HEALTH

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, including HIV and hepatitis C, are largely preventable but remain a significant public health concern in Canada. From coast to coast to coast, community-based organizations work every day with vulnerable populations at risk, especially from intravenous drug use in the midst of the opioid crisis.

Could the Minister of Health update the House on the government's actions in this field?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague from

Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for his tireless advocacy to help address the opioid crisis.

The Harper Conservatives addressed the crisis by trying to eliminate harm reduction services, and tried to use the Supreme Court to shutter Canada's first consumption site. However, our government knows that harm reduction can help address the opioid crisis.

Through the harm reduction fund, we are investing over \$30 million to organizations aiming to reduce the risks from drug equipment sharing.

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[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when we see patronage, breach of contract, and deception being used as part of a strategy to obtain highly lucrative fishing quotas for Liberal cronies, we cannot help but conclude that there is a definite appearance of a conflict of interest.

Why does the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard not admit he was wrong and start over with a clear, fair, equitable, and transparent bidding process?

[English]

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the minister has already made clear, the allegations made by the other side, no matter how often it makes them, are categorically false, and we are happy to answer any questions the Ethics Commissioner might have.

In the interim, we are absolutely proud of the fact that the process ensured that the best project was selected so the highest number of Atlantic Canadians would benefit, including first nations from four Atlantic provinces and the province of Quebec.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister attempts to excuse his interference in the bid process that gifted a clam harvesting quota worth hundreds of millions of dollars to a shell company because of after-the-fact involvement of minority indigenous partners. However, the rigged process also happened to involve the brother of a sitting Liberal MP, a former Liberal MP, and a cousin of the minister's wife, who is a former federal fisheries official.

Again, will the Prime Minister remove the minister from this file and restart the process?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Again, Mr. Speaker, these claims are completely unsubstantiated.

Oral Questions

The fact is that a new participant in the surf clam fishery should be no surprise to the previous Conservative government. It conducted a very similar process about three years ago to include a new entrant into the surf clam fishery. The only difference was that it forgot to include indigenous people.

We of course have not forgotten. We are focusing on the fact that the best proposal was selected that would advantage the most number of people from Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

The Speaker: Order, please. I have to ask the members for Battle River—Crowfoot and Cypress Hills—Grasslands not to be yelling when someone else has the floor.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

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FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite our warnings about Anbang's murky ownership, the Liberals threw caution to the wind and rubber-stamped the sale of BC's largest senior care home provider. Anbang has been seized and is under control by Communist China.

The minister told us this deal was in the best interests of Canadian seniors. I am hearing from constituents that the level of service at a local home has significantly deteriorated. Lives could be at risk.

The Liberals approved this deal. Now what are they going to do to fix this mess?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that under the Investment Canada Act we have a very robust and rigorous process that examines all these issues.

With respect to the issues regarding health care services, the provincial government is responsible for that. This is part of the arrangement in the compliance agreement. If there are any issues, the member opposite should raise them with the provincial government. If there are any breaches, the member opposite should raise that with the provincial government.

We will make sure that we will always advance Canada's national interest.

• (1450)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister guaranteed that all was fine with the Chinese takeover by Anbang Insurance with its senior care facilities. Let me share one of the most recent inspection reports from a facility, non-compliant in restraint and fall prevention plans, non-compliant in having certified staff available to deal with critical emergency situations, and non-compliant with sanitation procedures.

Do the Liberals still guarantee that Communist China is the best caretaker of our seniors?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that under the Investment Canada Act we followed the process. We made sure we did our due diligence, that we did our homework.

We also worked with and co-ordinated with the provincial government to look at any of the regulations and concerns raised by the member opposite with respect to the minister of health in British Columbia.

The member opposite knows full well that we have never compromised when it comes to national security. We have never compromised when it comes to our national interests. We will always make sure that the benefits are received by Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIVACY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the emergence of financial technology, effective privacy protections are essential, yet the government is muddling along blindly with its innovation agenda. The alarm was sounded last week by the Privacy Commissioner, who warned that the budget bill does not give adequate consideration to privacy.

However, the Minister of Finance is yet again too busy with his banking buddies, who are profiting off our personal information.

Why did the minister not consult either consumers or the Privacy Commissioner when drafting his bill?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know innovation in the banking sector is crucial. That is why our 2018 budget enabled the banking sector to buy financial technology firms. However, we have made it crystal clear that we need to ensure confidential information stays confidential. That is the case now, and it will be the case after our 2018 budget.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, banks have an enormous trove of all our personal information, every liquor store purchase, alimony payment, failed mortgage. No wonder hackers are always trying to crack the data safe, because it is literally a gold mine.

Legislators around the world are working to protect the data privacy rights of citizens, but the minister has put a for sale sign on it to allow banks to sell our personal information to third party operators.

When is the minister going to stop acting like a butler on call for the banking elite and start standing up for Canadian citizens for a change?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is absolutely wrong. We are working to ensure our banking sector stays innovative. We are recognizing that we need to have financial technology that works. We are also ensuring that confidential information remains absolutely confidential. There is no change to those regulations. We will continue to ensure that is the case, while we also pursue an innovative Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the conversations I have with the people of Beauport—Limoilou always bring me good advice. As we all know, conventional wisdom is rarely wrong. In fact, just this past weekend, I met with hundreds of my constituents, many of whom raised the subject of Ms. Jean's misspending. I would say that they are disappointed and even disgusted. I noted that, much like the official opposition, Canadians simply want Ms. Jean to publicly explain her extravagant spending.

When and where will we hear Ms. Jean's explanation?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should be proud that a Canadian woman is heading up such a major international organization that stands up for human rights and women's rights and promotes the French language. I have already committed to working with the Administrator and the Secretary General to modernize the organization's management practices and transparency. I would remind the House that the organization is governed by 84 member states and governments.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are not at all reassured by the justification or explanation given by the minister. The Secretary General is involved in scandals and untoward projects, has not been transparent, and has not offered public explanations. The Liberals must stop defending the indefensible and demand that the Secretary General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie be accountable.

When will our citizens and all of us in Canada be given explanations? That is the least we would expect.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, my team and I are committed to working with the Administrator and the Secretary General to modernize the organization's financial rules and transparency. Once again, the organization is governed by 84 member states and governments. Accountability is ensured in a very systematic manner with very rigorous processes. I can assure the House that we are monitoring the situation.

• (1455)

[English]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the job of the secretary general of La Francophonie is to bring its members together. Well, Michaëlle Jean has certainly done that. Member countries have come together to speak out against her outrageous expenses. She spent \$20,000 on a piano, a half a million dollar renovation on her apartment, and \$50,000 on a four day stay at the posh Waldorf Astoria in New York.

How can the Liberals continue to support her candidacy as head of La Francophonie, now knowing her abuse of taxpayer dollars?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, Canadians should be proud that a Canadian woman is heading up a major international organization that stands up for human rights and women's rights and promotes the French language. Once again, I am working with the Administrator and the Secretary General to modernize this organization's management practices and transparency rules. I would remind my colleagues that this organization is governed by 84 member states and governments.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, launched in April, the ideas program was a commitment taken in Canada's defence policy "Strong, Secure, Engaged". The program is designed to involve academics, industry, and innovators from throughout Canada in solving the security and defence challenges of today and tomorrow.

I know that both the minister and his parliamentary secretary have been active in organizing events and round tables to highlight the program. Could the Minister of National Defence please give the House an update on the ideas program?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands for his hard work on the national defence committee.

Today we are announcing the next phase of our ideas program. The ideas innovation network will support multidisciplinary networks that will help increase academic engagement and build Canadian expertise in defence and security challenges.

This is another example of how the ideas program is delivering solutions that will support and protect the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces.

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GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the grain backlog has had a devastating impact, with more than \$500 million in grain trapped on the prairies, and costly demurrage fees being passed on to producers.

What we have seen is that our farmers are in crisis. Our reputation as a global trading partner has been tarnished and the Liberals have done nothing except defend the rail lines. Farming groups are demanding that the Liberals have a plan to minimize the impact a CP rail strike will have on Canadian farmers.

Oral Questions

What is the Liberal plan to ensure that no further harm is done to our farming economy in case of a CP rail strike?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we too are very concerned about making sure that farmers have access to the rail line to ensure they can get their crops to market. I met with both parties over the weekend. We continue to work with the parties to reach a solution. This government believes in the collective bargaining process, and we stand beside the parties as they work towards a deal.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Israeli government announced a plan to build 2,500 new illegal settlement units in the occupied West Bank. This week, Canada signed a modernized free trade agreement with Israel, which includes a visit from the Israeli economy minister.

Can the minister tell the House whether the government considers the illegal settlements to be part of the Israeli territory for the purposes of this agreement?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a steadfast ally and friend of Israel and of the Palestinian people. We are committed to a just, lasting, and durable peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel. We continue to support the conditions that will allow the parties to find a solution. Canada is an active trading partner in the world, including for Israel.

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Syrian conflict led to the displacement of 5.5 million people. We are proud that Canada responded to that crisis by welcoming over 40,000 Syrians, but the countries neighbouring Syria remain heavily affected by this situation.

• (1500)

[*English*]

Can the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie tell this House how Canada is continuing to help improve this situation?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vimy for her interest in refugees and host communities.

Canada supports Jordan and Lebanon and others in different ways, for example when it comes to education. Together with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities we are intervening in the waste management sector and in skills development for women so that they may become involved in municipal management. Reducing the burden on these communities by strengthening local government is also a matter of peace and stability.

[*English*]

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei Technologies has established vast Canadian networks aimed at acquiring leading-edge 5G wireless technology. Huawei was previously implicated in stealing trade secrets and spying, which is why Canadian and American intelligence and security officials continue to warn that it is a significant cybersecurity risk because of its connections with Communist China.

When will the Liberals launch a full review of Huawei's activities in Canada?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have clearly demonstrated under the Investment Canada Act that we have the tools necessary to make sure that we address our national interests.

With regard to any concerns around intellectual property, as the member knows full well, we just recently launched Canada's first national IP strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to make sure that any of the intellectual property generated in Canada benefits Canadians. We are playing a leadership role when it comes to our national interests and we are also making sure we provide the tools necessary for our academic institutions and businesses to succeed in Canada and protect their IP.

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[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES, AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, since early 2018, more than 7,000 irregular asylum seekers entered Quebec. We thought the problem was the safe third country agreement, but now we know that the real problem is the minister. He does not have a triage plan or a plan to amend the agreement. The processing delays are never-ending, and the boss is asleep at the wheel.

Will the Prime Minister help resolve the migrant crisis by finally appointing a minister who will do the job properly?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working diligently on this very complex file.

There is a lot of misinformation circulating about asylum claimants. That is why we are continuing our awareness campaign throughout the United States and in other parts of the world. We know it is important to have very clear rules in place that indicate who is eligible to claim refugee status. We are getting the message out there that these people must appear before an independent tribunal.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration was so busy preparing for his sightseeing trip to Nigeria that he did not even know that asylum seekers in Plattsburgh were being given instructions on how to cross the border illegally.

Rather than playing tourist, can the minister ensure that the safe third country agreement applies to all of our borders?

Routine Proceedings

The safe third country agreement needs to be enforced at Roxham Road and everywhere else along our border.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, this file is very complex. We are working with the provinces where asylum seekers are crossing the border, such as Quebec and Ontario, as well as with our neighbour to the south, the United States, on this file.

The issue of safe third countries has been raised. There are no formal discussions under way at the moment, but our American counterparts are aware of the situation.

* * *

[*English*]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

The changes Transport Canada is proposing to flight crew work hours and rest periods threaten the very survival of small airlines that serve communities in my riding. For all of these communities, air is the only link. Given the unique reliance of these communities on air service, a one-size-fits-all approach will not work.

Will the minister engage in further consultations, as requested by the Coalition of Canadian Airlines, and work with them to achieve a mutually acceptable solution that works for everyone?

• (1505)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

As the member points out, transportation in the north is literally a lifeline to communities and is so important for their economic and social development. At the same time, as Minister of Transport I have to ensure that air transportation is done in a safe manner, and that includes the issue of crew duty days and fatigue. We are addressing this issue at the moment.

I have been in contact with northern stakeholders and northern air operators, and we will continue to be in contact as we move forward.

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1) I wish to table a notice of ways and means motion to introduce an act to implement a multilateral convention to implement tax treaty-related measures to prevent base erosion and profit shifting.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2) I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I think you will find unanimous consent in the House to adopt the following motion: that this House support the right to abortion as recognized in 1988 by Supreme Court jurisprudence on the decriminalization of abortion in the Morgentaler decision, and in several subsequent rulings, in

particular the Daigle decision in 1989, the Winnipeg Child and Family Services decision in 1997, and the Dobson decision in 1999, regarding a woman's right to equality, autonomy, and security.

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

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, there are only three days left until the deadline for the Trans Mountain expansion. Last week I asked for unanimous consent to expedite the study and vote on certainty for Trans Mountain. The Liberals denied it twice, but they have had the weekend to think about it, so I want to give them another chance.

I move that notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill S-245, An Act to declare the Trans Mountain Pipeline Project and related works to be for the general advantage of Canada be deemed votable.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to table the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Peter Kent: Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries said in an answer in the House that our Conservative government never had a plan to include indigenous partners in the clam harvesting fishery. I would like to table a release made by Fisheries and Oceans Canada in early 2015 that shows exactly the opposite.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent of the House to table the document?

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy today to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “Canada's Ocean War Graves”. This is a report that has come out of our committee's really excellent work.

I want to congratulate all of the committee members who were part of it, and in particular I congratulate Captain Bender, who participated in this study.

FINANCE

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-74, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

Routine Proceedings

• (1510)

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House will give its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 63rd report later today.

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 11th report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled “Main Estimates 2018-19”.

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented today in the House be concurred in.

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

Hon. members: Agreed.

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

Hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC) moved:

That, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration presented on Thursday, March 23, 2017 be concurred in.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about some important work the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration did earlier in this Parliament in relation to the modernization of client service delivery within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. This was a very extensive report, which the committee put a lot of time into, with the goal of trying to improve the experience for people who are applying, through various processes, through this department to legally come into Canada.

There were many witnesses who appeared before our committee, and there were many recommendations put forward by the committee, unanimously, as a matter of fact, to improve that experience. I will note, however, that it has been many months, over a year, since this report was tabled, and the government has not responded to many of the recommendations herein, nor has the government accepted the reality that we have seen a major change in the operating environment in Canada, with the influx of tens of

thousands of people at the Lacolle border crossing trying to illegally enter the country and subsequently claim asylum, and the impact that has had on the overall client service delivery experience for people who are trying to access the immigration system.

The genesis of this report was earlier in this Parliament, as I mentioned. The purpose was to look at ways IRCC could improve the user experience for people entering the system. There were many reasons the study was undertaken. I can think of a few.

I would like to talk about the public servants who work within IRCC. For the past two years, they have had to deal with a lot of immigration policy decisions being made on the fly by the current government. They have done their best to respond, but because of the rigid system of processing within the department, it has become a very inflexible system. We are seeing delays and backlogs happen more and more, especially now, since the government did not budget or take into account in its levels plan that by the end of this year, the minister will have overseen what could be close to 100,000 people illegally crossing the border into Canada and claiming asylum. That has had an enormous impact on the processing system as well as on client service delivery for IRCC.

I listened to the minister's responses to four hours of questioning last week with regard to the illegal border crossing crisis. He made many assertions about the government's record on client service delivery. I want to set the context of the system he came into.

Previous Liberal governments created a backlog of 108,000 for the parents and grandparents application stream alone. The previous Liberal government also increased wait times for parents and grandparents to 64 months and created a total immigration backlog of 830,000. Previous Liberal governments also imposed a right-of-landing fee of \$975 on new immigrants.

When we came into government, obviously it was a very daunting task to address the backlog, and we had a lot of success. Our former Conservative government had an action plan for faster family reunification. It included increased numbers of parents and grandparents as permanent residents and managing the number of new applications to reduce the backlog, including introducing the super visa and cutting the backlog and processing times in half. Part of the reason we introduced the super visa, in terms of service delivery, was to ensure that families were reunited faster. It was a 10-year multiple-entry visa, introduced by our Conservative government. Some 50,000 super visas were launched, with an average processing time of only three months. It also protected taxpayers by requiring private health insurance. Again, we were being cognizant not only of client service delivery but of the sustainability of Canada's social programs.

Routine Proceedings

● (1515)

We saw more parents and grandparents welcomed as permanent residents under our government as compared to the previous Liberal government. Over 171,000 parents and grandparents were admitted, versus 154,000 grandparents admitted from 1997 to 2005. I should go through the numbers, because government members keep standing up to talk about the illegal border crossing crisis, which, of course, was launched by the Prime Minister's #WelcomeToCanada tweet. Some keep trying to say that somehow it was Stephen Harper's fault that the Prime Minister tweeted #WelcomeToCanada.

