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(HANSARD)

Friday, December 11, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 11, 2015

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

• (1005)

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from December 8 consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I get started, I want to inform you that I am splitting my time with my colleague from Essex.

As this is my first full speech in the House of Commons, I want to thank the great people of Courtenay—Alberni for electing me as their member of Parliament. It is truly an honour to represent this great riding, which includes a large section of central Vancouver Island.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you have ever been to my home riding, but I would like to take a moment to introduce you and the members of the House to the land and the people who live there. I will then discuss some of the challenges that they face, as well as the opportunities that we have in relation to the Speech from the Throne.

I know that many members here would champion their own riding as the most beautiful place in Canada. I am confident that the physical geography found in Courtenay—Alberni has no equal. It starts at the beginning in Comox Valley, the islands, and Mount Washington, which normally has the largest amount of snowfall in North America. It stretches down through Oceanside and includes Parksville, Qualicum, and Nanoose Bay. They are beautiful beaches that we all know and care deeply about. It stretches across to the east side, Denman Island, Hornby Island, and Lasqueti Island, and crosses over the Alberni Valley and Mount Arrowsmith to the Pacific Rim. It includes the Long Beach national park, the great beaches of Tofino, and ten Nuuchahnulth communities, the nation of Qualicum, and part of the traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation.

My story in my riding dates back over 100 years, when my great-grandfather met my great-grandmother in Cumberland. Through my

family and my community, I have a deep understanding of this place. I have witnessed the changes, the hardships, and the victories that we have faced together and the challenges that we face today.

The realities of some of the challenges and issues in our riding include climate change, the effects of which are being felt right across my riding. The previous Conservative government refused to acknowledge those realities, but all it would have had to do was talk to the folks at home who were seeing the effects first-hand. Many people who live in rural communities will share the story. The effects of climate change are affecting them now. They include the historic melting of our glaciers and snowcaps. Bob Cole, a lifelong Port Alberni resident, was on CBC Radio in June, talking about how, for the first time in his life, the glacier had melted in June.

Increased flooding and boil water advisories are affecting municipal infrastructure. They are affecting our agriculture and our food security. Major droughts and forest fires are affecting our economy.

People in British Columbia and coastal British Columbia will always say that the health of our salmon is the health of our communities. It rained just in time in August this year, or we would have lost all of our salmon. That is our culture, our economy, and our lifeline.

The ocean acidification in Baynes Sound a couple of years ago killed our shellfish sector. We had Humboldt squid, a foreign species, showing up on our beaches in Tofino a couple of years ago.

This is real. Climate change is here. I am overjoyed that the Liberal government, as evidenced in the throne speech, is embracing a new tone when it comes to climate change, but my constituents need more than a tone of change from their government. They need real action, setting ambitious, accountable emissions reduction targets with annual progress reports for meeting targets enshrined in Canadian law. My colleague, the member for Edmonton Strathcona, presented an opportunity for us to do that just yesterday. It is an opportunity to strengthen Canada's environmental assessment process by including climate impact assessments so that new projects will not derail reduction targets.

The Address

We need to highlight the work of environmental protection and those who do it every day, including the Coast Guard. Marine traffic control is a very important issue in my riding. We closed the Tofino and Ucluelet station. That was the station that communicated right across the Strait of Juan de Fuca to our American allies. It protected mariners in one of the fastest growing marine areas of the economy of North America.

We are looking at the closure of the Comox station in March. This station is very important to coastal British Columbians in terms of marine traffic safety, because it is the only marine traffic control centre that is not in a tsunami subduction zone. We know that a tsunami is going to happen. It is not “if”, it is “when”. This is very important.

We saw during the *Leviathan II* boating incident in Tofino that it was local knowledge and local people that saved lives. Aboriginal people have been ill-equipped with training and equipment to save lives on the coast of British Columbia. The Ahousaht people saved lives in Tofino. People in the Haida Gwaii stopped the drifting *Simushir* from hitting the shore. People in Hartley Bay saved lives when a BC Ferries ferry went aground on the central B.C. coast. We need to better support these nations and coastal communities.

My community and the communities of coastal British Columbia rely heavily on dealing with derelict vessels and pollution in our waters, as members can imagine, but we have not dealt with that. However, Jean Crowder presented a very good opportunity in the last sitting of the 41st Parliament to deal with derelict vessels. We need national leadership on this to deal with the protection of the environment when vessels go aground and also to make sure that we protect mariner safety.

In my riding and in Canada as a whole, more economic activity that works in conjunction with the environment is needed.

Small business is the core of our economy and the natural leader of innovation. We did not hear anything about small business in the Speech from the Throne, and we need to make sure that we do something about that.

Raw log exports in my riding have gone up tenfold in 10 years. That is not double, but tenfold. This is deeply affecting the economy of Port Alberni and Vancouver Island, and future generations.

One-third of the children in Alberni Valley are living in poverty. This is unacceptable to everyone in my riding. It is unacceptable to everyone in this House.

We have opportunities to invest in innovation. In Sweden they are making car parts out of wood. This morning a forest company announced the opportunity to make biofuel out of wood. This is the kind of innovation that we need and that we can embrace, but we need the government's help to do so.

We have opportunities to invest in emerging sectors such as tech. The tech sector is the fastest growing sector in British Columbia.

What better place to have higher learning, with a natural surrounding like Courtenay—Alberni and the west coast?

We need to improve the role of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans so that it is doing its job and gets back to its mandate to

protect our wild salmon. We need boots on the ground so that we can help with the return of our salmon in coastal British Columbia.

We need support for infrastructure, especially for BC Ferries.

I am hoping that the House will support these important calls to action.

On social challenges, as I began to express, one-third of the children in Port Alberni and in Alberni Valley are living in poverty. Seniors in Oceanside and throughout our riding cannot get access to doctors. This is unacceptable.

Getting back to Alberni Valley, the life expectancy there is four years lower than the Canadian average. It is 40th in the world, just above the Dominican Republic. We have some work to do. Affordable child care would really help make a difference in the lives of people of Courtenay—Alberni.

We need a seniors strategy. Having the highest median age for seniors in my riding in the nation, I see first-hand the results of not having a seniors strategy, and not having a strategy for dementia and Alzheimer's. It is important that we do that.

We need better support for mental health and for veterans. We heard this every day at the door, as well as the impact of a failed economy on our youth, and youth unemployment. We need to ensure that our young people have an economy that will take them into the future, and make sure they have a living wage and an affordable place to live.

There are opportunities for us to move forward, and I would like to talk about some of those opportunities, working in collaboration with first nations. Often the wealth of our country starts in rural communities, but it leaves rural communities. We need to have shared prosperity with aboriginal people, and with all of our communities.

In recent years, the Nuu-chah-nulth won a very important court case in the Supreme Court of Canada: the right to catch and sell fish. This decision was awarded to them, but still the government has refused to sit at the table with the Nuu-chah-nulth people and negotiate fairly. I call upon this new government to do just that: sit and have fair and reasonable negotiations.

I am excited to bring a message of hope, optimism, and love from Courtenay—Alberni. I hope that the House will embrace our challenges, that we will stand together and work on our challenges together with ridings across this country to make sure we build a healthier, better, more prosperous Canada.

The Address

•(1010)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the member's thoughts about the indigenous fishery and how giving greater opportunity to share the natural resources of our collective lands would benefit the indigenous communities, including lifting children out of poverty from those communities, and giving pride to the parents to be those providers that we need them to be.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, in response to my friend from Winnipeg Centre, I want to outline that the court case is important.

During the campaign the chief from Hesquiaht First Nation, April Charleson, talked about the fact that the government has cut the welfare rate and income assistance rates. Transportation had been gutted so they could not even get home. It was \$250 to get a water taxi from Hesquiaht to Tofino to buy groceries. At the same time they had won their court victory to catch and sell the very fish that were running by their villages and they could not even get access to those resources.

My colleague is absolutely right. This is the solution. This is an opportunity to feed the people of Hesquiaht, feed the people of our communities. This is an opportunity to make sure that we empower people instead of mismanaging poverty. We have a historic opportunity right now to do just that and I hope my colleague will join me in helping make that happen.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith has also shared the trauma of raw log exports, I would say. We heard it every night on the campaign doorstep. People are concerned about seeing ships loading raw logs off the waterline of our communities while jobs are leaving our communities at the same time. I understand 20,000 value-added, high-tech jobs around paper and wood manufacturing have been lost in our province since the Conservatives took power 10 years ago.

I hope the member can elaborate on the impact of that loss of jobs on his community.

•(1015)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I have a personal connection to the forestry sector. My great-grandfather was a papermaker at a mill in Ocean Falls on the central coast of British Columbia. That town was a bustling community of 4,000 people. It produced Olympic swimmers back in the day. Today, that community has 75 people in it. I do not want to see that happen to Port Alberni. I do not want to see that happen to any more coastal communities, especially communities in my riding.

We have an opportunity to invest in innovation and technology. In our campaign we talked about the NDP having invested \$40 million in the forestry sector to do just that.

I hope the government will be able to see the opportunity that we have with our forest sector and the opportunity to keep jobs in British Columbia, in Canada, instead of shipping raw logs out of our country and shipping jobs out of our country. This has an enormous impact on our communities.

The socio-economic indicators in Alberni Valley may show an unemployment rate of 10% but it does not truly reflect the true

unemployment rate. The social assistance rate is 253% above the provincial average of British Columbia, and that is not okay. We need to do better. We have an opportunity. We have a thriving, beautiful opportunity to invest in our forestry sector. We are counting on the federal government and the provincial government of British Columbia to work together in collaboration with business to change direction in the forestry sector and make us more competitive so that we can make our mark on the world. This is our opportunity to do just that.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the aisle made a passionate speech and I certainly appreciate his comments.

I too spent some time in the Comox-Campbell River area in the aquaculture business. I realize the beauty of that area but yet the challenges that the region faces.

I come from Saint John, New Brunswick. As I stated earlier this week in the House, my city leads the country unfortunately in child poverty. The rate in Saint John is 31%. One thing I am proud of on behalf of the Liberal government is that the Canada child benefit will pull 315,000 children out of poverty across our country. Would my opponent agree that the Canada child benefit will be a great thing for his riding?

