



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Wednesday, February 6, 2019**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, these are dark days for French in Ottawa.

Yesterday, the Conservatives tried to seduce Quebec with their single tax return motion, but the Conservative member for Mégantic—L'Érable really put his foot in it when he went after the Minister of National Revenue for being francophone. Neither the minister nor Quebecers need to apologize for speaking French. We speak French and, unlike the Conservatives, we are proud to speak French.

Ontario's Conservative premier said no to a francophone university. New Brunswick's Conservative premier said no to the Jeux de la Francophonie. The Liberals are not even willing to engage in a debate about whether adequate knowledge of French should be a requirement for immigrants residing in Quebec to be granted citizenship. The minister of Liberal heritage even accused us of being racist. The Liberals also cry foul when we say that federally regulated workers in Quebec should be subject to the Charter of the French Language.

That is what it has come to. These are dark days for French in Ottawa.

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### ALBERT SANTERRE

**Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on February 3, we lost a man who dedicated 40 years of his life to municipal politics.

Albert Santerre was the longest-serving mayor in Brome—Missisquoi. He was in his ninth term as mayor of Saint-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, a position he held for a total of 30 years. Albert was also the deputy reeve of the Brome-Missisquoi RCM from 2005 to 2009 and from 2012 to 2015. He died of cancer on Sunday morning at Maisonneuve-Rosemont hospital.

Albert was a genuine and committed man who knew a lot of people and managed to advance some important issues. I want to thank him for everything he did for Brome—Missisquoi and offer my sincere condolences to his family, his friends and his colleagues. We have just lost a dear friend.

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[English]

### CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge well over 250,000 Canadians who live with congenital heart disease. Next week is congenital heart awareness week, and February 14 is recognized as congenital heart awareness day.

In Canada, one in every 100 babies is born with some form of CHD, making it the number one birth defect. These range from minor heart murmurs to complex structural anomalies. Sadly, there is no cure.

Years ago, CHD meant a child had a 20% chance of reaching adulthood. Today, thanks to advances in medical care and surgical treatments, 95% of CHD children now live well into adulthood. However, those living with CHD still require specialized lifelong cardiac care, with at least half facing the prospect of complications and multiple surgeries.

I stand in support of the Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance and commend the dedicated work of its volunteers.

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### HOUSING

**Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to be in Chilliwack, British Columbia a couple of weeks ago to announce the construction of 67 new rental housing units on behalf of my friend and colleague, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. Partnering with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the government invested \$11.8 million in this great project.

*Statements by Members*

This project is one of many under the national housing strategy. As a former property developer, I have engaged with countless Canadians who are trying to find their new home. Every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. I am pleased to represent a government that is supporting a real solution to the housing issue in our country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EDUCATION**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, every time our society has undergone tremendous change, it has been related to education. To name just a few such changes since I was a kid, take for example our thoughts and attitudes towards seat belts, smoking, waste disposal and recycling, the recognition of LGBT rights, and climate change. In each instance, younger generations had a profound influence on their elders.

Change was possible in all of those areas because school was, and remains, the crucible of knowledge that shapes minds on a neutral, scientific basis. Since Teacher Appreciation Week and Hooked on School Days both happen to fall in February, I wanted to take this opportunity to express my admiration for these women and men who give it their all day after day, who sometimes inspire dreams, but always help keep them alive.

The idea of offering a teacher an apple is probably outdated, but I encourage anyone who is a parent to reach out and send an email of thanks or encouragement to those who are there for our kids day in and day out.

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● (1410)

**LAURENTIDES—LABELLE**

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker,

Now that January has finally passed  
This bitter cold just cannot last

As temperatures begin to climb  
February brings winter carnival time

Head to Sainte-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson to skate  
Or to Brébeuf for a dancing date

Sainte-Adèle and Huberdeau fill with sledding squeals  
While at Ferme-Neuve they race snowmobiles

In Val-Morin and Notre-Dame-du-Laus, the fishing divine  
While Mont-Tremblant is the place to dine

Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts can toot its own horn  
Cause that's where Bonhomme Carnaval was born

Winter is about more than clearing snow  
So Laurentides—Labelle is the place to go

That is why I give three cheers  
To community members and volunteers

All of them are truly key  
To enjoying this great party

**LIBERAL SHIPBUILDING STRATEGY**

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in their desperate mad rush to try to launch the construction of a support ship, the Liberals are indefinitely postponing construction of several Coast Guard ships.

The Liberal shipbuilding strategy is marred by delays, improvisation, and cost overruns. Deadlines keep getting extended and not a single ship has been delivered. Worse yet, officials confirm that the design of this new ship is not even ready.

Confusion, bungling, manoeuvring, and no results—such is the Liberal track record.

The workers at Davie shipyard meet their deadlines without cost overruns and get nothing but Liberal contempt and unemployment in return.

With its aging fleet, the Coast Guard is struggling to keep the St. Lawrence ice free, but the Liberals say that is not their problem.

Liberal contempt and disdain toward Quebec and our Royal Canadian Navy is at an all-time high. However, in October, people will have the unique opportunity to fire these arrogant Liberals and elect a Conservative government that respects—

[English]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for London North Centre.

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**PRIDE MEN'S CHORUS LONDON**

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I wish to highlight a remarkable organization. Pride Men's Chorus London is a program of Aeolian Hall that was co-founded in 2016 by Rod Culham and Clark Bryan.

I have had the opportunity to attend several concerts held by the chorus. Its members envision a world where the human voice is lifted up through song in a celebration of diversity, and where music is valued as a powerful gift and seen as a universal tool to achieve and sustain love and inclusion.

More than this, Pride Men's Chorus seeks to proactively combat stereotypes and false perceptions that give rise to hate and violence. Its work challenges a heteronormative world-view by inspiring audiences, the LGBTQ2 community in London and the broader community in London through advocacy and music. It celebrates victories won and mourns lives lost, all while promoting unconditional acceptance.

I thank the Pride Men's Chorus London for singing out, changing hearts and making our community stronger. It makes London and Canada better.

*Statements by Members***ONTARIO PLACE**

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the best things the Conservatives ever did for Toronto was build Ontario Place. From the magic of IMAX and the wonder of Cinesphere to the riot we all had playing as kids in the Children's Village, or all the first dates on the lawn watching The Tragically Hip, Molly Johnson, Parachute Club and the long list of artists who circled the stage as we watched, Ontario Place is a cherished part of Toronto's waterfront.

However, the new provincial government at Queen's Park has put a for sale sign on the site and told the 1.5 million visitors who visited the site last year to scram. Clearly, Doug Ford is no Bill Davis. The Tories at Queen's Park are talking about a mall or, worse, a casino on the waterfront. What a waste. What a terrible deficit of imagination.

The people of Ontario, the folks of our city, and the Toronto Liberal caucus want to keep Ontario Place a public place. Hear our call: Ontario Place is a place for all. Ontario Place for all.

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**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, people in the neighbourhood of Elmwood—Transcona in Winnipeg are struggling to make ends meet and want to know exactly how much the carbon tax will cost them. Many small businesses, tradespeople and households are finding their resources stretched. They are being pulled down by the Liberal government digging deeper and deeper into their pockets, and now they are worried about the carbon tax that has been forced upon them by the Prime Minister. For what?

The Liberal carbon tax does nothing to help the environment. It is only making it harder to put students through university, get children to art classes and sports games, and enable tradespeople and small business owners to make a living. Hard-working Canadians in Elmwood—Transcona want and deserve a government that will allow them the opportunity to create a better future for themselves, their children and their grandchildren.

Fortunately, in October, their voices will finally be heard when they kick this Prime Minister and their current MP out of office.

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**SENIORS**

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Northumberland—Peterborough South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as parliamentarians, better seniors care is something we are all dedicated to. Today we are joined by the Canadian Association for Long Term Care. Since 2002, this association has been working hard to advocate for publicly funded health care services for seniors and has been sharing information, best practices and evidence in order to improve the quality of care for residents in long-term care, no matter where they may live.

The CEO, Daniel Fontaine, and members of the association are currently out meeting with parliamentarians to raise awareness of their pre-budget submission and the launch of the #BecauseYouCare campaign, which is calling on all members of this House to visit a care home in their ridings during the week of February 10 to 16. This evening the association is holding a reception from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

in room 752, 131 Queen Street. I am proud to be sponsoring this event, and I encourage all members to attend and hear about the exciting work this association is doing to advance seniors care in Canada.

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● (1415)

**MEN'S HEALTH**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize one of my constituents in King—Vaughan, a former school principal and a father of five. He is known as the ultimate hockey dad, despite knowing nothing about the sport when he first moved to Canada from Jamaica in the 1970s, because Karl Subban and his wife Maria raised three sons, P.K., Malcolm and Jordan, who were all drafted into the NHL.

Indeed, Mr. Subban was so focused on helping his children, including two daughters, succeed that he sometimes overlooked his own health. At the age of 40, he was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. This health scare and his own journey to become healthier were important factors in his decision to become a voice for men's health, and he was recognized in 2018 as a Canadian Men's Health Foundation champion.

Through a new awareness campaign, Don't Change Much, the foundation is inspiring men and their families to lead healthier lives using lifestyle programs to encourage small changes that will have a big impact on their health. Let us all remember to inspire our dads to take small steps to improve men's health. In fact, they do not have to change much.

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**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, life is getting harder for Canadians under the current Liberal government. Neighbourhoods like Willowdale, Lansing and Newtonbrook, in north Toronto, are no exception. In these areas, transit is easily accessible, but the Prime Minister took away the transit tax credit, making life more expensive. The Liberals increased the cost of commuting for those who ride the TTC and the GO train to work, school and recreation.

Just this week, the Conservative leader celebrated the lunar new year in Willowdale with the Chinese community. While there is much to celebrate in the Year of the Pig, there is also frustration. Residents of Willowdale are right to be concerned about the carbon tax, which is raising the cost of everything. They are right to be outraged about how the Liberals have made it more difficult than ever to reunite parents and grandparents and they are right to be looking for better representation come this October.

*Oral Questions***THE PERIOD PURSE**

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Jana Girdauskas and her amazing initiative, The Period Purse. Encountering a homeless woman in Toronto, Jana was struck by a simple but critical question: What does that individual do each month during her menstrual cycle? Jana quickly learned that the needs are vast, from women in the shelter system to low-income students and indigenous girls who stay home from school simply because they cannot afford tampons or pads.

Jana, to her credit, decided to act. She founded The Period Purse to provide female hygiene products for free to homeless and low-income women. What started as a small idea run from the porch of Jana's home, in my riding of Parkdale—High Park, has now blossomed into a national operation with chapters in nine different cities. To date, Jana's team has delivered over 7,800 period purses right across Canada.

On her second anniversary, I simply want to thank Jana for shedding light on such an important issue and for educating me, and other men like me, about this critical component of women's fight for equality.

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**CHILD CARE**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, March 8 is International Women's Day, and though it is 2019, the government has yet to do anything more than pay lip service to women's equality. Universal child care is recognized as an undisputed contributor to the equality of women and the welfare of children, yet our feminist Prime Minister has done little to nothing toward creating it.

We know from the experience of the province of Quebec that executed responsibly, a universal, accessible and affordable system of child care not only pays for itself but serves to increase the GDP by enabling more women to enter the workforce, knowing that their children are taken care of.

Child care costs run as high as \$2,000 per month per child in larger centres. This is financially crippling for women and families. We are raising the next generation of citizens. This failure is not feminism. We can do better, and when we do, all Canadians will benefit.

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**GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister misled Canadians by promising that he would run three small deficits and then he would balance the budget. Instead, however, he borrowed massively, he spent out of control and he will not return the budget to balance until 2040. Economists have rightfully pointed out that there has been no global recession, no good reason and absolutely no excuse. Worse yet, struggling Canadians are paying for the Prime Minister's mistakes.

Nearly 50% of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque and finding it difficult to do so, but the Prime Minister does not care. Why should he? He is sitting on a family fortune. During question period yesterday, he said, "low-income families do not benefit from

tax breaks because they do not pay taxes." What? How out of touch can he be? Of course they pay taxes. They pay income tax, payroll tax, HST, GST and now a massive carbon tax imposed by the Prime Minister. While the Prime Minister sits comfortably on his family fortune, those over whom the emperor rules are struggling to make ends meet.

Canadians deserve better. Canadians deserve an opportunity to get ahead, and this side of the House is going to do that.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

[Translation]

**FRENCH LANGUAGE**

**Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will never apologize for speaking French in the House.

I want to remind my colleagues that the first French words were heard in the new continent when Jacques Cartier set foot in Gaspé and met the Mi'kmaq nation in July 1534.

Our language is a living language here and around the world. The Francophonie has 90 member states representing 284 million individuals who speak French. French is a vibrant language, it is a beautiful language, it is our language and the language of both our ancestors and our children. It represents and defines who we are as a country.

Franco-Ontarians have been attacked by the Ford government, and the Conservatives opposite criticized my colleague yesterday for speaking French in the House.

We will never apologize for speaking French. I am proud of my language and my culture, and I am proud to be part of a government that defends the French language.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**TAXATION**

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said yesterday that low-income families do not benefit from tax breaks because they do not pay taxes.

Does the Prime Minister truly believe that low-income Canadians pay no GST, no gas taxes, no EI taxes and no income tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, the Conservatives have always given advantages and benefits to the wealthy and made the rest of Canadians pay more.

*Oral Questions*

We know that investing in the middle class and all those working hard to join it creates economic growth.

The Conservatives opposed lowering taxes on the middle class.

They opposed the Canada child benefit.

They opposed the guaranteed income supplement increase.

They opposed investments in affordable housing for Canadians.

Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[*English*]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, yesterday in the House, the Prime Minister said that low-income Canadians “do not benefit from tax breaks because they do not pay taxes.” That is his quote.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians this: Does he truly believe that low-income Canadians pay no GST, pay no EI payroll taxes, pay no federal taxes and pay no gas taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for 10 years under Stephen Harper, the Conservatives put forward an economic plan that gives advantages and benefits to the wealthiest 1% while neglecting to help low-income Canadians who actually need that help. That is one of the reasons Canadians chose a government that would focus on the middle class and people working hard to join it. That is what we have been doing.

While we have been doing that, the Conservatives have opposed lowering taxes on the middle class. They opposed the guaranteed income supplement increase for seniors. They even opposed the Canada child benefit. They opposed the things that make a difference in people's—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, none of that is true. Under the Conservative government, taxes were lowered for—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I cannot hear the question. We all need to hear the question. We need to listen quietly. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

• (1425)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, none of that is true. Under the Conservative government, taxes were lower for Canadians. It was the Prime Minister's tax changes that led to the top 1% paying less tax, but it is not surprising that he does not understand how the tax system works. He brags that other people manage his vast family fortune.

Once again, could he tell Canadians this: Does he truly believe that low-income Canadians pay no GST, pay no EI payroll taxes, pay no federal taxes and pay no gas taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know the Conservatives like to mislead the House, but it is blatant in that they actually did vote against the guaranteed income supplement increase for our most vulnerable single seniors. They voted against the Canada child benefit that stopped sending benefit cheques to millionaire families so that we could send more

money to the Canadians who needed it most. We watched them vote against strengthening the Canada pension plan for future generations. They stood and voted against investments in affordable housing for Canadians.

Every step of the way, they say things they do not mean and then act to hurt—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what is in question here are the Prime Minister's own comments yesterday in the House. As for the Conservative record, under our government, the parliamentary budget officer said, “Low and middle income earners have benefited more”.

Let us talk about what the Prime Minister has taken away. He took away the textbook credit. Does he believe that there are no low-income students? He took away the public transit tax credit. Does he believe that there are no low-income Canadians who take the bus? Has his luxurious lifestyle made him so out of touch that he does not understand the everyday struggles of low-income Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems unbelievable that after 10 years of government the Conservatives still do not understand this, but non-refundable tax credits do not help the lowest-income Canadians who need it the most. That is something they simply do not understand. Their approach of boutique tax credits continues to help the wealthiest Canadians while not doing anything for the Canadians who actually need the most support. That is why we increased the guaranteed income supplement—

**The Speaker:** Order. I want to remind members that they should have confidence in those on their side who will, in their turn, speak for their side so they do not have to speak when someone else is speaking.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has other people manage his vast family fortune, so it is no surprise that he does not understand how the tax system actually works. Individuals at the low-income cut-off would earn \$21,487 and pay \$1,451 in federal taxes. They would benefit from those tax credits. Also, the children's fitness tax credit was a refundable tax credit that he took away. Why is he making low and middle-income Canadians pay for his mistakes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while we continue to stay focused on Canadians, the Conservatives keep focusing, once again, on how I grew up.

*Oral Questions*

Let us be very clear. I have always been very clear. I have been fortunate in my life to have great opportunities that very few people had. However, in life, we are always defined by the choices we make. The choice I made was to serve, to serve as a high school teacher, to serve as the member of Parliament for Papineau and now to serve Canadians as Prime Minister. The choices we make as a government are to help the middle class and the people working hard to join it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PHARMACARE**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that all the NDP does is talk and talk. That is rich coming from the Liberal Party, which suffers from acute “consultitis”.

The Liberals proposed creating an advisory council on pharmacare last June. Why?

The Minister of Finance has already announced that they are going to propose not a universal plan but a public-private patchwork that will protect pharmaceutical corporations and insurance companies. Two Liberal sources confirmed as much on Friday.

How can the Liberals go around talking about how great universal health care is when they want to introduce a stopgap medicare system?

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians are proud of our public health care system, but we also know that far too many Canadians are having a hard time paying for their prescriptions. They have to make choices that no Canadian should have to make. That is why we created an expert panel to make recommendations. That is how we are going to figure out what we need to do to make sure Canadians can buy their prescription drugs and stay healthy.

This is a priority for Canadians and for us. We trust the experts and we are going to help Canadians by following their recommendations.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, maybe the Prime Minister should have informed the Minister of Finance that the Liberal priority was to consult again and again.