We need to focus on client service delivery right now, because all members in the House are getting calls in our riding offices from people who are trying to legally enter the country and are now encountering seven-year-plus wait times to come in under certain streams. What I think is most disgusting is the fact that the government is prioritizing the allocation of resources to process people who are illegally entering the country and is taking resources away from streams such as the privately sponsored refugee program, in which we now see wait times of up to seven years.

Do they think about that? Someone languishing in a UNHCR camp, who does not have access to a lot of resources, is now facing that long of a backlog. Meanwhile, the work the committee did over a year ago needs to be updated, given that the immigration levels report has been blown out of the water. In fact, the immigration levels report is probably birdcage liner at this point. This report not only needs to be concurred in, it needs to be updated because of the backlogs that are being created because of the reallocation of resources.

The minister will stand up here and tell us that this is not happening, that there are different processing lines, and that this is bananas. However, that is just cover, because we know that as of six months ago, over 80 processing staff from other lines of processing were reallocated to processing illegal border crossers, and I think that number has increased over time. When one thinks about removing 80 staff members, although I am sure it is at over 100 now, to process the crisis that is happening at Roxham Road, and we have seen these numbers exponentially increase since that figure was put forward, certainly we will continue to see backlogs. That is going to reduce the client service delivery experience for people who are trying to legally enter the country.

We should be prioritizing some of the recommendations included in this report, because we should be trying to prioritize the client service delivery experience for people who are legally entering the country as opposed to people who are illegally entering the country. If we continue to build tent cities and send people to process their applications and turn the CBSA and the RCMP into a glorified concierge service, we are, in fact, inciting people to continue with this activity rather than trying to enter the country legally.

I would argue that client service delivery for people who are trying to legally enter the country would be improved if the minister would seek to close the loophole in the safe third country agreement. If the minister closed the loophole in the safe third country agreement, or sought legislation that would allow him to designate the entire Canadian border an official point of entry for the purposes of being applied to the safe third country agreement only, we would reduce

demand on the system for processing the applications of illegal border crossers, thus allowing resources to be freed up for legal border crosses, which is what this report talks about.

To me, it is very important that the House move this report forward, but the committee should probably update this report as well. I think it is another piece of work we could do to investigate the burden of this border crossing crisis, which is squarely the Prime Minister's fault. It is squarely the Prime Minister's fault that he has refused to walk back his tweet, and these services are being impacted.

I would be very curious to see how the government votes on concurrence on this report, because many of the recommendations outlined here the government has not responded to. They have been exacerbated under the government's tenure.

I would like to point out some other things. There is a call centre. If a person is trying to access information when applying for permanent residency, citizenship, or any of the myriad of other services IRCC provides, there is a call centre that a client, ostensibly, should be able to call to get information.

● (1520)

Here is an interesting piece of information from the study:

The IRCC Call Centre has been the subject of numerous complaints about poor client service. Departmental officials provided detailed information regarding complaints received. Specifically, they noted that, with regard to the 4,453 feedback web forms received in 2015, there were 35 complaints specific to the Call Centre;

For those of us who do a lot of casework related to immigration, which would be almost every single person in the House, we understand the problem with the call centre intimately, because our staff actually have a hard time calling into it. Under the tenure of the former immigration minister, John McCallum, the government tried to remove the dedicated line for members' staff who were enquiring on behalf of their constituents. This report recommends that the government, under all circumstances, keep that line ongoing. It is very important for the House to accept that recommendation, because sometimes it is the last line of defence under the incompetence of the government in terms of being able to get information on an application that is pending.

My colleague, who has Vegreville in her riding, seconded this motion. She has been making an impassioned plea to the government. We have this whole report on client service delivery, and the government has decided to shut that processing centre down, even though, first, it is one of the most efficient processing centres in Canada, and second, the union of labourers there has been saying that there have not been job guarantees for all workers. Third, why is it kicking Alberta when it is down? It is taking away the equivalent of taking 100,000 jobs out of Toronto in terms of the impact it will have on the community of Vegreville. It is completely decimating that community. I do not think the minister even bothered to visit Vegreville.

Routine Proceedings

When we are looking at client service delivery, we have all these recommendations in the report that have not been responded to, which the government is making worse by closing one of the most effective processing centres in the country. There were also documents that came out that showed that there would be an additional expense to the government to shut down this processing centre. The Liberals' whole argument for closing it down was that it was supposed to be more efficient and save the taxpayers money, when, in fact, it is going to make the taxpayers spend more money. We get less efficiency and an increased cost for taxpayers. That is the hallmark of Liberal management.

There is one other thing I want to point out. The last time I tried to get concurrence on a report from the Citizenship and Immigration committee, it was on the issue of immigration consultants who were essentially fraudulent. We know that there are instances of people we would call ghost consultants. These are people who contract themselves out to newcomers to Canada under the guise of providing services promising to get them to Canada faster. It is very difficult for people who are working like this to face any sort of punishment under our current system.

Liberal and Conservative governments have made changes in how the immigration consulting profession is regulated. We know that there are still a lot of problems with that. I believe the committee put forward a unanimous report on recommendations on how to fix some of these things. However, the government, including the members on the committee that voted for the recommendations, when we tried to have it concurred in in the House, voted against the concurrence motion, therefore showing the true colours of the government on immigration, which is that it does not really care about improving client service delivery for people.

Why am I talking about immigration consultants in the context of this report? If we are talking about client service delivery, in a lot of ways, people should not have to contract an immigration consultant to do some of the most basic work it takes to apply to come to this country. We should be looking at ways to streamline and simplify processing for people who are seeking to enter the country.

● (1525)

This is what I have been saying all the time. When the immigration system of a country like Canada is functioning well, it should be a debate about process and how we improve processes. We can have partisan differences on that, but we should not be having a discussion about the fact that the entire system is melting down because the government has no control over a planned, orderly migration system.

What is striking to me is that since this report was written in March 2017, we have seen close to 40,000 people illegally entering the country from the United States of America, which we know is safe third country, to claim asylum. A lot of the processing issues that are noted within this report have been exacerbated because the government has refused to respond to this report in any sort of meaningful way after the recommendations were put forward by the committee, and then, of course, the additional burden on the system has made things worse.

The current government is very good at standing up in the House of Commons and using one thing to describe its action on a file: the

amount of money spent. I am assuming that the remarks the parliamentary secretary is about to give on this matter will be that the government has spent hundreds of millions of dollars. I am sure the government is quite proud that it has made a more expensive plan to deal with the Prime Minister's tweet. However, the reality is that it is throwing money into things and it is getting worse. The metric here should not be how much money the government has spent. In fact, I would argue the opposite. I think the government should be saying it has created efficiencies while saving the taxpayers' money. It should be about how we are moving back to a planned, orderly migration system wherein we are talking about things like how we modernize client service delivery for people who are seeking to legally enter the country. However, we are not there.

Where we are today is that we have the minister on national TV spreading falsehoods that Parliament can put forward legislation that could technically deem the entire Canadian border as a legal point of entry. There are ways we can legislate it such that it would only apply to the safe third country agreement. I think it is probably Parliament's job to look at legislation that could do that. However, the government refuses to walk back the ill-advised tweet that the Prime Minister put out, essentially for his own ego. I wonder also why the Prime Minister has not staged a photo-op at the refugee camp at Roxham Road. Perhaps the photo opportunities are not as good there as they are in other places.

I should not be glib. We should be providing incentives for as many people as possible to come to Canada through legal, planned, orderly migration that meets the needs of Canada's growing economy, that meets the needs of our obligations to humanitarian immigration. However, it needs to be done in a way that we are focusing on integration, not on entitlement, and on an easy-to-use, good system that would provide incentives for people to legally enter into the country. We should not be talking about spending hundreds of millions of dollars, which could be upward of a billion dollars, to the court's failed asylum claimants who have come in under the current government's watch. In fact, that is going to be one of the legacies of the current Prime Minister. In years to come, we will be looking at the tab he created for deportations of people he is essentially pedalling false hope to, who had no hope of ever claiming asylum in Canada. The cost to the Canadian taxpayer, and that diversion of resources that could have been used for the modernization of services for people who are legally entering the country, is something I do not think he or anyone else should be proud of.

I think this report is good. I might have a few quibbles here and there, but there are some good ways that I think are non-partisan. We could improve client service delivery. There are practical things. I love that the department officials at IRCC could be focusing on implementing these recommendations rather than having to focus their time on the tire fire that is happening at Roxham Road. It is very simple to me.

Routine Proceedings

Therefore, I would like the government to acknowledge my points today by voting to concur in this report on modernizing client service delivery. We could reset the tone in this House. We could say that we want to focus on legal, planned immigration, on resources for the live-in caregivers, the reunification of parents and grandparents, and all of these people for whom we know we did a good job under our Conservative government. This report should be concurred in to do that.

• (1530)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the efforts that our government has made. For instance, if we look at the immigration services which are provided, we have cut the processing time in half for spousal applications, for 82% of clients. We have also cleared the backlog left to us by the decade of darkness by 80%.

We have made a great commitment. We have shortened the processing times to 12 months, from years and years when people had to wait to get their spouses to come to our country, our great nation. We are trying to get families together to make sure they are more productive and able to work better.

Could the member comment on the improvements we have seen in the immigration system and how we have made things better for more Canadians?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that my colleague mentioned the decade of darkness.

Under previous Liberal governments, and the member talked specifically about parents and grandparents, I will reiterate the statistics for him. The previous Liberal government created a backlog of 108,000 people in the parent and grandparent stream. Let us think about that.

Our government had to come in and say to over 100,000 people that the former government had created a backlog under, that we needed a system to make sure those people could come to Canada in a planned and orderly way. What did the best immigration minister in Canadian history, Jason Kenney, do? He created the parent and grandparent super visa program. That super visa program cut backlogs and processing times in half. It also ensured the sustainability of our social programs, reducing the risks to taxpayers, by having a requirement for health insurance. This is something that the Liberal government has embraced. I am proud that I have the opportunity to talk about the fact that our Conservative government cleaned up a huge mess.

I believe my colleague represents a riding in Winnipeg. I would note that Manitoba has been one of the provinces that has complained that the Liberal government has created a problem for them, in terms of strain on social programs, affordable housing, health care, and access to legal services, because it refuses to close the loophole in the safe third country agreement.

As a Manitoba MP, he should be ashamed that his government is not doing more to close the loophole in the safe third country agreement.

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

As far as report and the recommendations go, there are some positives there. As members, we are aware of most of them. For example, as she said in her speech, there is the fact that the government has to process this type of case. Unfortunately, limitations in terms of client service, if I can call it that, can make it very difficult and time-consuming to help people. One of the more interesting recommendations I spotted in the report is the one about creating a web portal so that people applying for this service, or their authorized representatives, and, in many cases, MPs, can access updates.

What does the member think of that recommendation? When I work on a case and I call my assistants to ask for an update, I have to wait days before they call me back. I am a federal MP who is trying to represent people and advance cases that are, in some cases, very complex and difficult and take a heavy emotional and mental toll. I am sure people here know what I mean.

I would like my colleague to comment on that and her experience in her riding.

• (1535)

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more.

We should be doing everything possible to make it easier for people to go through these application processes, such that they do not need to hire an immigration consultation, or such that we can reduce the friction points within IRCC. With some of these processes, I think we still use carbon copy forms. It is just bananas.

I want to give some credit to department officials within IRCC. I would love to give them a mandate, to say that the government is going to deal with the issue at Roxham Road and they should put their brain power toward developing a web portal, or creating a cloud model, or ensuring that people who are processing applications are not in such rigid silos that demand cannot be met in different areas.

There are many different things that this minister could be focusing on in terms of modernizing client service delivery. Are there ways we could be using artificial intelligence to help client service delivery? How can we make the experience easier and more consistent, inciting people to come to Canada legally? That should be the focus of the minister. That is the focus of this report.

Unfortunately, we are not there because of what is happening at Roxham Road in Quebec.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this report was tabled in March 2017, and the government provided a comprehensive response to it. In addition to the response, we have made a number of changes, which I am sure a number of my colleagues will be able to speak to or have already spoken to.

Routine Proceedings

The member spoke about the call centres. In that regard, the department is focusing on providing agents with advanced training and support to ensure their skills line up with the individual call needs with respect to the website, and ensuring that all types of communication are implemented in plain language, as well as on the content of the website. With regard to more frequent and useful information, the government shares the committee's commitment to ensuring that clients and stakeholders have this information. Also, on application forms, the government agrees. Therefore, the government has provided a very comprehensive response to this report which was tabled in March 2017.

I am wondering, with the comprehensiveness of the response and the work we have done over the past year, does the member opposite not think, with the individuals who come to Canada through the regular immigration system as well as those seeking asylum, with the investments we are making that we are doing a great job to ensure that Canada stays secure?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, when I think of the minister's response to the immigration crisis in Canada right now, I think of the GIF of the cartoon dog sitting at a table with a cup of coffee while there is a fire behind him. It says that everything is fine. That is what I think of whenever the Minister of Immigration stands up in the House of Commons and comes up with a non-response to the fact that there are tens of thousands of people flooding across the border at the Roxham Road entry point while we are seeing backlogs of over seven years for somebody in a refugee camp in Djibouti to be privately sponsored as a refugee. Therefore, no, I would not classify that as everything being fine.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, I will continue with my questioning.

Again, this report was tabled in March 2017. Part 5 of the report spoke about processing times. As mentioned, we have reduced processing times for individuals, especially for family reunification. We have heard the minister talk about the capacity for caregivers, for family members to come, almost making the previous record look like they were not really focused on this file.

On performance measures and client feedback, again, the government agreed with the committee's recommendation and outlined a number of areas in which it has done continuous improvement to client services. On part 7 and the conclusions, again, the recommendations in this particular report have been comprehensively responded to by the government. I actually wonder why we are bringing it up at this point.

● (1540)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, first of all, everything is not fine. My colleague opposite will likely be shocked when she sees numbers for processing times that are accurate and up to date after the illegal border crossing crisis came forward. The minister has been very silent on those wait time increases, because we know they are there.

Second, the government's response to the committee report was typical Libéralese. It said a lot of nothing. It did not implement any of these findings at all. It had a lot of nice words, though, and I am sure the bureaucrat who wrote it spent a lot of late nights trying to

figure out how to write 10 pages' worth of stuff without committing to responding to any of these things.

We have had to fight tooth and nail to not have the MP's response line be cut. The government has not responded to the immigration consultant issue. The fact is that the IRCC is essentially imploding from within, as every member of the committee saw in front of that particular study.

Again, I would point to the wait times on things like private sponsorship for refugees. They continue to increase. Therefore, people who are legally trying to come to the country are having to wait, because the government is spending all of its time on Roxham Road. It is like the eye of Sauron has been diverted to Roxham Road instead of just closing the safe third country agreement. It should be more simple, and they should be doing that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Winnipeg North.

As part of the review of the votes under Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in the 2018-19 main estimates, I want to talk about the government's priority to improve client services. High quality, effective, and timely client-service delivery is a priority for the government and for IRCC. The department interacts with millions of clients in Canada and around the world, including applicants for electronic travel authorizations, visas, permanent residency, asylum, citizenship, and passports.

Canada is becoming more attractive to talented, skilled people, businesses, tourists, students, and families who want to contribute to our economic and social prosperity. For example, last year alone, the department processed more than 2.3 million temporary resident applications and more than five million passport applications, and it responded to nearly six million requests for information.

The government recognizes that a strong, effective, and efficient immigration system is not only desirable, but indispensable in every way for our country's future. With that in mind, IRCC has made it a priority to improve services for all of its clients. We know that by enhancing the quality of its services, Canada will be better placed to attract talent from around the world, boost trade and tourism, and help families reunite with loved ones or claim asylum in Canada.

We also know that while the number of applications in all of our business lines is rising, so are clients' expectations for faster, simpler services that are available electronically. Clients also have higher expectations of receiving updates on the status of their applications.

Because improving the client experience is a key priority for our government, IRCC recently launched a suite of initiatives aimed at improving service delivery and client experiences. The department also engages in an active dialogue with clients to better understand the issues they encounter.

Routine Proceedings

To begin with, IRCC now has its very first client experience branch, whose mission is to improve services to clients. It is responsible for improving existing services, testing new and innovative approaches, and improving dialogue with clients. I would like to talk about these areas in greater detail.

The government knows that processing times have a major impact on client experience in all business lines. I can assure my colleagues that the department is working hard and will continue to work hard to reduce processing times for economic immigrants, citizenship applicants, family class immigrants, and refugees.

The department's commitment to reducing processing times and improving service delivery is already making a difference. For example, processing times for spousal reunification in Canada used to be 26 months or more. Now, most new spousal sponsorship applications are processed within 12 months. Processing times for citizenship applications have also dropped from 24 to 12 months. Family caregiver applications used to take as long as five to seven years. That was unacceptable. Now that we have made changes, those applications are also processed in under 12 months.

The new express entry system for economic immigrants has also improved client experience. Last year alone, more than 86,000 of these express entry candidates received invitations to apply for permanent residence. The system is easy to use for these potential applicants, who can easily create an online profile and, once they receive an invitation, can fill out an online application that will, in most cases, be processed in less than six months.