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, of course we welcome giving money to people in need, especially parents and children who need help. I will give the House an example. I knocked on a woman's door in Parksville. Her name was Karlin. Karlin pulled out her child care bill and it was \$750. She pulled out her paycheque and it was \$750. She earns \$10.72 an hour. It is not enough. Fifteen dollar-a-day child care, a living wage. A living wage in Courtenay—Alberni is \$17.22 an hour.

We need more action from the government. We would certainly welcome the member working with us on finding solutions to help deal with these problems to make sure that we make Karlin's life a lot better and a lot easier.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations with the parties, and if you seek it, you should find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons be appointed to review the report of the External Panel on Options for a Legislative Response to Carter v. Canada and other recent relevant consultation activities and studies, to consult with Canadians, experts and stakeholders, and make recommendations on the framework of a federal response on physician-assisted dying that respects the Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the priorities of Canadians;

That five Members of the Senate and ten Members of the House of Commons be Members of the Committee with two Chairpersons of which the House Co-chair shall be from the governing party and the Senate Co-Chair from the Official Opposition party; and, that one additional Member of the third party be a member of the Committee without voting privileges;

The Address

That the House of Commons membership be determined by the whip of each party by depositing with the Clerk of the House a list of his or her party's Members of the Committee no later than five sitting days after the adoption of this motion;

That changes in the membership of the Committee, on the part of the House of Commons, be effective immediately after a notification signed by the Member acting as the chief Whip of any recognized party has been filed with the clerk of the Committee;

That the Committee be directed to consult broadly, take into consideration consultations that have been undertaken on the issue, examine relevant research studies and literature and review models being used or developed in other jurisdictions;

That the Committee have the power to sit during sittings and adjournments of the House;

That the Committee have the power to report from time to time, to send for persons, papers and records, and to print such papers and evidence as may be ordered by the Committee;

That the Committee have the power to retain the services of expert, professional, technical and clerical staff, including legal counsel;

That the quorum of the Committee be eight Members whenever a vote, resolution or other decision is taken, so long as both Houses and all officially recognized parties are represented, and that the Joint Chairpersons be authorized to hold meetings, to receive evidence and authorize the printing thereof, whenever six Members are present, so long as both Houses and all officially recognized parties are represented;

That the Committee have the power to appoint, from among its Members such sub-committees as may be deemed appropriate and to delegate to such sub-committees, all or any of its powers, except the power to report to the Senate and House of Commons;

That the Committee have the power to adjourn from place to place within and outside Canada;

That the Committee have the power to authorize television and radio broadcasting of any or all of its proceedings;

That the Committee make its final report no later than February 26, 2016; and

That, a Message be sent to the Senate, requesting that House to unite with this House for the above purpose and to select, if the Senate deems advisable, Members to act on the proposed Special Joint Committee.

● (1020)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. opposition whip rising on a point of order.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, there have also been consultations, and if you seek it I believe you will find consent for the following motion: that, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practices of the House and its committees, before proceeding with the election of a committee chair, pursuant to Standing Order 106.2, the clerk of the committee shall call upon each candidate for the chair to address the committee once, for not more than three minutes. When the final candidate has completed his or her speech, the clerk of the committee shall proceed immediately to the election of a chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the chief opposition whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is therefore not carried.

I see the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: There have been discussions among all parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: that, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, that the Standing Committee on Finance may hold organizational meetings on December 11, 2015, and that the membership of the said committee be as follows: Hon. Wayne Easter, Raj Grewal, Steven MacKinnon, Jennifer O'Connell, Robert-Falcon Ouellette, Francesco Sorbara, Hon. Lisa Raitt, Ron Liepert, Phil McColeman and Guy Caron; and that during its consideration of proceedings, pursuant to Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance, together with any necessary staff, may travel within Canada, and may authorize the broadcasting of its proceedings; and that notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to present its report on the pre-budget consultations no later than February 5, 2016.

● (1025)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first speech in the House, I would like to take a moment to thank the people of Essex for putting their trust in me and giving me the opportunity to serve them in the next four years. Essex is a beautiful and diverse riding, made up of many small towns, including LaSalle, Amherstburg, Kingsville, Lakeshore, Essex, Harrow, and many other small communities. As their voice in Parliament, I will listen to their concerns and take their priorities to Ottawa, and fight for them every step of the way. As their MP, I will embrace a positive, progressive perspective. I will consult with everyday people, and I will strive to ensure that all levels of government work together for the best interests of Essex.

The Address

Coming out of such a long election campaign, I would like to thank all of the amazing volunteers who helped me get elected. Their dedication is truly inspiring and made all the difference.

I would like to thank my family members for their unwavering support, my husband Germaine, our sons Maxwell and Maliq, my parents Tom and Linda, my brother and sister, extended family and friends.

Today I am honoured to rise in the House to debate the government's Speech from the Throne. During the election campaign, the Liberals made many promises to Canadians, and there are high expectations on them to deliver as government. While the throne speech was thin on details, I am hopeful that this is not an indication of a lack of commitment to follow through on their promises.

As the representative for Essex, and as a member of the NDP caucus, the progressive opposition, I will work to hold the government to account and push the Liberals to keep their word on increasing investments in infrastructure, boosting public pensions, and implementing democratic reforms.

One of the government's top priorities is what it calls a tax cut for the middle class. However, in reality nearly 70% of Canadians, including middle-income earners, will not receive any benefit. The NDP propose to modify the tax cut so that 90% of Canadians will benefit, helping to reduce income inequality and making our tax system a little fairer. Unfortunately, the Liberals have not accepted our proposal.

I hope to see the government make job creation a real priority. Too often, workers are forced to turn to part-time precarious work, as good full-time jobs disappear at an alarming rate. My riding of Essex has one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada, and the working class there really suffered under the Conservative government.

Communities depend on jobs and sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, IT, and logistics. There are many small businesses in my region that contribute so much to our communities. I have met with many people in the riding who have terrific ideas on how we can move our region forward and support quality local job creation. I am excited about what we can accomplish together.

I was pleased to see the throne speech reiterate a commitment to investing in infrastructure. Although few details were provided, I am hopeful that we will soon see a plan for getting this money out the door. My riding of Essex will benefit in many ways from great investments in infrastructure. More rail and better roads will help people and goods move with more ease. It will generate good jobs and more economic activity, which is what our region desperately needs.

As many will know, plans are under way to construct a second bridge and border crossing for the Windsor-Detroit corridor. Building this bridge will lead to increased trade, which is vital to our long-term economic prosperity. I applaud my colleague, the hon. member for Windsor West, who has advocated for this new crossing for years and worked hard to advance the file. I look forward to working with him and the current government on this and many other issues.

In the throne speech, the government committed to providing a more secure retirement for Canadians by working with the provinces and territories to enhance the Canada pension plan. After years of Conservative stalling, I welcome this important commitment.

On the doorsteps in Essex, I heard from many people who were concerned about their ability to save for their future and to retire with dignity. People work hard all their lives, and they deserve greater retirement security.

As a New Democrat MP, I will stand up for strengthening CPP, returning eligibility for old age security to age 65, protecting workplace pensions, and lifting seniors out of poverty by boosting the guaranteed income supplement.

I must also point out some of the topics that the Speech from the Throne failed to address.

As the NDP critic for international trade, I would like to see the government provide much greater details on its plan to consult Canadians on the trans-Pacific partnership. The Conservatives negotiated this deal behind closed doors in the dying days of their government. We all know that this deal could result in the loss of tens of thousands of Canadian jobs. Nowhere would the effect of this be more deeply felt than in my riding of Essex, where so many people are employed by the auto and agricultural sectors.

● (1030)

As an auto worker, I saw first-hand how job losses have impacted families and entire communities. When I started working on the assembly line at Ford, we had 6,700 people. Twenty years later, we are down to 1,500. These losses have been devastating.

In 2008, I found myself laid off. I know what that feels like. I know how it impacts our families and the decisions we make about our lives and our future. Many of my friends and co-workers made difficult choices, such as moving away from their families for work, and returning to school, as I did.

Facing economic uncertainty and starting over is unfortunately something that many Canadians experience today. I understand their frustrations and challenges on a deeply personal level, and I commit to working-class people in my riding of Essex and in Canada that I will be our voice in Parliament.

With so much on the line, Canadians deserve to be listened to. On the campaign trail, the Liberals promised public consultations, but their Speech from the Throne was silent on this and on compensation for farmers and auto workers who will be hurt by this deal.

The Address

I look forward to working with the hon. member for University—Rosedale on the TPP and many other trade-related issues. Although we will not always agree, I am optimistic that we can have a positive collaborative relationship.

I also look forward to working with the hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, as well as the honourable member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, the Conservative critic for international trade. On the TPP, I'm confident that we can get a better deal for Canadians.

Turning my attention to another issue now, the Speech from the Throne talked about working with the provinces and territories to develop a new health accord. However, I did not see a commitment to cancelling the Conservatives' planned cuts to health care. Reversing these cuts will allow us to invest in improving seniors care, making prescription drug coverage more affordable, and helping more Canadians to find a family doctor.

The speech also failed to outline plans to fight poverty and reduce inequality in Canada. I spoke earlier, applauding the government's commitment to enhancing the CPP. However, we in the NDP believe so much more must be done for low-income seniors, including boosting the GIS and reversing the Conservatives' cuts to OAS.

The rate of child poverty in Canada is shockingly high and deserves more attention from the federal government. I am proud to belong to a party that has worked to advance that issue for decades. In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously adopted former NDP leader Ed Broadbent's motion to end child poverty in Canada, but for 25 years, Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to act.

Today, more children live in poverty than in 1989. The NDP has proposed a new way forward: close the tax loophole currently enjoyed by CEOs on stock options. Those funds would be redirected to low-income families through an enhanced working income tax benefit and an enhanced national child benefit supplement.

As I near the end of my allotted time, I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise in the House today. As the Member of Parliament for Essex, I'm committed to fighting for the people of my riding. I will stand up for good jobs, better health care, help for those who work hard to get ahead, and a better deal on the trans-Pacific partnership.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleague across the floor for her first official speech in the House. It was an excellent speech, very passionate, very good information, and I thank her for that.