The choice is clear: the president of the FTQ, Daniel Boyer, recently said that if we had a fully public system, we could achieve economies of scale of \$3 billion in Quebec alone.

Marc-André Gagnon, from Carleton University, estimates that if Canada had a universal system not only would everyone be covered, but businesses would save more than \$8 billion since they would no longer have to offer private drug insurance.

Why does the government want to just patch up the system instead of providing true universal pharmacare based on—

**The Speaker:** The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are in process of consulting experts because it is

important to take the best path forward. That does not mean that we have not taken any action. On the contrary, we are moving forward with concrete measures to make drugs more affordable for Canadians.

We have already seen positive results from the pan-Canadian pharmaceutical alliance, which saves Canadians \$1 billion annually. We made major reforms to patented medicines regulations.

Yes, we created an advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare to review our options. We will continue to work very hard for Canadians.

[English]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, no Canadian should have to empty his or her wallet or go into debt to get the medicine his or her family needs and no Canadian should go without the medicine his or her doctor prescribed because of cost. However, Canada is the only nation with medicare that does not include universal coverage for prescriptions.

This is the Prime Minister's last budget before the election. It is his last chance to do what is right for people, which is to deliver a universal, comprehensive and public pharmacare system that covers every single Canadian. Will the Prime Minister do it?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are rightly proud of our health care system but we also recognize that Canadians in far too many situations have to make impossible choices between paying for their medications, paying their rent or paying for their food.

That is why we are committed to moving forward on pharmacare but moving forward in the right way. We put together a panel of experts to study the best way to help Canadians by making sure that their medications are affordable, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been saying that since 1997.

The Prime Minister clearly does not understand the reality people are facing. Millions of Canadians are deprived of the medicine they need because of price. Today we heard from Marilyn Sheehan, whose family lives in BC. She said she cannot afford the heart medication her husband needs and their son often goes without his life-saving allergy medicine. She said they are just “rolling the dice”. Private patchwork coverage has not helped them.

Why is the Prime Minister pursuing this very system that costs more and delivers less?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have not yet determined the best path forward. We have asked an expert panel to make recommendations about how to best help Canadians who are struggling and making impossible choices, like the member opposite so eloquently described.



*Oral Questions*

That is why we are actually not only just moving forward with that panel but we are moving forward with concrete measures, like joining the pan-Canadian pharmaceutical alliance, which means Canadians save over \$1 billion annually. We have put forward major reforms to patented medicines regulations. We are continuing to do the work to make sure that Canadians get—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

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[Translation]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are not making anything up. The Prime Minister said, here in the House, that “low-income families do not benefit from tax breaks because they do not pay taxes.”

This statement is totally out of touch with reality. Even low-income Canadians already pay too much tax, sadly, and they have been paying more in the three years that this government has been in power.

Could the Prime Minister at least acknowledge that low-income Canadians are paying more tax today than they were three years ago under the previous Conservative government?

• (1435)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the previous Conservative government was fond of using tax credits to help the rich, as always, but it did nothing to help low-income families.

That is why we took a different approach. We decided to invest in middle-class families and all families working hard to join them. That is what makes a difference. The Conservatives opposed the Canada child benefit. They opposed the guaranteed income supplement increase for our seniors. They opposed lowering taxes on the middle class.

Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister just said is unbelievable. He abolished the tax credit for people who use public transit, many of whom are students. He abolished the children's fitness and arts tax credits. He created a carbon tax that will affect the price of gas, groceries and all activities that people participate in. The comments he keeps repeating make no sense.

Will he at least acknowledge that Canadians are paying more taxes today than under the former Conservative government?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians have \$2,000 more on average with our approach than with that of the Conservatives.

However, I am pleased to hear the Conservative members speak about public transit. The problem is that they never invested in public transit. We have made historic investments to help students, hard-working people and seniors use public transit anywhere in the country. These are real investments that have helped families across the country and we will continue to invest.

[English]

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, low-income families do not benefit from tax breaks because “they do not pay taxes”; so declared the Prime Minister yesterday. However, low-income Canadians actually beg to differ with that postulation. Ann is a single woman who works in Milton, Ontario. She makes minimum wage and she pays approximately \$2,600 in federal income tax.

Will the Prime Minister stand today and tell us he stands by his statement that low-income Canadians do not pay taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems like the Conservatives do not want to stand by their own voting record, where they voted against the Canada child benefit and where they voted against lowering taxes for the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%. They voted against increasing the guaranteed income supplements for our most vulnerable single seniors. They even voted against strengthening the Canada pension plan for future generations.

We will continue to work hard to support the middle class and people working very hard to join it. That is what this government remains focused on.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in the statements that the Prime Minister made, he actually missed the point of the question, which is that Ann is a single woman making minimum wage. She does not get the Canada child care benefit. She does not get the guaranteed income supplement. She does not get that middle-class tax cut either, yet the Prime Minister thinks she does not pay a single cent in taxes. She would beg to differ. She will pay about \$5,000 in taxes every year after CPP and EI are included. Then there will be the GST, then there will be the HST and then there will be the Liberal carbon tax, which is coming next.

Will the Prime Minister still stand by that ridiculous statement?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk about the Canada workers benefit that goes directly to low-income workers who will be able to have a little more money every month to be able to afford the cost of living and, indeed, create more incentives for them to stay in the workforce. Of course, if they want to go back to school, we have made sure that unemployment insurance will actually help a person go back to school and retrain. People can continue to get EI benefits.

These are the kinds of things that we are focusing on to make sure that all Canadians have a real and fair chance to succeed—

**The Speaker:** I remind the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope and others, to remember what I said about waiting for their side to have its turn and to have confidence that the members from their side who will speak will be able to make their case effectively. I am sure that is true on all sides. We have to remember that.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. I do not need assistance from the member for Edmonton West. Thank you very much.

*Oral Questions*

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

• (1440)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, many will recall the sad day when the Prime Minister insulted our job creators, our small business owners, by saying that they were trying to avoid paying taxes by incorporating. It was insulting. He insulted hundreds of thousands of Canadians again yesterday when he said, and I quote, “low-income families do not benefit from tax breaks because they do not pay taxes.” That is false. Thousands of Canadians were appalled by his statement. A student named Geneviève posted on Facebook yesterday that she has to pay taxes.

Is the Prime Minister going to tell Geneviève that that is not true, that she does not pay taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, small and medium-sized businesses are very pleased that we lowered their tax rate to 9%, which is the lowest rate in the OECD. We will always help our job creators, our small businesses. As for students, we have increased grants across the country for young people from low- and middle-income families, because we know that investing in education is the best way to generate economic growth for individuals and for our entire economy.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister might not be aware, but Canadians start paying taxes starting at \$12,000. He may have never done this before, but that is how it works. People know this. Yesterday on Facebook, Richard Sauvé said that he earns \$13,000 a year and pays taxes. This is the reality for Canadians. Another reality is that all Canadians pay GST. What the Prime Minister said yesterday is not true.

Will he apologize to the thousands of families he insulted yesterday?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are so transparent. They say whatever they want when they are in opposition or in election mode, but when they are in power, they always give benefits to the wealthy and do nothing for the people who actually need help.

Perhaps this is why they voted against increasing the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable seniors. They voted against the Canada child benefit, which gives more money to nine out of 10 families. We stopped sending the cheques to millionaires that the Conservatives kept sending out. We know that by investing in those who need it, we can—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

\* \* \*

**PHARMACARE**

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, poverty is rising among seniors, and all too often they have to choose between buying food or medication. No one should ever have to make that choice. One of my constituents, Mr. Desmarais, is on a certain type of medication. It is absolutely vital that he take it every day, but the cost is exorbitant. How is he supposed to pay for that? Millions of seniors across the country are in the same boat.

What are the Liberals waiting for? When will they implement a pharmacare—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are always very concerned about the plight of our seniors. That is why, since taking office, our government has been making concrete investments to help our most vulnerable seniors. We increased the guaranteed income supplement for single seniors. We invested in housing for seniors. We invested \$5 billion in home care across the country.

We will continue to invest in our seniors, and we understand that investing in pharmacare is the right thing to do. That is why we are waiting for the expert report before moving forward.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talks and talks but does not actually do anything.

My constituents are tired of seeing the wealthy exploit our system while they struggle to make ends meet and to pay for medication.

I met a 70-year-old man in Sherbrooke who told me that he faced a tough decision on his last visit to the pharmacy. He had three prescriptions, but he could only afford to get one filled. It is disgraceful that this kind of thing is happening in a country where access to a doctor is free. Access to the drugs prescribed by the doctor is not free.

Why is the Prime Minister telling my constituent to wait for yet another report, when he could have taken action at any time in the three years he has been in office?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have taken meaningful action to help seniors by increasing the guaranteed income supplement and investing in housing for seniors.

However, we know we still have a lot more to do. With regard to pharmacare, we have joined the pan-Canadian pharmaceutical alliance, helping Canadians save \$1 billion a year. We have put forward major reforms to the Patented Medicines Regulations.

We are going to keep listening to Canadians, because we also feel it is unacceptable for people to have to choose between food and medicine. We are going to work together to solve this problem.

\* \* \*

• (1445)

[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister accused low-income Canadians of paying no taxes, but what about him? He inherited a multi-million dollar family fortune in the form of a tax-preferred trust fund from his father. Le Journal de Montréal wrote that for more than 15 years the funds from the trust have grown off the balance sheet of the Prime Minister and his brother without affecting their taxable income.

*Oral Questions*

How much tax did the Prime Minister avoid paying by using this trust fund tax loophole to shelter his family fortune?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, while we remain focused on Canadians, the Conservatives want to focus on me. We are going to continue to invest in the middle class and those working hard to join it. We are going to continue to do things that they vote against, like strengthening the Canada pension plan; like increasing the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable single seniors; like investing in a better Canada child benefit that is going to continue to lift hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty, instead of sending child benefit cheques to millionaires, as the Conservatives consistently want to do. We are going to focus on Canadians.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are focused on the Prime Minister's hypocrisy. The Prime Minister's trust fund operated outside of a blind trust for over a decade. He would have known that he was saving a fortune in taxes on his family fortune that entire time.

The Prime Minister said yesterday that low-income families do not benefit from tax breaks because they do not pay taxes. How much tax did the Prime Minister avoid paying because he was sheltering his family fortune with the trust fund tax loophole?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the very first things we did as a government was try to correct the direction the Conservatives went in, of trading benefits and advantages for the wealthiest one per cent. The very first thing we did was lower taxes on the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest one per cent, which the Conservatives voted against.

We are going to continue to look to make our tax system fair, as we did in the case of small businesses by lowering small business taxes to 9%. We are always looking for ways to support Canadians. That is the focus of this government, unlike the Conservatives, who want to keep giving advantages to the wealthy.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the wealthy are paying \$4.6 billion less in tax, while the average family pays \$800 more, but we know why the Prime Minister is advantaging the wealthy. He wants to help people just like him. He used the trust fund tax loophole to save thousands of dollars on his taxes. However, he has never come clean on how much he saved and how much he avoided paying, which other Canadians will be forced to pay. Will he stand and finally answer that question today?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives have difficulty understanding that one does not advance as an economy when one continues to give benefits to the wealthy, the way they always have. We lowered taxes for the middle class—the very first thing we did as a government—and raised them on the wealthiest one per cent, which the Conservatives, of course, voted against. They refused to support us in increasing the guaranteed income supplement for our most vulnerable single seniors. They refused to support us in moving forward with the Canada child benefit that is making a real and tangible difference in the lives of millions of Canadians.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he sure does not want to answer that question.

We know that is his agenda. Since he became Prime Minister, the wealthiest one per cent are paying \$4.6 billion less, and the share of the overall federal tax burden paid by the wealthiest one per cent has dropped.

We know his real motive. He is a trust fund millionaire, and he wants to protect others like him. We are simply asking him to be transparent about it. How much money did he save by taking advantage of the trust fund tax loophole?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, between the torquing of the numbers and the personal attacks, the Conservatives do not want to face the facts or have Canadians understand that they actually voted against lowering taxes on the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest one per cent.

The only way the numbers that the member opposite just cited even, maybe, perhaps, might align is if we completely ignore the Canada child benefit that has made a huge difference in the lives of Canadians. Perhaps that is because Conservatives have no intention of continuing that Canada child benefit. That is something that—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first nations in this country are facing a housing crisis, and 85% of first nations in Manitoba report mold in their homes.

We are talking about 15, 17 or 20 people in a house. Babies, elders and families are suffering. In community after community, people are saying that things are not getting better. Things are getting worse.

My question is for the Prime Minister. Does he not know that this housing crisis is literally making people sick? Will his Liberal government move from talking to action, to address this housing crisis on first nations now?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we were elected in 2015, we heard loudly and clearly from Canadians that they wanted a renewal of the relationship and investments in indigenous peoples that would begin to close the gaps and the inequalities that exist in Canada.

That is something we set about doing from the very beginning. We have since lifted 78 long-term boil water advisories in indigenous communities. We have opened hundreds of new schools. We have invested in new health centres. We are investing in hundreds, indeed thousands, of new housing units right across the country in indigenous communities.

*Oral Questions*

We know there is more—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the mould crisis in Cat Lake is a public health disaster. The government has known about this for years.

Now, there are children awaiting medical treatment. Seniors in the community have died from respiratory problems.

Will the Prime Minister commit to sending an independent health team, conducting an immediate assessment of the families affected, and immediately assuming his responsibilities under the Jordan principle?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are working directly with the chief and council in Cat Lake. The minister is in direct contact with Chief Keewaykapow.

We know that there are concerns about the health, safety and quality of the housing and that there is an urgent and long-term need for measures.

We are working with the community and our partners to fast-track the necessary repairs and the construction of new housing units. We will continue to work closely with the chief and the council to find solutions for the short, medium and long term.

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**REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of investing in our regions. The Conservatives want to cut our infrastructure investments in Quebec, but we support all regions in the province and across the country.

Can the Prime Minister tell us about the most recent announcement made in Shawinigan to encourage economic development in Quebec?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her hard work and her question.

Over 1,300 Canada Revenue Agency employees in Shawinigan do very important work. They deserve safe, modern and eco-friendly facilities.

Earlier this week, we announced the construction of a new building to replace a 40-year-old building. This project demonstrates our commitment to regions across the country. Unlike the Conservatives, we will not put federal jobs in the regions at risk.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**TAXATION**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to The Globe and Mail, using CRA data, the wealthiest one per cent are paying \$4.6 billion less in taxes, and further data shows they bear a smaller burden of the federal tax take.

The Prime Minister would know about rich guys getting off easy. He used a trust fund tax loophole that allowed him to pay a lower rate on his family fortune than other Canadians would have to pay. He should do the right thing now and tell Canadians how much he saved by using the trust fund tax loophole. Will he do so?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the members opposite continue to focus on me, why do we not focus on Canadians? Indeed, why do we not focus on Canadians living in the riding of Carleton, where \$48 million a year goes directly to families every month, tax free, in the riding to support 16,000 kids with the Canada child benefit? We send \$7,000 a year for 22,000 constituents with the strengthened Canada pension plan, and will send over \$300 for households next year with the climate action incentive. We are investing in the—

• (1455)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Carleton.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that if people take the bus, they are too rich and deserve to lose their transit tax credit. If they put their kids in hockey or soccer, they are too rich for the Prime Minister and deserve to lose the refundable children's fitness tax credit. If they buy textbooks at university, they are too rich and they deserve to lose their textbook tax credits, says the same Prime Minister who used a trust fund tax loophole to lower his tax bill.

Does he realize, as he sits there and smirks, how horribly arrogant he is when he accuses low-income Canadians of not paying their taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, instead of personal attacks, we stay focused on Canadians. We stay focused on making sure there are historic investments in transit to help low-income students get to school, to be able to get a better job and a stronger future. We invest in families with a tax-free Canada child benefit every month that makes a huge difference in their lives in terms of groceries, in terms of back-to-school supplies, in terms of new shoes and boots. These are the things that are making a real difference in the lives of Canadians, and these are exactly the things that the Conservatives consistently vote against.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister said that low-income families do not benefit from tax breaks because they do not pay taxes. That is totally false and further proves how out of touch the Prime Minister is with Canadians' real lives. People who earn \$12,000 per year pay tax on gas, food, prescription drugs and everything else.

Can our millionaire Prime Minister, who inherited his family fortune, look thousands of low-income people in the eye and tell them they do not pay taxes?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to know how the Conservatives can look low-income families in the eye when they voted against increasing the guaranteed income supplement for seniors and the Canada child benefit, which has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty in this country. They voted against our investments in affordable housing, in old age pensions, in students and in Canadians who need help. The Conservatives voted against Canadians every time.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on what planet does our wealthy Prime Minister live? Yesterday he said that low-income families do not pay taxes. Hello, earth to mars.

A mother in my riding named Lorraine is working very hard to make ends meet. She has a low income and she pays taxes.

Will the Prime Minister come with me and tell Lorraine with a straight face that she does not pay taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for all single mothers and for all mothers in this country, we have helped low- and middle-income families through the Canada child benefit, which is really making a difference. Every month they receive a tax-free cheque that directly helps them ensure a better future for their children. It has helped millions of families in this country, but the Conservatives voted against it. They have always opposed the Canada child benefit. It is unfortunate for families that have—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier should listen to the answer to his question.

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

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**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, there was a debate on the environment in Outremont and the Liberal candidate decided to stay away. She did not show up.

It is not easy to defend a Prime Minister who breaks his promises. It is not easy to explain to people that his party's priority is to give billions of dollars to his oil industry friends. It is not easy to defend wasting public money on the purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Are the Liberal candidates trying to hide because they know that their government's environmental policies do not cut it in Quebec?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a government, we understand that we must invest in environmental protection. We must invest to create the economic growth that will help us continue to protect the environment. The NDP still believes that we have to choose between creating jobs and protecting the environment.