We acknowledge that improvements can still be made in some areas, and we know that ongoing discussions with stakeholders are important to simplify, clarify, and improve services in the various sectors. IRCC also regularly updates its website with information on processing times for the majority of its services to clients.

The department is establishing more and more service standards that it reviews regularly. Once a service standard is established, the observation rates are published annually on the IRCC website. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has opened visa application centres around the world, which is another excellent example of its commitment to providing more efficient services to clients.

• (1545)

Today we have a standard network of 137 centres in 95 countries. It provides claimants with several important support services, especially in areas where there are few or no visa offices.

These services include the reception and transmission of visa applications and documents, the return of processed documents to applicants, the scheduling of interviews, and the collection of biometric data. The centres also verify whether visa applications are complete, which expedites processing and helps decrease the number of applications rejected because they are incomplete.

At the same time that the government is undertaking initiatives to improve existing services, it is also testing new and innovative approaches in order to grow the Canadian economy through immigration. For example, last year we launched our global skills strategy to attract the best talent from other countries. It should be noted that a good number of the ideas that led to this strategy

originated from stakeholders, particularly private sector employers, and we extend a very big thank you to them.

The strategy is designed to help Canadian employers recruit the highly skilled foreign talent they need when they need it. Whether employers need to bring in a professional to train Canadian workers, an experienced executive to lead a major expansion, or an expert with highly specialized, in-demand skills, our global skills strategy will make it faster for businesses in Canada to bring in the talent they need to succeed. To achieve this, the global skills strategy has set an ambitious two-week standard for processing visas and work permits for certain highly skilled workers for businesses operating in Canada.

Our government has also introduced a new work permit exemption for very short-duration work terms, for example 30 days or less for work in highly specialized fields and up to 120 days for researchers, which means less red tape for employers.

IRCC continues to innovate and invest in new ways to design its services. IRCC has also launched some design challenges that consist of choosing a service to improve and review from A to Z with the help of its clients.

Since 2016, IRCC has been tackling these design challenges with clients, consultants, lawyers, professors, immigration officers, call centre agents, and master's students in the design program at the Ontario College of Art and Design University. Together, they have come up with new ideas that have been tested by our clients, then fine-tuned and turned into pilot projects. Using this approach, IRCC is creating solutions that directly address the issues raised by clients, so we can provide better services.

By understanding clients' frustrations and innovating to create a culture of service, IRCC is implementing lasting and major transformations.

We also need to recognize that the services provided by the government relate to some of the most important decisions and stages in the lives of our clients. It is vital that the delivery of those services reflects well on the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and showcases the best that Canada has to offer.

That is why our government has recently undertaken a series of initiatives to ensure that all of our actions reflect a positive attitude toward clients and our relationship with them.

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For example, we want clients who contact the client support centre to be given information about their files more quickly, we want to provide sponsors with tools that will help them better track the status of their spousal sponsorship application, and we want to improve the online experience, since that is how a growing number of our clients are contacting the department.

The website is also constantly being improved to meet clients' needs. The department has already updated over 500 pages on the site. As members know, electronic applications also allow the IRCC to optimize the use of technologies and implement an effective application processing system so that it can offer clients simplified, more user-friendly services.

Our priorities include innovation and improving client service delivery. We know that, in addition to making service to IRCC's millions of clients better, our improvements will make our immigration system faster and more efficient, which is also good for our economy. Our government made a firm commitment to reunite families as quickly as possible, and these improvements will make that happen.

Ultimately, our immigration system will be set up to serve Canadians better. We are committed to continue improving the immigration system so it is as efficient as possible.

• (1550)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated the parliamentary secretary's remarks. His document and his speech were very detailed and included hard numbers.

Some numbers were left out, however. For one thing, he forgot to mention that, since the Prime Minister's infamous January 28, 2017, tweet, over 26,000 people have crossed the border illegally, most of them via Roxham Road. I call those crossings illegal because there is a big sign not far from Roxham Road that says "It is illegal". People can see a picture of the sign courtesy our public broadcaster. More than 19,000 people crossed the border last year. As of May 18 this year, 7,612 people have crossed the border illegally via Roxham Road.

I asked the Prime Minister this question during question period, and now I am asking the parliamentary secretary the same question. Does the government acknowledge that the Prime Minister's infamous January 2017 tweet inviting the whole world to come to Canada was inappropriate?

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, what we can acknowledge is that the previous government cut \$400 million from the Canada Border Services Agency budget. In our last budget, we reinvested \$173 million to deal with the issue of irregular border crossers.

Let me be clear on one thing: our government is doing everything necessary to deal with this situation. We have deployed a tremendous number of missions abroad to ensure that potential asylum seekers are aware of our laws and rules before coming to Canada. We have a working group in place with the governments of Quebec and Ontario. We also have partners on the ground, such as the municipalities and settlement and integration agencies, who are helping us a great deal. To say that we on this side of the House have done nothing is completely false. On the contrary, we are very

focused on this file. We will continue to do everything we can to manage this situation with the key partners that we have been working with from the start.

[*English*]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I refer back again to the document we are talking about, which was tabled in March of 2017.

First of all, I would like to thank the committee and witnesses for being able to produce a comprehensive report, to which the government provided a response. Since 2017, I think that the minister, the parliamentary secretary, and the team have done a remarkable job in ensuring that many of these issues have been addressed.

The report talks about having a call centre, and we have introduced a client experience branch to ensure the services we provide to clients are better. For the website, we have introduced innovation and have harnessed the best technology to ensure that individuals are having the best experiences. One of the recommendations was to provide more frequent and useful information. With our services, we are making sure that we are providing faster, easier, and better-targeted information to clients. With regard to application forms and making sure they are comprehensive, we see a team of individuals going out, the minister and others, making sure individuals are aware of what the expectations are when coming to Canada. For processing times, the parliamentary secretary talked about reducing them. We have heard many times in the House about how they have been so dramatically reduced.

Based on the report that was tabled, the comprehensive response from the government, and what we have done since then, maybe the parliamentary secretary could tell us if there is anything further he thinks we could do to better an already brilliant system they have been working on.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. She gave an excellent summary of everything the government has done so far.

We committed to improving client services at IRCC. As my colleague mentioned, much has already been done. I want to repeat this because it is important. Under our government, wait times for family reunification have dropped from 26 months to 12 months.

We have managed to significantly reduce the processing backlog from the previous government, and we will continue to cut processing times. The backlog for spouses or children was significantly reduced. We also doubled the number of applications for parents and grandparents. We did a lot for refugees, as well. For example, we welcomed 1,300 Yazidi refugees. The department decided to make client services and the services in our various sectors a priority. This is our commitment.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to a very important report, but there are some things on which I would like to comment before I get into some of the details of the report or issue that we are debating today.

It is interesting to note that the report was tabled back on March 23, 2017. Many dozens of reports have been tabled in the House, more than 100. As with this report, I commend the efforts of members who take the time and use the resources and spend the energy in putting these reports together. Whether it is this report or other reports that come before our standing committees, it is important that we acknowledge the amount of work, not only by politicians but by Canadians in all regions of our country, who often come to Ottawa to express their opinions and concerns. Ultimately information is accumulated and put in the form of different recommendations.

This report is no different from many other reports that in good part are being acted on by the government in different ways. For example, if we look at this report, we see there are 24 recommendations. I have had the chance to briefly go through some of those recommendations. There is one I want to provide some comment on specifically, but as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has described, the department has acted in a very strong way on a number of different recommendations. Something that Canadians should be aware of is that even though all of our standing committee reports do not get debated on the floor of the House of Commons, it does not mean the government is not taking action on these reports. We value the fine work of our standing committees, where Canadians as individuals or groups express their ideas and thoughts on important public policy. We understand it and appreciate it, and it does not have to be debated in order for the government to look at the recommendations and act on them where we can.

There are very few ministers of immigration, with the possible exception of the previous one, who have been as aggressive in addressing the important issue of immigration here in Canada. Let there be no doubt that immigration is absolutely critical to the long-term development of our country, both economically and socially. As a government and as a party, we understand that and appreciate it. The actions seen day in and day out continue to reinforce just how important immigration is to our country.

Having said that, I want to also make reference to the reason we are debating it here today. I am very much suspicious in the sense that this is one of many different types of reports out there. Here is a report that has been sitting around now since March 23, 2017. The government has proactively been implementing certain aspects of its recommendations, but why has the official opposition chosen to take it up today?

The opposition members like to say they want to debate government bills, but when they are afforded the opportunity to debate government bills, we see tactics of this nature that ultimately prevent them from debating government bills.

● (1600)

What were we supposed to be debating this afternoon? I believe it was Bill C-59 regarding public safety. It is legislation that is very important to all Canadians. All political parties want to debate the bill, yet we have the official opposition bringing forward a report that will take away from the debate on Bill C-59. Trust me when I say that in the coming days, the opposition members will stand in their place to say they want more debate time. That is what they will argue, but then they will bring in motions of this nature.

This is not to marginalize the issue. We understand the importance of immigration. We understand how important it is to recognize and act on the work that our standing committees do, but we are not going to be fooled by an opposition party that now decides that this is the day to debate it. The real reason they are doing this is that they do not want to debate the government bill. That is the reason they have brought this motion today.

That is fine. They are the official opposition. They can work with the other opposition parties and entities in the House, and this is the topic that they want to debate today. It happens to be a topic that I am exceptionally passionate about, because there is nothing that is brought to my constituency office more often than immigration concerns.

I often say that I get hundreds of files or immigration requests every month. People think I am exaggerating if I say 400. If anything, I am underestimating the actual numbers that I deal with in my constituency office. Most people would be amazed at the amount of help we try to give people to come here from countries like the Philippines or India, in particular the Punjab, and other countries around the world, such as Ukraine and Pakistan. Individuals are trying as much as they can to get family to come and visit Canada.

I follow the issue of immigration very closely. I used to be the immigration critic for the Liberal Party of Canada when we were in opposition. I witnessed first-hand the types of problems that were created and generated by Stephen Harper and Jason Kenney, and there were plenty. If members want to talk about disasters in immigration, this is a great way to look at it. I remember sitting at committee when they came up with the announcement about stopping the sponsoring of all parents and grandparents. They killed it flat. What they did was say they would come up with a super visa to justify doing that. Then a couple of years later, after they finally opened the program, they said it would be 5,000. When the Liberals took the reins of power, we doubled that 5,000 to 10,000.

The Liberals put in a better processing procedure for immigration. We are making a real difference in processing times. The best example is the reunification of families. Imagine if a person is going to the Philippines or to India. In particular, I said I do a lot of work in relation to the Punjab. When a person went through the province of Punjab to get married, it would take two to three or even more years to get their spouse to Canada.

Routine Proceedings

During the Harper years I was not able to get one temporary visa, not one, where dual intent could have been used in order to get a spouse over to Canada. We have seen significant improvements. Now it is closer to a year. I believe it is just under a year. I have actually been successful at getting some of those temporary visas for spouses.

Our ministers of immigration have understood, right from the get-go, how important it is to clean up the mess that the Conservative Party left when they were voted out of office. We will continue to do so. This is all about clients.

I believe that technology can make a difference. In 1991, I believe it was, I was in the Philippines in the embassy as a Parliamentarian taking a tour of the facility, and I saw these huge plastic containers. I asked what all the plastic containers were for. There were literally thousands of documents inside these plastic containers.

• (1605)

They said they would get two or three plastic containers of written correspondence a day.

Technology does need to be acted on, which is something this government takes seriously. We are proactively fixing many of the problems that were created by the previous Conservative government.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's interest in this file and his past history with it.

Monte Solberg, a friend of mine, was a former immigration minister. I remember visiting with him in the immigration building, where he took me from floor to floor and showed me the stacks of files that the Liberals had left him with. Those files were stacked in rooms on every floor. He told me that his department was left with a staff that spent 50% of its time finding a file and 50% of the time putting it back. He said that was what the Liberals had left him with. His job, he said, was to try to change the process, digitize it, make it modern, and make it work.

The Liberals left paper files and a bureaucracy of paper that created this nightmare of finding files and putting them back. Monte, as the Conservative minister of immigration, undertook the process of modernizing the process.

If we are talking about continuing the process that the Conservatives started, I would be happy to see that, but it was not what the Conservatives were left with when they took office. Is the member talking about carrying on the process of making it more advanced than it was when the Liberals left it when the Harper government came to power?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was lucky to be a parliamentarian in 1988. Back then, not all civil servants had computers.

Technology has been able to assist government in many different ways, and I have not even touched on the web.

At one time we did not have anything but paper, and it took time to work things through the system.

Let there be no doubt that even when we were transitioning back in the early 1990s and a live-in caregiver had to go through a live-in

caregiver process, all paperwork and everything else was done within three months. When we took office it was years. Back in the early nineties most of the work was done through paperwork, yet it was still done within three months.

We can take advantage of technology. We need to continue to move forward with that. I am very familiar with it.

It is amazing what can be done with an immigration file number, a date of birth, a person's last name, and the type of information that can be pulled from the Internet. That sort of thing did not exist before. It does today, and that is a positive thing.

This government will continue to improve the quality of client services as best we can. One can tell how we are doing by looking at processing times. In many areas the processing time has been virtually cut in half.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find the use of the word “client” a bit cold and rather jarring since we are talking about people who want to immigrate to Canada or who are refugees in Canada. I think another term would be better, but that is not what my question is about.

I am very pleased that the wait times have been reduced, but there is a problem that I see regularly in my riding of Hochelaga, and I would like to know whether the government intends to do anything about it. When a person makes an asylum claim, a process is set in motion and, when that process ends, any other process that was undertaken at the same time also comes to an end. For example, in my riding, an individual made an asylum claim and an application for permanent residency on humanitarian grounds. However, when an asylum claim is denied and the person is sent back to his or her home country, the application for permanent residency is no longer considered valid.

I have seen the same thing happen to someone in the case of sponsorship. A person submitted an asylum claim and a sponsorship application at the same time. The asylum claim was denied and then the sponsorship application was no longer considered valid when the person was sent back to her country of origin.

Could the department not take into consideration the other types of claims that may be pending before sending people back to their home countries?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, first, it is important to recognize that they are two totally different systems. The other thing to recognize is that we have an incredibly professional civil service that has done an outstanding job in meeting the demands. Also, as a government, we need to support that civil service. We have done that with the investments of tens of millions of dollars, if not going to the hundreds-plus millions of dollars, to help out with the processing. That is of critical importance. Due to the success of working with our civil servants, providing the additional resources, we have seen dramatic decreases in processing times overall.

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[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. I am going to talk about what we liked in the report and how we need to do more. I may pour some cold water on the praise that the government has been heaping on itself in this file.

Let us take a moment to seriously consider the reality and the challenges we see every day on the ground as MPs, when we are trying to help people hoping to become citizens, obtain legal status, or change their legal status. I am talking about people who want to come live here in Canada for a variety of reasons, all of them equally valid.

I think we need to get out of the Ottawa bubble a little and really consider the repercussions this has on the work we are trying to do, which is client service, the service provided to individuals by the department. I use the word “client” with apologies to my colleague from Hochelaga, because I share her aversion to the use of that word to describe these people, these human beings, who come to Canada and who quite often live in uncertainty and may not understand how to proceed with all the different applications they need to complete.

First, I would like to come back to the point I raised in my question for the member for Calgary Nose Hill, who moved the motion. One of the recommendations was to implement an online portal where both clients, meaning applicants for permanent residence, for example, and authorized representatives, who could be an MP, an MP's assistant, a lawyer, or any other person who might be involved in this type of file, could track the status of the application. That is extremely important.

● (1615)

As I said in the question I asked my colleague, I think it is unacceptable and appalling even that in this digital age, when I can get minute-by-minute updates on the pizza I just ordered, it takes days, even as a federal MP, to get any information on the status of an individual's application.

These applications can determine whether the applicants can start looking for a job with a work permit, move forward on a difficult personal situation, reunite with their family living in Canada or whether someone can come and visit them, whether they can attend their son or daughter's wedding, or in more tragic cases, whether they can be present for a dying family member's final days. These are the questions being asked by people applying for visitor visas for specific reasons.

That is completely unacceptable. People may think that whether or not we know the status of the file will not change the outcome, but that is not at all the case. It makes a difference to our work and the decisions that we must make to determine the next steps to be taken. Will we write to the minister? Will we approach the minister in the House? Will we go public? Will we ask a question in question period? Which tools in the MP toolbox will I use to deliver on a file and provide any help I can to the individual? These decisions are influenced by this type of information, which is not duly available as readily as we would like.

We would also like to see the duration of work permits increase from six months to one year. At first glance, this might be something that people will question. However, I have a perfect example to illustrate my point.

As you know, I have been helping a citizen from my riding for several years. I refer to her as a citizen even though she has not yet received her Canadian citizenship. Her name is Sophie Thewys and her case was highly publicized. She came to Canada after marrying a Quebecker, a Canadian. She decided to make a life here. She arrived with her son and started a family with her spouse, Nicolas Faubert. What happened then was tragic. On Christmas eve, her husband died in a car accident. Even though her permanent residence application had already been approved, the approval was withdrawn because she had not yet signed the papers granting her this status.