I also want to indicate that it is obvious many of the challenges in her area will be fulfilled through our Liberal promises over the next four-year mandate, as many of the issues she addressed we have in the throne speech or have shared throughout the campaign.

My question to the hon. member would be about the trans-Pacific partnership. The NDP was totally against it and wanted it out, and she seemed to indicate in her speech that we should move forward, but maybe with some changes or consultations. I am glad to see that, but I would like to know if the NDP position now is that we work closely in establishing that trade deal.

● (1035)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my colleague across that what was indicated in my speech around the TPP is that Canadians are expecting this issue to be brought to them as promised by the Liberal government.

We will certainly be participating in all of the discussions around the TPP because this trade deal has massive implications for working people.

Canadians and people in my own riding of Essex cannot afford to lose tens of thousands of good-paying jobs out of our economy and out of our communities. I look forward to working with the government to challenge what is in the TPP, to find out if it is good for Canadians.

Again, I encourage those across the aisle to ensure that this issue is brought to Canadians, as promised by their government.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's comments. I agree with some, in terms of concerns, and I certainly have questions in terms of some of the solutions that have been outlined in the member's speech.

I want to say, in response to one of the previous questions, that it appears the Liberal Party believes that promises deliver results. They do not. Action delivers results. The government has shown through the throne speech that it is long on promises and short on action.

What is being proposed for the middle-income tax cut, which the member has spoken to, is incredibly short-sighted, leaving so many in society out of the benefits that the government has proposed and indeed has put before the House. I grew up in government housing in a place where I was surrounded by those who were earning the least in society. These people were not looking for a handout, but a way out.

In terms of job creation in manufacturing, there was not a single mention in the throne speech. What is the member's position on that and what would the NDP propose to ensure that we actually grow the number of manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

The Address

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the NDP has been quite clear on its desire for an auto strategy in Canada, a manufacturing strategy in Canada. Manufacturing jobs in our communities provide many spinoff jobs. There is an incredible benefit to the communities where they exist. We need a manufacturing strategy because it is an important component in our GDP. Therefore, we require the government across the aisle, as well as members on this side of the House, to seriously look at implementing a manufacturing strategy in Canada, so we can save good-paying jobs for all Canadians.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate my colleague on her maiden speech. I thank her for bringing forward her values, passion, and strong principles for the people of Essex and Canada.

As I articulated earlier, in my riding Parksville has a median age of 58. When I was door-knocking in Parksville, I met seniors who had gone to food banks for the first time in their lives. I knocked on one door and a woman said she had to make a choice between food and medicine. She could not afford to buy her own medicine.

I would ask the hon. member to talk a little more about her proposal on pharmacare and how we can make sure this woman does not have to make that horrible choice.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Mr. Speaker, I also experienced this at people's doors. People told me they were making very difficult choices about whether they could afford medication. It is not simply about being able to afford drugs that are necessary; it is about a path forward to health for Canadians. If Canadians are healthy, we will have a healthier and more productive society. New Democrats definitely stand behind having a pharmacare program in Canada.

• (1040)

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Labrador. Before I begin, I want to congratulate you on your election to the Speaker's role, and I want to congratulate each and every other member of this House on their election.

It is a great honour and privilege to be standing here for the first time to deliver this speech in such a great House, the House of Commons.

I want to take this moment to thank all of my supporters and volunteers, and I send a very special thanks to my wife, Lisa; my two children, Riley and Kate; my mom and dad, Mike and Linda; and all my other relatives, in-laws, and friends. I thank them all.

On December 4, I was delighted to hear the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Excellency the Governor General, David Johnston. The Governor General is an extremely intelligent and remarkable individual. It was extra special hearing the speech delivered by him because he is from northern Ontario. He was born in Sudbury but was raised and educated in Sault Ste. Marie.

Now that the Speech from the Throne has been delivered, we begin to make real change happen here for the people of Sault Ste. Marie and this great country. The riding of Sault Ste. Marie is located in the heart of the Great Lakes on the Trans-Canada Highway on the border of Michigan. It is the home to a diverse group of people, including the first nations of Garden River and Batchewana,

and the communities of Goulais River, Heyden, Searchmont, Aweres, Prince Township, and Sault Ste. Marie.

It is known as a very warm and welcoming place. It is the home to Sault College, Algoma University, the Canadian Forest Institute, Searchmont Ski Resort, a number of beautiful provincial parks, and the Soo Greyhounds.

I have had an opportunity, since the October 19 election, to meet with a number of business, political, and community leaders in Sault Ste. Marie, and there is a renewed sense of optimism and hope in my riding; and I believe that is so in Canada as well. In fact yesterday, I had the opportunity to host a meeting here in Ottawa with the chief from Garden River First Nation, Paul Syrette. He was accompanied by councillors Chris Solomon, Caroline Barry, and Andy Rickard. We discussed a number of important issues for Garden River, including the need for infrastructure, economic development, and the inquiry into the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. It was an excellent conversation, and I look forward to working with them over the next four years in a nation-to-nation discussion, along with Batchewana and a number of other first nations.

Sault Ste. Marie, though, is not just diverse because of its people. In fact, it is home to a group of diverse industries. It is the self-proclaimed alternative energy capital of North America. It partakes in a wide range of energy projects including wind energy, with the Prince Wind Farm; hydroelectricity, with five hydroelectric stations generating a total of 203 megawatts of renewable energy; solar energy; co-generation; and reverse polymerization.

During the campaign, the Prime Minister visited my riding to reaffirm this government's commitment to invest \$200 million more annually to create sector-specific strategies that support innovation and clean technologies in the forestry, fisheries, mining, energy, and agricultural sectors.

That is why I was delighted to hear in the Speech from the Throne that this government continues to hold to that promise. Protecting the environment and growing the economy are not incompatible goals, and it is time that a government starts treating them as such.

The diversification of the economy is more important now than ever in Sault Ste. Marie and Canada. Sault Ste. Marie relies heavily on the steel industry. Essar Steel Algoma and Tenaris Algoma Tubes are two of the largest employers in my riding. To put things in perspective, Essar Steel Algoma is one of only three fully integrated steel mills that remain in Canada, and on an annual basis it contributes \$1.2 billion to Canada's GDP. It provides 2,800 direct jobs and more than 5,000 indirect jobs.

Points of Order

●(1045)

Sault Ste. Marie was built on the steel industry, and as a representative for my community here in Ottawa, I have the job of ensuring the government does what it can to protect and ensure its continued growth. This is not going to be a simple task. Like many other industries, the steel industry is facing challenging economic times after a decade of neglect. In fact, shortly after my election to this House, Essar Steel Algoma gained CCAA creditor protection and is currently restructuring. Tenaris, a leading supplier of tubes and related services for the energy industry, has laid off hundreds of its employees from my riding. As in other areas of Canada, the steel industry in Sault Ste. Marie faces a number of challenges. It is relying on governments, including this one, to think critically and to engage with producers and other stakeholders to find suitable solutions.

For those reasons, I am glad that this government is committed, as it was in the campaign, to historic spending on infrastructure, which will help stimulate the economy both locally in Sault Ste. Marie and nationally.

As a former four-term city councillor, I know that Canadian municipalities face major infrastructure deficits. They need more support from the federal government and have suffered years of neglect. Infrastructure is crumbling. These historic investments in transit, social, and green infrastructure would go a long way to addressing these issues. They would put Canadians to work, and they would give them safer cities and homes to live in. As an added bonus, infrastructure projects use steel, which is produced in my riding.

Ridings across this country also have Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet, to find enough funds to raise their kids, and to save for their future. In Sault Ste. Marie, I know this is the case. This government's commitment to creating a larger tax-free child benefit that would raise 315,000 kids out of poverty is critical. The government showed on Wednesday that it would strengthen the middle class by providing it with a middle-class tax cut, which would benefit roughly nine million Canadians every year. This is just part of the government's plan to implement real change for Canadians.

Our government is investing in the future of our children and giving families more money to save, invest, and grow the economy. It is well known that when middle-class Canadians do well, they spend their money locally. They benefit local businesses and, in turn, help to boost the economies and create jobs.

In Sault Ste. Marie, we need middle-class people to do well, but we also need to help those who are struggling or down on their luck. Not only is this government committed to creating jobs through investment in infrastructure, but it is mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that the government will strengthen the employment insurance system. We will ensure that the EI system serves the economy and Canadians. As someone who has worked hard in my community to ensure the economic success of everyone, I am particularly proud of this. People in Sault Ste. Marie and across Canada need a social safety net that is there for them so they can get back on their feet; and an effective EI system is a good initial step toward that.

I am also proud that this government will work with the provinces and territories on a number of initiatives, including, but not limited to, providing more income security when people retire, reducing post-secondary costs, developing a new health accord, and reducing carbon pollution. In short, Canadians do better when our governments work together.

We need to invest in our country and Canadians and in industries that continue to sustain us for generations to come. That is exactly what this government is committed to doing, and the Speech from the Throne is evidence of that.

Once again, I would like to thank the people of Sault Ste. Marie for electing me. I look forward to working with all members of this House to improve the economy and, in particular, the success of the steel industry in Canada. It is time we elevated the discussion around the importance of the domestic steel industry in Canada, and I look forward to working with all members.

The Speaker: We have a point of order. The hon. member for Carleton.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2015-16

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House adopted Bill C-3, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016. As is our practice, I rose to place a question to the President of the Treasury Board during the committee of the whole. I asked him if he could confirm if the bill was in its usual form and the President of the Treasury Board replied, "The form of this bill is, in fact, the same as that passed in the previous supply period".

I checked the Journals Branch this morning and the copy of the bill that was adopted by the House of Commons did not include the schedules that contain the actual amounts in the supplementary estimates. It would appear that we did not actually grant for Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, because the bill was not in fact presented in its complete form, having excluded the schedule which provides for the authorization the House must actually give.

Originating with the Magna Carta, the crown cannot spend what the people do not approve through their elected representatives in the House of Commons. That is probably the most important foundation in public finance. Therefore, if information about that spending is not properly included in the legislation adopted in the House, then the Government of Canada does not have the authorization to spend the money that it does. That is the first point.