We know that the only way to build a more prosperous economy and world for everyone in the years to come is to ensure that we are protecting the environment. That is why we have a real plan and are taking action to create jobs and protect families while protecting the environment.

• (1500)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is dizzying. I get the feeling that if you looked up the word “liberal” in the dictionary, it would say, “say one thing and do another”.

People are not fooled by the Prime Minister's doublespeak. The Climate Change Performance Index was released at COP24, in Poland. Out of 60 countries, Canada ranked 54th. It is so bad.

How can the Prime Minister look our young people in the eye and tell them that he is concerned about the planet and their—

**The Speaker:** Order. The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for 10 years under Stephen Harper's Conservative government, we lost a tremendous amount of leadership on the environment. For three years we have been working very hard to develop a plan and an approach that will protect the environment and create economic growth.

The Conservatives still do not accept that we have to fight to protect the environment, but we know that the only way to create a prosperous economy is to protect the environment and ensure good jobs for the future. That is exactly what we are doing and we will continue to do that for Quebecers and all Canadians.

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[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Lois from my riding lost her job because the Liberals closed a federal office in Vegreville. Now she is making minimum wage, bagging groceries. She is struggling like so many others, and she is paying all kinds of taxes.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said, “low-income families do not benefit from tax breaks because they do not pay taxes.” Well, he is wrong.

Is the millionaire Prime Minister, who has never had to worry about money because of his family fortune, really going to look Lois in the eyes and tell her she does not pay any taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I wonder how the Conservatives actually talk to their constituents when they know they voted against the Canada child benefit. They voted against the Canada workers benefit. They voted against increasing the amount of the guaranteed income supplement for the most vulnerable single seniors. They voted against strengthening the Canada pension plan. They voted against infrastructure investments, which are making a huge difference in the lives of Canadians across the country. That is what they do not understand about how to build a strong economy. One invests in the middle class. One does not help the wealthiest, like the Conservatives always do.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** That was a little rich, Mr. Speaker.

Thirty-year-old Ashley lives with her parents in a rural part of my riding and has to drive almost 100 kilometres a day just to go to school or to work. Last year, she made under \$19,000. The Prime Minister says that people like Ashley do not pay tax and yet her payroll taxes have gone up, she pays the gas tax and GST, and she never got the so-called Liberal tax cut for the middle class.

Every time she turns around, Ashley is paying more and more under the Liberal government.

Will the rich—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives resort to personal attacks when they cannot defend the fact that they consistently have voted against all the initiatives that we have made to invest in the middle class and people working hard to join it.

Our investments in families through the Canada child benefit, in workers through the Canada workers benefit, in our seniors through restoring the age of retirement to 65 from the 67 they had put it at are all things that have helped people concretely and have led to the kind of economic growth they never saw under 10 years of Stephen Harper.

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has demonstrated yet again just how out of touch he really is, stating that low-income Canadians do not pay taxes. Rhonda, whose income is below the poverty line, struggles to keep a roof over her head and pay her bills.

Like thousands of low-income Canadians, she wants the Prime Minister to know that she pays payroll taxes, income taxes, the GST and every other kind of tax, and she cannot afford more taxes.

Will our trust fund Prime Minister continue to tell Rhonda and every other low-income Canadian that they do not pay taxes?

• (1505)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our focus from the very beginning has been investing in the middle class and people working hard to join it, and that is exactly what we have done step by step.

The Canada workers benefit helps low-income Canadians stay in the workforce, and indeed, if they want to go back to school, we have made sure that employment insurance continues to cover them while they go to school. That is something the Conservatives never did. We know this because the Conservatives continue to insist that tax benefits and advantages to the wealthiest 1% is the way to grow the economy. Three years of Canadian—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg Centre.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister often says, no relationship is more

important to our government than the one with indigenous peoples. It is in that spirit that the government committed to work nation-to-nation with indigenous partners and implemented the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as all 94 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. The UN has declared 2019 to be the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Can the Prime Minister explain to the House what the government is doing to support indigenous languages?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for his question and for the hard work that he does for indigenous languages in the House of Commons.

For too long, government policies focused more on destroying indigenous languages than on protecting them. That is why we support our partners who want to revitalize and strengthen their language and culture.

Yesterday, in the House, we introduced the first bill dealing with indigenous languages. In it, we recognize the right to use an indigenous language. We will appoint a commissioner, to ensure that future governments respect that obligation. Protecting language and culture is how—

[English]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Ana Mae is a constituent of mine who works hard, but is struggling to get by. She earns \$15.50 at a fast-food restaurant. Contrary to the Prime Minister's insulting assertion that low-income Canadians do not pay taxes, Ana Mae pays federal income tax, CPP, EI and the GST.

Will the millionaire Prime Minister, with his vast family fortune, look Ana Mae in the eye and tell her that she does not pay taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past three years, we have seen over 800,000 jobs created in Canada and the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. That happened because, unlike the Conservatives, who had an approach for 10 years to support and invest in the wealthiest 1%, we made investments in the middle class and those working hard to join it. Those investments are leading to the kinds of economic growth that are giving more opportunities for everyone.

The Conservatives continue to vote against tangible, concrete measures that make things better for people who are working hard to join the middle class, and they will continue to—

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

*Oral Questions***AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, our dairy farmers believed the Liberal government's lofty promises and nice words, but they have been betrayed. Once again, trade agreements have been signed at the expense of our farmers.

The Liberals have put our food sovereignty at risk. They have once again proven their incompetence, with the diafiltered milk file and the reciprocity of standards.

On January 18, the Prime Minister promised that he would make sure farmers, and not the government, would determine the amount of compensation.

Will the government keep its promise? When will our dairy farmers be compensated?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during negotiations for the new NAFTA, we said that we would protect supply management, and that is exactly what we did. We announced three working groups made up of representatives from the supply management sector to help farmers and processors adjust to the new NAFTA, to adjust to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and to innovate in the dairy sector. We are helping workers in the dairy industry. We will always help farmers and workers across the country.

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[English]

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government came to office with a commitment to invest in infrastructure across Canada, including my home province of Alberta and my hometown of Edmonton. Since taking office, we have been doing just that.

After a decade of inaction from the Harper government, we have been making the much-needed investments in transit, recreational infrastructure, water systems, cultural spaces and more that Edmontonians deserve.

Could the Prime Minister please update the House on the investments our government has made to support Alberta's communities and those infrastructure investments in the city of Edmonton?

• (1510)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Edmonton Centre for his hard work.

We have indeed made historic investments in Edmonton's infrastructure, which includes reducing traffic with investments in the Yellowhead Trail and the 50th Street overpass; investments in the Fort Edmonton Park expansion; investments in the Jerry Forbes Centre; investments in public transit; and investments right across the city, like we are making right across the country.

The Conservatives want to cut infrastructure investments in Alberta. We will continue to invest in communities.

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the reality is this is personal. I did not realize that the Prime Minister and I had so much in common. We both grew up in taxpayer-funded housing, he in 24 Sussex; me in the projects in Barrie.

The Prime Minister said that low-income Canadians did not pay tax. He does not understand who pays for his nannies, for his planes and for his houses. It is all paid for by servers like Andrea in Barrie.

When will the trust fund Prime Minister look Andrea in the eye and tell her she does not pay taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Canada, nobody chooses where they are born, but we make choices about what we choose to do in life.

The choices the Conservatives consistently make are to stand against investments in public and affordable housing and to stand against investments in the Canada child benefit which is helping nine out of 10 Canadian families and lifting hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty. The choice the Conservatives continue to make is against increasing benefits for our most vulnerable single seniors. The choice the Conservatives make consistently is to help the wealthiest 1% instead of Canadians who need the help.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, on February 1, this place happily passed Bill S-203 at second reading. It started in the Senate with Liberal Senator Wilfred Moore and then went to Senator Murray Sinclair. It is not yet before the Standing Committee on Fisheries. We need it to be there. In this place, we need to let Canadians know, before the next election, that we will not tolerate the keeping of whales and dolphins, sentient beings, in conditions that amount to torture.

Does the Prime Minister stand with us? Could we get this passed before the next election?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for bringing this issue forward in the House.

We agree that the capture of whales and dolphins for the sole purpose of being kept for public display should be ended. While the banning of whale captivity is not yet legislation, in practice it has been in place for years.

We put forward legislation that includes putting an end to the captivity of whales unless it is for rehabilitation. We supported Bill S-203 at second reading. We look forward to the work the committee is going to do on it.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Translation]

**POINT OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I made some remarks in the House that were hurtful to the Minister of National Revenue and to all of my francophone colleagues.

I want to offer my sincere apologies to the minister and to all of my colleagues. I had a chance to apologize to the minister personally just before question period. I realize that I should never have made such remarks in the House. They absolutely did not reflect my views about the fundamental right of every member to speak in the language of their choice, especially in French.

Every member has the right to speak to the House in the language of their choice and be proud to do so.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member for Mégantic—L'Érable for his gracious and earnest apology.

The hon. Minister of National Revenue on a point of order.

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell my colleague opposite that I gladly accept his apology on behalf of the francophone community of Quebec and all francophone communities across Canada.

[English]

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Kings—Hants.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1515)

[English]

**RESIGNATION OF MEMBER**

**Hon. Scott Brison (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was first elected on June 2, 1997. Today, nearly 22 years later, I am informing the House that February 10, 2019, will be my last day as member of Parliament for Kings—Hants.

Welcome to my unplugged tour. For 22 years I have worked hard and fought hard for the people of Kings—Hants, Nova Scotia, and Atlantic Canada, and it has been a wonderful honour.

In December, during our final days in Centre Block, I reflected on what the House of Commons means to me and on the debates and decisions that have shaped the Canada I love.

The House of Commons has not just been a place that has shaped my career; it has shaped my life. When I was first elected in 1997, a family like mine would not have been legally recognized in Canada. I feel privileged not just to have helped contribute in some small way to this progress as a parliamentarian, but also to have benefited from it as a citizen. That is one of the many reasons that today, as I leave public life, my belief in government, in Parliament and indeed in politics as a force for good is stronger than ever.

In this age of cynicism when the doubters tell us the government does not matter, I experience the living proof of government as a

force of good every day in the sheer existence of my family. Government matters, politics matters and members of Parliament matter.

I have been elected seven times for two parties, and I have served under nine leaders. I have been a member of caucuses as small as 12 and as large as 184. I have served in a fifth-place party and in minority and majority governments. I am deeply grateful to the Right Hon. Paul Martin and the Right Hon. Prime Minister, the member for Papineau, for giving me the opportunity to serve in their cabinets.

I am proud of what our Prime Minister and what our government have accomplished for and with Canadians. I loved being part of his team.

Yes, I have enjoyed my time on the front benches, but let me tell all members that there is no such thing as a bad seat in the House of Commons. Members of Parliament do not need to serve in a cabinet to make their mark in history or to help build a better Canada. Do not ever take for granted the honour of being trusted by Canadians to forge the future of this country in this place, to improve the lives of people and to make a difference. Never take for granted the honour of serving our constituents. When members and their constituency teams help people, it changes lives.

I would like to read to members from an article from the Enfield Weekly Press, from my riding, dated May 11, 2005. The headline is “Gorman to Get Pension”. The article goes further:

A 90-year-old Gormanville woman couldn't have asked for a better Mother's Day gift.

Almira Gorman, who still lives in her own home in the community, is in line for about \$27,000 in back benefits from the Canada Pension Plan.

Gorman didn't realize she was entitled to the payments and did not [initially] apply to receive them.

Government policy dictated she was only entitled to receive back payments for a period of up to 11 months, but that apparently changed....

That is the end of the article, but it is not the full story. My constituency office worked with me, and we fought hard for Mrs. Gorman. It was not easy to get her retroactive payment, but we found a way. My constituency team's work helped this elderly lady of modest income, who had raised a large family in rural Hants County, to get the money she deserved, and that enabled her to build an accessible bathroom in her house so she could continue to live at home. It changed her life.

● (1520)

Here in Parliament, the work we do as parliamentarians in the chamber, in caucus rooms, in committee rooms is very important. Being a member of Parliament is a fantastic platform to take on issues, to study, to learn, to build and defend ideas, to change people's minds and sometimes allow them to change our minds.



*Routine Proceedings*

I spent 16 years of my career in opposition, and I found those years too, as a private member, to be so fulfilling in so many ways. I wish members opposite many more years to enjoy that.

We can make a positive difference in the lives of Canadians from any seat in the House of Commons. Just ask our friend, the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester, who has served his people, Atlantic Canadians and the people of Canada exceptionally well in a remarkable and accomplished career as a great member of Parliament.

In terms of partisanship, I have a unique perspective. I served in two parties, and I have great respect and affection for members of all parties. There are good people in every party, and while we have ideological differences, we all come here to serve, driven by the same desire to build a better Canada, and while none of us is perfect, every MP in the House must have something going for them. They must have some goodness in them. After all, they were able to earn the trust of their fellow citizens to become elected to this place. When we demonstrate respect for each other in this place, we demonstrate respect for the citizens who chose us as their members of Parliament, and the opposite is true as well.

In the spirit of non-partisanship, I would be remiss not to recognize Canada's first openly gay member of Parliament, Svend Robinson, who is with us today. His courage in 1988 made it easier for me, coming later, to live my life openly and honestly and to become Canada's first openly gay cabinet minister in 2004.

As members embark on their lives in this new chamber, I embark on a new chapter in my life. I feel grateful, and I want to thank some people.

For starters, I want to thank my family, including my 95-year-old father, Clifford Brison, who is watching this from home. I understand they put new batteries in his hearing aid. Dad used to pass out campaign flyers at the front door of Sobeys for me.

I want to thank the people of Kings—Hants, who stuck with me through thick and thin, seven elections and 22 years. They were there for me when I came out in December of 2002. They stood by me when I came out again in December 2003, this time as a Liberal. They had my back during some of the big debates, including when I was part of a cabinet that legalized same-sex marriage in 2005. They celebrated with Max and me when we married at our home in Cheverie in 2007. I want to thank the people of Kings—Hants for the love and respect they have afforded not just to me but to my family, Max, Claire and Rose.

I want to thank all the volunteers who have knocked on the doors and put up the signs, and I want to invite all of them to our last big barbeque at home in Cheverie this summer. It will be our 23rd annual Kings—Hants barbeque—I forgot to tell Max—and they will be able to enjoy hearing me belt out Conway Twitty's *Hello Darlin'* one last time.

● (1525)

I want to thank my constituency staff, who over the years have included the late, great Audrey-Ann Murphy, Pat Taylor, Tanya Moore and more recently Evan Fairn. They have helped improve the lives of thousands of their fellow citizens.

I want to thank my friend of 40 years and long-time staff member and organizer of all my campaigns, Dale Palmetter. Dale has given me very direct advice for 22 years, and I am sure in my next chapter he will continue to do so.

I want to thank Tisha Ashton, who is with me here today. For 17 years she has provided me with flawless, or usually flawless, policy advice. Edward Rawlinson has been with me for 13 years and Adèle Desjardins has worked with me for 22 years. Adèle started her House of Commons career over 50 years ago, in 1968, working for the Right Hon. Robert Stanfield, and she served the Right Hon. Joe Clark for many years. I am the only one she has served who is not a right hon. I tried, but it did not work. *Merci beaucoup*, Adèle.

I want to thank my minister's office teams, some of whom are here today. These are wonderful, exceptional, loyal people, who are smart and decent, and most recently helped me execute this final chapter of my political life, code-named internally "Brixit".

I want to thank the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, who is not only an excellent member of Parliament but has been and is a terrific Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board.

I want to thank our world-class public servants, from the wonderful officials in my departments to House of Commons security to the staff of the parliamentary restaurant, including of course Marguerite, and our parliamentary pages. They have all taken such good care of me and of all of us.

[*Translation*]

I especially want to thank the House of Commons interpreters. I know that they have had trouble following my French from time to time. I am sure that I was one of the biggest challenges of their careers. In fact, one of the greatest gifts life has given me has been the chance to perfect my French as an MP.

[*English*]

Lighten up, folks. That was a laugh line. This is a tough crowd. For goodness' sake, in my absence, could you bring a sense of humour back into this place? Reverse the full humorectomy that has fallen on the House of Commons.

In closing, there are three reasons I am moving on.

First, after 22 years as an MP, I am proud of what I have helped to accomplish, and I am leaving under my own steam.

Second, I am ready for a change. At 51, I have the runway to take on new challenges in a new career, and the energy to pursue exciting opportunities.

Third, and most important, is my family. For me, there are three miracles in the gallery today: Maxime, Rose and Claire.

Some people become parents easily, some even accidentally. For Max and me, the journey to parenthood was neither easy nor accidental. I have been so blessed in so many ways to have this lovely family. The most important roles or titles I will ever have are being husband to Max and daddy to Rose and Claire.

*Routine Proceedings*

● (1530)

Long after I have left public life, I will be bringing my children back here to remind them that Parliament matters. This is where brave lawmakers, nation-builders, members of Parliament and senators helped build, and will continue to build, a Canada that is one of the truly rare places in the world where a family like ours is possible.

There is a tradition in rural Nova Scotia churches. I have gone to a lot of funerals over the years. There is a reading that ends with, "Miss me, but let me go."

Mr. Speaker, thank you, and miss me, but let me go.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by simply saying that the member for Kings—Hants is rude. He has frequently criticized my speeches in Parliament and elsewhere as long, very, very long. He calls them, and I quote, "the Regina monologues". Today, he will just have to sit and listen.

The member for Kings—Hants is a centennial baby, born in 1967, so he missed this country's entire first century. However, I think we all might agree that he has rather made up for all of that in the following 51 years.