Now, over a year and half later, we are still trying to get her that status for humanitarian reasons. Even though this has been going on for years, and even though there were delays due to administrative errors that were IRCC's fault, not hers, she has to once again provide the same information, answer the same questions, and pay for police reports out of her own pocket to prove that she does not have a criminal record. This is a nightmare that is preventing a friend, a human being, a citizen, a resident of my riding, from grieving her loss and living her life as normally as possible under tragic circumstances.

Why is this relevant? When I started talking about this case in public with Sophie's permission, and when she pleaded with the government and the minister to explain this senseless situation, some of the headlines twisted the story a little. They said she was in danger of being deported. That was not true because she does have legal status here in Canada. She has a work permit, as does her son. Even so, we are caught up in all this stupid red tape—pardon the expression, I would not want to cross the line and use unparliamentary language. I have been trying, so far in vain, to convince the minister that this kind of case is exactly why discretionary authority exists. That permit will enable her to keep doing what she is doing, to live in the community, and to work, because she does have a job.

● (1620)

My intention is not to disclose all the details of her personal life. She talks about it and gave me permission to do the same. This work permit allows her to continue living with her son while awaiting the response to her application for permanent residence, which is taking a long time. It has already been approved. It would allow her to grieve properly. I have spent a lot of time on Sophie's case and we will continue to do everything we can for her, but unfortunately, with all due respect to her, she is not the only one going through this type of problem. As members of Parliament, we have many people who come to see us every day with this type of problem.

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This brings me to the next recommendation, which seems appropriate to me. It would have us follow the Australian example by providing detailed explanations when applications are denied. That is very important. It is easy for an official to know which box has been checked off or not. That is part of their daily work. I say that respectfully. I do not mean to attack people who have to follow orders and deal with resources that make their work more challenging. However, someone who comes here from abroad, uproots their life to flee persecution and violence, or to flee abject poverty in order to live a more prosperous life in Canada, deserves to know more than just which box has been checked off.

We can do everything in our power as MPs, but in spite of our best efforts, we ultimately need some help from the public service, by which I mean the government. This is especially true for MPs' offices, which are flooded with requests of this kind in heavily populated ridings or ridings that are home to many new Canadians from cultural communities, people who came to live their lives in Canada in order to be with their families, for instance. God knows our assistants also deserve plenty of credit for the work they do on these files. When we travel to and from Ottawa, these people work extremely hard to support people.

Ultimately, more detailed explanations would help not only applicants, but also the MPs and other stakeholders assisting them. That is extremely important, because it will help us figure out how to proceed and how to hopefully resolve cases as quickly as possible. Some MPs get more work in this area than others, but at the end of the day, all MPs know how hard it is to deal with these systems.

We recognize all the work that needs to be done to improve the service that is being provided. It is important, because there are all kinds of factors that make life hard for a newcomer to secure a visitor visa, to visit or reunite with their family, and to become a citizen or permanent resident. There may have been extremely difficult circumstances driving them to come here.

There are many excellent people working in the community or in law to defend the rights of newcomers. We also know there are others who try to take advantage of them, and so we try to give them good advice. That is why we need more information from the government, as well as better-structured, better-funded systems. A change like that would go some way to eliminating this scourge, because we would have official sources we could rely on for this type of information. We would know that we could quickly get accurate information about a given file.

In closing, I would like to say that I am very proud of the work that was done by the committee. I am particularly proud of the supplementary report tabled by the member for Vancouver East, who just said that we like the recommendations that have been made, but that there is still a lot of work to be done.

• (1625)

The member for Winnipeg North said that we are trying to use obstructionist tactics because the report was tabled over a year ago. Regardless of when the report was tabled, nothing has been done about the difficulties we are facing or the recommendations that were made. There is clearly still an enormous amount of work to be done.

I am very pleased to join in this debate and talk about my experience as a member of Parliament, which I am sure is similar to that of many of my colleagues in the House. It is high time that we modernized our systems and created the tools needed to allow MPs, community stakeholders, and immigration lawyers to do their jobs. Ultimately, we need to ensure that the most important people in all of this, those who came to Canada to have a better life, whatever the reason, can benefit from a system that provides them with the information they need, supports them, and is easy to navigate. We would all be better off for it.

[*English*]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague ended his speech by saying that this was not a delay tactic, that members in our communities had very real issues. He described one that was very heartfelt. I do appreciate the work he does on behalf of his constituents.

However, today we are supposed to be debating Bill C-47, about which I know the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie is very passionate, ensuring that Canada's cedes to the Arms Trade Treaty. I know that at some point along the way, we will hear the comments that members did not have enough time to debate this important legislation.

As I mentioned, the report was tabled in March 2017. The government provided a comprehensive report. We have heard from the parliamentary secretary, the minister, and others about the work we have done around this to ensure that each of the recommendations are fulfilled and that we try to make the experience for those immigrating to Canada as best as possible.

Does my colleague not think we should be debating Bill C-47, particular legislation that is very important to his colleague, the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie?

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we were going to be debating Bill C-59, and I am the only member in this place who has report stage amendments for the bill. Therefore, I would have been the first speaker on that bill.

Despite that, I am still very pleased to have raised the points I did in my speech. The fact is that Bill C-59 is going to be before the House this afternoon. Essentially the Liberals have tried to escape the fact that they supported Stephen Harper's draconian security bill, the former Bill C-51, and, as usual, were trying to have it both ways, having their cake and eating it too, that there were problems with the bill, but they would support it and fix it after an election.

What happened after that? We waited two years after an election campaign. The Liberals promised to fix those egregious measures. They ignored the fact that in the meantime CSIS was still using the powers given to it through Bill C-51. After that, the Liberals tabled the bill in the dying days of the spring sitting, in June 2017, and did not bring it up for debate until the fall. Then when we finally got the debate on it, we had shortened committee hearings, nowhere near enough time to deal with omnibus legislation.

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I respect my colleague and I certainly respect the fact that there can be an upheaval to Parliament's schedule. I would like to be making my speech and going back to my office, or doing whatever else, but this is an important issue. I do not want to hear that somehow Bill C-59 is so urgent, because the Liberals have certainly waited a long time to do anything about it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for once I have a comment rather than a question.

I thank my colleague from Beloeil—Chambly for highlighting the work that we do as MPs on immigration files. He described a situation that has been very problematic in recent months in his riding, but in doing so, he showed that we MPs are supposed to represent our constituents first and foremost. Dozens if not hundreds of cases are brought to our attention every year that must be resolved individually.

If I may, I would like to applaud and thank the hard-working people in my riding who take on these sensitive duties with dignity, namely Guillaume Béland and Isabelle Turcotte-Genest. I also thank the minister for his support and assistance. Every time I have had to forward a specific case directly to the minister, he has always taken care of it, so I want to thank him.

I thank my colleague for highlighting the fact that, as parliamentarians, we set partisanship aside and work on a case-by-case basis to resolve the situations our constituents find themselves in.

• (1630)

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comment.

What he says is very true because many people work on these files, such as members of our team, community organizations, and many people in our riding, both in MPs' offices and in the community. One only has to work on a high-profile immigration case or a difficult deportation case to see how quickly party lines disappear. Our colleagues come to us and say that they saw what happened with someone in our riding, that they know how difficult the situation is, and they offer their support. This shows that, in the end, even though we may disagree about how to reach a solution, we want the same thing. We want to make the process as painless as possible, if I can put it that way. In my opinion, that is the goal of this report.

Once again, like my colleague, I would like to speak on behalf of the people who work with me. I can say that in reading such a report, I see all the problems we experience every day. It is high time that we solved this, and we hope to have unanimous support for the recommendations of this report and today's motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague always shows how things should be done in the House by just simply standing and providing very cogent presentations on very complex matters. I give him a thousand accolades for that.

I am little troubled about what our colleague across the way has suggested, that instead of talking about this matter of ensuring services are delivered to support constituents, it would be more

important to talk about a policy reform. In my constituency office, time after time people tell me that they would like me to reform the policy on immigration, employment insurance, and the way assistance is provided to constituents. They are also concerned about what was Bill C-51, and hopefully it will be improved, although we will not hold our breath.

Could the member speak to that again? We need to remember that we have two roles as elected members, and certainly working on providing better services to our constituents is an equally important one.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my colleague for her kind words. I really appreciate it.

The reason I am so comfortable standing up in this place is because we are talking about what we hear, understand, and experience in our riding offices and in our work as members of Parliament. I would say that this makes it a bit easier.

What she said about employment insurance stood out to me. We are reminded that we can always do better when it comes to issues like immigration, employment insurance, the CRA, or any other department, file, or any aspect of the federal government with which Canadians interact. I am obviously eager to debate the next bill on the Order Paper. As the only MP to propose amendments at report stage, I look forward to presenting them. At the same time, there are changes to the schedule. There are opportunities to debate, and we must take advantage of them. That is what I am doing, because we do not often get opportunities to talk about the need to improve the system.

I would like to think that a government that keeps saying “better is always possible” would take full advantage of any opportunity to talk about what it can do better. We have heard about what it has done, and that is all well and good, but I want to hear about what it will do better. The government can blow its own horn and spout all kinds of numbers, but ultimately, all MPs, and I would even go so far as to say all Liberal MPs, know perfectly well that when we go back to our riding offices, things are just as difficult as ever, no thanks to the federal government and certain departments.

There is a huge amount of work to do, and I hope that, instead of slinging arrows on procedural matters, they will take this opportunity to actually address it. They could even cite some of the cases in Liberal ridings, talk about what is working and what is not working so well. There is never any harm in talking about that. Anyone who truly believes in the notion that better is always possible has to talk about what is not working so well in order to make things better.

Routine Proceedings

•(1635)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that the New Democrats are wrong in their assertion of the priorities. There are many different reports sitting there that could be debated. As I said previously, this is an important issue. However, at the end of the day, we could be debating these reports throughout the rest of this session if the New Democrats really wanted to do that.

Both the Conservatives and the NDP are using this as a game tactic to prevent debate on government legislation. Then, at some point in time this week, we will hear them criticize us for not allowing enough debate on government bills. You cannot have it both ways. Do you want to debate reports endlessly or do you want to debate government bills?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind the hon. member that I do not want to debate anything. I am perfectly neutral. I am sure the question was meant for the hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly for 30 seconds or less, please.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I would love to debate the other bill. However, at the same time, the member for Calgary Nose Hill has moved a motion, and that is her right. If the member thinks she does not have the right to do that, then we have a serious problem here.

The Liberals waited until we were close to the election to table bills for election reform. They waited two years to table their Bill C-51 reforms. At the end of the day, they control the agenda of the House. If they want to whine and complain about it and not contribute, that is their problem.

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 Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Fisheries and Oceans; the hon. member for Calgary—Nose Hill, the Environment.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been married for 40 years. In those 40 years, I have not been able to speak for 20 minutes straight without being interrupted, so this will be a maiden voyage for me.

I am pleased to rise and speak about this issue today. This is a growing crisis, one that could soon rival the mess created by the Liberals on the returning ISIS terrorists or the small business tax grab that hurts farmers, ranchers, family doctors, and local shop owners, calling them tax cheats because the Liberal government cannot stop spending other people's money. It is far more serious than the Prime Minister's multitude of vacations with terrorists and lobbyists.

My riding has definitely seen an impact on the major concerns of delivering the resources necessary to support individuals who are in this country legally, in my riding as well as in ridings across the

country, and providing stability for those who come to this country through legal immigration.

Here is what my staff have to say, and I am sure that MPs throughout the House will have similar stories from their staff. Immigrants seeking to renew their legal status who are here legally, who have a job and are contributing to our country and our economy, can expect delays of up to one year to get their permits. This means that they and their families could lose their access to medical care. There are employers who need to go through the labour market impact assessment process and end up getting rejected for their candidates because it takes too long.

Caregiver and family reunification is being delayed by months, if not years, while immigration officials deal with the mess at the border. Let us be clear. The burden and the backlogs are entirely because of the Prime Minister's irresponsible tweet. The minister should have gone to his boss back then and told him to fix the problem he created, but he did not. Now, thousands of Canadians and their families, legal immigrants, temporary foreign workers, and businesses are paying the price.

In my riding, agriculture co-operatives need very specific people for a specific growing season. Quite often, they are returning staff who have been through the process before. Here is what is happening. Delays to the labour market impact assessment approvals are causing temporary foreign workers to be rejected outright. Foreign workers are being rejected for very small application problems. Companies are having to restart the hiring process to try to find new people for their work because administrative resources are being starved.

Privately sponsored refugees are refugees in real need, from war zones and foreign aid areas, who have Canadians sponsoring them to come to Canada. There is a backlog of 45,000 applications. These are the refugees with the highest rate of success and the lowest cost to Canadian taxpayers, because they are privately sponsored. They are following the rules and agree to join Canada. They are seeing a decade of delays because there are no immigration officials to deal with the paperwork, while we rush through the process of illegal border crossers.

Illegal border crossers enter the country without permission, without following and respecting our laws, and are receiving full social assistance and work permits within days. Legal immigrants are waiting months and months, if not longer, for their permits. This is completely unacceptable to Canadians. We are giving priority to those who refuse to respect the law and hurting people who are following the law, including innocent families and children. Employers are hurting because they cannot hire workers due to these government backlogs. This is unacceptable and un-Canadian.

What have the ministers been telling us? They have said that everything is fine, that all is well, and that there is nothing to see here. We should not worry about that tweet, or about the record numbers across the border. We should not concern ourselves with reports coming from border officers, the RCMP, and Immigration that illegal border crossers are a crisis.

We know this to be completely false.

Routine Proceedings

Let me go back to the genesis of this report. On October 7, 2017, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration adopted its report entitled “Modernization of Client Service Delivery”. The purpose of this study was to study various issues with client service that were brought to the committee by a range of witnesses, including lawyers, immigration consultants, groups that work with refugees, and representatives from the private sector.

● (1640)

This issue is even more relevant today, a year after the report was introduced, because the government has failed to manage the borders, and this has exacerbated the existing issues within the Department of Immigration.

During the committee's study, witnesses identified a broad range of issues and shared with the committee a number of ideas for improving client service at IRCC. In particular, witnesses highlighted frustrations with the call centre, as well as the departmental website and online applications, including the status updates provided online.

More complex issues were also raised with the committee, including the possible use of artificial intelligence in business applications; how to address minor errors that can result in applications being returned, potentially jeopardizing rights; how to facilitate access to IRCC services for individuals with little English or French language skills; and the provision of in-person services. Finally, processing times, fees, and customer service from other government departments may not be new issues, but with the modernization certainly added some new perspectives.

All of these issues illustrate how inaccessible the Department of Immigration is, and this is unfair. We know that many newcomers ultimately turn to immigration consultants and lawyers to help them with their paperwork, which costs them thousands of dollars. This is another example of big government failing the people it has been set up to serve.

Let us talk a bit about a few of the issues that witnesses brought to the attention of the committee. The Canadian Bar Association submitted a brief to the committee, which highlighted that the Department of Immigration does not currently contact clients when it exceeds processing times. There is a simple fix to this. The department could send an automated email, which would be helpful, to advise clients that the application is being processed and further time is required, as well as requesting an additional inquiry if a decision is not made within a specific number of days. This would decrease inquiries and complaints.

We also know that if someone fails to check one little box, the department may outright reject the complete application. A simple fix would be implementing a system for routine requests for additional information on intake and triage, with reasonable deadlines to facilitate processing, rather than unnecessary refusal of applications. This would assist in reducing inefficiencies.

Another group we heard from was a private sponsorship group called Syrian Refugees Gravenhurst, which was generous and compassionate enough to put its own resources on the line to privately sponsor refugees from Syria. What it told the committee, as several groups did, was that the department met that generosity with

stymying and bureaucracy, failing to communicate even the most basic information to the sponsorship groups.

Here is a list of issues that the group told our committee about.

The first issue is that there is great frustration among sponsorship groups that formed in response to the current refugee crisis, which are being told that the wait times for the family they are matched up with may be as much as 55 months, due to the location of the family. Groups do not understand how they were offered matches that could not come to fruition in a reasonable length of time, given that there were so many in need. It seems that this issue has been addressed for groups going through the blended visa office-referred stream, but not for groups of five who have raised the full funding themselves and now have it tied up for years.

If the private refugee sponsorship program is to flourish, IRCC policy and procedures must take into account the distinct nature of the undertaking of community volunteers. At the time this group contacted the committee, the IRCC website estimated that the processing time for privately sponsored refugees in Egypt was a staggering 55 months.

There is one group right now that is facing a zero-day wait time. Members can guess which one it is. It is the illegal border crossers.

Here is the second issue that Syrian Refugees Gravenhurst raised. The IRCC website is not well organized to support private sponsorship groups seeking to organize for the purpose of sponsoring refugees. Overall, it is not up to 21st-century standards for user-friendliness. There is no clear path for interested groups to follow to learn about the program and compare options, such as whether to constitute the group as a group of five or as a constituent group of sponsorship agreement holders, or whether to channel the sponsorship through community organizations, such as a local church or Rotary club.