Statements by Members

The second point is that the President of the Treasury Board took great lengths to say that he would “surprise” me by actually answering the question. In fact, he did surprise me and he did answer the question, but then he surprised me again today by virtue of the fact that his answer was incorrect. I looked back at the schedule of the previous supply bill that was passed by the House of Commons and the schedule was in fact present, which is contrary to the words the President of the Treasury Board uttered when he said that the form of the bill was the same as that passed in the previous supply period. We now know that this is not accurate and that the President of the Treasury Board has misled the House.

This of course creates a dilemma because the schedule has not been adopted by the House and it is one for which I do not have a solution, but it is one that I am obliged, as a member of the House of Commons, to bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, and to the attention of the House.

● (1050)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Carleton for bringing this to my attention. On the same point of order, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member, in good faith, bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I would like to make a very brief response to it.

I rise to respond to the member's point of order respecting the statement made by the hon. President of the Treasury Board in the committee of the whole last night on the form of the bill. I wish to notify the House that there was indeed an administrative error in the print of the bill before the House. The bill did not contain the schedules that are normally contained in the bill.

I ask hon. members of the House for their understanding in this manner, and I sincerely apologize for the error and any confusion that this has caused members of the House and staff.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that a number of administrative errors occurred with respect to Bill C-3, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016.

[*English*]

Due to these administrative errors, the copy of the bill that was circulated at the opening of yesterday's session did not contain the usual schedule that reflects how the global amount of supplementary estimates is allocated among the various votes. As is the usual practice on the final supply day, the House considered and concurred in the supplementary estimates followed by the supply bill based upon these estimates.

I have instructed the Acting Clerk and his officials to take the necessary steps to ensure that a corrected copy of Bill C-3, the one that accurately reflects the will of the House, is forwarded to the other place.

[*Translation*]

I thank hon. members for their attention.

● (1055)

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Sault Ste. Marie and I share the fact that we were both municipal councillors, he for four terms and myself for three, so we clearly recognize the infrastructure issues that affect cities and towns across our great country.

One of the issues that has come up since the election is the lack of a plan on behalf of the Liberals with respect to infrastructure. We have seen a lot of money, over \$2.65 billion, go to developing countries, as has been announced, but there has not been any announcement for any city or town in our country.

Could the hon. member tell us what the Liberal plan is with respect to infrastructure, given the fact that our Conservative government previously made the largest infrastructure spending announcement in some time?

Mr. Terry Sheehan: Mr. Speaker, as a former city councillor, I know the importance of infrastructure. That is why I was so pleased during the campaign when we announced the historic amount, doubling the infrastructure commitment to \$125 billion for transit, for much-needed social infrastructure, for green infrastructure. These things are needed.

Infrastructure in cities across Canada is crumbling and doubling the commitment is so important, because there is such a deficit. It is going to be an absolute pleasure to meet with various people to find out what their priorities are so we can get moving on this. Transit is important across cities. The Garden River First Nation that I met with has a number of priorities that it has listed for me.

It is a historic investment. It is amazing. It is going to be so beneficial not only for fixing the infrastructure deficit, but for the much-needed jobs that are required, and for the construction and steelmaking industries as well.

The Speaker: Seeing as we are at 11 o'clock, I wish to inform the House that there will be three minutes left for questions and comments for this speech after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DAY FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF QUEBEC

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce to the House that this Sunday, December 13, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., hundreds of Quebecers from every part of the province will come together to participate in the national day for the independence of the people of Quebec.

Statements by Members

As the Prime Minister said on Wednesday, the people of Quebec were not consulted when the Constitution was patriated in 1982. Ever since, Quebec has been governed by laws to which it never consented.

I would like to remind him that Quebec is entitled to self-determination, just like any other people. Quebec independence would be economically beneficial to our nation. That is what we will be explaining to Quebeckers on Sunday.

I would also like to take this opportunity to invite all of the distinguished members of the House to join us if they would like to participate.

* * *

[*English*]

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time rising in the House as the member of Parliament for St. John's South—Mount Pearl, and my first duty and wish is to thank my loving family, my loyal friends, my devoted volunteers, and the people of the riding who put their faith in me. I promise to serve them all with honour and with rigour.

The government has moved swiftly in its first days on a matter of crucial importance to the people of my riding, making the announcement that the St. John's maritime rescue sub-centre, closed three years ago, shall be reopened.

I thank Minister Tootoo and my fellow MPs for their hard work and their advocacy.

This centre provides crucial search and rescue capabilities for over 900,000 square kilometres of ocean. It is the protector of those who make their lives at sea, including our fishermen, and the many who work to produce our plentiful offshore oil. Helicopters transport those workers. Beneath them as they fly are Signal Hill, the Narrows, Bay Bulls, and Witless Bay.

I invite hon. members to come and visit my beautiful riding. As our famous tourism ads say—

The Speaker: I want to remind all hon. members that we refer to people in the House by their title. I am sure that the member was referring to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and that is the title he will want to use.

It is also important that those assistants who work for MPs take note of the fact that when they are helping members to prepare members' statements or questions, they refer to the title of the person and not use their name.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Mountain View.

* * *

●(1100)

RED DEER—MOUNTAIN VIEW

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank the constituents of my wonderful riding of Red Deer—Mountain View for re-electing me to the House of Commons. I am proud to continue representing Red Deer and Red

Deer county, with the addition of the county of Mountain View and the beautiful communities of Olds, Carstairs, Didsbury, Sundre, and Cremona.

Red Deer—Mountain View forms a large of the central Alberta economy. Our riding depends on agriculture, natural resource development, and manufacturing. In recent years, we have faced a number of issues, most notably low oil prices and grain shipment backlogs. This is why I was quite concerned that in the government's throne speech, there was no mention of agriculture or natural resources.

Since these issues are ones that affect our region directly, but do not seem to warrant the Liberals' attention, I have made a commitment to ensure that support for these sectors becomes a priority. It is important that the government respects and does not forget central Alberta or the thousands of Canadians who depend on the agriculture or energy sector to put food on their families' tables.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RIVIÈRE-DES-MILLE-ÎLES

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is my first intervention in this democratic chamber. It is a real privilege for me to represent the people of my riding. To my constituents, volunteers and family members, thank you so much.

I would also like to take a moment to wish all my colleagues the very best for the holiday season, a very merry Christmas, and a happy new year.

Rivière-des-Mille-Îles is fortunate to be home to a number of innovative businesses, particularly in the transportation sector. I will soon have an opportunity to visit Nova Bus, a company based in Saint-Eustache that has been working in the public transit sector since 1993.

For several years now, the company has been a leader in bringing electric vehicles to public transit. For instance, they have a hybrid bus that runs on electricity.

I would like to commend Nova Bus for its contribution to our community and for its commitment to reducing our environmental footprint.

* * *

[*English*]

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week I asked the government when it would release details of the secret deal made between the previous government and U.S. Steel, which put the pensions and health benefits of 20,000 workers and pensioners at risk. After rubber stamping the takeover of Stelco, the Conservatives failed to stand up for Hamiltonians' jobs, signing an agreement that left thousands of workers with no jobs, pensions under threat, and medical benefits that are now cancelled.

During the election, Hamilton Liberal candidates slammed the former government for keeping the agreement's details secret. In answer to my question, the minister made it clear that the government has no intention of releasing the details of the deal requested by the workers, pensioners, United Steelworkers, and all the sitting NDP, federal, and provincial members representing Hamilton ridings.

Action must be taken now and details of the secret deal must be released. U.S. Steel must be held responsible for every obligation made under the secret deal and ensure that 20,000 vulnerable workers and pensioners are protected. Anything less is unacceptable.

* * *

[Translation]

ACADIE—BATHURST

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in the House of Commons today for the first time as the member for Acadie—Bathurst, in New Brunswick.

[English]

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your new role as Speaker of the House and to congratulate all members of Parliament on their recent election.

[Translation]

I also want to thank the people of Acadie—Bathurst from the bottom of my heart for placing their trust in me. It is an honour to represent them here in Ottawa.

[English]

The riding of Acadie—Bathurst has gone through difficult times on economic, social, and cultural fronts during the last few years.

[Translation]

Our plan promises better days ahead and will help us rebuild the riding of Acadie—Bathurst in all areas. I am proud to live in a riding where the francophone and anglophone communities and the Pabineau First Nation live and work together to grow our economy.

* * *

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my first order of business is to thank the constituents of Oshawa for affording me the opportunity to represent them in this place for a fifth term. I am honoured and humbled.

Oshawa's ties to the auto sector run deep. I was proud that our Conservative government invested in the auto industry after the economic downturn in 2008 and 2009 and helped save Canadian jobs, but things have changed. The Liberals are back.

This new Liberal government has abandoned the auto industry and communities like Oshawa in its throne speech. It chose to ignore the competitive challenges Oshawa is facing due to the high cost of energy and labour created by their cousins, the Ontario Liberals. To add insult to injury, the federal Liberals seemed determined to implement these failed energy and payroll tax policies across our

Statements by Members

great nation. These policies have destroyed Ontario's competitiveness compared to northern U.S. states.

I urge all members of the House to join together in creating policies that promote the creation of auto jobs, not policies like payroll and carbon taxes that will kill them.

* * *

• (1105)

[Translation]

FREDERICTON

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House today as the representative for the good people of Fredericton, Oromocto, New Maryland and the Grand Lake area. I will work hard to earn the trust of my constituents every day.

The opportunity to be in such a privileged position as to help direct the course of our great nation and to be a strong voice for my region is not just a veritable honour, but also a dream come true for this young lad from Freddy Beach.

I would also like to thank all the people who worked hard on my election campaign. Their intelligence and vision were major factors in my election win. As all members in this place know, it takes the determination and incredible passion of a team to win an election.

* * *

[English]

CLOVERDALE—LANGLEY CITY

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I rise in the House for the first time as the first member for Cloverdale—Langley City, I want to thank the residents of my riding and my family for their support. I also want to acknowledge that my riding falls in the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples.

I served our country for the last 32 years as a federal public servant with Parks Canada, living and working in many regions of the country. My new position as member of Parliament is a continuation of my extensive career in public service.