Finance, the economy and business have always been of great interest to him. He got his education in these fields at Dalhousie University. He was already an entrepreneur during those university years. He rented small refrigerators to his fellow students. To their parents, he distributed brochures showing those little fridges stuffed with vegetables. To the students, he showed the brochures with fridges stuffed with beer. He liked to think of himself in those days as a "fridge magnate", which maybe was a precursor to his later careers.

After university, he joined an equity firm, invested in a paint company, and moved to New York City. It was there that he was discovered by Jean Charest, who persuaded him to return to Nova Scotia to contest the 1997 federal election in the constituency of Kings—Hants as a Progressive Conservative. He was 30 years old at that time, and the Progressive Conservative Party had two seats in the House of Commons. I remember well because I was there. His political adventure had begun. Obviously, he was an optimist.

Over the intervening two decades, the member for Kings—Hants has been a backbencher, a front-bencher, in government, in opposition, a committee chair, a parliamentary secretary, an official critic, and a minister twice. He has been elected, resigned, been re-elected and crossed the floor. That diverse experience shows at least three things.

First of all, he cannot keep a steady job. Second, he has broad experience in, and I think from what we have seen today, the deepest respect for the institutions of parliamentary democracy. Third, to continually win and retain the loyalty of his voters, no matter what partisan hat he might be wearing at any given time over all of those elections, it is obvious that he has never forgotten for a second where he came from and where his roots are.

Indeed, the people of Cheverie and Nova Scotia are probably the most frequently referenced demographic group in caucus and around the cabinet table, because he makes sure they are always mentioned.

He ran for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party, and after reinventing himself he also ran for the leadership of the Liberal Party. He was quite a kingmaker. After dropping out of the PC race, he then backed Jim Prentice, thus cementing a victory for Peter MacKay, and after dropping out of the Liberal race, he backed first Bob Rae and then Michael Ignatieff, cementing a victory for Stéphane Dion.

He did not win the leadership but he has, throughout his career and again today, proved himself to be a smart, funny, principled, decent, devoted trailblazer, with friends on both sides of the House.

The member for Kings—Hants embodies and helped drive some of the biggest social changes our country has ever seen, becoming Canada's first openly gay cabinet minister.

● (1535)

That mattered, not just because of the benefits that we know diversity brings to every organization and society that embraces it, but it mattered for a generation of LGBTQ2 people to see themselves in those holding some of the highest offices in the land. Representation matters, democracy matters, and there could have been no better role model.

On many other fronts, he worked human rights protections into free trade negotiations, even though he was not in government at the time but sat in the opposition. In government, he got the estimates process changed to help MPs follow the money in government spending; he championed regulatory reform to augment Canadian competitiveness; he concluded 17 collective bargaining agreements with public servants; and he has led the drive toward digital government in the modern economy in Canada.

The member for Kings—Hants has been blessed with excellent staff, as he mentioned a few moments ago, throughout his parliamentary career. Today, for all of us who serve in this place in whatever capacity, I am sure we would want to take this opportunity with him to recognize those devoted people who work with us. Those on many sides of the House have had the opportunity to work with Tisha, Dale, Edward, Adèle and the others he has mentioned. How they endured all of those years, how they put up with all of that aggravation, is hard to believe.

We also want to thank Max, Claire and Rose for sharing a spouse and father with all of Canada. Whether on that side of the House, this side of the House or outside of Parliament, just by watching this man, we could tell the moment that Max and then Claire and Rose came into the life of the member for Kings—Hants. Something fundamental changed.

*Routine Proceedings*

The member for Kings—Hants has done more than most in our chamber for diversity and inclusion; for accommodation and respect; for young people and role modelling; for making Canada a more fair, decent and wonderful country where more and more people, whatever their colour or creed, whatever their gender or orientation, whatever their ethnicity or heritage, whatever their abilities or exceptionalities, where more and more people of all kinds can be and are equal, first-class Canadians. All of us together live in a country that is the finest example of pluralism that the world has ever known. This is the cause to which the member for Kings—Hants has devoted his parliamentary life, and together we say, “Thank you and Godspeed”.

• (1540)

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I want to extend my best wishes to the member for Kings—Hants as he leaves public life. In truth, I could go on for a while, but I am mindful of the time.

As many know, as was mentioned today, the hon. member is father to two beautiful girls, Claire and Rose, and although I understand they are very good readers right now, when they are old enough to read Hansard, this is what I want them to know about their father. I wish it were funnier.

First, Claire and Rose should know their dad loved his country, his region, his province and his constituency. He represented his constituents so well that for 22 years they trusted him to be their voice. They supported him through two parties, two leadership bids and countless lessons in French immersion, I am sure. However, he could not do it alone. He was loved and supported by his husband Max St-Pierre, who Claire and Rose know as “Papa”, an incredibly supportive person in the member’s life.

Second, Claire and Rose should know that their dad was a great parliamentarian. Indeed, their dad was built to serve. It has been reported on good authority that, at 12 years of age in elementary school, he gave a speech to the local 4-H club that quoted, as inspirational talks invariably do, the likes of Mark Twain and Will Rogers. This is what he said, “Iron rusts from disuse. Stagnant water loses its purity. And inaction saps the vigour of the mind.” He was 12, by the way. “To be successful one must be ready for hard work, must have integrity and must have a good attitude. If you have the will to win, you’ve achieved half your success. If you don’t have the will to win, you’ve achieved half your future.”

**Hon. Scott Brison:** “Failure.”

**Hon. Lisa Raitt:** I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the point of order. We will fix that in the blues.

Indeed, in this place, the member was successful because he was ready for hard work. He had integrity and had a very good attitude, which was well displayed through his frequent interjections in question period and cute little asides in the halls as we passed one another. Saying that he was ready for hard work, integrity and good attitude is great advice for anyone who is entering public life.

Third, Claire and Rose should know that their dad was proud to be a politician. The member for Kings—Hants delivered a tribute to our former colleague, another great politician, Jim Flaherty. He quoted a portion of a speech by Theodore Roosevelt and stated:

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

On that morning when we honoured Jim Flaherty, those were words that many of us took to heart and were grateful for.

When asked why he used that quote, the member for Kings—Hants said:

It embodies a respect for those who roll up their sleeves and enter public service with the best intentions and public interests. If you’re going to enter public life and give it your all, you’re going to be in the arena described by Roosevelt. You could say “in the arena” doesn’t necessarily apply to every politician. There may be people who get elected and who don’t necessarily push as hard or go as far as they could. Who get comfortable.

I am sure many of us would agree that the member for Kings—Hants was not one of those persons.

At the end of the day, when he talked about the role and responsibility of being a politician, he put it very clearly and frankly when he said:

...we spend far too much time in politics debasing that which we do and who we are. It annoys me the degree to which some politicians go to say, “I’m not a politician”.... I am a politician. That’s what I do. And anyone who puts their name on a ballot becomes a politician. And it should be something that we ourselves honour and we encourage others to honour.

• (1545)

Finally, Claire and Rose should know that leaving this place is not easy, and he made the conscious decision to be more present in their lives. He said, “I’ve gone at this 120 per cent for almost 22 years, working evenings and weekends and putting my job first”.

I will miss the wit and humour of the member for Kings—Hants, but I respect and admire—and maybe am a little bit envious of—his decision to be with his family, and I wish him very well.

**The Speaker:** He did not seem to like the part about his face being marred, but I am pretty sure it was not meant as a direct statement.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of my party to join the member for Milton and, I am sure, all members of this House of Commons to thank the member for Kings—Hants for his 22 years of service: service to his constituents in Kings—Hants, service to the people of Nova Scotia, service to this House and service to Canada.

*Routine Proceedings*

The member for Kings—Hants indeed does have a distinguished record, but for me and many other Canadians it is not least for being an out gay MP and then being elected five times after coming out, a record he shares with Svend Robinson. The member for Kings—Hants was only the fourth gay MP to come out, after two New Democrats and one Bloc member, but he still managed to set two records. He was the first Conservative to come out, albeit a Progressive Conservative, and then a year later he was the first Liberal to come out. Therefore, out of the first four members of Parliament in the parties, he holds two records, and I am sure, in the last two days we can make room for him over here.

The member is always quite modest about the importance of his being an out gay MP. He made reference today to what is most important, and that is inspiring members of the LGBTQ2 community always to aim higher and to know that everything is possible in Canada.

He has also helped remove barriers for all of those who will follow him. I once had a moment when I dreamt of being in cabinet and I am now starting to dream that dream again, but no matter where we are in Canadian life—whether a woman, a member of the LGBTQ community, a visible minority, disabled—whenever we see someone from our community succeed, it does let us know that it is also possible for us to achieve our dreams. I thank the member for Kings—Hants for that.

In 2004, the member for Kings—Hants set another record by being the first out gay cabinet minister, but at the time there was more comment on the fact that he was the youngest cabinet minister. I think that is why it seems this is an early retirement, even though he has been elected seven times.

For all that he is modest about his achievements, he has been part of a government that has made significant strides in improving the lives of LGBTQ Canadians, so for all that progress that has been made—I know he has been in there pushing the gay agenda—I want to give him credit. For all that remains to be done, I blame his colleagues and we will hold them responsible for that at the next election. I know it is being at the table that is so important, and I thank the member for Kings—Hants for playing that role.

I am not going to go on nearly as long as he did, and I am not nearly as funny as he is. However, all who worked with him know that the member for Kings—Hants represents all that is best of collegiality in this House. All who have watched him here in this House will have often seen that glint of humour, even in the most serious statements, but they have never seen a shadow of malice from this member, and I thank him for that.

While we in this House are sorry and sad to see the member for Kings—Hants go, I know that his husband—let me say that again because I love to say that in the House of Commons—his husband and his daughters will be glad to have him back full time. We all wish him well in whatever career he chooses to adopt, providing it is outside of politics. Once again, I thank the member for Kings—Hants for all he has done here. I thank him for being a friend in this House. We are very sad to see him go.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I rise to salute the member for Kings—Hants, who is leaving this place at the end of his term after 22 years of public service. For 22 years, the member has been very effective in bringing the concerns of his constituents and his province, Nova Scotia, to this place—perhaps even too effective.

Serving as minister many times over, and as President of the Treasury Board, he has held several important positions and left his mark in the public service, particularly during this term.

In closing, I want to acknowledge his unusual political journey. He is man who stays true to his principles when his values are challenged. When voters go to the polls, they expect to be able to count on people who stand up for them when it matters. The member for Kings—Hants was clearly one such individual.

• (1555)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise here this afternoon to pay tribute to my friend and colleague, the member for Kings—Hants. We are long-time friends.

[*English*]

In fact, I remember, as executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada, going to meet with the Tory caucus to talk about Kyoto. The wonderful right hon. Joe Clark, John Herron, the environment critic of the day, and our friend from Kings—Hants, never suggested for one moment that there was any question about the science of climate change. We had a respectful hearing and a good conversation, as was always the case, so I was perhaps not surprised that he left the Progressive Conservative caucus. I had hoped that he would become leader of the Green Party so I would not have to, but unfortunately, as it turned out, he went to the Liberals, and as we know, it is a storied history of 22 years.

We have already heard wonderful speeches from the Minister of Public Safety; our friend from Milton, and I am sure the member for Kings—Hants is thinking that yes, it would take two girls from Cape Breton to give a proper sign-off to a member from the valley; our friend from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, also a great champion of LGBTQ rights; and the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

[*Translation*]

We are gathered here because the member for Kings—Hants is an honourable man who is respected and liked by all members on all sides of the House.

[*English*]

We are sorry to see him go. We have talked of his great contributions in terms of public policy. I used to sit rather close to the member for Kings—Hants in the 41st Parliament. My seat has not moved. I take his point that there are no bad seats in the House of Commons, and I should know.

*Routine Proceedings*

I do remember his repartee. I have disapproved strongly of heckling, but there was a style, a grace and a panache to the approach of the member for Kings—Hants that I would never regret.

Here, from memory, is something of a K-Tel greatest hits of the member for Kings—Hants. As far as I can remember, he was the first member to begin something that is now routine. When newer ministers get a softball question from their own backbenches, the questions are generally in the order of “The minister is certainly magnificent today. Can the minister tell us how much more magnificent he might be tomorrow?” As those questions were lobbed, the member for Kings—Hants would invariably say, “Watch out, it’s a trick question”, then he would follow up with the inevitable, “Don’t forget to thank the member for all his or her hard work back in the riding.”

My favourite, and usually in repartee with our friend, the member for Carleton, when he was a minister and the member for Kings—Hants was in opposition. The member for Carleton would say, “Our child care policies here on the Conservative benches draw on the expertise of mom and dad”, to which the member for Kings—Hants would say, “What about dad and dad?”

We are going to miss him around here, not least for the fact that there is nobody who can stand on his or her feet and make it sound like a comedy routine by saying, “Yes, Mr. Speaker, the bill is in its proper form.” How the heck that is funny I will never know.

To the member for Kings—Hants, please come to my wedding, and tell me when the picnic is going to be in Cheverie.

**The Speaker:** I thank all those who have spoken. If the House will indulge me, I have known the hon. member for Kings—Hants for well over the past 19 years now. I think I met him before that, but not very much. I have always appreciated his sense of humour and his friendship. When I think of his sense of humour, I even appreciated it when, on June 2 each year, he would say to me, “Happy anniversary”. You see, June 2, 1997, was the commencement of his parliamentary career and the commencement of what I like to call my involuntary sabbatical.

I have always appreciated and admired his eloquence. I have appreciated his generosity too, and today, in his eloquence, he certainly had a generous interpretation of 10 minutes.

He is the member of Parliament for my neighbouring riding. My riding is Halifax West and his is Kings—Hants, but I am actually a native of his riding, as we were both born at the Payzant Memorial Hospital in Windsor, but quite a few years apart, of course. Was I born before or after him? No, of course I was born before.

When we were both members of the Paul Martin cabinet, we, along with Anne McLellan, were all natives of Hants County, Nova Scotia, which we thought was rather remarkable. We all thought we were remarkable, of course, but not everyone else did.

I admire his courage as one of the first openly gay members of Parliament. Many have spoken of that. I guess I had better not get into the question of crossing the floor and all that, because that might involve partisanship. We have been great friends and great colleagues, and I have appreciated his service to the people of Nova Scotia and his great love for Nova Scotia.

I want to wish him, Max, Rose and Claire all the best.

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●(1600)

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish the member a very good retirement. As a member who has served here for 19 years, we appreciate his service.

I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 57th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Public Accounts of Canada 2018”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 58th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Report 2, Disposing of Government Surplus Goods and Equipment, of the 2018 Spring Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

It is obvious which committee is doing the most work in this Parliament.

I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 59th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Report 7, Compliance Activities—Canada Revenue Agency, of the 2018 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

While I am here, I would like to say that as a committee, we were very saddened by the loss of our Auditor General of Canada, Mr. Ferguson. I am sure that we will be giving a statement in the House at another time. However, this was an auditor general who worked with his public accounts committee and cared deeply about transparency and accountability. He was a public servant who was a servant in every aspect of the word. Certainly he helped make our public accounts committee one of the strongest public accounts committees. He will be very sadly missed.

●(1605)

**The Speaker:** I note that the hon. member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert, across the floor, was very enthusiastic in her endorsement of the statement by the member for Battle River—Crowfoot about the important work the public accounts committee does.

I would also recognize his good words about the Auditor General, Michael Ferguson. I know that all members share the grief of Canadians about his loss. We echo the kind words about him the hon. member had to say today.

*Routine Proceedings***INCOME TAX ACT**

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-428, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (child fitness tax credit).

She said: Mr. Speaker, like others here, the member for Kings—Hants is someone I have known for actually over 22 years. I had the good fortune of meeting him in 1995. I wish him, Rose, Claire and Max Godspeed in their next great adventure.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today to introduce my private member's bill.

As members know, I have announced my return to medicine when my present term ends this year. Improving the health of Canadian children is why I became a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon.

[*Translation*]

That is why I accepted the invitation extended by former finance minister Jim Flaherty to chair the expert panel on the children's fitness tax credit in 2006.

[*English*]

The panel's recommendations formed the original children's fitness tax credit. In 2014, 1.8 million Canadian families with children were claiming the credit. Unfortunately, the present government campaigned on a promise to eliminate it.

[*Translation*]

The children's fitness tax credit was eliminated in 2017.

[*English*]

The bill I present today is similar to the 2006 children's fitness tax credit, with added benefits for parents who have children with disabilities.

This is a simple bill. I hope it will find multi-party support. I welcome the opportunity to meet with members of Parliament who support healthy and active children.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PETITIONS**

## RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Liberal government's last budget is due in a few weeks, a few months at the most, and the people of Trois-Rivières want to make their voices heard now more than ever. They have been waiting 25 years for passenger rail service to return to Trois-Rivières.

That is why I am happy to speak on their behalf by presenting another instalment of a petition that attests not just to consensus, but to unanimity among stakeholders in Trois-Rivières and Mauricie as well as all the people who want the high-frequency train from Quebec to Windsor to serve their community.

On their behalf, I am presenting another instalment of this petition, which calls on the government to take action on this matter during its

current mandate, rather than making it an election promise for some future government to keep.

[*English*]

## CANADA'S OCEAN WAR GRAVES

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present a petition from a growing list of citizens urging the government to recognize the brave Canadians who lost their lives defending our country at sea, yet have no gravestone on land where relatives or friends can visit and honour their memory. It is a great privilege to present the petitioners' request that the government secure and protect the location of downed ships in our water or international waters and that it designate land monuments to commemorate the sacrifices of our fellow Canadians who have been lost at sea.

● (1610)

## ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am also honoured to table a petition from residents of my riding, from Perdue, Asquith, Biggar, Martensville, Saskatoon, Sunningdale, Springwater and other surrounding communities. They are calling on the government to do more to protect rural Canadians.