● (1645)

More information is on the website than most groups were able to find at the stage when they needed it. Information for sponsorship groups is often mixed in with information that is not current and/or is about completely different classes of applicants.

A third issue they raised was that once the group's application is in process, lack of communication from IRCC affects almost every sponsorship group. The only projection for processing time is a generic number based on the past cases for immigrants, apparently of different classes, located in the same country. Statements from the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship about clearing the backlog by a given date are of little use when groups cannot even confirm if the refugee family is defined as being in the backlog. Individualized communication is required and needed.

Routine Proceedings

A fourth issue they raised was that similar to other classes of applicants, sponsorship groups are often referred to MPs' offices, which are said to have access to more information on applications in progress. In general, groups report that the MP's staff are very attentive to their requests, but often cannot get more useful information specific to the family in question.

A recent example comes from a group that had established contact with their matched family at a time when the information available to the MP's office still said the family was likely to arrive in 2020. The family suddenly reported that they had been interviewed and were told they would be able to depart in three or four months.

Many groups express concern that they place an inappropriate burden on MPs' staff when going to them to access information that should be available directly from IRCC. It seems that the department of immigration is off-loading their work onto MP offices, which often only have one or two staff who are caseworkers.

A fifth issue they raised was that flexibility in the system is needed to respond to unexpected situations. There is a backlog of applications from private sponsorship groups right now, at the same time that agencies that assist government-sponsored refugees report a lack of resources. Given the border-crossing crisis, they are stretched to the very limit.

Caught in the backlog of sponsorship groups waiting for families, there are groups outside of areas designated to receive government-sponsored refugees that would provide the needed support without putting demands on the agencies that are having trouble meeting the demand. It seems there is no flexibility to take advantage of the excess capacity for private sponsorship that would put minimal demands on government agencies in the designated centres. We know that privately sponsored refugees fare far better than government-sponsored refugees and are far less reliant on government resources.

Here is the sixth issue that Syrian Refugees Gravenhurst brought up: not all groups receive contact information for the refugees after approval. Communication between the private sponsorship groups and the refugees they will be sponsoring prior to arrival in Canada can ease the transition for the new arrivals and their sponsors. Depending on the situation, sponsors may be able to suggest things the refugees can do to prepare for establishing qualifications, obtaining employment, or qualifying for a Canadian driver's licence. Refugees can ask questions about their destination and can learn more about what to expect. If contact is possible, sponsors can be better prepared for the individual needs of the family when they do arrive.

Another issue that I want to raise, which will affect the provision of good client services, is the unfair closure of the Vegreville case processing centre. The immigration case processing centre in Vegreville is the most efficient processing centre in the country, and while the government tried to convince rural Albertans that it would save money to move the centre to Edmonton, we know that it will cost more.

We also know that it will cause a loss of up to 420 people from the community of Vegreville.

It will cost Canadians more to close this office, and it will remove 9% of the town's labour force.

It will cost Canadians more to close this office, and it will cost the town \$15.9 million of GDP.

It will cost Canadians more, and it will also cost the town \$14.5 million in labour income.

It will cost Canadians more, and it will result in a loss of \$1.2 million in municipal revenue annually to the town of Vegreville.

It will cost Canadians more, and it will cost employees, specifically the 76% of employees who are women, forcing them to choose between their families, their community, their volunteer commitments, and a career.

● (1650)

It will cost Canadians more to close to this office, and it will impact over 250 spouses' jobs in Vegreville.

It will cost Canadians more to close to this office, and it will impact three local small businesses owned by employee families.

It will cost more and cause businesses to close their doors.

It will cost more to close to this office, and it will impact 350 school-aged children in Vegreville.

It will cost Canadians more, and it will cost employees thousands in moving costs and relocation expenses, and it will force double the number of houses to go on the market in Vegreville.

This is just another example of the government's failure to prioritize Canadians and newcomers and of its depriving them of services. Wait times would go up as a result of this closure.

This is in addition to the evidence the immigration committee heard and a number of recommendations that were developed. I will not get into those recommendations today because they are available in the report.

We know that a large percentage of constituency work related to immigration and citizenship is done by members of Parliament in their offices, and we know that many Canadians and newcomers rely on the services provided by IRCC, which is why we are calling for this report to be concurred in today.

Routine Proceedings

As I conclude my speech today, I would like to take some time to highlight the record of the previous Conservative government. There was higher immigration under Conservative governments, after Liberal governments' cuts in levels. In 1993, immigration levels reached a peak and then were severely cut for many years thereafter. Under Conservative governments, we saw a higher level of immigration. For example, the average level under Conservative governments from 1993 to 2015 was 257,830. By contrast, Liberal governments averaged only 220,000 in the same time frame when in government. There were 20% more immigrants admitted under Conservatives than past Liberal governments. Over 10 years of Conservative government, we admitted 2,579,494 people. By contrast, the Liberals over a 10-year period only saw 2,171,987 immigrants come to Canada. We saw 10% higher levels of family class immigration under the Conservatives. The average annual number of family class immigrants under Liberal governments, from 1997 to 2005, was 60,000. By contrast, there were 66,000 family class immigrants under Conservative governments. The Conservatives maintained family class immigration at 26% of the total share of immigrants versus the Liberals' 24%. Moreover, visitor visas nearly doubled under Conservative governments compared to Liberal ones.

The previous Liberal government's record on immigration was that it froze funding for immigrant settlement services for 13 years, slashed the budget of the CIC, did nothing on foreign credential recognition, did nothing on marriages of convenience, did nothing to crack down on crooked immigration consultants, and did nothing to fix a broken refugee and asylum system. In 2015, before being elected, Justin Trudeau's Liberals voted against foreign credential recognition loans, efforts to speed up foreign credential recognition for immigrants, and the creation of the new expression-of-interest stream that connected immigrants with employers. Previous Liberal governments created a backlog of 108,000 parents and grandparents. They also increased wait times for parents and grandparents to 64 months, creating a total immigrant backlog of 830,000, and imposed a right-of-landing fee of \$975 on new immigrants.

Our Conservative record included welcoming 20% more immigrants per year on average than previous Liberal governments. We cut the right-of-landing fee in half, saving newcomers more than \$300 million by 2011 alone, and we tripled settlement funding. In 2005, settlement services funding was \$368 million; by 2014, we tripled it to \$925 million. Our Conservative record also included taking action on foreign credential recognition.

In conclusion, it was an honour to speak to this issue and to report on the Conservative record that certainly is stellar, unlike the rhetoric we hear from the other side.

• (1655)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind hon. members that when we refer to other members, we refer to them by their title or their riding but not by their name.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in

his speech, my colleague talked about the asylum system as though it was exactly the same as our ordinary immigration system. That is completely false and he continues to repeat that falsehood. My colleagues know that they are two completely different systems and yet even their leader has repeated these falsehoods on Quebec television. That is completely false and Canadians know it.

Let us now talk about their record. With regard to family reunification, it took 26 months to process a spousal sponsorship, and they created a backlog of more than 75,000 applications. The work experience of international students was not recognized when processing their permanent residence application. Family caregivers had to wait five years or more for family reunification. There was a backlog of 62,000 cases. As for parents and grandparents, there was a limit of 5,000 applications and a backlog of 167,000 cases was created.

I do not know how other members could have considered eliminating the francophone mobility program, however, as a francophone, I find that appalling. They also cut more than \$400 million from the Canada Border Services Agency. What about cutting refugee health care? Canadian courts said that was cruel and unjustified.

Are my colleagues proud of their record?

[*English*]

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, while I was not in government then, I would say that we should be proud of our record back then, because unlike what we just heard from my colleague across the way, more parents and grandparents were welcomed as permanent residents to Canada under Conservative than Liberal governments. From 2006 to 2014, 171,000 parents and grandparents were admitted under a Conservative government, versus 154,000 by the Liberals between 1997 and 2005. Therefore, more parents and grandparents were admitted as permanent residents by us than by previous Liberal governments. Plus, the Conservatives introduced the super visa, which allowed for a record number.

I have heard various comments made in response to our remarks about illegal border crossers and immigration. The Liberals like to throw out the line that the Conservatives were cruel and punished immigrants and refugees coming to our country because we cut their health care. In reality, how did the health care get cut? Health care was cut for those who were ordered deported.

Routine Proceedings

The ministers are telling us that up to 90% of the illegal border crossers in our country right now, and there are over 35,000 here now, will be ordered deported. Therefore, if 90% will be ordered deported, and many are, once they are ordered deported, are we going to continue to offer them social assistance? Are we going to continue to offer them medical coverage during that time?

My constituents and many Canadians across our country are quite concerned, once the process has been exhausted, to have these individuals deported. Therefore, I think a reasonableness factor has to be factored in, and not just Liberal rhetoric.

• (1700)

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has not had the experience I did when I was an MP from 2008 to 2011. When we look at the processing times and the experience of people attempting to get service through IRCC, we see that there is a vastly different set of circumstances than 10 years ago. I am seeing a steady improvement in services at IRCC. I am not saying that it is completely done yet, but I am seeing great improvements.

I wonder whether the hon. member can find a way to access that information and look at how those processing times have improved and understand what kind of changes have already occurred.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, from my research and watching Canadian politics as an observer back in the day, I understand that things take time to change. The government is a big ship, and if we are trying to make changes to it, it takes time to do. I have a staff member who has been in a constituency office working on immigration files for nearly 20 years and who says that some of the changes the Conservative government implemented in its 10 years in office started to play out very well in immigration processing times toward the end of 2013-14, 2015-16, and now into 2016-17. These were changes made under the previous Conservative government.

The issue now is that we have two streams. The minister was talking the other night about there being two streams and that the one stream of the illegal crossers has no impact on the other process. I can tell members that this is completely false. The staff in my office are being told by immigrants themselves, who are here trying to get their PRs, work visas, and everything else looked after, that immigration officials are saying that they are sorry that the backlogs are now months and months longer. When asked why, it is because they have had resources redeployed to deal with the illegal border crossers. That is also what the immigration department is telling my own staff.

I would suggest that these two streams the Liberals are trying to throw down the throats of Canadians do not work. They are not working. No one believes it. The fact that times are now lengthening, that it takes longer to get things processed now, has nothing to do with the former government. It has everything to do with the mishandling by the Liberal government of illegal border crossing today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are two separate streams. The Conservatives can try to cut it whatever way they want, but there are two different

streams. That said, we hear a lot of numbers. I will give two examples from when I was the immigration critic of Conservative policy, which I would suggest was very wrong in its direction. Example one was when the Conservatives prevented people from being able to sponsor their parents for two years. That meant that if a 25-year-old individual came to visit me and said that they would like to sponsor their father and mother, there was no process enabling them to sponsor them. They could invite them for a visit, yes, but they could not sponsor them. Why? It was because the Conservatives had shut down the program. That is one example.

The other example is that in order to get rid of a backlog, the Conservatives went to our embassies and asked how many skilled workers they had, and then just hit the delete button. All of the applications of those individuals in the queue were just deleted as if they had never been submitted. We are talking about tens of thousands, going into the hundreds of thousands, of applicants whose applications were just deleted.

Forget about the numbers. Could my colleagues talk about those two policies and how they were of benefit to Canada?

• (1705)

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. If the Conservative government was so horrible in bringing people to this country and had such an abysmal record, why in the 10 years the Conservatives were in government did they admit into this country more than two and a half million people, while the Liberals in a similar 10-year time period admitted barely more than two million?

With respect to the whole idea of backlogs of immigrants, we are looking at a Conservative government which took office and had a total immigration backlog of over 830,000. That particular government did a stellar job in those 10 years at welcoming Canadians and should take no lessons from any Liberal on this particular immigration issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions in the House today.

Government Orders

The first petition was forwarded to me by Megan and Kyle, two students at St. Bonaventure Catholic School in Don Valley West. They are part of a larger initiative called the Women at the Heart of Peace campaign. These very engaging students came to Ottawa on May 2, along with over 40 other youth from across the country, as part of a national youth delegation delivering signatures from the campaign to Ottawa.

They request that the House take all the necessary actions to dedicate more of Canada's gross national income to international assistance in supporting women working for peace.

• (1710)

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition was initiated by a citizen of Don Valley West, Vicki Fecteau, whom I congratulate for her tremendous advocacy. It is supported by 8,574 Canadians.

The petitioners call on the government to make protection of animals from fire an objective of a revised national farm building code. Tragically, just over a week ago we were reminded of the vulnerability of animals. Sixteen horses died in a fire at Sunnybrook Stables in Don Valley West. Sunnybrook Stables has provided a variety of equestrian activities to the public for four decades. These horses were also part of a team that brought healing to veterans with PTSD. It is a tragic loss.

This petition highlights the importance of ensuring safety for animals under human care.

ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, west coast coastal communities are still grappling with oil spill risks, the hassle, the visual pollution, and the impact on tourism and fishing of abandoned vessels that still pollute our coast. Transport Canada says there are apparently thousands of them.

Petitioners from Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Victoria, and Parksville urge the government to amend the Canada Shipping Act to make the Coast Guard the single agency responsible. Municipal governments have been getting the runaround for decades because every agency points its finger at the other telling it to look after them. There is a hole in the jurisdiction.

The petitioners urge that the Canada Shipping Act be amended to make the Coast Guard an elite one-stop shopping agency. We ask the House, once again, to please act and get this problem off the backs of coastal communities.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 2017

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-59, An Act respecting national security matters, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): There are three motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-59.

[Translation]

Motion No. 3 will not be selected by the Chair, since a similar motion was defeated in committee.

[English]

All remaining motions have been examined and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendments at the report stage.

Motions Nos. 1 and 2 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 and 2 to the House.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-59 be amended by deleting the short title.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-59, in Clause 49.1, be amended:

(a) by replacing lines 13 to 15 on page 43 with the following:

“3 (1) The Governor in Council must issue written directions to all deputy heads prohibiting”

(b) by deleting line 25 on page 43 to line 2 on page 44.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the third motion, which pertained to one of my amendments, was not selected by the Chair, but I will still come back to the important points about it in a few moments. Just because it was not selected does not mean we cannot talk about it.

We are near the end of what has been a very long road with this government on an issue that dates back to even before the Liberals took office. Obviously, we must recognize that Bill C-59 is the result of the Liberals' approach. On one hand, during the last Parliament they supported Stephen Harper's draconian bill, Bill C-51, and on the other, they claimed that there were a lot of problems with the bill. The Liberals told people not to worry, however, because when they took office they would fix all of those problems. That was problematic for obvious reasons. If the bill was so flawed, posed so many problems with regard to national security matters, and violated Canadians' rights and freedoms, the Liberals should not have voted to pass it, and yet that is exactly what was happening with Bill C-51.

Government Orders

Let us fast-forward a little. After the Liberals were elected, they waited two years to introduce the legislation. They said that they had to hold public consultations. I will come back to that.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, used the power to disrupt threats bestowed upon it by Bill C-51. CSIS confirmed that in committee.

• (1715)

[*English*]

While we waited those two years for the government to consult, even though the election promise had been to consult on a specific piece of legislation, this was open consultation, or so it would seem. However the problem was, and many experts decried this, the fact that the government's green paper seemed to indicate, through some of the notions that were put forward, that some of these aspects were already a foregone conclusion. There was a definite bent more toward the side of intelligence gathering and law enforcement, and certainly a lack of substantive points being made in favour of the other side of that, which was protecting Canadians' rights and privacy.

Too often the Liberals, in the committee in particular, like to put the word "balance" forward. As we heard from representatives of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, when they presented at committee, balance implies that something is being taken away from one side or the other to achieve said balance. For us, the question of rights and liberties, and certainly the protection of Canadians' privacy, is not something that can almost be a victim of that type of compromise required to achieve said balance.

[*Translation*]

The other aspect that was not included in the public consultations, but that eventually became a central topic in our committee study, is the Communications Security Establishment, or CSE.

[*English*]

CSE, as members will know, is under the purview of the Minister of National Defence and its mandate is given to it by the National Defence Act. However, despite promises to no longer come forward with omnibus legislation, the Liberals have taken something that is the purview of the Minister of National Defence, something that the national defence committee has the institutional memory to study, all due respect to me and my colleagues on the public safety committee, and put it into this legislation.

That ended up taking up inordinate amounts, and rightly so, of time at the committee. These new powers being given to CSE and the huge change being made to CSE's mandate took up a lot of space and led to the most questions, not just from members but also from some of the experts who were there. Quite frankly, as far as we are concerned, many of those questions still remain without answers.

[*Translation*]

For example, there is the issue of CSE's cyber defence capabilities, as well as its offensive and active capabilities. The experts asked many questions on that subject. I introduced an amendment in committee to eliminate these powers, but it was not intended to compromise the safety of Canadians or our cybersecurity. We still kept CSE's defensive powers and capabilities in place.

However, we had the right to ask questions, as I did with the senior CSE officials, though I did not get satisfactory answers, especially about what all this means for our country's military future.