Currently, the three main issues that families of Cloverdale—Langley City face are their struggles with the high costs of living in metro Vancouver and stagnant earnings; the serious transit shortfalls in the region south of the Fraser in metro Vancouver; and poverty, homelessness, addictions, and crime.

I am excited to see that the government's plan to bring real change directly addresses the issues of my constituents. I look forward to addressing the concerns of my riding in the House and working with all members to improve our communities and our country.

*Statements by Members***HARRY PRATT**

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time I am making a statement in this place in the 42nd Parliament, I want to begin by congratulating all of the new and returning members.

I also want to thank the fine people of Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for electing me to represent them for a fifth time. I am humbled and honoured by their trust and expectations.

On a more sombre note, I was saddened this week to learn of the passing of my friend Harry Pratt of Kemptville in my riding. As a real estate broker, Harry worked tirelessly for his community, serving on numerous boards and organizations. He has been called the town's biggest cheerleader.

He was hospitalized with pancreatic cancer. This past Saturday, friends and family turned the cafeteria of the hospital into a wedding chapel so that Harry could watch his daughter get married.

Harry passed away on Sunday afternoon at 68 years old.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Sheila and his family.

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JULIA TURNER

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next Tuesday, December 15, the Welland minor hockey midget teams and people across Niagara Centre will be dressed in purple to remember the life of Julia Turner. Julia tragically lost her life to cancer at the age of 15. She was an avid hockey fan, and every year her friends come together to play in the Julia Turner Hockey Night in Welland in her memory.

Throughout her community, Julia was committed to helping those who were less fortunate. To celebrate her life and her work, everyone is asked to bring a non-perishable food item to donate to The Hope Centre in Welland, Ontario.

I would like to thank the organizers of the Julia Turner Hockey Night in Welland, especially her family and friends, for their heartfelt tribute to a remarkable young woman.

In the spirit of Julia's dedication to helping those in need throughout her community, I would like to remind all members of the House, people throughout the community, and all Canadians to think of those less fortunate as we enter the holiday season and to support their local food bank.

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● (1110)

JAMES CHAPLIN

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time that I rise in this House, I would like to thank the residents of Cambridge, North Dumfries, and North Brant for placing their confidence in me to represent them.

Today I rise to pay my final respects to James Chaplin, a man who changed the course of many lives in Cambridge, including mine throughout my time with the YMCA.

Jim spent 57 years leading Canadian General Tower, as president, chairman and CEO, and was a member of Galt city council. Jim Chaplin was truly known for his patronage and support of many worthy causes in our community. He was an ardent champion of both the namesake Chaplin Family YMCA and The Bridges shelter.

One minute is not nearly long enough to detail his dedication, commitment and passion for his family and his community.

I thank Jim for living such an exceptional life. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons has been back only a week and already Santa's elves are seeing who is being naughty and nice. With broken promises on deficits, refugees, transparency, and Senate reform, our Liberal colleagues must be getting worried about the carbon emissions from the coal they will get in their stockings.

On a more serious note, Canadians are disappointed that the Liberals are sticking with their plan to step back rather than step up in the fight against the brutal terrorists of ISIS. They should listen to people such as the Liberal members for Fleetwood—Port Kells and Kelowna—Lake Country, who both wisely indicated during the campaign that continuing air strikes was a key component of a balanced approach. Rather than listening to their own members, why has the government forced them to vote against their beliefs on a matter of such importance to millions of victims of the brutal ISIS regime?

Canadians do not cut and run; only in Canada do the Liberals run from ISIS.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next week is a special week for Newfoundland and Labrador. A gentleman by the name of Dwight Ball, whom I have known for many years, as many of us have, will be sworn in next week as Newfoundland and Labrador's next premier. It is a moment we have been waiting for quite some time.

Dwight is a compassionate individual and empathetic to all citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador. He is certainly a fantastic member of the House of Assembly, and will now become our next premier.

Specifically, I would like to congratulate the new MHAs in my riding: Brian Warr, Baie Verte-Green Bay; Al Hawkins, Grand Falls-Windsor-Buchans; Jerry Dean, Exploits; Derek Bennett, Lewisporte-Twillingate; Tracey Perry, Fortune Bay-Cape La Hune; Dr. John Haggie, Gander; and, Derrick Bragg, Fogo Island-Cape Freels.

I congratulate the Liberal Party in Newfoundland and Labrador. We look forward to—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Essex.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of Essex for trusting me to represent them in Ottawa. I will work hard every day to be a strong voice for their priorities.

In Essex, family farms fill the landscape and are vital to the success of our local economy. Too many family farms have disappeared over the last decade in Essex, but despite farmers' many challenges, they are embracing environmentally sustainable and progressive conservation practices.

I want to specifically honour the work of Don and Neil Huber, who, like many farmers in my community, are spearheading innovative agricultural practices. By using no-till planting and helicopter seeding methods, they are helping the environment and reducing soil erosion and improving water quality.

To be a farmer is about more than growing food. A farmer is a small business owner, an employer, an accountant, a mechanic, and a climatologist, all the while living on a razor-thin profit margin and working far more than the traditional 40-hour work week.

I want to thank Don and Neil Huber and all the farmers in my riding and across Canada. They do not just feed their families and their neighbours, but are truly artists in their "field".

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18TH PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour today to rise in the House to pay homage to the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, Canada's 18th prime minister. He has just been awarded the Supreme Companion of Oliver Reginald Tambo, South Africa's highest award given to a foreign national. It is a tribute to Mr. Mulroney's courage, conviction, and leadership in his stand against apartheid and his call for the release of Nelson Mandela.

I am also very proud that his leadership on the world stage is once again being recognized. During my tenure as defence minister and foreign affairs minister, I travelled to Ukraine three times. During my visits, I planned to bring up the fact that Canada, under Brian Mulroney, was the first country to recognize the freedom and independence of Ukraine. On two occasions, the Ukrainian ministers beat me to it and brought the matter up first.

Also, the defence minister of Kuwait made a point of telling me how grateful he was that Canada came to his country's defence, again under Brian Mulroney's leadership.

The award from South Africa is a great honour for Canada's 18th Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, and I share the pride of all Canadians in celebrating his achievements.

● (1115)

[Translation]

TORONTO—DANFORTH

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since this is my first time rising in the House, I would like to start by thanking the people of Toronto—Danforth for putting their trust in me. I also want to thank my family for supporting my decision to serve the voters in my riding.

[English]

Happy Holidays. This is a season to give us a chance to connect with the people we care about. It is also a time for us to remember the people around us who are struggling and to see how we can make their new year brighter.

Next Friday, I will be participating in the Riverside Antler Breakfast, which supports a nutrition program for local kids. This past weekend, I attended the Riverdale Share, a local concert that supports local programs. This Monday, the Ripple Refugee Project, a local group, welcomed a Syrian family of eight to our community.

These are examples of the important charitable work under way in Toronto—Danforth and across Canada.

Let us thank them.

[Translation]

Happy holidays.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE SENATE

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talks a good game about the Senate, but in reality, he is up to the same old Liberal trick of appointing friends. The Prime Minister's first move was to appoint the Speaker of the Senate without consultation, and he is unilingual to boot.

Let us be clear. The only test for this appointment was being a good buddy of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows very well that we have embarked on a new process for appointing senators. This process is much more open and transparent, and people across the country will be able to participate.

With respect to the Prime Minister's decision to appoint a new Speaker of the Senate, we chose a parliamentarian with tremendous integrity and considerable experience. This is the first time we have had someone from Newfoundland and Labrador as Speaker of one of our houses of Parliament.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the way I see it, a friend is a friend.

Oral Questions

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is on a witch hunt. Yesterday, the chair of Canada Post's board of directors thwarted the government's plans to lay off quality Canadians. Ms. Matthews indicated that the CEO of Canada Post, Deepak Chopra, was chosen through a proper appointment process. He should be commended, not humiliated.

Will the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons continue with his ploy to once again appoint friends of the Liberal Party?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite fond of my colleague opposite, but the fact that he is talking about appointing friends to government positions is a bit rich.

With regard to the appointment in question, we were concerned because we deemed the appointment process carried out by his government to be improper. The action we have taken will make the appointment process more transparent and open. If Canadians who have been appointed through a process that we found to be faulty want to apply for those positions again, they can do so. That is what I indicated in my letter. However, I am surprised that the chair of the board decided to release the names of the people who received letters. We never released anyone's name.

[English]

The Speaker: I now recognize someone who has been of enormous assistance to me in the last few days. The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have already seen the Liberals' inability to manage costs related to resettling refugees, with their campaign promise of \$250 million ballooning to over \$1 billion, and now we know why.

Former Liberal MP Denis Coderre has found a way to use money meant for resettlement to take care of his friend, with an \$1,800-a-day consultant's fee. This is money that could actually go to help refugees. The City of Toronto has employed four people for the same amount.

What steps will the government take to ensure that federal tax dollars are being spent on the world's most vulnerable instead of on high-priced Liberal friends?

● (1120)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was unaware of this point regarding Denis Coderre, but I will look into that immediately.

I just want to say that my colleagues, the Minister of Health and the Minister of National Defence, and I were with the Prime Minister and two opposition colleagues last night. It was a wonderful evening to greet the first refugees in an air force plane to arrive in Toronto. It was a wonderful night for all Canadians to celebrate.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just hope that Mr. Coderre's friend was not there and on the clock.

As it stands now, the only vote the Liberals are planning to hold on changes to the electoral process is a vote in this House where they can use their majority to get their preferred outcome. Only 184 Liberals will get the final say on how 30 million Canadians choose their next government.

The Prime Minister has used language like “strong” and “broad consultations” when talking about electoral reform. We all know that the ultimate way of consulting Canadians is through a referendum where every Canadian has the right to be heard. Why would the government settle for anything less than the best, and not hold a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have been clear in this House all week, we will convene an all-party committee to review the process and to ensure that it is a collaborative one and a thoughtful one. We believe decisions on this issue deserve to be approached in such a manner, and I look forward to working with my colleagues opposite to make sure that the next electoral system we introduce makes sure that every vote counts.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Ajax said this week that to presume the outcome of consultations on electoral reform is nonsense, but that is exactly what the Liberals are doing.