Rural crime is a real concern for these petitioners, and they would like to see the government ensure that RCMP police service agreements mandate that the prevention of crime and the investigation of criminal activity be paramount in these agreements and that the Government of Canada always ensure the RCMP has the resources required to keep rural Canadians safe.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to deliver a petition from over 6,160 Nova Scotians, many of them fishermen who depend on the Gulf of St. Lawrence for their livelihood. The petition calls on the government to conduct a full environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, regarding a proposal to pipe effluent from a kraft pulp mill in Pictou into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, threatening tourism and fishing industries in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Quebec. Thousands of fishermen are counting on the government to act.

## FIREARMS

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from the ridings of Bow River, Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner and Lethbridge. They call on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and reject the Prime Minister's plan to waste more taxpayer dollars studying a ban on guns that are already banned.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a petition from residents of the Thames River valley area who call on the government and the House of Commons to acknowledge that the Conservative government stripped environmental regulations under the navigable waters act and left hundreds of rivers vulnerable, the Thames in particular.

As a result, the petitioners are asking the Liberal government to fulfill its promise to reinstate environmental protections that were gutted in the original act and commit to support my bill, Bill C-355 in order to protect the future of the Thames River by amending the Navigation Protection Act.

## CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table today. The first one comes from 50 petitioners from my riding who are asking the Government of Canada for the full disclosure of the costs associated with the implementation and imposition of the federal carbon tax, including the costs for an average Canadian family.

## MORTGAGES

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition is signed by a few dozen of my constituents asking for the Government of Canada to launch a complete and thorough review of the B20 stress test imposed on mortgages. Earlier this week, the City of Calgary passed a motion unanimously asking for the same thing.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## Government Orders

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## DIVORCE ACT

## BILL C-78—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-78, An Act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successfully, without further debate or amendment.

• (1615)

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

[English]

Questions and comments, the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canadians will remember that when the government unveiled the Speech from the Throne in the fall of 2015, the government made the commitment that all voices will be heard with respect to legislation brought before the House. That has turned out to be a Liberal promise made and a Liberal promise broken, because the current government has introduced time allocation again and again. Indeed, the government has introduced time allocation at least 50 times.

It is a massive bill. It is a 150-page bill that makes comprehensive changes to the Divorce Act, yet there has been very little time to debate the bill in the House. We had one and a half days at second reading and an afternoon at third reading stage. Why is the government once again shutting down debate?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our government wants to work co-operatively with all members of the House to advance, through Parliament, a bill that is quite frankly 20 years overdue.

At second reading, 32 members of the House rose to speak on the bill or to ask a question: 15 members from the Conservative Party, seven members from the NDP, the member from the Green Party and nine Liberal members. At committee, 54 witnesses presented 53 briefs. At third reading, five Liberal members, three members of the Conservative Party, three members of the NDP and the member from the Green Party spoke. That is over eight hours in this place and 13 hours of study at committee.

*Government Orders*

There is a great deal of consensus on the bill from all parts of the House. We agree about the direction in which this should go. Frankly, the bill would help families that are going through the pain of divorce and would especially help children. It is a priority to get it through.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to serve on the committee during review of this bill. I was very impressed by the number of briefs we received. I was very impressed by the witnesses, members of the public, professionals, or association representatives, who took the time to come and discuss this bill and the countless hours they devoted to preparing for our meeting. It is a shame that MPs who did not have this opportunity will not be able to debate this bill.

One of the reasons I got into politics was to combat the public's cynicism about politics. I do not understand this approach to governing that the Conservatives took and the Liberals are maintaining, moving time allocation. The witnesses sent briefs because they wanted us to take the time to debate this bill properly. I do not understand why the government chose to cut off the debate. What makes the government think that we would not be able to pass the bill within a reasonable time?

I think we need to take our time debating this important bill. Yes, there is consensus, but it is our role as parliamentarians to debate the bill and take the time to discuss it and consider all the recommendations out of respect for all the members of the public who took the time to share their opinion on this bill. We should take the time to consider this bill as a matter of respect.

• (1620)

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

She is right that there is a consensus. Canadian stakeholders and experts agree that this is a good bill and that we should move forward.

I will quote Ms. Siham Haddadi of the Barreau du Québec.

...the Barreau du Québec would like to welcome the reform of the Divorce Act, which puts the child at the heart of deliberations, adapts terminology to soften conflicts and, above all, modernizes the Divorce Act, which had its last major reform in 1997, to make it more relevant to today's family realities. That is the challenge that the legislator set for itself with this bill, and the Barreau du Québec thinks it has met that challenge with great success.

There is a consensus in this country. It is time to pass the bill.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in response to the question asked by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, the minister mentioned that a number of members had spoken on the bill. I was present in the House for part of its debate.

Given the size and complexity of the bill, I would like to ask the minister whether he really thinks debate has become stale and needs to be terminated for the expedient passage of the bill. This is a complex bill about which many members have had correspondence with their constituents. Is that really what he is saying?

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, that is effectively what I am saying. I appreciate the hon. member's question, but there is a large degree of consensus in the House and across Canada.

The experts are weighing in and the voices are fairly unanimous, that this is an excellent piece of legislation. Lawrence Pinsky from the law firm of Taylor McCaffrey said, "Bill C-78 is clearly an advance in family law in Canada, and the government should be commended from bringing it forward. This should be a non-partisan issue."

From West Coast LEAF, Elba Bendo stated:

West Coast LEAF welcomes the important amendments proposed by Bill C-78. We are very glad that the intended purpose of the legislation—to promote faster, better and more cost-effective solutions to family law disputes—recognizes the difficult reality that many people across this country are alone in navigating the legal system during what is often one of the most difficult times in their lives.

We need to move forward, because the bill has widespread support.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in our parliamentary process, time allocation is meant to be used in exceptional circumstances only, and yet, according to my count, this is the 56th time that the Liberal government has brought in time allocation.

I am wondering about the reason for this afternoon's time allocation motion. Perhaps the Liberals want to beat the record set by the previous Conservative government.

I am wondering about the broad consensus. If there actually is such a broad consensus about moving forward on this bill, why do the Liberals believe that the only way to do it is by imposing time allocation rather than debating it with the other parties?

In my opinion, this is another example of this government's arrogance.

• (1625)

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Of course we want to work with the other parties in the House, and that is what we have done. Many speeches have been made at each stage so far, and many reports were studied in committee. I want to share a quote from the testimony of the National Association of Women and the Law:

NAWL fully supports the exclusion from this bill of any presumptions of shared parenting. Determining what's in the best interests of the child must be done on a case-by-case basis.

We are moving forward in this fashion so that we can protect the best interests of the child. The best interests of the child must absolutely be entrenched in law, and that is what this bill will do. We want to satisfy this requirement.

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I certainly agree with the hon. minister that there is widespread support, but not unanimous support for the bill. My objection is that this is a time when we are not debating the bill, but talking about the use of time allocation.



*Government Orders*

The government is applying time allocation on bill after bill. This practice used to be extremely rare. It was made common in the 41st Parliament when the Conservatives were in power, though the Liberals in opposition decried its use because it limited debate. It limits our opportunity to take the bill through its proper and full review. I lament it. I find it unacceptable.

I know that it probably comes down to a conversation, to which I am not privy, between the House leaders to come to some agreement about having speedy and efficient use of the House and allowing all members to participate in debate.

I think this is the first time the hon. Minister of Justice has been asked to press a bill through using time allocation. This must stop. We must find a better way in this place to allow full debate and not constantly be applying time allocation.

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the hon. member of the Green Party, as I always do. I appreciate their sincerity. I share generally the member's concern for using time allocation.

In this case, we have very important legislation that will greatly benefit Canadians, in particular Canadian children, at a time in their lives which is particularly difficult. There are a number of provisions in this act which are 20 years overdue. We need to get this legislation through both Houses. It is for that reason and because there has been ample time thus far.

We accepted a significant number of amendments at committee stage in order to represent the good faith with which the bill was moving forward, with the general acceptance on all sides of the House.

It has been a good collaborative project thus far and we hope to get it across the finish line.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Justice on his appointment. They say that a nation's treasures are its scholars. I know the member was a law professor at McGill. I am a Concordia grad. Therefore, we always had this difference of opinion on what the best football team was. He was also clerk for Justice Peter Cory. I am sure he will do a great deal for Canadians.

He can use it as an endorsement, because I will attack you now on the rest of this—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the member to address the Chair.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, this guillotine motion has been used 56 times, as the member for Trois-Rivières mentioned, the 56th time being on this legislation. By doing that, only 10% of the members of the House have an opportunity to speak on it.

I was looking forward to participating in a fulsome debate on the details of the bill. As some members know, my parents went through a divorce, so I am intimately familiar with their experience and how expensive it was. However, we do not have an opportunity to bring back our constituents' concerns about how the divorce system works in Canada, often to the detriment of young Canadians who have parents who are choosing to separate and divorce.

Why are we proceeding in this manner when it is not necessary? I really think the minister is doing a disservice by defending what is truly indefensible, which is that in this case, our constituents should have a say. We know many families in our communities have a personal experience they could bring to the table. There is a place for experts, which is at committees, but the place for constituents to be heard is in the House.

• (1630)

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his good wishes. I have enjoyed our exchanges under past guises.

I will do two things. First, I readily admit that Concordia has a much better football team now than McGill, which has not been good, frankly, since I was a law student, and that was a long time ago. Second, I thank him for his reference to a person who has been a role model to me, the Hon. Justice Peter Cory. Justice Cory is a virtuous, upstanding person who has been a public servant in Canada and remains someone who I look up to.

I assure the hon. member that I feel comfortable advancing the bill in this manner. Canadians have had a great number of opportunities, not just in this parliamentary process in which they have reached out to their members and to committee and have participated with expertise as well as with personal stories. They have also had 20 years in order to advance their opinions on how reform should happen.

Therefore, we are following largely the voices we have heard over the last 20 years, and it is time to push this across the finish line

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I feel compelled to rise to defend the McGill Redmen football team, and to avoid a Tory attack ad tomorrow, saying that the minister denigrated McGill.

However, as the minister stated, the committee heard from over 50 witnesses and made numerous amendments. Does the minister believe that the work of the committee enhanced the bill and allowed it to move forward more rapidly as a result of the committee having brought forward the ideas of Canadians who came before it?

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Mount Royal for his leadership on the committee.

A number of important amendments were brought forward at the committee stage. One of them was directly the result of interventions from the hon. member for Mount Royal, introducing official language rights, which was an additional engagement that I made when I presented the bill at third reading. Amendments were also brought forward to protect victims from family violence by explicitly providing that parties may apply to a court to waive or change relocation notice requirements. There were amendments to ensure clarity and reinforce the best interest of the child as well as to clarify factors not to be considered in the best interest of the child. A great deal of good work was done at the committee stage.

*Government Orders*

Again, as minister, I am very comfortable moving forward with the legislation in this manner.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, this is the first time I have risen with the Minister of Justice in his seat as the minister. I would like to congratulate him on his appointment, but it is disappointing that on his first bill, there is a time allocation motion.

The member for Calgary Shepard and other Conservatives have mentioned that the Liberals have used time allocation 56 times. That does not come anywhere near the 100 times the Conservatives did in the last Parliament, so there is a little hypocrisy here.

Despite the fact that I am a supporter of the bill and I agree with the minister that great progress is being made, there is an importance to debate in the House that gets missed through time allocation. Members might want to speak at third reading members, like myself who represents both my constituents, some of whom have concerns, and who represents families that are quite diverse. However, sometimes we have other responsibilities in committee or other things we have to do so we cannot get here on that one day when there is a debate, especially when the government House leader has shortened the amount of notice we have of when things will be debated.

It is important that we have debates so all members can represent their constituents, can represent all parts of Canada and, in this case, represent diverse families in Canada.

In my case, I would have liked to have been able to speak so I could reassure those constituents, who have expressed opposition, of the reasons why I support this important reform. In the rush to get things through, sometimes we miss the importance of that debate and the timing of those debates so all parts of the House can be heard.

•(1635)

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his good wishes. His points are well taken. In an ideal world we would be able to have debates which would last forever and in which every member who wanted to speak, at the time they wanted to speak, would be able speak.

The practical reality is that this is an important bill. It embodies the kind of diversity that the hon. member has fought for throughout his whole career. We are comfortable with it substantively. We are comfortable with the answers he will be able to give his constituents and his interlocutors, whether they agree with him or not. This is important, positive legislation that we need to move forward.

I recall as a law student in the late 1980s, studying the Divorce Act recently reformed in 1985, and not a whole lot has been done since then. This is important moving forward.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is an important philosophical debate, particularly coming from the Minister of Justice.

Anyone knows that justice is about due process. It is about the structure that we put in place for a trial, for a jury to review things and then for a bill to come into law.

The minister used the argument that this legislation was overly debated at committee, that amendments were made. That is the role

of committee to debate amendments, but that does not in any way detract from the purpose of debate in the House.

Then the minister used the argument that the bill was 20 years coming. Clearly then perhaps the legislation should have been brought in earlier. However, by no means does that support the argument for shortening the period of time it is debated at each stage in the House of Commons. It undermines the very purpose of the House of Commons. If we do not need time to debate an important bill in the House of Commons at each phase, then what is the purpose of us being here?

The minister is focusing on the area of consensus, but, again, that is not the point of debate in the House of Commons. It is around those things on which we do not agree.

How can the minister justify shortening the important process of time and the very nature of debate on such important legislation such as the Divorce Act.

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, the intellectual coherence around the bill, the intellectual importance and the practical and ethical importance of the bill is about the best interests of the child and about the benefits that it would bring to families by protecting the best interests of the child, by protecting the ability in many cases of a spouse, who often happens to be the female in a traditional relationship, to get access to resources on settlement. These kinds of measures have been long called for by experts in the field, and they justify moving forward as we are doing.

The legislation supports the ability to reduce poverty. It supports the ability to improve access to justice, coupled with the move toward unified family courts in a number of different provinces, such as Alberta.

The legislation would help, in a tangible way, families, children in particular and spouses in passing through a very difficult period in their life.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin:** Madam Speaker, let me try again. Hopefully, this time, I will be able to make myself understood and the minister will not talk to me about the merits of the bill in his answer. That is not the purpose of the 30 minutes that have been allocated for discussion. This is a procedural debate. I would like the minister to tell me why it is so important or urgent to impose time allocation on a bill for which there is such broad support. Surely there are other ways to come to an agreement between parties.

The work that was done in committee is one thing. The work that must be done in the House is another. We were all elected to do that work. If the government wants to take away our opportunity to debate a bill, there should at least be a discussion among the parties, which does not seem to be the case.

Why is the government imposing time allocation rather than negotiating with the leaders of each party, for example?

•(1640)

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I once again thank my hon. colleague for his question.

*Government Orders*

I want to point out that members have had ample time to debate this bill in the House of Commons at first and second reading, and a lot of work was done in committee. Members had ample opportunity to participate in this process, either here in the House or in committee. They had ample time to consult their constituents and to read experts' opinions on the subject.

They had the opportunity to participate in debates and in the development of the bill. We are at a point where we need to move forward.

[*English*]

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I find it interesting, just entering into the conversation now, that the hon. minister stands up and talks about how there has been ample time to consult our constituents.

With that, I would like to bring up a constituent, somebody for whom I have been tirelessly advocating. She is Shelley Beyak, whose children, Liam and Mia Tarabichi, were kidnapped by their father, Shelley's ex-husband. The Prime Minister refuses to intervene in this case.

How does the hon. minister, who is new on this file, rationalize the comments today about speeding up a piece of legislation when he and his Prime Minister are failing to act to bring home Liam and Mia Tarabichi, a situation this bill actually touches on? As well, another piece of legislation, Bill C-75, actually lessens the charge for abduction of children under 14 and would again fall to this situation.

How does the minister rationalize his actions on this file while leaving time allocation on this important piece of legislation?

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, one of the very important elements of this bill is to provide help to families in situations of family violence, and particularly to help protect the children and help the spouse or married partner who is perhaps the victim of that family violence.

There are important measures contained in this bill to help move that situation forward progressively and protectively. That is of primordial interest, and one of the reasons this bill is of such importance.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the minister. He just said that members have had ample time to discuss and debate this bill. That is all well and good.

It may be enough for a former university law professor, but mere mortals need time to come to grips with the content of what many people would consider to be a complex and complicated bill.

That being the case, how can he claim that we have had “ample time”? Those were his exact words. How can he say that?

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I said that because we have had nearly eight hours of debate in the House, on top of the work done in committee and the speeches made before the committee. During this process, MPs have had a chance to

consult their constituents. The government feels we have had enough time to understand the details of the bill.

As I just mentioned, there is a consensus on the bill. That became clear during the debates in the House. We agree about moving forward.

• (1645)

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister a substantive question on the bill itself.

One of the things the bill does is codify the factors relating to the best interests of the child, factors that the courts have regularly recognized over the last number of years. However, one factor that is missing is the recognition of the benefit to children of shared parenting. That is not say that shared parenting is desirable in all circumstances—it clearly is not—but more often than not, it is.

At committee there were a number of witnesses who brought forward compelling evidence to demonstrate that this in fact is the case. Moreover, when Parliament last comprehensively reviewed the issue of custody and access, as it did through the special joint committee of 1998, codifying the factors was one of the recommendations. This the government has done, but it was recommended to include in those factors the benefit of a shared parenting relationship.

**Hon. David Lametti:** Madam Speaker, indeed the bill places the best interests of the child first, and one of the criteria is maximal contact time with each parent. This was felt to be a better criterion than an equal parenting presumption, which has been tried and has failed in a number of other jurisdictions. The best evidence from experts was that we have chosen the better way to go forward.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** 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 Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, Agriculture and Agri-Food; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Veterans Affairs; the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable, Intergovernmental Affairs.

[*English*]

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

*Government Orders*

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

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Call in the members.

• (1725)

*Before the Clerk announced the results of the vote:*

**Mr. Darshan Singh Kang:** Mr. Speaker, I would have voted in favour, but I was overlooked. I will vote yes.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member and the omission has been corrected.