CSE is governed by the National Defence Act, but it is a civilian agency, not a military one. However, Bill C-59, and now the federal budget and the legislation that the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness says will be tabled this fall, is opening the door to capability sharing between CSE and Canadian Forces to improve our cyber capabilities in a military context or even in war zones.

[*English*]

I posed questions to the chief of the CSE and other officials who were present throughout different stages of the study. I said that there was some debate in the context of international law as to what sovereignty meant in this digital age. An act of war is when one infringes on someone's sovereignty, but is a server part of one's sovereignty? What is the role that data is playing in this? Certainly, colleagues who work on the trade file had similar concerns that they raised.

I asked these questions in the context of information-sharing capabilities with Canadian Forces. All I was able to get as an answer was that this stuff was already being done and it was better that it be codified in the law with all the protections, oversight, and review. Pardon me for being glib, but that all comes with that. However, it is not enough. If a foreign state actor, as the bill describes, engages in some kind of activity, we are talking about the Minister of National Defence having the capability to interfere with intellectual property and to be engaged in an active way.

In this era, when the federal budget is talking about more and more capability sharing between police and intelligence services, which let us not forget is what CSE is, ultimately, as it is not any kind of offensive entity but rather deals with foreign intelligence, and then to involve the Canadian Armed Forces, we are going down a slippery slope. This is not an issue I raise. It was one that witnesses raised time and again throughout this study.

Part of the reason why I tabled amendments, which were unfortunately voted down by the Liberals at committee, was to remove these elements, not because we disagreed, although they certainly are concerning, but because they required proper study. They should not have been part of omnibus legislation. They had nothing to do with the previous Bill C-51. Nor were they part of the public consultations that both the minister did and the committee did.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

That is important. I know the answer I will get is that all the issues relate to national security. That is not enough. We need to be able to examine these issues more thoroughly, and that is certainly not the feeling we got.

Government Orders

Lets continue to look at part three of the bill that has to do with CSE. One of my amendments was unfortunately deemed inadmissible by the Chair, because it was too similar to another amendment I had proposed and that my colleague, the leader of the Green Party, had also proposed. The motion was almost word for word what the experts had suggested. It had to do with publicly available information. We will come back to this concept.

The concept, as it currently exists, is important because it gives CSIS and CSE the power to collect publicly available information. With respect to CSE, we were told over and over again that its mandate does not concern Canadians, since the legislation explicitly prohibits it from targeting Canadians. We must be careful, though, and we have to read part three of the bill, subclause 23 and 24, and the next few subclauses.

Subclause 23 indicates that, despite the ban on targeting Canadians, the centre can collect publicly available information for study and research purposes. In short, it lists a number of things to advance its mandate. Even collecting information inadvertently is allowed. This is very problematic.

[English]

We tried to do a few things to fix that. The first was to change the definition of “publicly available information”. That is because when I asked representatives of the CSE if the information that Cambridge Analytica legally but immorally stole from Canadians and others throughout the world through Facebook would be part of publicly available information under the definition provided in this legislation, I got a one-word answer, which is rare in these parts. It was “yes”.

What does my amendment propose to do? The Liberals said not to worry, that they would deal with it. They put in the words “a reasonable expectation of privacy”. That is good. That was part of my amendment as well, as was it part of the amendment brought by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. However, there is a whole slew of information missing from that. Allow me to read it to the House, since unfortunately it was deemed inadmissible and voted down by Liberals at committee.

It states that it would also include, along with information where Canadians have a reasonable expectation of privacy, “information that is published or broadcast only to a selected audience or information that is subscribed to or purchased illegally”, in other words, the prohibition on information purchased illegally. That is the problem with these amendments sometimes when one is reading them without the rest of the text that follows. Why is that important? It is important because despite the assurances that we got, there are a lot of questions about this. These are questions and concerns that some of the foremost experts in the field all have as well.

I also proposed an amendment for a catch-and-release principle, for information acquired incidentally on Canadians by the CSE. If it truly does not need the information captured incidentally, I understand it. That happens sometimes when one is going to study the information infrastructure in Canada. Therefore, we had a reasonable compromise, which was that if it happens, the centre has a responsibility to get rid of it. That was another amendment that was voted down by the Liberals on the committee.

● (1725)

[Translation]

I could speak at length about the CSE aspects, but I have only 20 minutes for my speech. It just goes to show how complex and worrisome the new concepts are and how we are far from having enough time to address them today. I would even say that we had very little time in committee as well. I have been in Parliament for seven years, and for the first time since becoming an MP, even though I can be quite verbose, my mike was constantly cut off and not through any fault of the chair, but because we simply did not have enough time to get into the details. I am not blaming the committee chair, who does excellent work on this study. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time for this conversation.

I want to come back to something more specific that affects more than just CSIS. I am talking about one of my amendments that were deemed admissible. Amendments that go beyond the scope of a bill can be proposed when that bill is referred to committee before second reading, as this one was, and the Liberals took advantage of that.

[English]

The Liberals used that opportunity to essentially present a new bill into the legislation dealing with the question of information obtained under use of torture, which bafflingly the Conservatives voted against. However, we do not have time to get into that today.

I voted in favour of it, for two reasons, but it does not go far enough, and we are going to get to that. The first reason is because the fact that it was even on the table was an acknowledgement that the status quo is not good enough, that the ministerial directives right now are not good enough, and that having these concepts more explicitly enshrined in law is always a good thing. Even though some of these symbolic statements in legislation sometimes seem to be only that, symbolic, they guide the decisions made and the advice given when these agencies seek legal opinions and so forth. On that front, it is a good thing. The other reason I supported it was because it is better than nothing. However, the language that remains is that the Governor in Council “may” issue directives to deputy heads. At the end of the day, we remain in the same situation we were in before. These were all recorded votes, so Canadians can check them.

Let me say for the record that I offered more explicit amendments to nearly every section of the bill that dealt with one of these agencies, putting in an explicit prohibition on using information that may have been obtained under the use of torture. Every single Liberal and Conservative on the committee voted against them. That is absolutely shameful.

Here is the motion that is before us today: that “The Governor in Council must issue written directions to all deputy heads...” At the very least, even though we are still dealing with ministerial directives, that obliges the government of the day to issue the directions, even though we already know that the directives themselves have loopholes. Even if the current directives, I will acknowledge, are stronger than the ones in the previous government, there are still holes in them, and those holes need to be addressed.

Government Orders

It is sad to see that my amendments, which would have at least done something to prohibit the use of that type of information, were defeated through the committee process.

[*Translation*]

Speaking of my amendments, I want to mention one thing I forgot at the beginning of my speech, since I think the Canadians watching us will find it interesting. The government said that it was open to suggestions from the opposition. I suggested 120 amendments, and just four of them were accepted by the Liberals. Three were accepted on the condition that I use the Liberals' wording, and the other was accepted because it was just a preamble. Not a single one of the Conservatives' 25 or 29 amendments was accepted. Not a single one of the Green Party's 55 amendments was accepted either.

The Liberals proposed amendments. Anyone can look at them, they are public. The Liberals put forward one amendment and decided to withdraw the others because they had an inferior one to replace them. I therefore proposed the Liberals' amendments myself, and they voted against their own amendments. That speaks volumes about the process.

I have just three minutes left, and I have only spoken about one part of the bill. I just spent 20 minutes giving a speech on the flaws of a single part of a bill that has 10 parts. That tells you everything you need to know about the flaws in this bill, not to mention the fact that CSIS retains its power to disrupt and to detain without any right to counsel, as was the case with the former Bill C-51.

• (1730)

[*English*]

Without mentioning that apart from changing the word “sharing” to “disclosure”, even though the word “disclosure” was there, what was qualified by groups like the B.C. Liberties Association, among others, as a cosmetic change at best to the information sharing regime remains in place. It was one of the biggest criticisms we had, and a reason for voting against Bill C-51 in the previous Parliament.

We will get to that through a future point of order, but hopefully we can vote on different elements of the bill. There are two parts that are good, review and oversight. Despite the fact that we tried to make changes to the review body to make it more accountable to Parliament and less to the executive, it was rejected. With the real-time oversight of the intelligence commissioner, we tried to make that a full-time position. I was not able to propose those changes, as they would require royal prerogative, which I, as an opposition member, do not have. Perhaps I can enter a final plea, although at report stage it is probably too late for that.

[*Translation*]

It is all too clear that, on the one hand, the Liberals did not want the Conservatives to criticize them for standing up for the rights and freedoms of Canadians and, on the other hand, they wanted to try to protect their progressive image in light of our legitimate criticisms that they have failed in their duty to protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians. Despite all the time we were able to dedicate to the study, despite the public consultations, questions from experts, criticisms from members, and a grandiose announcement that the Liberals were going to do things differently in committee, still, all of our amendments were rejected. The same system will remain in

place and not enough improvements are being made in terms of what the Conservatives proposed.

[*English*]

In conclusion, it is true that we are entering a brave new world. We certainly know that in this digital age. I acknowledge that the threats are evolving and we need to address them. There is no doubt about that. However, one thing is for sure: right now, the ability of these agencies to act is outpacing the protections that Canadians have for their rights and freedoms, and their privacy.

That, for me and my party, is completely unacceptable, because at the end of the day, if we truly want to defeat these threats and what they stand for, if we truly want to stand on the other side of that terror and on the right side of history, it means standing up for Canadians' rights and freedoms. This bill just would not do that, and we will continue to oppose it. It is absolutely unfortunate, because we heard that better is always possible, but it does not seem to be with this legislation.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his work on this file and on others that are important related to privacy and to industry. One of the most important things is a consistent set of understandable rules, and that is what the member's amendments were.

Canadians have been getting a series of emails from different Internet-usage organizations or companies warning about their privacy changes. That is because Canada is often a laggard when it comes to being progressive on this. Many companies are going to follow the European model to protect privacy. That is why people will get them from PlayStation, different service providers for music, and other types of organizations that are using international models.

I ask that the member expand upon some of the amendments he had at committee, which were very reasonable and in line with some of our competitors in terms of industry access and standards that we should have been moving forward on.

• (1735)

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that when it comes to the rapidly evolving information infrastructure in this country and throughout the world, these are the issues that come up. It was quite timely during our study that these things were in the news, such as Cambridge Analytica and all these types of things.

I will acknowledge that on the one hand, they bring to light the fact that we need to be prepared to deal with interventions from foreign state actors and parties operating in bad faith, and even companies, and do these kinds of updates and ask more of the private sector, as my colleague said. The other side of that coin, and another part of what this legislation deals with, is this. Those who know Alan Moore's graphic novel from the 1980s, *Watchmen*, will remember the question the book poses, which is “Who watches the watchmen?” That is the question we have before us.

Government Orders

Ultimately, CSE will say its duty is to protect Canadians and protect our information structure. No one is calling that into question, but at the end of the day, it is not a blank cheque to operate with impunity and without accountability. While the government may say that its new review mechanisms provide that accountability, it just is not enough when we look at these concepts in law that are not clear and when we look at these concepts brought before committee, before us as parliamentarians, and that were never part of the public consultations undertaken by both the government and our committee. We tried to make amendments to fix this. None of these amendments would have undermined CSE's ability to do its work. They would have protected Canadians' rights and freedoms, and that is the opportunity the government missed.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the arguments that have been put forward by the hon. member this afternoon. I would ask a question about specifically the member's second amendment, where he wants to insert in the operative sentence instead of the word "may", the word "must". Therefore, the sentence would read, "The Governor in Council must issue written directions".

In the bill as it is now written, there is one section, subclause 3(1), that would create the general authority to issue directions. It says, "The Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the appropriate Minister, issue written directions". The very next section, subclause 3(2), goes further to say, in language that is quite similar to this amendment, "The Governor in Council must issue written directions in respect of the matters referred to in" the preceding paragraph.

Therefore, the point the hon. gentleman is making, that the requirement to issue these directions should be mandatory, not permissive, is, in fact, covered in the legislation as it is presently written, when we read subclause 3(1) together with subclause 3(2). I think that accomplishes the objective the hon. gentleman is seeking.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, this is the hard thing about amendments. Canadians listening to us will hear the amendment, and then a sentence is added in to a much larger text. What does that larger text say that the minister just quoted? It says that the Governor in Council "may" issue directives related to information obtained, and it then enumerates torture, abuse, all the bad things that happen in countries with less than stellar human rights records. It is the very type of information that we do not want CSIS or any other agency to be using. Therefore, they "may" issue directives related to that.

The next section that the minister talks about, where it says they "must", is that in the event they choose to, because they "may" do it, they "must" issue it to the following deputy heads. Therefore, it is basically the list of who would get the directive if the minister chose to issue it. That is the problem here. My amendment would get rid of that grocery list of deputy heads. It says flat out that when it comes torture, the Governor in Council must issue a directive, and that is it.

Let us not get lost in this debate on this specific amendment. Let us ask Canadians to go back and read the transcript of the committee hearings. I read time and again into the record amendments that explicitly prohibited any of these agencies from using information, even if we suspected it was obtained through the use of torture. Listen to the recorded votes, as Liberal after Liberal and

Conservative after Conservative voted against them. That is what they stood for. That is what they are standing for. There is no other way about it. When it comes to torture and standing up for human rights, directives are just not good enough.

● (1740)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his thoughts. Indeed, he is one of the hardest-working members on the committee. He offered many thoughtful amendments and has delved into this bill. He is to be commended for his hard work on the committee. However, this is a bill that we will never get entirely right. There is always the challenge between the human rights concerns and security concerns. It is eternally evolving.

I appreciate the hon. member's concerns, many of which I personally think to be quite legitimate. However, on the other hand, they are not set off against the security concerns. The people who have been writing about this bill seem to think that the government has struck the right balance.

I would be interested in the member's comments about Craig Forcese, from the University of Ottawa, who said that it is the "biggest reform of Canadian national security law since 1984...." He said that on accountability and review, we seem to have caught up to the 2006 Arar Commission, with real cleanup of CSIS threat reduction powers.

Craig Forcese and Kent Roach wrote that "solid gains—measured both from a rule of law and civil liberties perspective...at no credible cost to security...rolls back much of the unnecessary overkill of...Bill C-51."

It seems to me that those people seem to think that balance is being obtained. While I think the hon. member's interventions are quite legitimate and thoughtful, I wonder whether he thinks that the comments by those professors reflect the appropriate balance in the bill.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his depth of sharing throughout the process of studying this bill. As I alluded to in my speech, it is not an easy task, considering the depth that we want to go into on these issues. However, there is that word again, "balance". I do not want to mischaracterize what any of those esteemed professors have said, but they also said that when it came to threat reduction powers, basically the Liberals took something that was flagrantly unconstitutional under the Conservatives and made it more likely constitutional. As far as I am concerned, as a parliamentarian, that is not the kind of threshold I want to be striving for. I think we can do more than that.

On the security question, that element is important. New Democrats obviously take the security of Canadians seriously. We know that there are things like the police recruitment fund that was cut under the previous government. We support the continued efforts by the current government, and more can be done to counter radicalization. We understand that there is a challenge when it comes to prosecuting foreign fighters. That is an issue in the news, and it is obviously of great concern to folks. There are a lot of challenges that need to be taken on. However, as we said when we debated Bill C-51, there are changes that can be made without huge overhauls and overly broad powers to national security agencies that can accomplish just that. It is about having the political will to do it, to stand up and say that when it comes to being on the side of history, let us be on the right side and stand up for Canadians' rights and freedoms.

* * *

FEDERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT

BILL C-57—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with regret that I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-57, an act to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting motions to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

● (1745)

EXPORT AND IMPORT PERMITS ACT

BILL C-47—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-47, an act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code (amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments).

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting motions to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

BILL C-75—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect

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to the second reading stage of Bill C-75, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting motions to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, with respect to consideration of Government Business No. 22, at the next sitting, a minister of the crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate be not further adjourned.

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to challenge the notice that was given by the government House leader of a closure motion concerning government Motion No. 22. It is my view that her notice was premature and therefore is out of order.

I raised a point of order earlier today disputing the correctness of House records concerning debate on government Motion No. 22, and we are still awaiting a ruling on that point of order.

Standing Order 57, which governs closure, reads, in part:

Immediately before the Order of the Day for resuming an adjourned debate is called, or if the House be in Committee of the Whole, any Minister of the Crown who, standing in his or her place, shall have given notice at a previous sitting of his or her intention so to do, may move that the debate shall not be further adjourned...

Page 663 of Bosc and Gagnon puts this into plain English. It states:

Regardless, debate on the item which is the subject of the notice must have begun before notice of closure may be given.

The related footnote points to a ruling by Speaker Fraser in December 1988 during debate on the Canada-United States free trade agreement. Members with a passion for politics will recall that this was the immediate wake of that autumn's general election, sparked by the resistance of Liberal senators to a previous Conservative government's free trade agreement with the U.S. After the election, Parliament met quickly in order to pass the free trade agreement before a New Year's Eve deadline.