They have already decided for Canadians that one option is not on the table, and they will not commit to giving Canadians a say in a referendum. Even if Canadians do want change, there is no consensus on what it should look like. All Canadians should get to make that choice.

Why is the government scared to let Canadians choose in a referendum?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we want Canadians to trust that their votes really matter, we must be willing, as members of Parliament, to set aside party preoccupations and undertake a serious examination of the way elections work.

We want to explore this issue in the right way. That means that, before taking action, we are going to engage in a thoughtful and thorough process about the various electoral reform options available. Unlike the previous government, we have every interest in making sure that the voices of Canadians are heard throughout this process.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Paris talks have stalled on the subject of compensation for the most vulnerable countries. Who do you suppose is standing in the way of a deal on this issue? None other than the Canadian delegation, led by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. Canada has even garnered two fossil awards for obstructing the negotiations. Are the Conservatives still in charge or what?

Will the government stop obstructing the process, keep its promises and work toward getting an agreement signed?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is misinformed. Canada is pushing hard for a robust agreement that will unite humanity in the fight against climate change. We can be very proud of the role that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change is playing. What a change compared to the last 10 years.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with two fossil awards, the government is catching up with the Conservatives pretty quickly.

The draft Paris agreement includes the commitment to “limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C...[to] significantly reduce risks and impacts”.

The NDP's targets would have meant Canada was finally doing its fair share. Conservative targets, which as of now are also Liberal targets, will not get us there.

Will the government commit to adopting ambitious new targets with real accountability, or does the government just want to keep collecting fossil awards?

● (1125)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the international community is celebrating the role Canada is playing in Paris.

We are playing a very positive role. We have been a laggard for the last 10 years, and now we are a leader. We may be proud of it. We may hope that we will have a strong international agreement that will allow Canada to implement a very strong plan with the provinces to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and to make sure that Canada will do its share to fight climate change.

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[Translation]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning, a report revealed that day care costs are rising across the country. Families and women are paying the price.

Instead of tackling the problem, the Liberals chose to cut taxes for people of means.

The new government needs to get its priorities straight. Can it tell us what it plans to do to keep day care costs from rising?

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time I rise in the House, I want to thank the good people of Winnipeg South for placing their confidence in me and assure them that I will work hard every day to earn that trust.

In our platform, we committed to work with provinces, territories, and indigenous communities to create a national early learning and child care framework in order to provide quality, affordable, flexible child care for those who need it.

We will be making more announcements in the coming days. I appreciate the member's question.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are being squeezed by higher and higher child care fees. Over the last year, the cost of child care has increased five times the rate of inflation. Now, while the Prime Minister's child care needs are covered, thanks to Canadians, too many Canadians have nowhere to turn for theirs. Why is the government helping the wealthy and leaving so many Canadian families behind?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we will be working with the provinces, territories, and indigenous communities to introduce an early learning and child care framework. I would point out to the hon. member that we will also be introducing the Canada child benefit that would benefit nine out of ten families, more than the Conservative plan, putting the money in the hands of families and lifting many more children out of poverty.

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TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only two minutes after tweeting that he was enjoying learning about his files, the Minister of Transport announced that he would not reopen the Toronto Island airport agreement. He completely ignored the fact that the airport handles over two million passengers each year. This decision impacted thousands of jobs across Canada and Bombardier's new C series aircraft program.

Could the minister tell us how he made an evidence-based policy decision in just two minutes?

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the process that was under way dealt with a very complex issue around planning in the City of Toronto. The issue had had significant debate within the city of Toronto, and significant numbers of reports were filed with city council.

Oral Questions

If members reviewed those files, they would understand the decision was not merely about the airport but about the entire waterfront, an investment our government is prepared to support and continue as we try to build a great city with a great waterfront and balance all the competing needs.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week we are welcoming the first Syrian families of the 25,000 government-sponsored refugees to Canada, so why is the government leaving Afghan refugee James Akam out in the cold? James served bravely alongside our troops in Afghanistan as an interpreter and now needs refuge in Canada. At a time when we are welcoming thousands, why is the government leaving Mr. Akam out in the cold after he has shown tremendous service to our country?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question and also his acknowledgement that it was indeed a wonderful evening last night, and it was. I neglected to mention that, in addition to my federal colleagues, Kathleen Wynn was also there, the Premier of Ontario.

In answer to the question, that case is under active investigation by my department as we speak.

* * *

• (1130)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Canada's east coast, the arctic surf clam fishery is healthy and sustainable and exclusively controlled by only one company. Former minister Gail Shea proposed that the fishery be increased and opened to new entrants, based on the scientific advice of DFO officials. This week, the town of Burin and the Cooke Clam Group joined a growing list of municipalities and companies calling on the minister to allow new entrants into the fishery.

I know that fisheries did not warrant a mention in the throne speech, but what is the minister waiting for? When will he end the arctic surf clam monopoly and help create these new jobs?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the decision with regard to fisheries opening and the level of catch will be made based on sound science and in consultation with those whose livelihood depends on the fisheries. Managing fisheries based on robust scientific evidence is a priority for the government, and for the first time, I think scientists and biologists will be able to speak freely when it comes to fisheries and oceans.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to speak today for the first time on behalf of the residents of North Okanagan—Shuswap.

The longer the minister waits, the longer the people of Atlantic Canada must wait for these new jobs. The arctic surf clam fishery represents a real opportunity for economic growth in this region. When will the minister follow through on the Conservative plan to support new entrants? Why does he not act on that today?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, managing fisheries based on robust and scientific evidence is a priority for our government. That is why the minister has instructed officials to review recent decisions in these fisheries and return with advice on the way forward for consideration.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the most recent Sommet de la Francophonie, in Dakar, Canada and the heads of state and governments passed a resolution expressing their concerns about the rise in the number of acts of terrorism and their unwavering support for the fight against terrorism.

While our allies around the globe are intensifying their fight against ISIS, Canada is stepping back by withdrawing its CF-18s.

Does the Liberal government also plan to turn its back on our partners in the Francophonie in the fight against terrorism?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as it has been repeatedly stated, we are continuing the fight against ISIS. I am particularly concerned about the reach of ISIL into other regions and, in particular, into other nations.

We will be making sure that we work with our coalition partners to look at our intelligence so that we have the right capabilities and are able to prevent future disasters similar those that have taken place in the past.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, people in this country left cable TV in record numbers in 2015, deciding instead on digital streaming devices like Netflix.

Yes, unlike the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party over here believes in low taxes, giving Canadians a chance and a choice to watch TV.

Why is it that we are seeing that the Liberals do not want to limit choice? In fact, they want to tax.

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for offering me my first question as parliamentary secretary in the House.

The government believes in an open Internet where Canadians will have a choice as to what they would like to download, and for the lawful content of their choice. There is no question, as the hon. member's premise is quite false. Certainly, this government believes in an open and net neutral Internet.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HOUSING

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the Liberals promised to invest in social and affordable housing and to renew the long-term subsidy agreements.

If nothing is done by the end of the month, 5,200 households in Quebec are going to lose their subsidy. During the holiday season, it is unacceptable to cause these families so much anxiety.

Will the government tell us whether it plans to invest in social and affordable housing and renew the long-term subsidy agreements, as promised?

• (1135)

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government committed to a \$20-billion infrastructure program that would emphasize social infrastructure. That will include housing and renewing housing agreements, as the member mentioned, as well as facilities for seniors, early learning, and child care.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 1.5 million Canadian families do not have adequate housing. Some families have been waiting 10 years on social housing lists. Affordable housing agreements are about to expire.

The Prime Minister's parliamentary secretary repeatedly promised through the campaign that the Liberals would spend \$20 billion on affordable housing, but now it turns out that that same money is going to cover all kinds of other priorities.

Can the parliamentary secretary tell Canadians exactly how much the Liberal government will spend on affordable housing?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member, who I met for the first time this morning in the elevator.

I would just repeat what I said before. Our government has committed to \$20 billion over the next 10 years in social infrastructure. A major element of that will be housing and the renewal of housing agreements, as has been mentioned.

We will be announcing details of our housing program in the coming days, and I look forward to the member's future interventions.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister stated during the campaign that a large percentage of small businesses were nothing more than tax havens for wealthy Canadians trying to evade taxes. The Minister of Small Business and Tourism is now turning that statement into official government policy.

How can the minister justify going after small and medium-sized business owners to pay for the finance minister's deficit?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is both an honour and a privilege to stand in the House. I would like to thank the good people of the riding of Waterloo for having me here to represent them.

As Minister of Small Business and Tourism, I am committed to representing small businesses across this nation. I will be working closely with the Minister of Finance to ensure that our commitment to lower the tax burden on small businesses is fulfilled. Not only will we be doing that but we will be working with small businesses because we know that they are job creators, they are the economic drivers of our nation. We will continue to work with them wholeheartedly. I look forward—

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

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last Parliament passed my bill to end a Prohibition-era law that created interprovincial trade barriers against Canadian wine. Since then, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and my home province of British Columbia have all embraced direct-to-consumer provincial shipping of Canadian wine. The premier of Ontario continues to block interprovincial trade of wine.

Will the Prime Minister, who campaigned with Kathleen Wynne, encourage her to support the free trade of Canadian wine and allow direct-to-consumer shipping?

Mr. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has undertaken an opportunity to encourage trade at all levels, especially internally. We will be working on this file very closely over the coming mandate. We hope that we will be able to encourage more interprovincial trade.

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[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's decision to eliminate the toll on the Champlain Bridge will cost between \$3 billion and \$5 billion over the next 30 years. That is over \$100 million a year.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities tell us whether this shortfall has been included in the Minister of Finance's projections, or is that just going to add to the deficit, which keeps getting bigger and bigger under the Liberals?

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as part of our commitment to the province of Quebec as well as the regional municipalities in the area of Montreal, we are going to live up to the commitment to make the new Champlain Bridge a toll-free bridge.

The current framework includes all the costs to build the bridge, to maintain it, and to run it. Everything is included in the current framework and tolling revenue will have no impact on our framework.