**Mr. Raj Grewal:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask for consent to change my vote to yes.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Brampton East has asked for unanimous consent to change his vote to yes. Is there consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

*(Division No. 989)*

**YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Breton
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Drouin
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long

Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McGuinity	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Morrissey	
Murray	Nassif
Nault	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Trudeau
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewsjy
Yip	Young
Zahid — 163	

**NAYS**

Members

Albas	Alleslev
Allison	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brosseau	Calkins
Cannings	Choquette
Clarke	Cooper
Cullen	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Dreeschen	Dubé
Dusseault	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Grewal
Hardcastle	Harder
Hughes	Johns
Kelly	Kent
Kmiec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Leitch	Lloyd
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacGregor	Maguire
Marcil	Martel
Mathysen	May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Nantel	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall

O'Toole  
Pauzé  
Quach  
Rayes  
Richards  
Sansoucy  
Sopuck  
Ste-Marie  
Stubbs  
Trost  
Vecchio  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Yurdiga

Paul-Hus  
Poilievre  
Ramsey  
Reid  
Saganash  
Schmale  
Sorenson  
Strahl  
Sweet  
Trudel  
Viersen  
Waugh  
Weir  
Zimmer — 106

### PAIRED

Members

Dhillon

Moore — 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion adopted.

I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

● (1730)

### THIRD READING

The House resumed from January 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-78, An Act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Mount Royal.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-78. I will use most of my time to address the important amendments the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights have made to this important bill. I was proud to work with the committee to bring forward these changes, which reflect witness testimony and would significantly improve access to the Canadian family justice system.

Changes to federal family laws are long overdue. The changes we are bringing forward are substantial. They would better address the challenging issues that families may face, such as family violence and disputes over relocation. They would improve access to the Canadian family justice system. Bill C-78 already went a long way toward achieving these goals and the work of the justice committee took the bill even further.

I am fortunate to represent a riding like Parkdale—High Park in this chamber, where the constituents are informed and engaged, and I am privileged to bring their concerns to this chamber every day. My constituents in Parkdale—High Park have spoken to me repeatedly about the importance of reconciling the need for a strong and fair justice system with their desire to be compassionate and understanding toward the plight of single parents and vulnerable children. This bill is precisely that middle ground.

[Translation]

I want to thank the many witnesses who submitted briefs or shared their thoughts on this bill in person. The committee listened closely

### Government Orders

to all the different points of view raised by members of the public and family justice system professionals in response to Bill C-78.

Committee members gathered important information from over 50 witnesses. The committee also received over 50 briefs representing a broad range of opinions and points of view. It reviewed the recommendations carefully, and many of them resulted in amendments to Bill C-78.

[English]

Relocation, particularly moving with a child after separation or divorce, is one of the most highly litigated areas of family law. There is next to no guidance on this issue in the current Divorce Act.

Bill C-78 would introduce a relocation framework to ensure that children come first and to encourage out-of-court dispute resolution. Some witnesses brought forward suggestions to improve access to justice in relocation, which is particularly relevant for northern remote communities and unrepresented litigants.

[Translation]

The Canadian Bar Association and the Family Law Association of Nunavut wisely recommended the use of a simplified form rather than court applications to facilitate access to justice and reduce the need to get the courts involved.

[English]

The committee addressed this concern and developed an innovative solution promoting conflict resolution and access to justice. Specifically, it passed an amendment to give non-relocating parents the option of indicating their opposition to a proposed relocation through a form set out in the regulations. This will save the responding parent time and money.

The committee also amended the bill to require that parties seeking to relocate use a form to provide notice. Requiring that notice be provided through a form will promote clarity by prompting parents to provide all necessary information in a consistent manner.

We anticipate that these measures will relieve the administrative burden on the non-relocating parent, while still helping to ensure that courts only hear cases in which there is a genuine disagreement between the parties.

I believe that all members of the House support efforts in the bill to improve protections for children and families who have experienced family violence. For the very first time in federal law, Bill C-78 includes a broad, evidence-based definition of family violence and guidance for courts making parenting orders in the context of family violence.

● (1735)

[Translation]

Bill C-78 also stipulates that courts will be required to take family violence into account when determining the shared parenting arrangement that will be in the best interest of the child.

*Government Orders*

Witnesses raised concerns that, when people fleeing violence want to relocate, it can be dangerous for them to inform the other parties of their intention to apply for an exemption concerning the notice requirements.

[*English*]

In response to this particular concern, Bill C-78 was amended to explicitly provide that parties may apply to a court to waive or change relocation notice requirements without notice to other parties. Courts could then decide whether or how other parties should receive notice, without risking the safety of family members. People who have experienced family violence and face ongoing risk must be able to relocate without compromising their safety. However, notice is a fundamental principle of the legal system, so courts will exercise this power only where necessary.

Now I want to turn to the important issue of poverty reduction. I said I would focus this speech on the work of the justice committee, but I must take a minute to raise another issue of importance to me and I believe to many Canadians. That is the feminization of poverty and how the bill would help address it.

[*Translation*]

Children and families going through a separation or divorce are more vulnerable to poverty, especially those living in single-parent families, which are often led by mothers.

Unfortunately, although parents are required to provide accurate and up-to-date information on their income when the child support amounts are established, many parents do not comply. In 96% of cases where child support payments are in arrears, women are the ones owed money.

Obtaining fair child support amounts is key to reducing the risk of child poverty. Children do better when a fair and accurate amount of support is set and paid for them promptly after separation or divorce.

Bill C-78 would provide for various measures to ensure that child support obligations are met, which would address the pressing need of eliminating poverty in families going through a separation or divorce. The bill would allow for information on a parent's income to be shared with the court and provincial services.

With respect to official languages, the family justice system must adapt to the changing needs of Canadian families. This includes the needs of Canadians living outside Quebec whose first language is French, as well as those living in Quebec who have English as their first official language.

Consequently, the committee adopted an important amendment. Bill C-78 will now explicitly recognize litigants' right to use the official language of their choice in divorce proceedings before the lower courts. The parties will be able to give evidence, make submissions and apply for an order in the language of their choice. They can also be heard by a judge who speaks their official language.

This important change in the family justice system will provide the parties with the same language guarantees currently provided by the criminal justice system. This will help English-language and French-language minority communities flourish in Canada. It is very

important to point this out, in light of the current Ontario government's threats against its francophone community.

I would like to recognize the tireless efforts of my colleagues, specifically the member for Mount Royal and the member for Ottawa—Vanier, to ensure that this becomes a reality.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I would like to once again recognize the work of the entire Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, and of course the invaluable contributions of family law experts and stakeholders from across Canada. They have made an impressive bill even stronger and more responsive to the needs of all Canadian families.

The residents in my riding of Parkdale—High Park have said that one of the many ways to modernize the justice system in Canada is by addressing the shortfalls of our family justice system, and this bill is a comprehensive step toward realizing that important goal.

● (1740)

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question of the parliamentary secretary respecting the issue of relocation. He represents a riding in the centre of Toronto and I represent a riding in suburban Edmonton. We represent ridings where lawyers are readily accessible, but that is not the case in northern and remote communities.

There was a concern raised at committee about the 60-day notice period to notify the non-relocating parent of the relocation with a 30-day response time. It was noted that in many parts of Canada this time period would be very difficult, if not impossible. I was wondering if the parliamentary secretary could comment on that, and explain why the government rejected a Conservative amendment to increase the notice period from 60 days to 90 days with a 60-day response time.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the official opposition critic for his contributions to the bill. It is an important point about relocation. I will underscore two points. One, as I said in comments, relocation is one of the most litigated areas in the entire family justice domain. Therefore, the first thing we are trying to do is to reduce the amount of litigation and reliance upon lawyers who, yes, exist in Edmonton and Toronto but not in other parts of the country.

The second point about the relocation is about just trying to strike the right balance. If we proceed with a notice requirement that is too prolonged, it will jeopardize the ability of the relocating parent to successfully relocate, should that be determined to be in the best interests of the child and in the context of that family's situation. It is not a perfect solution, but it is an attempt to strike a balance to accommodate both the needs and the interests of each of the parents in a divorce situation.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this bill is a great example of how a couple of members can make a difference.

[*Translation*]

At various stages of this bill, francophones living outside Quebec told us they could not get a divorce in French. That is the case in British Columbia, Newfoundland and several other provinces.

[*English*]

We sat there, listened and understood that this was a real problem.

[*Translation*]

All the parties worked together to introduce an amendment that would give people the right to get a divorce in French anywhere in Canada.

Divorce is one of the main reasons why people who have not been charged with a crime have their first interaction with the justice system. They want to express themselves in their own language.

[*English*]

It is hard for me, no matter how bilingual I am, to speak in my other language when I am emotional. I am so proud that all three parties, the Conservatives, the NDP and the Liberals, got together to promote official language rights in both minority communities in Canada. I want to thank my fellow members for having done that.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Mount Royal for his contributions and for this important point. Both he and the member for Ottawa—Vanier were strong, solid and consistent in their support on this important issue.

This issue should not be underestimated by the House. Protection of official language minority rights is a critical priority for this government and should be for all governments in Canada. Unfortunately, we have not seen that. Most recently, we have had threats to official language minority protection in my province of Ontario.

What we stand for on this side of the House and in this Parliament, thankfully unanimously, is that the protection of official language minorities is not a partisan issue, and it should never be a partisan issue.

[*Translation*]

Making it possible for people to get a divorce in French in British Columbia or in English in Montreal is a very good example of that priority in action.

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am supportive of the bill, but I was hoping that it would go a little further. In the event of a marital breakdown, the Divorce Act should grant joint custody or shared parenting unless it is clearly demonstrated that it is not in the best interest of the child. I am hoping that when it is, and unless demonstrated otherwise, the bill would grant shared parenting or joint custody. I would like a response from the parliamentary secretary.

●(1745)

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate my friend on the other side for his election and for his recent membership on the justice committee.

Shared parenting is an important issue. It came up in the time allocation debate. Shared parenting is not entrenched in law right now. We are continuing to not apply shared parenting as a presumption in law with these amendments. What we are doing is focusing on the best interests of the child on a case-by-case basis. That is the default proposition. That requires a unique analysis in each instance. It is very important to understand that and to understand that maximum contact with parents is entrenched in the legislation, but always with the qualification that it be in the best interest of a child.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** It being 5:45, pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I suggest if you were to canvas the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at six o'clock so we can proceed with the day.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

## BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

### OPPOSITION MOTION—SINGLE TAX RETURN IN QUEBEC

The House resumed, from February 5, consideration of the motion.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion relating to the business of supply.

●(1825)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 990*)

### YEAS

#### Members

Albas  
Arnold  
Barrett  
Beaulieu  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Block  
Boudrias  
Calkins  
Cooper  
Diotte  
Dreeshen

Alleslev  
Barlow  
Barsalou-Duval  
Benzen  
Berthold  
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
Boucher  
Brassard  
Clarke  
Deltell  
Doherty  
Egliniski

*Privilege*

Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Fast	Fortin	Leslie	Levitt
Gallant	Gill	Lightbound	Lockhart
Gladu	Godin	Long	Longfield
Gourde	Harder	Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Kelly	Kent	MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Krmiec	Kusie	Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
Lake	Leitch	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Lloyd	Lobb	May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
Lukiwski	Maguire	McGuinty	McKay
Marcil	Martel	McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman	McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Medicino	Mihychuk
Motz	Nantel	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Nater	Nicholson	Morrissey	
Nuttall	Obhrai	Murray	Nassif
O'Toole	Paul-Hus	Nault	Ng
Pauzé	Poilievre	O'Connell	Oliphant
Rayes	Reid	Oliver	Ouellette
Richards	Saroya	Paradis	Peschisolido
Scheer	Schmale	Peterson	Petipas Taylor
Sopuck	Sorenson	Philpott	Picard
Ste-Marie	Strahl	Poissant	Quach
Stubbs	Sweet	Ramsey	Ratansi
Trost	Vecchio	Rioux	Robillard
Viersen	Warkentin	Rogers	Romanado
Waugh	Webber	Rota	Rudd
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 80	Ruimy	Rusnak

## NAYS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arya	Ashton
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Bernier	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Breton
Brousseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Carr	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Chen
Choquette	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Donnelly
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault	Duvall
Dzerowicz	East
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fuhr
Garneau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardcastle	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Kwan
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc

Saganash	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Trudel
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Weir	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Yip
Zahid — 191	

## PAIRED

## Members

Dhillon Moore — 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:28 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

\* \* \*

[English]

## PRIVILEGE

## ALLEGED RACIAL PROFILING

**The Speaker:** I have a member rising on a question of privilege for which I have notice.

**Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House on a question of privilege not only as the member for Hull—Aylmer but also as the chair of the black caucus.



*Private Members' Business*

Two days ago, during this Black History Month, a group of black Canadians, mostly young black Canadians, were on Parliament Hill to engage and to sensitize members of Parliament on the issues facing Canada's black communities. This effort was known as "Black Voices on the Hill". I regret to inform you that both the member for Halifax and I were made aware of an incident of racial profiling of this group of young Canadians.

This place belongs to all Canadians. Therefore, I ask you to investigate this matter immediately and to suggest measures to make this place the welcoming and open place it should be for all Canadians.

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same question of privilege as the member of Parliament for Halifax and as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism.

Following the Government of Canada's Black History Month gala event at the National Arts Centre on Monday, February 4, I was approached by several constituents of my riding of Halifax who were in Ottawa to participate in "Black Voices on the Hill" earlier that day. They shared with me their deep disappointment at the alleged incident of racial profiling in the parliamentary precinct described by the member for Hull—Aylmer. Later that night, I was contacted directly by another Halifax constituent, who had been a witness to the incident.

There is grave concern in my community over this experience, so I too am respectfully requesting that you look into this matter and report back to this House on your findings, as well as any actions that may have been or may be taken to rectify this upsetting incident.

• (1830)

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer for raising this question and also the hon. member for Halifax for his comments.

I take this matter very seriously. I will look into the matter and return to the House in due course.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from November 27, 2018, consideration of the motion that Bill C-417, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (disclosure of information by jurors), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-417 standing in the name of the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, an individual I had the pleasure of working with on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. The bill has risen out of a long process involving great work on that standing committee.

Before I get into the details of that, I want to go back to May 2017, when I had the honour of participating in a press conference with the

member for Victoria and two jurors, Mr. Patrick Fleming and Mr. Mark Farrant. It was at that point, when I was serving as our party's justice critic, that I became aware, because I do not think many people were aware at the time, of the strains and stresses that were involved with one of the most honourable services a person could give to his or her country; that is to serve as a juror, as a judge of one's peers, in a fair, open and honest trial setting. What I learned at that time shocked me. It was not only that jurors went through these stresses, but it was that there were little to no supports to look after them when they had finished this very honourable duty on behalf of their community.

In my capacity at the time as the justice critic and also as the second vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, in June 2017, I asked if the committee could devote its very precious time to studying this matter. I am very thankful to all my Liberal and Conservative colleagues who unanimously agreed with me on my motion to study.

As a lone New Democrat on a committee, it is not very often that we get to see our motions passed and actually acted upon. Therefore, I have to commend my colleagues, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton; the member for Niagara Falls; our great chair, the member for Mount Royal; and, indeed, all of my colleagues on that committee who saw real value in this study and honoured me and, most important, the jurors, with committing to this study.

I very much enjoyed my time on that committee, serving as the justice critic. Especially for someone who does not have any formal legal training, it required a lot of effort on my part to bring myself up to speed. Even though I am now the agriculture critic and have gone on to greener pastures, I will still remember my time on that committee.

One of my proudest times in this Parliament is to have my name associated with this study, because its recommendations reflect a gap that exists in our justice system.

It was very difficult to listen to the testimony we heard at that committee. We had witnesses who had been jurors on the Paul Bernardo trial. We also had Mr. Farrant and Mr. Fleming.

Jurors are basically dragooned into service. They are taken out of their ordinary lives and pressed into service, almost cut off from their friends and family, not able or allowed to discuss any of the proceedings with members of the public or those they are closest to. They have to do this duty with little or no thanks, little family support and also very low pay. It is indeed very much a patchwork quilt across the country. Some jurors were earning about \$40 or \$50 a day for this service.

In order for a jury to render a verdict, it must be exposed to all of the evidence of some of the most horrible crimes that have ever been committed in the country. I am talking about coroner's reports, pictures of the crime scene, audio recordings and video recordings. How can we for one second imagine that someone would go through that experience and not be affected by it in some way? At the end of their service, jurors were essentially given a handshake, a pat on the back and shown the rear door of the building with a "Thank you for your service".

*Private Members' Business*

I can imagine myself, as a father of three children. If I had gone through that experience, would I be able to just pick up where I had left off to resume a normal life? The answer is no. We cannot expect someone to go through that experience, to witness that kind of imagery, to hear those kinds of recordings and simply go back to a normal life.

• (1835)

That is where the gap exists. That testimony was difficult to listen to, but it was important to listen to. All members of that committee assured our witnesses that their words would not be in vain, that we were going to commit to some action in a unanimous and collaborative way. I am proud to see that all members from all parties committed to that work and collaboration.

The result of that testimony was, in what I consider to be one of the finest works of this 42nd Parliament, the report on "Improving Support for Jurors in Canada". I will draw the attention of members to recommendation 4 of that report, which recommended:

That the Government of Canada amend section 649 of the Criminal Code so that jurors are permitted to discuss jury deliberations with designated mental health professionals once the trial is over.

This is important, because we know from our increased understanding of mental health issues, of post-traumatic stress disorder, that we cannot tackle this problem by simply sweeping it under the rug. We have testimony from the Canadian Armed Forces and from our first responders. We know that the key to addressing post-traumatic stress disorder and the mental health issues that arise from it is to treat it early with professional help. Why should jurors be excluded from that very same help we freely give to our first responders and our Canadian Armed Forces?