To aid the bill's passage, the government proposed a series of temporary procedural rules, not unlike the intention of government Motion No. 22. When the 1988 procedural motion was called, Liberals and New Democrats rose to challenge every fibre of it, because at that point they were still fighting against the free trade agreement with the United States. To make a long story short, those procedural arguments continued throughout the day.

S. O. 57

In any event, the then government House leader gave notice of a closure motion. That notice, too, was challenged, which brings me back to Speaker Fraser's ruling. On December 15, 1988, at page 78 of *Debates*, the Chair said:

From a careful reading of this Standing Order, it is clear that the closure motion may only be moved "immediately before the Order of the Day for resuming an adjourned debate is called".

In addition, this may only be done if notice of the intention to move closure has been given orally in the House by a Minister of the Crown at a previous sitting. While the Standing Orders specify when the motion can be moved, and how notice is to be given, they are silent on when notice may be given.

The Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier argued yesterday that notice could only be given after debate had begun. Standing Order 57 does not specify this. However, a search of numerous previous instances where notice of closure was given—going back to 1913 when the rule was first introduced—has failed to reveal an occurrence where notice was given prior to debate having begun.

It can be argued that merely because this has not happened previously that does not prevent it from being allowed in this instance; that the Standing Order does not specifically prohibit this and therefore it should be allowed.

After a very careful consideration of this point, I am more persuaded by the weight of precedent and practice. Taking into consideration the gravity of the measure to be invoked and the necessity of protecting the rights of the minority, it is my feeling and decision that the intention of the Standing Order as drafted and as it has been applied is to allow a majority to impose closure only after debate on the question has begun. This is to ensure that such debate is not unfairly or prematurely curtailed. In this instance, debate on the motion had clearly not begun when the Hon. Minister served notice.

In resumé therefore I find that the motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Hon. Minister of State is in order and may be moved and debated. However, I cannot accept the notice of closure on that motion as proposed by the same Hon. Minister yesterday. Such notice can only be given once debate on the motion has commenced.

Next, let me anticipate a counter-argument from the government pointing to time allocation proceedings concerning report stage consideration of Bill C-62, the GST bill, in April 1990. It is critical to distinguish between the two rules that govern time allocation and closure.

● (1750)

Earlier, I quoted Standing Order 57 with its reference to an adjourned debate. Time allocation, on the other hand, is regulated by Standing Order 78. Section 3 of that Standing Order, which applies to most time allocation motions, reads:

A Minister of the Crown who from his or her place in the House, at a previous sitting, has stated that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of sections (1) or (2) of this Standing Order in respect of proceedings at the stage at which a public bill was then under consideration...

We have a critical difference here between "adjourned debate" for closure, and "under consideration" for time allocation.

Because a lengthy and complex ruling on the grouping and voting of report stage motions on the GST bill had been delivered and the various motions themselves had been proposed from the Chair, it could be clearly said that Bill C-62 had been under consideration when notice was given of a time allocation motion.

A critical maxim, applied judicially in statutory interpretation cases would be instructive here. It is that "Parliament does not speak in vain". That touchstone is elaborated upon in various entries in *Sullivan on the Construction of Statutes*, the leading Canadian authority on the interpretation of laws. I will simply offer two short quotes from the sixth edition. First is paragraph 8.14, which says:

Although ordinary speakers or writers require much co-operative guesswork from their audience, a legislature is an idealized speaker. Unlike the rest of us, legislatures

are presumed to always say what they mean and mean what they say. They do not make mistakes.

Then there is paragraph 8.32, which reads:

It is presumed that the legislature uses language carefully and consistently so that within a statute or other legislative instrument the same words have the same meaning and different words have different meanings. Another way of understanding this presumption is to say that the legislature is presumed to avoid stylistic variation. Once a particular way of expressing a meaning has been adopted, it is used each time that meaning is intended. Given this practice, it follows that where a different form of expression is used, a different meaning is intended.

In summary, "adjourned debate" and "under consideration" are two different expressions and, as a result, carry different meanings. The use of closure requires an item to have been debated, not simply to have been proposed or otherwise placed under consideration. Government Motion No. 22 has not been debated and, therefore, closure on Government Motion No. 22 is premature and out of order.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. opposition House leader for her additional comments on the question.

I see the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader rising. Is he wishing to make comment on the same point of order?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): If I may, on the same point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: We will receive that now.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity earlier today and would like to reinforce some of the statements I made then about what the member can find in *Hansard*. The opposition House leader's arguments are based on her assertion that the debate on government Motion No. 22 has not yet begun. As I stated earlier in response to another point of order, the *Hansard* of Friday, May 25, 2018 has a clear transcription of the government House leader debating government Motion No. 22.

The Speaker read the motion and the minister debated it. It is all there in black and white on page 19675 of *Hansard*, which clearly shows that the debate had actually begun. As such, the notice is indeed in order.

I am prepared to table the document.

● (1755)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his additional comments on the matter. I am certainly aware that the question of whether the debate on Motion No. 22 has begun or not, as the members have expressed in their arguments, is already the subject of a point of order from earlier today, for which the Speaker has not yet given his decision.

Government Orders

I therefore suggest that the notice pertaining to the time allocations as presented by the government House leader are in order, but for the time being, until such time as the Speaker has given a ruling on this question of whether the debate has begun on Motion No. 22 or not, we will reserve whether the motion for closure on Motion No. 22 is in fact in order. It is not at the moment. We will wait until such time as a decision on the previous point of order earlier today is rendered, at which point, depending on that outcome, the government House leader may then proceed accordingly.

* * *

NATIONAL SECURITY ACT, 2017

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-59, An Act respecting national security matters, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at this point in the proceedings, we can get back to the topic of Bill C-59 for what is really, under our procedures, both a report stage debate and a second reading debate.

I am very pleased today to rise in support of Bill C-59, as it has emerged from the standing committee, the government's proposed legislation to update and modernize our country's national security framework. This landmark bill covers a number of measures that were informed very thoroughly by the views and opinions of a broad range of Canadians during extensive public consultations in 2016.

[*Translation*]

It was in that same spirit of openness, engagement, and transparency that Bill C-59 was referred to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security before second reading. The committee recently finished its study of the bill.

[*English*]

I want to thank members of that committee for their diligent and thorough examination of the legislation, both during their consideration of the bill, and indeed, during their pre-study of this subject matter in 2016, which contributed significantly to the drafting of Bill C-59 itself.

An even stronger bill, with over 40 amendments accepted, is now back before the House. The amendments would bring greater clarity, transparency, accountability, and public reporting. One of the major changes made by the committee was the addition of a new act in the bill, entitled avoiding complicity in mistreatment by foreign entities act.

Last fall we undertook to enhance and make public a previously secret 2011 ministerial directive to both CSIS and the RCMP that dealt with how those agencies should share and receive information with and from foreign entities when there was a risk that the information may have been derived by, or could result in, torture or mistreatment. Obviously, it is important to have ministerial directives governing such a serious topic.

The goal of my directive was to establish strong safeguards to ensure that information shared by Canada would not lead to

mistreatment and that Canada would not use any information that could be tainted by mistreatment, with one exception. That is when it is essential to prevent the loss of life or serious injury.

The new avoiding complicity in mistreatment by foreign entities act would go a step further than ministerial directives. It would create a statutory requirement for such directives to exist in the form of orders in council, and not just for CSIS and the RCMP but for all departments and agencies that deal with national security. It would also require that each of those directives in the orders in council be made public.

This amendment, which is now in Bill C-59, is another example of how this legislation would strive constantly to achieve two things simultaneously. This bill would strengthen Canada's ability to effectively address and counter 21st-century threats while safeguarding the rights and freedoms we cherish as Canadians.

Bill C-59 is the result of the most comprehensive review of Canada's national security framework since the passing of the original CSIS Act more than 30 years ago. That review included unprecedented open and transparent public consultations on national security undertaken by Public Safety Canada and by the Department of Justice.

● (1800)

[*Translation*]

Several issues were covered, including countering radicalization to violence, oversight, and accountability, threat reduction and the Anti-terrorism Act, 2015, the former Bill C-51. All Canadians were invited and encouraged to take part in the consultations, which were held between September and December of 2016.

[*English*]

The response to the consultations was tremendous. Citizens, community leaders, experts, academics, non-governmental organizations, and parliamentarians alike made their views and ideas known over the course of that consultation period. In the end, tens of thousands of views were received, all of which were valuable in shaping the scope and the content of Bill C-59.

With almost 59,000 responses received, the online consultation was what generated by far the largest volume of input. In addition to that, there were nearly 18,000 submissions received by email. In addition, public town halls were held in five Canadian cities: Halifax, Markham, Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Yellowknife. This gave citizens across the country a chance to share their thoughts and opinions in person.

The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security held numerous meetings on the consultations. It even travelled across the country to hear testimony not only from expert witnesses, but also general members of the public who were invited to express their views.

A digital town hall and two Twitter chats were also organized.

Members of the public also had the opportunity to make their voices heard at 17 other engagement events led by different members of Parliament at the constituency level.

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In addition, 14 in-person sessions were held with academics and experts across the country, as well as a large round table with experts from civil society.

I simply make the point that there was an extensive effort to be open, to be inclusive, to ensure that every Canadian who had something to say on this topic could have the opportunity to do that. This was not a process reserved for politicians in Parliament or for experts in ivory towers. This was an open, public, inclusive process, and Canadians let their voices be heard.

After all of that information was collected, the next step was to carefully analyze every comment, every submission, every letter, and all of the other forms of input. All of the views that had been expressed to the various consultative mechanisms have now been published on the Government of Canada's open data portal, so anyone interested in actually seeing who said what to whom throughout the whole consultation process can look it up and see what the dialogue was like.

In addition to that, an independently prepared report provides an overview of what was heard during the consultations.

While it would be difficult to summarize everything that we heard from Canadians in a consultation process that massive, I can speak to a few of the key themes and ideas that emerged.

As one might expect, given the thousands of submissions, there were widely differing opinions. That is what we would expect from Canadians who are very engaged in an important discussion. Certainly that was the case in these consultations.

The results make one thing perfectly clear. Canadians want accountability. They want transparency and effectiveness from their security and intelligence agencies. They want all three of those things, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness, together. They want the government and Parliament to achieve all of those things at once. Bill C-59 goes farther and better than any other piece of legislation in Canadian history to accomplish those three things together.

Canadians expect their rights, their freedoms, and their privacy to be protected at the same time as their security is protected.

Consistent with what we heard, Bill C-59 would modernize and enhance Canada's security and intelligence laws to ensure our agencies would have the tools they needed to protect us and it would do so within a clear legal and constitutional framework that would comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

● (1805)

There is no doubt in my mind that the legislation before the House today has been strengthened and improved by the result of the close work that was done by the standing committee. All the scrutiny and clause-by-clause analysis and consideration, all the debate around all of those various amendments has resulted in a better product.

When we tabled this legislation, and before the committee did its work, many of the most renowned experts in the country said that it was very good legislation and that it accomplished more in the field of national security than any other proposal since the CSIS Act was first introduced. That was a great compliment coming from the

imminent experts who made those observations. However, now, after the debate, after all of the input, after all of the amendments, the legislation is even better.

One of the things I am most proud of with respect to Bill C-59 is how it represents a dynamic shift in the review and accountability structure for our entire national security apparatus. Currently, some of our agencies that deal in national security have a review body that examines their work. CSIS of course has the Security Intelligence Review committee, SIRC. The RCMP has the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, CRCC. Those are a couple of examples. However, there is no unified review body that can look beyond one agency at a time and actually follow the evidence as it moves across government from agency to agency.

For the first time, Bill C-59 would fix this problem by creating the national security and intelligence review agency, or NSIRA. NSIRA is largely modelled on the often discussed idea of a "super-SIRC", which would have the authority to review all matters of national security, whether they are with CSIS, or CBSA, or IRCC, or the RCMP, or Global Affairs, or DND, or anywhere else in the Government of Canada.

When we link that to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which was recently created by the passage of Bill C-22, Canadians can be assured that we have a review architecture in place that is required for the 21st century. It involves parliamentarians, through the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. It involves expert review through NSIRA. In addition to that, it involves, for the first time ever, a brand new innovation that we have introduced, a new element of actual real-time oversight, which has never existed before, through the work of the new intelligence commission, which is also created by virtue of this legislation, Bill C-59.

We also worked to ensure that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the central principle behind Bill C-59. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than the changes we have made to the former Bill C-51's threat reduction measures.

When Bill C-51 created these threat reduction measures, it created an open-ended, seemingly limitless course of possible action for CSIS to take. This bill would create a closed list of specific actions that CSIS could apply to a federal court for permission to undertake. It is open, it is transparent, while at the same time gives CSIS the tools it needs to keep Canadians safe.

Another part of the former Bill C-51 that we have undertaken to dramatically improve is the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act, or SCISA. After Bill C-59 is enacted, this new legislation will be renamed to the security of Canada information disclosure act, and it will not grant any new powers to collect information on Canadians. Rather it is a roadmap for how existing information related to a threat to the security of Canada can and should be shared between departments and agencies in order to mitigate or eliminate that threat.

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●(1810)

It clarifies that advocacy, protest, dissent, or artistic expression are not activities that undermine the security of Canada, and it creates a robust review framework to ensure that information is being disclosed to other departments appropriately, with proper record-keeping at both ends of the process.

Next I want to touch on an issue that I believe almost every member of the House supports, and that is the fixing of the passenger protect program, or what is sometimes known as the “no-fly list”.

I imagine that virtually every member of the chamber has met with a member of the group called “No-Fly List Kids” at some point during this Parliament. To be clear, there are currently no children on Canada's passenger protect list. However, there are children and adults who may share a name with someone who is on the list. Former defence minister Bill Graham famously had to deal with this very problem when someone sharing his name was actually listed.

Fixing the problem involves both funding and new legislation. Bill C-59 will play an important role, allowing the government to collect domestic passenger manifests and screen the list itself, rather than sharing our passenger protect list with over 100 airlines around the world. What this means is that once the government is collecting the passenger manifests, it will be able to issue redress numbers to people who share a name with a listed individual. Anyone who has booked a flight to the United States in the past few years has probably noticed that their system has a box for a unique redress number. Once Canada's system is up and running, it will operate in a very similar fashion.

I would also note that we got the necessary funding to develop this new system this past March, in the most recent budget. This measure is another excellent example of ensuring that the rights of Canadians are respected while at the same time safeguarding national security.

There are many other important parts of Bill C-59 that I will not have the time in 20 minutes to go through in detail. However, I would like to just mention some of the others—for example, the new stand-alone legislation to modernize Canada's Communications Security Establishment. It has needed this modernization. It has needed this new legislation for a long time. Bill C-59 introduces that legislation.

There are also important changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which ensures that protections are afforded to young Canadians in respect of recognizance orders.

Changes in the Criminal Code would, among other things, require the Attorney General to publish an annual report setting out the number of terrorism recognizances entered into during the course of the year. Also, there are very important changes to the CSIS Act that would ensure that our security agents are confident they have the legal and constitutional authority to undertake their essential work on behalf of all Canadians, including, for example, the complex matter of handling data sets, taking into account the advice and judgments of recent decisions in the federal courts.

●(1815)

[*Translation*]

Should Bill C-59 pass, this historic piece of legislation would enhance Canada's national security, keep its citizens safe, and safeguard Canadians' constitutionally protected rights and freedoms.

[*English*]

For all these reasons, I would encourage all hon. colleagues to join me in supporting Bill C-59. I am glad it enjoys strong support among Canadians generally and among some of our country's most distinguished experts in national security and civil liberties. We have been very fortunate to have the benefit of their advice as we have moved this legislation through the parliamentary process.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the member said in his speech that the central tenet of Bill C-59 is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I was under the impression that Bill C-59 was about protecting Canadians and national security. Let us keep that in mind.

During the clause-by-clause consideration at the public safety and national security committee, over 235 amendments were proposed. Interestingly enough, all 29 Conservative amendments were defeated by the Liberals, and all 43 Liberal amendments were passed.

Now, on one such amendment that was proposed at committee, we heard from national security experts. It was proposed by the Conservatives, but it does not matter who proposed it because it was about national security. This really should be a civil liberties bill, because twice as many witnesses at committee were either civil liberty individuals or lawyers, as opposed to national security experts.

One thing that was brought up by a number of experts was the disconnect between intelligence and evidence—

The Deputy Speaker: We are on questions and comments. I know the hon. member is up next, and I just wanted to make sure we were on the right part of the debate. Go ahead.

The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, we heard from witnesses that the gap in Canada currently being able to effectively prosecute returning ISIS terrorists, or those who leave our country and return to join a terrorist organization, is the gap between intelligence and evidence. There were a number of great amendments, and one that specifically targeted that.

I am wondering whether the minister would be able to provide us with an answer. We did not really fix the gap. National experts told us that we needed to fix the gap if we really wanted to be successful. To me, the bill is still wanting in that regard.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member began his question by wondering why, in a bill on national security, we would talk about the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

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As I mentioned in my remarks, our objective through this whole process has been twofold: one, keep Canadians safe; two, safeguard their rights and freedoms. We need to protect national security, and we need to do so in a manner that is consistent with the charter.