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● (1140)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the first acts of the Liberal government was to approve the dumping of eight billion litres of raw and untreated sewage into the St. Lawrence River, one of Canada's most iconic waterways, in direct violation of Section 36 of the Fisheries Act. So much for the government's vaunted and phony commitments to science and the environment. Cities and municipalities downriver called it surprising, disgusting, and outrageous.

Why did the minister overturn the order issued by our previous Conservative government and allow important fish habitat in the St. Lawrence to be polluted in direct violation of the Fisheries Act?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make sure that I get briefed on that. I will make sure that we look at this question for the member opposite and I will get back to him with an answer.

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CANADA POST

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under the previous government 20,000 Winnipeggers lost their door-to-door mail service along with many others across the country. During the campaign, the Prime Minister promised to restore that service but the government has been backpedalling ever since. I was quite shocked to read in the *Free Press* this week that Winnipeg Liberal MPs say that people in our city are happy with the cuts.

I am wondering if the Minister of Public Services and Procurement will explain to seniors and people living with disabilities struggling to stay in their family homes why the Prime Minister feels that promises made to them do not need to be kept and when exactly he told her it would be okay to let them down.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada Post's plan to convert door-to-door delivery has been suspended, but this government is committed to a review and the review will ensure that Canada Post provides a high quality of service that Canadians expect at a reasonable price.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us review the commitments.

[Translation]

During the election campaign, the Prime Minister met with the mayor of Montreal to talk about Canada Post. Standing by the mayor's side he clearly said, and I quote, "We are committed to restoring home mail delivery." The message could not have been clearer. It was even recorded if the government needs help jogging its memory.

However, now that the Liberals are in power, the government is singing a different tune and fuelling cynicism.

Will the Prime Minister honour his commitment and restore home mail delivery?

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the plan to install community mailboxes has been suspended, but this government is committed to conducting a full review of Canada Post. That review will involve Canadians across the country.

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[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the great people of Nickel Belt for electing me as a member of Parliament. It is an honour and privilege to serve them and this House.

[Translation]

The holidays can be a time of despair and loneliness that can result in tragedy for those suffering from severe mental health problems.

Could the Minister of Veterans Affairs tell the House what his department will do to help veterans in this situation?

[English]

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Nickel Belt for his dedication to veterans. This can be a difficult time for many Canadians, including veterans. I want veterans to know that our government is here to help. Veterans and their families can immediately reach a mental health professional by contacting veterans assistance service, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We will be launching a social media campaign to promote this service and to highlight the importance of reaching out for help.

I encourage all members of the House to spread the message and to support our veterans.

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● (1145)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, residents of northern Canada face punishing costs of living due to their remoteness and limited transportation. The Liberal campaign platform promised tax relief for the residents of Canada's northern zone through a 33% increase in allowable deductions for northern residency.

Oral Questions

Northerners expect that this important tax cut would apply to the 2016 tax year. Why is the government already ignoring northern Canadians?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say for the hon. member that we have made that commitment. We will be increasing the tax deduction for northerners in the coming days. It is a welcome commitment that we made in the election and it will be a welcome commitment the day it is implemented by our government.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency's current TD1 form for 2016 and the description of the northern residence tax deduction currently show no increase to this important tax deduction.

Will the minister take the steps necessary to put in place an enhanced northern residence tax deduction for the 2016 tax year?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think all members in the House realize that northerners have been left behind for a long time in this country. We know what the costs of living of northerners are and while it has been ignored for many years, it is something we are prepared to address. We have made that commitment and we will honour it.

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HEALTH

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the smoke from tobacco products is a deadly substance and as a result, governments and NGOs from around the world have advocated for stricter regulation, especially for youth. Science has proven marijuana smoke has the same potential to cause harm, however, the Liberal government is blindly pushing forward with its marijuana plan at the expense of Canadians' health.

Why will the Minister of Health not embrace the science and abandon this risky plan and as a family doctor, how can she support this?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all concerned with the health of Canadians, both young and old, and we are concerned with the health risks associated with smoking.

As pertains to the issue of marijuana, however, we have lost the fight, and the current approach to marijuana is not working. Results this week have revealed that record amounts of marijuana are being used by our youth. Our government plans to implement legislation to address that so we can keep marijuana out of the hands of children and youth.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in July the Conservative government was proud to commit \$1.53 billion to the largest public transit infrastructure project in the history of Calgary. The Green Line North LRT project will double the rail network and cut commute times in half for my constituents.

Today, Calgary city council will be debating the funding model in order to kick off construction by 2017. Will the government honour

this Conservative commitment, support Mayor Nenshi and the city of Calgary to get Calgarians moving again?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2013, the previous government announced \$14 billion for infrastructure. Out of that, \$1 billion was allocated for Alberta. Unfortunately, very little has been delivered so far.

We are committed to doubling our infrastructure funding to \$125 billion. I will be working very closely with the mayor of Calgary and my hon. colleague to meet those commitments.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during the election, the Liberals promised to finally end criminalizing Canadians for simple possession of marijuana. The current government could have taken immediate action, but has not. There are no details, no timeline for decriminalizing marijuana possession, no commitment to expunge the record of hundreds of thousands of Canadians convicted for simple possession, and thousands are still unfairly facing possible arrest, tying up the police and our justice system.

Why has the government not taken any action to legalize simple possession of marijuana?

Mr. William Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in order to protect our kids from the ravages of marijuana, to make our communities safer, and to reduce the social and health harm associated to its use, our government has committed to legalize, regulate, and restrict access to marijuana. In order to do so, we will be establishing a federal-provincial-territorial task force to design a strict sales and distribution system with appropriate health concerns.

This will be done in partnership with our provincial and territorial partners, and with stakeholders right across the country.

* * *

● (1150)

[Translation]

CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this new government is already disappointing many Quebecers. It is backtracking on Canada Post, labour-sponsored funds, and French, and it is challenging the end-of-life care legislation.

To add insult to injury, this week, the Minister of Canadian Heritage stayed silent on the sale of the Maison de Radio-Canada. However, cabinet will have to approve such a decision. The future of the domestic production of French content is in jeopardy.

Does the minister really intend to approve giving up the Maison de Radio-Canada?

Oral Questions

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question. I would also like to thank the people of Edmonton Centre for bringing me here, to the House.

The minister has taken this situation in hand. Radio-Canada operates at arm's length from the Government of Canada, of course. When we have all of the information, we will let the member know what is going on with this very important issue.

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[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we introduced the universal child care benefit because we realized the value of giving back to all Canadian kids, regardless of mom and dad's income. Lower income earners would receive more benefits and higher income earners would receive fewer benefits but all Canadian families would benefit, whereas the Liberal plan applies only to some income earners.

Why is the Liberal government supportive of only some Canadian families and not all Canadian families?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to introducing tax measures that help those Canadians who need them the most. Our introduction of the Canada child benefit, which will be considered in our next budget, will help nine out of ten Canadian families and will raise hundreds of thousands of children in poverty out of a very difficult situation.

We are proud of what we are doing for those Canadians who are most vulnerable.

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ASSISTED SUICIDE

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has only a short period of time to respond to the Supreme Court's deadline on assisted suicide.

While consulting with individuals and organizations within my riding and from across the country, the community of persons with disabilities has expressed to me that it is very concerned. Specifically, it wants to know that the most vulnerable among us will be protected.

On behalf of all Canadians with disabilities, how will the minister ensure the right to choose life will be protected for those who have a disability?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, the issue of physician-assisted dying is a sensitive and complex one.

Our government will follow through on our commitments to consult broadly on this issue, and we will be introducing a parliamentary committee in order to do so. We also look forward to the report of the external panel, which we expect next week and which will report on a number of consultations that have already taken place.

I look forward to working with my colleague, the Minister of Justice in responding to this very important issue.

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SPORTS

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I speak for the first time in the House, I would like to thank the great people of Souris—Moose Mountain.

Own the Podium was created by our Conservative government. It supported our athletes and contributed to their success. Could the Minister of Sport assure Canadian athletes, as they prepare for the Rio Olympics, that their funding will not be on the chopping block as the Liberals look for ways to contain their runaway deficit?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former athlete who represented Canada and stood at the podium proudly, I can assure the House that we think of athletes at the core of every decision we make.

As part of our ongoing due diligence and our quest for accountability, transparency, and the effective use of public funds, we are looking at our entire targeted excellence strategy, including our support to Own the Podium.

The fact is that athletes and coaches know that we have to review our game plan on an ongoing basis. That is what we will do. We will do the best for athletes, and they will represent us proudly next summer in Rio.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Syrian refugee crisis has brought Canadians and community groups together. They are all working hard to help mitigate the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War. This is a truly national project. Canadian businesses are also being extremely generous in these efforts.

Could the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship talk to the House about how Canadian businesses are contributing to the settlement efforts?

● (1155)

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe for her question.

I am pleased to announce that CN and the chairman of the board, Robert Pace, have set the gold standard for corporation donations, with a \$5-million donation to help house Syrian refugees. Yes, I said \$5 million. We are all so proud of this national project, and the generosity of all Canadians will ensure it is a success.

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal plan for electoral reform without a referendum has been universally panned in the media. For example, the *Toronto Star* states that the “government’s approach displays unprecedented arrogance.”

The *Star* is right for the following reason. If first past the post gives false mandates as the Liberals claim, then surely 39% of the vote under first past the post gives the Liberals a mandate to put options before Canadians, but nothing more.

Canadians themselves must make the final choice, and only a referendum represents a true mandate for any particular change to the present system. Is that not so?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we begin a conversation with Canadians and parliamentarians about how we will bring our voting system into the 21st century. That is why we are bringing forward historic changes to the electoral system. We will engage Canadians in an open and transparent dialogue, and those in the House. The government has no intention of prejudicing that debate. We have every interest that all voices be heard.

I hope all my colleagues across the aisle will join us in this effort.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in October, Canadians chose a positive and optimistic plan for the future that will provide economic growth by investing in jobs and lowering taxes for the middle class. When middle-class Canadians have more money in their pockets to save, invest, and grow the economy, we all benefit.