This brings me to the member for St. Albert—Edmonton and his Bill C-417.

Bill C-417 is a direct result of our committee's hard work. The bill would amend section 649 of the Criminal Code to allow for jurors to freely and openly discuss what they witnessed with a registered and dedicated health professional who, by the very nature of the job, would be sworn to secrecy in any case and committed to keeping those conversations secret.

Other jurisdictions have implemented this kind of change with great success. I look at the Australian state of Victoria. It has recognized the problem, has acted on it and has had some great success.

As a part of that committee's report, the government was asked for a response. The former minister of justice indicated in her response:

I am committed to examining jury-related issues, including section 649 of the Criminal Code, with provincial and territorial colleagues as part of my ongoing review of the criminal justice system, which would apply a Gender-based Analysis Plus approach to identify potential differential impacts.

I am proud to be a joint seconder of this bill to show the cross-partisan support for the member for St. Albert—Edmonton. The first seconder of the bill is the member for Victoria. The member for Mount Royal is there as well. This was a unanimous recommendation.

It is my sincere hope that members of the House, given the fact that we are running out of time in this 42nd Parliament, will see the

intent behind this legislation and its merits and will honour the incredibly hard work and powerful testimony that was received at committee. I hope they will find it in their hearts to unanimously support the bill and send it to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

I would like to commend my Conservative colleague for his work. I am proud to be seconding the bill. I hope we can do honour to those who serve in our justice system.

• (1840)

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-417, an act to amend the Criminal Code section 649, which has been brought forward by my colleague, the Conservative member for St. Albert—Edmonton. I have had the honour of knowing the hon. member for over 10 years and I am very aware of his experience and his encyclopaedic knowledge of statutory law. Any bill brought forward by him amending the Criminal Code clearly says to me that this is a required change and that I can be confident in supporting it.

The member is very passionate about justice issues, but even more so about protecting the victims of crime. Jury duty is something most of us will never experience. Many of us will be contacted through the selection process but few are actually chosen. These Canadians who are chosen and perform their civic duty are often exposed to the horrific details of crimes without the benefit of being mentally prepared for the experience.

They are silent observers who must, for the benefit of a fair trial, expose themselves to images, testimony and unbelievable details to ensure that they are considering all the evidence before making their decision. They do not have the ability to change the channel, leave the room or simply avoid the experience. They are compelled to go through with their service from beginning to end.

Many, after seeing and hearing the unimaginable, have to gather as a group to discuss everything in detail, again and again, and then to come up with their decision for a verdict. As we can imagine, this can leave a normally healthy person with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and those who are predisposed to mental health issues are often even worse off.

An increasingly growing awareness about PTSD in society has really opened up our eyes to the effect it has had on people, their families and those around them. That is a good thing. We suggest those with PTSD get professional help to address their problems, but this is not always possible, especially for those who are suffering because of their jury duty. In Canada, it is illegal to discuss one's jury deliberation experience with anyone. This, on the surface, is perhaps a good policy to ensure our court system does not degenerate into a genre of tell-all books by those on juries.

However, this makes it almost impossible for those with jury duty PTSD to seek professional help because they simply cannot talk about what is causing their health problems. Imagine a person being sick and being told to see a doctor, but not to discuss anything that has to do with how he or she became sick or what that person is experiencing. That is basically the reality here. Bill C-417 seeks to create an exemption for those affected by their jury duty to be able to discuss what they need to with their health professional. Of course, those deliberations would be protected by patient confidentiality.

*Private Members' Business*

To do this, Bill C-417 is proposing section 649 of the Criminal Code be amended to allow former jurors to discuss their deliberations with designated health professionals once the trial is over. This, in fact, is also a unanimous recommendation of the justice committee of the House. Our colleagues have examined this issue in detail and this is their recommendation. Now it is up to us here to make the necessary legislative changes.

It is also worth noting that this concept has come to fruition in Australia already. In the time since, it has shown to work without any problems. Now it is Canada's time to implement these changes. If we say we support victims of crime, we have to allow them to access the help that they need.

Major players in our justice system have also spoken in favour of this change, including the Criminal Lawyers' Association and the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Given that all parties have supported this idea up to this point, I expect that to continue. I just hope we can get through this legislative process before the writ is dropped.

● (1845)

I was quite moved when I read the testimony given in committee by former jurors. They spoke to the challenges they faced after their jury duty. I was particularly struck by the way their experience left them in a position where everyday things became a source of stress and anxiety.

Many of those on jury duty who witness testimony and evidence of serious crimes speak of the lasting and permanent impairment of their emotional well-being. It is really quite unimaginable.

Much of court testimony is already made public through the media and can be discussed. However, in a study done by Dr. Sonia Chopra, 70% of jurors said that their stress occurred as a result of the deliberations. That is the part of jury duty they cannot talk about. During deliberations, they face the stress of rehashing facts, testimony and the interpretations thereof. They have the stress of knowing that victims are expecting a certain result, but also the stress of knowing that they must be ready to deny them if the facts do not support a guilty verdict. They hold the life of the accused in the balance and the stress of not wanting to make a mistake. It can be overwhelming. Are they about to condemn an innocent person? Are they about to set a mass murderer free? Will they make the right decision?

This bill, while a great idea, does not mention some of the other aspects of this issue that tend to bother me greatly, especially as a member of the health committee. As a society, we pay for mental health services for incarcerated prisoners in this country. However, we do not pay for the same services for innocent jurors. As a society, we need to think about that. Are we comfortable with this arrangement? I certainly am not.

Even if we were to agree to pay for mental health services for jurors, we do not currently have the capacity to provide that service here in Canada. Over and over again, we hear at health committee how Canada is challenged to provide mental health services in all regions of this country. It is my hope that if we create the opportunity for jurors to seek mental health support, the provinces will prioritize their work to set up the proper support system for them.

Part of this progress, I expect, will be spurred by the work of the member for Cariboo—Prince George and his tireless efforts to create a federal framework on post-traumatic stress disorder. His work to pass Bill C-211, his private member's bill, will be instrumental in his process, I anticipate.

Bill C-211 was supported by all parties in this House, and it demonstrates our shared will to address PTSD here in Canada, no matter who is affected or why. It is my hope that Bill C-211 will allow for the creation of a standard of diagnosis, care, treatment and even terminology for PTSD that will be consistent from one end of our nation to another.

Improving mental health services in Canada is a shared responsibility. All parties have studied the issue. All parties agree that more needs to be done. Now we just need to do it. We need to insist that some provinces up their game to ensure better consistency and availability of mental health services.

I am not naive, and I know that there will always be unreasonable calls for improvements to mental health services, but so far, I have not heard one person say that he or she thinks we here in Canada are doing a great job.

Investing in mental health is an investment. By providing help to those who need it, we can allow people to live normal lives, hold employment, pay taxes, raise good families and participate in the community. Ignoring their needs costs us greatly, both in terms of money and as a society.

I applaud my Conservative colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton for bringing this sensible proposal forward. I applaud the justice committee for studying this serious issue. It will be an honour for me to support this bill. I ask that my colleagues in all parties do the same.

● (1850)

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to participate in the second reading debate on Bill C-417 today. I congratulate my colleague on the justice committee, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, for bringing forward this bill.

During our study in committee on counselling and other mental health supports for jurors, we heard first-hand from jurors about the trauma they experienced from their participation in jury duty. In fact, our committee released a unanimous report in May that highlighted the necessity of the legislation we are now debating.

During the first hour of debate on Bill C-417, we heard from two other members of the justice committee, the member for Mount Royal and the member for Victoria, who both spoke of the need for this legislation. In fact, I would ask all members in this House to support this important legislation.

*Private Members' Business*

This bill would amend section 649 of the Criminal Code. It would add an exception to the offence of disclosure of jury proceedings so that it would not apply where disclosure was made for the purpose of receiving medical or psychiatric treatment, therapy or counselling from a health care professional following the trial.

The government has consistently made efforts to ensure that the criminal justice system is fair, efficient and equitable for all Canadians. I think the bill would benefit from some amendments that would further its objective and improve its drafting. I note that the bill's proposed amendment to section 649 would benefit from greater clarity in terms of what was meant by "health care professional" to ensure that information being disclosed by a juror was made to a professional who was regulated and bound by the duties of confidentiality so as not to undermine the integrity of the jury secrecy rule. Moreover, as currently drafted, the English and French versions of this bill could be viewed as inconsistent. This could result in the English version being interpreted more narrowly with regard to the types of health care professionals and services covered by the exception. For example, it could exclude psychologists.

In addition, an amendment to provide for a coming into force period, such as 90 days after the day the bill received royal assent, would allow the provinces and territories some time to effectively implement the change to section 649. I believe that these amendments would be consistent with the bill's objective and would enhance its drafting.

As we debate and examine this bill, it is important to be mindful of the way in which juries contribute to justice in Canada and play an important role in upholding our Constitution. Subsection 11(f) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to a jury trial for offences carrying a maximum penalty of imprisonment of five years or more. Under the Criminal Code, certain offences, such as murder, provide for the presumption that the accused will be tried by a judge and jury. For other offences, such as sexual assault or robbery, an accused can elect to be tried by judge alone or by judge and jury.

In *R. v. Davey*, 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada held that "the jury reflects the common sense, the values, and the conscience of the community." In *R. v. Sherratt*, 1991, the jury was also described by the court as an "excellent fact finder" and a "final bulwark against oppressive laws or their enforcement" that increases societal trust in the justice system.

While jury service is an important civic duty in Canada, we know from our committee's study on juror support and its report, "Improving Support for Jurors in Canada", that it can be both challenging and stressful for jurors. Jurors may be exposed to graphic evidence and disturbing testimony.

Throughout our committee's study, witnesses provided testimony on the significant impact jury service could have on jurors' personal lives. Some jurors indicated that following the trial, they had difficulty caring for their children and maintaining relationships. Some even reported experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder following the performance of their duties. Witnesses also identified other sources of stress that accompanied jury duty, such as financial strain, contentious deliberations and the pressure to reach a verdict.

● (1855)

I agree with the statement made by one witness and former juror who was selected for the Paul Bernardo trial, Ms. Tina Daenzer. She said, "Our right to trial by jury depends on the willingness of all citizens to serve, but doing so should not be at the expense of a juror's own mental health." It is certainly a concern that the negative experiences of some jurors may lead others to avoid jury duty, which poses challenges for courts that already struggle to obtain sufficiently large and diverse jury pools.

I recognize that the member for St. Albert—Edmonton has noted the work of the committee as providing the basis for his legislation and as such, I would like to use some of my time today to discuss the committee's work, as well as the recommendations made in its report.

The committee's report makes 11 unanimous recommendations. Seven of the recommendations fall within provincial-territorial responsibility, including, for example, increasing the compensation jurors receive for jury duty in order to reduce the financial stress that can occur for some when serving as a juror. The report also recommends that information packages be provided to prospective jurors and that jurors be offered debriefing sessions and psychological support after the trial. Moreover, the report recommends supporting training for justice system professionals on the impact of legal proceedings on jurors' mental health.

The government's response to the report was tabled on July 18, 2018. It details the government's commitment to raising the report and its recommendations with the provinces and territories and to encouraging discussions on ways in which jurors can be better supported across the country. I understand that this has been done and that federal, provincial and territorial officials continue to engage on jury-related issues. The government's response also sets out its commitment to explore funding and to examine section 649 with provincial and territorial partners. Our committee's recommendations have rightly recognized the important role that the provinces and territories play in this area.

With respect to matters within federal jurisdiction, federal responsibility over the criminal law includes procedure in criminal matters. Part XX of the Criminal Code sets out the procedural rules regulating jury trials and jury selection, as well as the offence of disclosing information relating to jury proceedings in section 649. Provincial and territorial legislatures enact laws relating to the establishment of juries for civil, criminal and other proceedings such as coroners' inquests. Their legislation also provides the basis for identifying possible jurors from the community, the grounds upon which a person is ineligible for jury membership and juror compensation.

*Private Members' Business*

The issue of juror support generally falls within provincial-territorial jurisdiction given their responsibility for the administration of justice. Thus, it is very encouraging that several provinces and territories have established psychological support programs for jurors. This allows jurors to access a certain number of free counselling sessions in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Yukon.

I strongly believe that supporting jurors is vital for the individual jurors themselves, but also for the legal proceedings in which the jurors are involved and the administration of justice more broadly. I appreciate the opportunity to be part of this debate today.

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-417, an act to amend section 649 of the Criminal Code. I want to thank my colleague, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, for his work on the bill. I want to thank all of my colleagues in the House, from all sides, who have worked tirelessly on this.

I also want to thank someone who has become a good friend of mine. He has been very passionate about this. I first met him in the fall of 2016 after tabling my bill, Bill C-211, with respect to a national framework on post-traumatic stress disorder, and that is Mark Farrant.

Mark Farrant has been a tireless advocate. As I said earlier on, when he first brought this issue to me, I was talking with reporters regarding my bill and those who were included in it. I was ashamed at the time that I did not include jurors.

We trust that when people sign up to do their civic duty, they do their duty and not a lot is said afterwards. Why? It is because they are sworn to secrecy. They are not allowed to talk about the horrific images, videos and testimony they hear.

I also want to say thank you to the 12 angry jurors who wrote letters to the Minister of Justice, early on, which were tabled in April 2017, I believe.

They wrote such things as, “In 1995, I was selected as juror number one for the murder trial of Paul Bernardo. Lasting four months, the jury watched videos of Leslie Mahaffy and Kristen French being raped and tortured for weeks on end. Each day I would go home in a daze, barely able to comprehend the things I saw. Burned in my memory, even at night the videos would replay in my head and I couldn't make it stop.” That person would not be able to share that with anyone else.

Here is another one: “There's not a day that passes that the thoughts don't come back, the details, the autopsy pictures of bullet holes in human heads, forensic photos, the pools of blood.” That juror was on the jury for the Pan murder trial.

Another juror wrote, “It is a different world being part of a murder trial. It takes you to places you can't even imagine and don't want to go. It isn't how I live. To live life through the eyes of a murderer can be very difficult to witness. This is why counselling is necessary for jurors.”

Finally, another juror wrote, “The trial itself was two and a half months in length, and the visuals of the kidnapping and gruesome account of what took place from beginning to end of her horrifying

demise have not impacted only myself but also had an impact on my family. I will never be a juror again, nor will my friends or my family, as they watched in pain at what I was and still am going through. I am not the only juror on the trial that sat through this and is suffering from PTSD. There are three that I know of. It is an abomination that doing our civic duty would lead to our lives being changed forever and creating a living hell for our family. Why are the courts not taking care of us when we are trying to take care of society by doing our civic duty?”

That is a great question.

I have deviated from my speech because these letters are the catalyst for why we are here today. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mark Farrant and the 11 other jurors who had the courage to come forward. They had the courage to put their faith in all of us in this chamber, believing that we would take this seriously. For that, again, I want to offer a huge thank you to my colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton for putting forth this bill, which amends section 649 of the Criminal Code.

PTSD is the mental health injury that people encounter when they see or experience traumatic events. It could come from images. It could come from videos. It could come from a car accident. It could come from any terrible accident. We are only now just beginning to understand what post-traumatic stress disorder means.

● (1900)

We used to think when we saw some of our soldiers come back from war or some of our first responders sit in a corner and be dissociative that they were shell-shocked, that they were different. Now we know that it is post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental health injury. We also know now that PTSD can impact those who are subject to rape or sexual abuse.

These people are just doing their civic duty, but over the course of two weeks or two months—or 10 months, as we are hearing—images are burned into their minds. Then, at the end of the trial, we turn them loose to walk out the front doors of the courthouse, never to speak of it again, and until this bill comes forward, they are not even allowed to share it with their doctors.

Mark Farrant shared that there were many physicians who were not even willing to listen to him for fear of a patient-doctor violation. He was having these issues and was not able to share exactly what was going through his mind.

We know through the course of this study that our jurors face not just mental health injury or mental illness because of the experience they go through, but also the financial crisis that has been put in place. One juror wrote that it had impacted her family so acutely that even her own son had attempted suicide, all because of the mental health injury that she faced during the course of her civic duty.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Obviously, members have heard the speeches down the way, and I think that this bill is timely. I am very proud of all of us and the work that we do here. I am proud that on June 21 of last year we managed to pass my bill, Bill C-211, which received royal assent and has now become law. We are now the first country in the world to have adopted national legislation to tackle post-traumatic stress disorder. It is my hope that the House could see its way forward to pass my other bill, Bill C-425, which would recognize June 27 as national PTSD awareness day. It would bring us in line with what our counterparts in Australia, the U.S. and the U.K. are doing.

However, the bill before us today, Bill C-417, is much needed and long overdue. It might be too late for those who have already served, but at the very least, as we move forward, we can be sure that if people sign up for civic duty and become jurors on a case, they will have the support they need and require once the court case is done.

This bill is overdue, and I applaud all of us in the House and the health committee for its work on it. As it was so aptly put by our friend for Calgary Confederation, when our colleague for St. Albert—Edmonton brings something forward like this, he has encyclopedic knowledge of our law system and court system.

I also want to make note of a great point that was brought forward. If we can pay for care for the mental injuries and mental health issues that our inmates have, then for sure, 100%, we should look forward to paying for and helping those who do their civic duty.

• (1905)

With that I humbly offer to my colleagues that I wholeheartedly support the bill. It is long overdue and I want to thank those who have brought this issue to the forefront, including Mark Farrant and the 12 angry jurors who brought these letters and showed the courage to speak out.

• (1910)

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and an honour to rise to speak in the second hour of debate on my private members' bill, Bill C-417.

Let me say that it is really wonderful to see the cross-party support for this common-sense piece of legislation because this is a totally non-partisan issue. It is about doing what is right. It is about ensuring that those men and women who are suffering as a result of doing nothing more than their civic duty can get the help they need. That is what Bill C-417 is all about.