I do not know if the hon. member sees a contradiction there, but quite frankly we do not. We think there is no contradiction in doing the right thing to keep Canadians safe, and also the right thing to safeguard Canadian rights, freedoms, and privacy. If the member sees that those two things are unalterably opposed to each other and that we have to choose either security or rights, then Canadians will be put in an invidious position.

Our determination is to achieve both together, and that is consistent with what we heard from Canadians in the last election. They said that they did not trust the Conservatives with their rights, and they did not trust the NDP with their safety. Canadians wanted both at the same time, and this legislation delivers both at the same time.

● (1820)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I attended many a rally concerning opposition to Bill C-51. Those constituents and people across my city are not any more convinced that they need not still be concerned. The only time I received more concerns was over the fact that the government refuses to deal with the arms trade.

It is my understanding that the government is still refusing to absolutely prohibit the use of information attained through torture, not just prohibit the country from using torture to get information, but prohibit its use in any way. The reason I raise this is that both Liberal and Conservative governments have been involved in rendition and in colluding to get that information.

If there is one thing we hear a lot of Canadians speak out about, it is that they are opposed to providing reparations when the government violates international law. We have Maher Arar, Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad El Maati, and Muayyed Nureddin. Is the government not concerned that the amount we have to pay out in reparations is simply going to mount if we do not finally and absolutely prohibit, in any circumstance, the use of information gained through torture?

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, many constitutional and civil rights experts who have looked at the ministerial directives we drafted a year ago and at the provisions in this bill, which take the essence of those ministerial directives and would give them the force of law through orders in council as a result of Bill C-59, have said that those directives are the most progressive they have ever seen. Plus, they are public for the first time in Canadian history. We have moved this along light years from where it was.

Let me just put a hypothetical situation to the hon. member. Imagine that there was a would-be bomber in a little town in rural Ontario who was going to get on a train to go to a big urban centre to detonate a bomb, and presume that information about that threat came to the attention of the RCMP and there was a question as to the source of that information, but the information was accurate and was viable. What would members do in those circumstances? Would they let the bomber get on the train to go to a large urban centre to kill thousands of people, or would they put in the law, as we have done,

the exception that when the use of the information is necessary to save Canadian lives, they can in fact save those lives?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the sections of Bill C-59 that the minister did not talk about too much was part 8 that deals with the Youth Criminal Justice Act. When we think about indigenous youth, racialized youth, and especially when we look at some of the challenges they might face, the amendments in this piece of legislation would require that only a youth justice court would have the jurisdiction to make orders against young persons, and would ensure that they are detained in a safe, fair, and humane manner. I wonder if the minister could further elaborate on that and talk to the importance of this particular part of the legislation as it pertains to our young people.

● (1825)

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, once again, this is consistent with the two basic tenets of this legislation: keeping Canadians safe and safeguarding Canadian rights and freedoms. We need to make sure that we accomplish both of those objectives with the same degree of enthusiasm and quality. Doing that, in part, requires that we say explicitly in this legislation that where offenders may be young people, the existing provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act would apply to the proceedings involving young people, to ensure that the thoughtful provisions of that legislation that are particularly designed and shaped to deal with young people in trouble with the law would apply in cases that engage national security, just as they would apply in respect of any other criminal matter. That is the point here: to make sure that the Youth Criminal Justice Act has the same force and effect with respect to proceedings under national security as it would have in relation to any other criminal matter. In our view, that is an appropriate way to proceed. It would achieve the objective of protecting Canadians and also of safeguarding rights and freedoms.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister's speech went over a lot of the important issues in this bill that we need to be concerned with. I would like to focus on how we have achieved a balance in this bill between protecting the safety and security of Canadians and protecting their privacy rights.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Speaker, there are many provisions that work in that direction through the 10 or 11 different parts in the bill. I will go through two of the most important.

The first is the national security and intelligence review agency, which for the first time gives a single agency the authority to scrutinize the activities of all the intelligence and security agencies and functions within the government of Canada wherever they may be vested across the whole of government. If there is an issue, one can follow the trail of evidence from one agency to the next to the next, and we will not have to deal with truncated information in silos. This will be the most comprehensive review organization that has ever existed in our national security architecture.

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The second, although there are many, is the creation of the new intelligence commissioner. For the first time ever, we will have an official appointed with the responsibility to conduct not only a review of activities after the fact, but to scrutinize activities before they take place, and either authorize them or refuse to authorize them if this official finds the particular behaviour to be unreasonable or inappropriate. For the first time ever, we will actually have oversight and not just review.

Those are just two examples of how agencies like this ensure that the security apparatus of the country is doing what it needs to do to keep people safe, while at the same time doing it in a way that protects rights and freedoms.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am here to talk about the sale of Canadian helicopters to the Philippines, whose president said that he once threw someone out of a helicopter and would not hesitate to do it again. He sees that as a good way to get rid of political opponents.

This sale was the subject of a deal between the Department of National Defence and the Philippines government brokered by the Canadian Commercial Corporation. When the sale in question became public knowledge, the government said the Canadian Commercial Corporation would have to review it. Finally people started asking questions.

• (1830)

[*English*]

The real problem was that the system did not catch the sale in time. We had the media, not the minister, tell us about it. Then the minister told us that she would closely scrutinize the export permit request. Maybe the minister did not know, but she would never see an export request because our system is full of holes. This is worrying.

As I said, this deal would have gone ahead and we would not have known about it if some investigative reporter had not been able to get the information. One has to wonder how many such deals have gone ahead without us knowing.

[*Translation*]

The helicopter story is not over, since there are reports that the company that wanted to sell the helicopters is now considering sending it in parts to the United States and then having the parts sent to the Philippines.

We can learn a lot from the Philippine helicopter story, since it exposes some major flaws in our current system, and these flaws will still exist after Bill C-47, to implement the Arms Trade Treaty, passes.

Some exports to the United States are not controlled. The company could use this to circumvent the Canadian government. Then, there is the fact that Bill C-47 does not cover the activities of the Department of National Defence or the Canadian Commercial Corporation. This is what originally led us to this agreement, and nothing will end up being changed.

The Liberals say that they listened to experts about acceding the Arms Trade Treaty, but this is not true. The Liberals addressed a few issues, but the experts were primarily concerned about sales to the United States, and this problem will continue.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by noting that Canada strongly advocates for human rights in the Philippines. In fact, the Prime Minister and the foreign affairs minister raised our concerns directly with their counterparts in the Philippines at the most recent ASEAN meeting.

We also raised our ongoing concerns at the last universal periodic review of the Philippines in 2017. This included the need for the Philippines to end extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detention, torture and harassment; prevent, eliminate, and end impunity for all forms of sexual violence; strengthen the protection of children's rights; and refrain from reintroducing the death penalty.

Like tens of thousands of soldiers wearing the Canadian uniform, I and many others like me have fought for human rights on behalf of Canada to protect the weak and the innocent.

While I cannot speak to the activities of the Canadian Commercial Corporation, which falls under the responsibilities of my trade colleagues, to which my hon. colleague referred, I can say that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was abundantly clear about the particular contract raised by the member during question period.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said, "I will conduct an extremely rigorous human rights analysis of any potential export permit application related to this contract"—specifically the Philippines—and "I have the power to deny a permit if I feel that it poses a risk to human rights and I am prepared to do so."

I would also like to point to a key clarification, which is also related to my colleague's comments during the debate on Bill C-47 earlier today.

Under international law, when a state accedes to a treaty, it obviously agrees formally to be legally bound to the provisions of the treaty. For Canada, this includes all federal government departments, such as Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence, and crown corporations such as the Canada Commercial Corporation. This is exactly what the hon. member was talking about in terms of closing loopholes. Bill C-47 would do just that.

Acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty would ensure that the CCC is bound to the national provisions. This is a concern my hon. colleague has previously raised, and her concerns are being addressed.

Adjournment Proceedings

I am, however, disappointed that my hon. colleague seems to have indicated that the NDP will no longer support Bill C-47, which is ironic because doing so would allow Canada to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty and close the loopholes that quite rightly concern her. If this is so, then her party will be voting against ensuring the CCC applies the very criteria for which she has indicated such a passion.

Our government is committed to the protection and promotion of human rights around the world, and we remain committed to a strong arms exports system that Canadians can have confidence in.

• (1835)

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary said that we are advocating for human rights in the Philippines. I am sure we are advocating for human rights in Saudi Arabia also, but on the other hand, we are selling them arms.

My colleague also said that the Minister of Foreign Affairs would have done a human rights analysis of any potential export permit. What the government does not seem to get is that it did not need an export permit because of those loopholes.

Despite the Liberals saying that all government departments will be covered with that, I would challenge the parliamentary secretary to tell me where in Bill C-47 the Canadian Commercial Corporation is mentioned, or the Department of National Defence. In fact, Canadian officials have told us that Bill C-47 would not change anything in what the Canadian Commercial Corporation can do now and that DND would continue to have a separate system.

When the Liberals say they are closing the loopholes, they are the only ones saying they are closing the loopholes. All the experts disagree with them. I would like them to listen to what the experts have to say on this subject.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, Canada remains a strong defender of the rule of law and of human rights internationally.

In the Philippines, Canada takes specific and concrete action by recognizing and supporting human rights defenders, encouraging a free and open press, providing training on international laws governing human rights, and supporting the peace process in Mindanao.

We also are committed to a strong and robust arms control system that rightly takes into consideration human rights concerns. A key part of this is acceding to the Arms Trade Treaty through Bill C-47, which closes the very loopholes that my distinguished colleague is concerned about.

We encourage the NDP to support Bill C-47 at the appropriate time.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I asked the member for Burnaby North—Seymour in this Parliament, will the Minister of Transport listen to Gabriola Islanders and cancel the five bulk anchorages proposed off the undeveloped shoreline of our community on Gabriola Island? These are 300-metre-long vessels designed for export of Wyoming coal, which all the west coast U.S. ports have refused. They are bound for China where the coal will be burned in power plants. There is no local benefit; it is all local risk.

I did not get an answer in question period and, for the folks at home, this is an opportunity, in four minutes rather than in 30 seconds, to hear a full answer from the government.

The risk of bulk anchorages to coastal communities is real. I know that from when I was chair of the Islands Trust Council. In a year and a half period, we had three bulk carriers in Plumper Sound drag anchor and almost go on the rocks. These were massive vessels that were improperly sited.

I am going to relay to the representative of the minister some of the impacts that are being described by coastal constituents throughout the Salish Sea about what anchorages are doing to them right now. These are vessels that are waiting to go into port in Vancouver. They are not bringing goods or taking goods from Vancouver Island. Again, it is all downside; there is no upside for our communities.

This is a letter that was sent on March 14 to the minister by Gabriolans Against Freighter Anchorages, Anchorages Concerned Thetis, Cowichan Bay Ship Watch Society, and Plumper Sound Protection Association, with the Valdes Island Conservancy. These are grassroots groups from a whole bunch of the islands that are affected.

They said that over recent weeks they have seen a surge in the number of freighters using south coast anchorages before going to berth. They were told that this is due to rail delays in delivering the grain to the port. They were also told that with expansion of trade and the potential expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline, anchorage usage is only going to get worse.

They said they take very seriously the impacts of these ships in their midst. They continue to have grave concerns about the risk of accidents, such as collision or grounding that could occur as freighter traffic increases through the confined inlets and bays of the south coast waters and southeast coast of Vancouver Island.

They also referenced freighters dragging anchor in strong winds.

Robert Krize from Gabriola said that he shudders every time he thinks of the damage that these anchorages could do. He is from Alaska and saw first-hand the damage done by the *Exxon Valdez* in Prince William Sound. He said that these proposed anchorages make no sense at all.

Kay Morissette from Saltair said that the potential damages to the environment are well known. The bilge pumps, anchors dragging, and other scraps from the boats are impacting the water and ecosystem directly.

The Cowichan Bay Ship Watch Society said that the average length of stay has doubled just in the last year, from eight days to 16 days in some of the anchorages.

Another constituent, Janet, on Gabriola Island said that they do not see why islanders have to take up the slack for inadequate planning demonstrated by the Vancouver harbour authority.

Adjournment Proceedings

My questions for the minister's representative are, why has he not cancelled the Gabriola anchorages already, and when is he going to put pressure on the ports to clean up their act so that we do not externalize these costs on to coastal communities?

• (1840)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking my colleague for the question.

It is my pleasure to rise today and discuss an issue that is so close to the city of Nanaimo, a place where I previously served as a city councillor, and as my wife reminded me this morning, where I was first elected over 19 years ago. How time flies.

The Government of Canada is committed to safe, clean, and efficient marine transportation that is environmentally responsible and that supports economic growth. Fisheries and Oceans Canada understands that the Pacific Pilotage Authority completed an anchorage review, risk assessment, environmental review, and public consultation for the proposed anchorages. After considering information submitted by the Pacific Pilotage Authority, Fisheries and Oceans Canada determined that adverse impacts to marine mammals, fish and fish habitat, and aquatic species at risk can be avoided through the application of appropriate project design and mitigation measures. Therefore, a Fisheries Act authorization is not required for this project.

Our government understands that Canadians are deeply connected to our coastal areas and waterways, and this is especially true on our beautiful Pacific coast. Canada needs a strong Fisheries Act to protect fish and their habitat for future generations. This is why our government has introduced Bill C-68, after extensive consultations with Canadians. The proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act would restore lost protections for fish habitat, enhance marine protection and habitat restoration, and strengthen the indigenous role in the review of projects, monitoring, and policy development.

We heard from thousands of Canadians, including over 200 indigenous groups, who said they want strong, fair, and clear legislation that sustains our environment and protects our oceans and waterways. If passed into law, the proposed changes would recognize that decisions could be guided by the principles of sustainability, precaution, and ecosystem management, and there would be full transparency for projects with the introduction of a public registry. Canadians would have confidence that large and small projects that impact fish and fish habitat would be managed to enhance the protection of fish and ecosystems, while industry would be provided with certainty as to when development projects required approval.

In addition to the proposed legislation, our government introduced a \$1.5 billion oceans protection plan to improve marine safety and responsible shipping while protecting Canada's marine environment. Measures under the oceans protection plan are working to protect our coasts while promoting safe and responsible commercial use, in collaboration with coastal and indigenous communities. The oceans protection plan is helping to create economic opportunities for Canadians today, including jobs for middle-class Canadians, while protecting our waters for the benefit of future generations.

Our government understands the importance of efficient and responsible marine transportation. This includes anchorages in and near Canada's busiest ports. A specific initiative under the oceans protection plan will work with coastal communities to respond to environmental, economic, cultural, safety, and security concerns about anchorages and to propose management options.

Ensuring the protection of Canada's oceans and the sustainability of marine life are key priorities for our government. We also recognize that a strong economy requires a healthy environment. For this reason, our government will invest more than \$280 million to support the restoration of lost protections for fish and fish habitat. The proposed Fisheries Act will safeguard fish, protect the environment, and benefit our communities.

Finally, I can assure this House that Fisheries and Oceans Canada is committed to working with Canadians to sustainably manage all coastal areas.

• (1845)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member, I think he is answering the wrong question. This is not an intervention about amendments to the Fisheries Act. In fact, the irony here is that the Environmental Assessment Office study of the proposed Gabriola anchorage has said that because the Harper Conservatives had gutted the Fisheries Act, no fisheries permit was needed for this project. It was not going to be assessed. The fact that the government is now amending the Fisheries Act reveals completely that the review of the Gabriola anchorages was inadequate, which is why we have asked the government to cancel the five new anchorages on the basis that the process was so undermined. If they want this to go ahead, they should start it completely under a new review.

Specifically, the environmental assessment review also identified that the consultation with first nations was inadequate. I have an exact quote on this, which says, "the lack of Public/First Nations consultation leaves potential for significant effects". Indeed, this year, in March, Lyackson First Nation wrote to the minister saying that the anchorages consultation process was inadequate. The mayor of Ladysmith wrote the same in May of this year.

There is nothing about the Salish Sea anchorages plan or the pilot project that aligns with the government's bold promises on first nations consultation. Why is it so hard to get the member to understand and the government to live up to its promises on environmental protection, marine protection, and first nations consultation related to anchorages in the Salish Sea?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, the protection of Canada's oceans and the sustainability of marine life are key priorities for our government. We also understand the importance of a safe, clean, and efficient marine transportation system that is environmentally responsible and that supports economic growth. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has reviewed the information provided by the Pacific Pilotage Authority, including an anchorage review, risk assessment, environmental review, and public consultation for the proposed anchorages.

Our government does understand that Canadians are deeply connected to our coastal areas and waterways and to the fish and fish habitat they support. That is why we introduced Bill C-68 after extensive consultations with Canadians. The proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act would restore lost protections for fish and fish

habitat while enhancing marine protection and habitat restoration. We will also strengthen the indigenous role in the review of projects monitoring and policy development. I sincerely hope that the member opposite will support this important and historic legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill is not present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given. Accordingly, the notice is being 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 6:49 p.m.)

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