I want to take this time to thank the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for initiating a very important study around juror supports, which ultimately led to a unanimous report with a key recommendation that Bill C-417 seeks to implement.

I also want to acknowledge the NDP justice critic, the member for Victoria for his tireless advocacy. I was very honoured that he was the named seconder of the bill.

As well, I want to acknowledge many members on the Liberal side, the member for Oakville North—Burlington, the member for Toronto—Danforth and the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, all of whom stepped up and co-seconded it, in addition to all the members of the justice committee who lent their support, most especially the hon. member for Mount Royal, the chair of our

committee, who was tireless in his advocacy and who worked very hard to encourage the government to support the legislation in principle.

Most importantly, I would like to thank those jurors who have had the courage to speak up, including the 12 jurors who wrote letters and the jurors who came before our committee to share their stories and share their experiences, including Daniel Cozine, Michaela Swan, Patrick Fleming, Tina Daenzer, Scott Glew and Mark Farrant. Their stories were heard loud and clear and have made a difference.

Let us work together across party lines to see that this legislation can come into effect before the dissolution of this Parliament.

**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.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to stand in the House during Adjournment Proceedings to follow up on a question I posed to the government last year, on October 16. Some members of the House will recognize this was World Food Day.

It is four months later and there is still no clear answer from the government side to my original question, which was with respect to the development of a national food policy for Canada. As recently as last week, when I had the deputy minister, Mr. Tom Rosser, before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, he was a little vague, but told me that maybe we would see something in the next three to four months.

There were a lot of extensive consultations with Canadians from coast to coast to coast in the development of this food policy. In fact, I can remember that it was one of my more popular town halls in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I had a lot of people come out. Not only consumers of food, but many local farmers came to participate in the panel discussions as well as in the individual round tables. From their deliberations, I was able to formulate a report, which I handed to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with a lot of pride for participating in a process that would eventually lead to the development of this policy.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I fundamentally believe that the food policy is not going to be a very simple undertaking. It will certainly take some time, but I would like, by the end of this evening, to have some kind of clear indication from the parliamentary secretary as to where the government is at, what more needs to be done and whether we can reasonably expect something in this 42nd Parliament.

The New Democrats have had a plan for the development of a national food policy for quite some time now. As the agriculture critic, I have to recognize the work of dignitaries in this party, like Malcolm Allen and Alex Atamanenko, who were previous agriculture critics and led to the development of our plan, “Everybody Eats”. It was our vision for a pan-Canadian food strategy.

We recognize that in a food strategy we need to have a holistic plan. We need to make Canada a leader in the environmentally sustainable production of food. We need to work with industry to make it a part of the conversation, to have farmers at the centre of this conversation. We want something that protects critical watersheds, that promotes best practices and reduces food waste from farm to fork.

We want to promote the welfare of animals, because as farmers know, the welfare of their animals allows their business to succeed and thrive. Farmers who engage in animal husbandry will tell us that the welfare of their animals is always their top concern.

There are a lot of good ideas out there. They have all been collected by the government. It has now had almost two years to go through that vast amount of information, which was the product of a lot of work by Canadians from all around the country.

Therefore, I would like to pose a question for the parliamentary secretary: When can we, as Canadians, as parliamentarians, expect to see the national food policy? Could he inform the House as to a concrete timeline for the development of that?

• (1915)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for raising this important issue. Canadians' food choices have an impact on food security, health and food safety, our environment and our economy.

The government is working with Canadians to develop a long-term vision for food in our country. This vision is entitled “A Food Policy for Canada”, the first policy of its kind in Canada. We plan to introduce a food policy for Canada by the end of our mandate.

This policy will address food issues and pursue opportunities in areas related to increasing access to affordable food, improving health and food safety, conserving our soil, water, and air, as well as growing more high-quality food.

A food policy will improve how we work together. It will also support the hard work done by our farmers to feed families. The Government of Canada held extensive consultations, and more than 45,000 Canadians shared their thoughts online. We also heard from hundreds of stakeholders through our national and regional

engagement sessions and community events. I took part in many of them myself.

People from Charlottetown to Vancouver to Yellowknife and everywhere in between have spoken. We released a report entitled, “What We Heard”, which sums up the consultations. These are some of the key messages we frequently heard during the consultations.

First, there is the urgent need to combat hunger. In Canada, access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods is especially hard for certain groups, including for those who live in poverty, as well as in indigenous and northern communities.

The consultations also showed significant support for conserving air, soil, and water quality. Food waste was raised as a major problem that needs to be addressed. An estimated one-third of food in Canada is lost or wasted and Canadian households spend roughly \$10.4 billion a year on food that ends up in the trash, resulting in increased landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and missed opportunities to help combat food insecurity.

We are exploring how we can build stronger food security for Canadians and help Canada continue being a leader in growing healthy, high-quality food. Our farmers work long, hard hours to feed Canadian families.

With a food policy, the Government of Canada, industry and other organizations will be able to work better together towards the health, environmental, social and economic goals related to food.

• (1920)

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's comments with respect to this question on the development of a national food policy. I am glad to hear we will see it by the end of the current government's term.

He knows as well as I do from recent testimony before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, especially with our current study on indigenous participation in agriculture, where we have seen the statistics, that even in a country as wealthy as ours and even with the amount of food we are capable of producing, there are still many food-insecure areas and populations that do not have access to safe, nutritious and wholesome food. It is my sincere hope that this national food policy, while putting the needs of our farmers first and foremost, will also address those critical areas, because I think that in a country as wealthy as ours, this is still a national stain and shame. For the welfare of those populations that do not have the means, I certainly hope we address that, because I believe it is our duty as parliamentarians to look after those who are less fortunate.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant:** Mr. Speaker, by bringing everyone together, with a wide range of experiences and viewpoints, we will build a food policy for Canada. This policy needs to reflect the priorities and opinions of Canadians, indigenous peoples and stakeholders.

We held broad consultations, and now we are rolling up our sleeves and carefully considering all of the feedback we received. The feedback is about the mandates of various federal agencies, some of which are currently developing complementary initiatives.

We are taking the time to get it right. A food policy will ensure that we are all moving in the same direction, with the same goals in mind, on the vital issues surrounding food.

[English]

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise in this place on behalf of the women and men who serve in uniform in the Canadian Armed Forces to participate in this adjournment debate.

The great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, which in its wisdom has elected me to be its democratic representative in the six consecutive previous elections, is home to Garrison Petawawa, Canada's largest army base, training ground of the warriors. I appreciate the trust I have earned from our women and men in the forces and I have their backs.

During question period, I asked the government a question regarding the health and safety of our troops. While I may have expected a lack of response from the since renewed Minister of Veterans Affairs who is now the Minister of Indigenous Services, Canadians expect more for their soldiers and veterans.

I implore the former justice minister, now Minister of Veterans Affairs, to become the advocate for veterans, the one they have been lacking in the Liberal government.

My question referred to the decision by the Liberal Party to play politics with military procurement. The policy decision to play partisan politics relates to the fact that the budget has not been increased as was promised to soldiers and veterans. In fact, it was cut by \$8 billion.

Promises to restore the funding after the federal budget is balanced do not count for anything because we all know there is no plan to balance the federal budget. What does that mean for the average soldier when military procurement budgets are cut?

The public is only made aware of high-profile cuts such as the unfortunate parody that is being played out with the Vice-Admiral Mark Norman show trial over naval ship procurement. There is also the decision to purchase second-hand junk from the Australians by acquiring their fighter jet cast-offs.

Rather than proceeding with the second-hand fighter jet cast-offs, we should be holding a fair and open competition immediately. Defence budget cutbacks mean the health and safety of soldiers are compromised. For example, it has been brought to my attention that

the health of soldiers has been shortchanged by the use of unqualified individuals to perform basic medical procedures.

In this case, the procedure is a routine eye examination. Eye examinations are required as part of the universality of service standard all soldiers must maintain, but rather than employing a licensed ophthalmologist to conduct these eye examinations, a medical technician has done the testing for a year. The bare minimum in eye care has been given.

As an unqualified technician, the referral to a physician specialist, in this case an ophthalmologist, would not be made because a technician is not trained in eye health. For the most part, service members are not made aware that the regular eye exams being provided by the Canadian Armed Forces are not being provided at the civilian standard level of care that would identify health concerns.

Until a crisis occurs for a soldier, no one knows anything. In this real life example, service members, after experiencing vision difficulties, only discover the nature of their vision loss after being diagnosed by off-base civilian medical professionals. The tragedy of one case in particular is that the vision loss was preventable and would have been diagnosed in a timely fashion had a proper medical person been—

● (1925)

**The Assistant Deputy Chair (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that she asked for answers about our men and women in uniform who are part of a peacekeeping mission in Mali. She also said that there was no debate or vote in the House on that mission. My colleague knows the rules of the House better than I do, but I am going to stick to the questions she raised.

I am very pleased that we are bringing Canadian leadership back to the world stage by working with the United Nations to strengthen international peace and security. After decades of setbacks and cuts by the Harper Conservatives, Canada is recommitting to peacekeeping by supporting the United Nations mission in Mali. That responds specifically to the question my colleague raised.

Today, our air task force provides medical evacuations and tactical airlift services to UN forces. We support the peace process in Mali, and we are taking a comprehensive approach that includes diplomatic, development and military resources. Our efforts are focused on protecting civilians.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

During operations, the safety and well-being of our women and men in the armed forces is paramount. While we cannot eliminate all risk, we will always work to reduce the risk our Canadian Armed Forces members face during operations. Our government ensures that our troops have the equipment and training they need for their missions. In the case of Mali, that includes modified rules of engagement to reduce risks to their safety. We are proud of the role the Canadian Armed Forces is playing in Mali and the positive influence they have around the world.

Through Operation Presence, the Canadian Armed Forces is contributing vital resources to the UN's stabilization mission. For example, we have deployed a task force of about 250 people. Two Chinook helicopters and four Griffon helicopters are ready at all times to conduct life-saving medical evacuations and provide tactical airlift to UN forces in Mali.

As of February 1, our air task force had flown over 127 sorties, including six medical evacuations. It had transported over 4,600 passengers and more than 340,000 kilograms of freight.

The mission in Mali is an opportunity for Canada to stand out on the world stage through the Elsie Initiative. Our government understands that diversity is our strength, and it is essential to the success of any mission. We are very proud of the fact that women now represent 15% of Canada's forces deployed in Mali, which is more than the UN average of just 4%. Canada is a global leader in this area, and while we are proud of the progress we made, we know there is much more to do to increase the representation of women in the Canadian Armed Forces.

As the member opposite well knows, we have been very open and transparent. We have made a one-year commitment to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, or MINUSMA. The mission will end at the end of July 2019. We are very pleased that Romania will assume this important role in Mali after us, especially since this confirms the relevance of the commitment we made to the United Nations. This will ensure a judicious rotation of deployments in partnership with our allies, while still supporting peacekeeping efforts.

● (1930)

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, the tragedy of one case in particular is that the vision loss was preventable had it been diagnosed in a timely fashion. Now a soldier faces being assessed as medically unfit for duty and being involuntarily released from service, and will have to prove the condition is due to his time in the military in order to get any pension.

That is one soldier. How many other soldiers' health and well-being are affected by these types of cuts that are invisible to the public until there is a problem?

The health and safety of our women and men in uniform should be a number one priority for the government. There is an opportunity for the new Minister of Veterans Affairs to make things right. She can either repeat the mistakes of the last minister of veterans affairs or do the right thing and give veterans what was promised in the last election. She should drop the empty PMO talking points and do the right thing. Lives depend on her.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Mr. Speaker, once again, the member is not talking about the question she raised for this adjournment debate. I will therefore refer to what I said in my speech.

We are very pleased to be involved in peacekeeping operations where the Conservatives refused to get involved. Our air task force and our people on the ground are making a difference and are appreciated by our international partners.

Furthermore, I want to reiterate that the safety of our men and women in uniform is our priority. I want to clarify for my colleague that our government believes that the House of Commons should also have the opportunity to debate international deployments, which is why we held a take-note debate on March 20, 2018. That offer still stands, and I encourage my colleague to consider it.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to talk about a file that has taken up a lot of our time over the past few days, namely the single tax return, which was unanimously requested by the National Assembly.

The Quebec National Assembly has called for Quebeckers to be able to file just one tax return. The Premier of Quebec is calling for the same.

Yesterday, we had the opportunity to discuss this file at length during a supply day where the opposition moved a simple motion. We were calling for the government and all parliamentarians to work together and adopt the following motion:

That, given:

(a) the House has great respect for provincial jurisdiction and trust in provincial institutions;

(b) the people of Quebec are burdened with completing and submitting two tax returns, one federal and one provincial; and

(c) the House believes in cutting red tape and reducing unnecessary paperwork to improve the everyday lives of families; therefore,

the House call on the government to work with the Government of Quebec to implement a single tax return in Quebec, as adopted unanimously in the motion of the National Assembly of Quebec on May 15, 2018.

That was yesterday. Earlier today, we voted on this opposition motion. Unfortunately, and despite his fine words, the Prime Minister once again demonstrated that he has no intention of respecting the will of the provinces. Every Liberal member voted against our motion.

Had the motion been adopted, talks could have gotten under way with Quebec to address the request by the members of the Quebec National Assembly, which, I would remind members, was unanimous. The Premier of Quebec himself called for this several times, and it would have made life easier for Quebeckers. The ultimate goal of the call to create a single tax return for Quebeckers is to make their lives easier by reducing red tape.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Contrary to what the Liberals suggested over the last few days, there is no need to fearmonger about job losses. There is no way a single job would be cut simply because we dropped one of two tax forms. The people currently working for the Canada Revenue Agency will all keep their jobs because there are still major challenges to be addressed, especially tax evasion. Furthermore, CRA staff will still have many audits to do.

Consequently, the debate should not suggest that allowing Quebecers to file a single tax return necessarily and automatically means that employees in Quebec will lose their jobs. That is false, yet the Liberals have been raising the spectre of job losses for the past few days to justify their refusal to let Quebecers file a single tax return in accordance with their wishes and best interests.

I must remind the House that Quebec is the only province where people have to file two tax returns, one provincial and one federal. We are trying to make life easier for Quebecers and get rid of one of those tax returns. We want to streamline the process and reduce the paperwork burden created by the need to file two tax returns in Quebec.

• (1935)

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable for his question.

For the past few days, he has been accusing our government of fearmongering about the single tax return. What we are saying is that we are always in favour of working with the Government of Quebec to make life easier for Quebecers, but we will not be foolish or do so at any cost. My first thought is the CRA employees. My colleague must consider the potential impact this would have on the more than 5,500 employees working in 14 offices in Quebec.

There would be job losses. As the Minister of National Revenue said, “chop, chop, chop”. Premier Legault himself admitted it. What do the Conservatives have to say to these 5,500 employees? Yesterday, the Conservatives revealed their true colours. They do not have a plan, and on top of that, the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord told us that the more than 5,500 CRA employees in Quebec were a mere detail.

In Quebec, the CRA is more than just a detail. We are talking about real people. We are talking about 5,500 high-quality jobs that support middle-class families. Those 5,500 families contribute to their community and the vitality of rural regions.

Our position is clear. We will not jeopardize those jobs. The federal government, nine provinces and the three territories have harmonized their definitions of income. Quebec has a different definition, different rules and different exemptions. For Quebec to have a single tax return, the nine other provinces and the three territories would have to amend their framework or else Quebec would have to amend its own.

Which option do the Conservatives prefer? When will they tell us who they are going to ask to change their approach? If the Conservatives were serious about their intention to simplify the tax return process for Quebecers, they would not have made cuts to the services offered by the CRA.

Rather than making empty promises, we, on this side of the House, will continue to invest in services that make a real difference in the lives of Quebecers. It is with that objective in mind that the Canada Revenue Agency and Revenu Québec have been working together for nearly 30 years. That collaboration has paid off. Many of the new services are designed to improve access for the 86% of taxpayers in Quebec who file their tax returns electronically.

Many services such as auto-fill my return, file my return, express NOA and ReFILE have already been put in place to make it easier for Canadians to file their returns. Other benefits for Quebec residents include updates to the tax preparation software to make it easier to complete both forms. The basic information that is the same for each form can be automatically generated using the new features. That is what co-operation with Quebec looks like.

• (1940)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech sounds familiar, because we have been hearing it over and over for the past week.

Unfortunately, the government is once again refusing to listen to the Premier of Quebec and Quebec's National Assembly, which unanimously asked to begin the process of implementing a single tax return for all Quebecers. Little wonder that the Liberals refuse to work with Quebec, given that they still see it as a threat, like in the old days. The government is unwilling to give up any of its power to Quebec.

As to the matter of the different definitions of the word “income”, it is utter nonsense. When Quebecers get paid, they get one cheque, not two. They only get one paycheque. These are just technicalities, and the Liberals are using trivialities just to get out of letting Quebec have its way and to avoid trusting Quebecers. Hardly surprising, given that the member for Gatineau said that the idea of a single tax return was the dumbest idea ever. That is the message he sent to Quebec's National Assembly.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are trying to win over Quebecers with some magical thinking, but they do not have a real plan.

As far as a single tax return is concerned, they have no plan. As far as tax evasion is concerned, they have no plan. As far as dealing with climate change is concerned, they have no plan. Should I keep going down the list? The Conservatives not only do not have a plan, but they are totally wrong when they say that a single tax return can be implemented with a simple administrative agreement.

In Quebec, the Canada Revenue Agency employs real people. We are talking about 5,500 good jobs that support middle-class families, 5,500 income earners who spend money at small businesses in Shawinigan, Jonquière, Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Rouyn-Noranda and Rimouski.

On this side of the House, we are going to do what it takes to protect these jobs that support so many communities in Quebec.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[*English*]

(The House adjourned at 7:44 p.m.)

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

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