Could the hon. Minister of Small Business and Tourism please inform the House of the actions that the government will take to help small businesses?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with all hon. members in the House and Canadians across the nation to ensure small businesses are represented.

Small businesses are drivers of the economy. They employ 90% of the private sector workforce and account for about 40% of the GDP. Our government will support them. We will support them to be more productive, innovative, and export oriented, and we are committed to lowering the tax burden for small businesses. I will be working closely with the Minister of Finance to ensure that happens.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when answering a question, the minister of global affairs mocked and laughed at the notion of muzzling officials, but that is exactly what he is doing. The Office of Religious Freedom has received international praise for promoting Canada’s role in addressing religious freedom around the globe. Religious

Oral Questions

minorities and other countries are depending on Canada to keep the lead on this issue that is so important to so many persecuted minorities.

Why is the minister muzzling the ambassador of religious freedom? Is this a prelude to shutting down the office?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has wrong information. It was his government that was muzzling officials. We do not do that. To the contrary, we have encouraged our officials to help the government go through its mandate. One part of our mandate is to protect the freedom of religion, as all freedoms, to do it proudly and strongly, as Canada should be.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is creating a committee to examine one of the most emotional issues in Quebec in recent years, and that is dying with dignity. The Quebec National Assembly unanimously passed a resolution on this issue.

In the mandate letter to his Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister asked him to ensure that parliamentarians are able to properly represent their constituents.

If the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons feels that it is important to add a member of the third party, but without the right to vote, and five unelected senators to this committee, what reason does he have for excluding an elected member of the Bloc Québécois, a party that has 10 elected members and represents more than one million Quebecers?

● (1200)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question. I am rather surprised by it. This morning, I was quite proud when the House unanimously adopted the motion to create a joint committee with our Senate colleagues in order to study this very important issue. I would like to thank all MPs for giving their unanimous consent so that we can move forward on this important issue and be inspired by Quebec’s leadership.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons noted, the Bloc Québécois supports the creation of a special committee on assisted suicide. The National Assembly was wise enough to have a non-partisan debate on dying with dignity by inviting members from all political parties to be part of the travelling commission that examined the issue.

What is stopping the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, who is promising real change and claims he wants to reform our democratic and parliamentary institutions, from including members from all parties on that committee?

The Address

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that the motion to create that committee was adopted unanimously by the House and was very clear about the composition of the committee. That is why I am surprised by my colleague's concerns about which members will participate. As I just said, the motion that was adopted unanimously was very clear about the committee's membership.

I hope our colleagues in the Senate will join us in the coming hours to be part of this historic commitment.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Bloc Québécois showed its goodwill by agreeing to the motion to appoint a committee on physician-assisted death.

I have been here for 30 years. There have been a number of occasions when special committees were struck to address sensitive or ethical issues. This honourable chamber always sought to bring all political parties to these committees in order to achieve broader consensus.

I respectfully ask the Leader of the Government to reconsider the membership of the committee and to talk it over with other leaders to allow a member of the Bloc Québécois to sit on the committee, without the right to vote. Is having the right to speak too much to ask?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, my colleagues may find this situation somewhat frustrating. I hope their frustration will not extend to the content of the motion unanimously adopted by the House.

The House knows full well that we want to consult all Canadians in an appropriate and responsible manner. My colleague the Minister of Justice is committed to doing just that. I hope that ultimately, when the bill is introduced in the House, all hon. members will join in a healthy debate on new measures to replace those the Supreme Court deemed unconstitutional.

As I said earlier, we are inspired by Quebec.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1205)

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last night the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill and I joined the government in welcoming 163 Syrian refugees to Canada at Toronto's airport. There have been consultations among the parties, and if you seek you should find unanimous consent for the following motion, jointly seconded by the hon. Minister of International Development and La Francophonie and the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill. I move:

That this House, on behalf of all Canadians, warmly welcome our new Syrian and Iraqi neighbours, and indeed all refugees who have escaped conflict around the world and arrived safely in Canada, a country with an unwavering commitment to pluralism, human rights and the rule of law.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

JUSTICE

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want Parliament to know about the tragic story of Cassandra Kaake, who was 31 weeks pregnant when she was murdered in Windsor, Ontario a year ago.

Tragically, there will be no justice for Cassandra's preborn baby girl, Molly, who was also killed during that violent attack. That is because in Canadian criminal law a preborn child is not recognized as a separate victim in attacks against their mothers.

This petition calls on Parliament to pass legislation to allow a separate charge to be laid in the death or injury of a preborn child when that child's mother is a victim of a crime. Canadians want justice for victims like Molly.

* * *

• (1210)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: We had three minutes remaining in the time for questions and comments for the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Sault Ste. Marie for his first speech in the House today.

The Address

The member mentioned child care. Costs for child care have reached crisis levels in Canada. Families are struggling with child care costs. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released a study comparing Canada's 27 busiest cities, which revealed the dramatic differences between child care costs in our two largest cities. In one month in Toronto, child care costs are \$1,033, but in Montreal they are \$174. This vast difference is unacceptable and crippling to Canadian families.

Based on this, will the government drop its opposition to a universal child care program that will help Canadian families?

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during my speech I mentioned the importance of the new Canada child benefit, which is going to raise 315,000 children out of poverty and support 9 out of 10 families. It will go hand in glove with the tax cuts proposed for the middle class, because we are going to strengthen Canadian families. We are going to look after everyone, and we will make sure that no one slips behind.

A lot of the investments that we will be making in infrastructure, including social infrastructure, will help those families who are in need of a home. There is a lot in there, and I look forward to working with the hon. member and all members of the House as we look after all children in this great country.

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was a question earlier by the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil regarding investment by the government in urban areas, and the response was related to green infrastructure and social infrastructure.

Could the member please give an example of how social infrastructure will help with bridges in urban areas and how it will help with the overall infrastructure problem?

Mr. Terry Sheehan: Mr. Speaker, the whole infrastructure program, which is historic in nature, and the doubling in such spending to \$125 billion, is extremely important. As I looked at and delved into the program and how municipalities will access it, it will be much like how the gas tax transfers get to communities. I was pleased to see that there are opportunities for cities like Sault Ste. Marie to access a number of infrastructure requirements that we have, including roads and aqueducts, through the government.

I am very pleased with that. The program is of the utmost importance, because our infrastructure has been crumbling over the last little while and there are a number of places that also need roads and bridges, not just in the city of Sault Ste. Marie, but in the more rural areas around it.

It is there, and I look forward to working with everyone in the House. I would ask that the hon. member also delve into it and make sure that he gets his community ready, and prioritizes things so that the community is ready to hit the ground running and apply.

• (1215)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute honour for me to stand in the chamber today and to speak to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to acknowledge and thank my colleague for the wonderful speech he made this morning, and for his response to many of those questions that are certainly important to people in our country.

I am going to start by thanking the people of my constituency, the people of Labrador, whom I am so proud to represent in this chamber as their member of Parliament. They re-elected me in the last election, and they did so with a number of issues in mind. They elected me with the best of intentions and tremendous hope for change that would happen for them, as it would for many other Canadians across the country. I want to acknowledge the hard work of many of my volunteers who went out every day over this long gruelling campaign, but certainly never relented in their mission because they believed there could be better. They believed in a stronger Canada, and they worked so hard for that.

I want to acknowledge my friends and my family for their love, support, and commitment that they have continued to show me in political life over the years. I certainly am very grateful for all of that, and I give thanks for those blessings.

I am pleased to stand here today as part of a new and exciting government in this country. Under the leadership of our Prime Minister, we have committed to work hard for Canadians. We have committed to work hard on their behalf for the issues that are important to them in their communities, in their towns and cities, within their families, and within their professional lives. Canadians were engaged on all of the serious issues that are facing our country, and they were looking for the kind of leadership that would matter, the kind of leadership that at the end of the day would include creating jobs, growing the economy, strengthening the middle class, and, most important, creating a Canada that would be inclusive, accepting, and fair to all Canadians.

I come from a riding in Labrador that is made up of a number of indigenous groups, both Inuit and first nations. It is an area that has played home to allied countries from around the world, more than seven allied countries over our history. We have become a region in northern Canada that has looked with optimism instead of pessimism. We are a region that has advanced despite our challenges, and we are a region that is focused on greater opportunity for the future.

We are lucky to be in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, one that I am so proud to say will be represented by the leadership of Premier Dwight Ball and his Liberal government over the next four years. I want to congratulate Premier Ball for his hard work and efforts on behalf of all the people of our province, and for laying out a wonderful mandate that is reflective of the issues and concerns of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. I want to thank him and his team for giving the people of our province real choice for real change in this past election.

I want to acknowledge and recognize the MHAs who were elected in my riding: the member for Cartwright—L'Anse au Clair, Lisa Dempster; the member for Tornгат Mountains, Randy Edmunds; the member for Labrador West, Graham Letto; and the member for Lake Melville, Perry Trimper. I want to congratulate each of them and to say that I am looking forward to working with them to improve the lives of the people we collectively represent in the riding of Labrador.

The Address

I am also very happy to be joined by six very strong members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador. Having a strong team of colleagues to work with in our province makes our job so much easier. I want to recognize and congratulate each of them on their election: the members of Parliament for St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Avalon, St. John's East, Long Range Mountains, Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, and Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame. Join me in congratulating all of them on their election to the House of Commons.

● (1220)

As my colleague, the member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl, mentioned in his speech today, we will be reopening the marine resource centre in St. John's, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The centre was closed three years ago by the previous government without proper consultation with the people in our province. It was done at the peril of those who work and live by the sea and earn a living from this sea-based island. All of the people who work in the offshore oil and fishing industries depend upon the safety and security of a proper search and rescue capacity and the ability to have someone to call, and someone to answer to the call, in a time of crisis. I am proud that our government will be reinstating the search and rescue centre in Newfoundland and Labrador. We will also work to improve search and rescue services throughout our province and country to ensure that Canadians, whether they work on the sea or the land, have the protection of a search and rescue service and someone to respond in their time of need.

I represent an area that has a very diverse culture, which I will speak to for a few minutes.

We are home to 5 Wing Goose Bay, one of Canada's wonderful air force bases. It is a military base that has operated to serve not only Canada but many of our allies around the world. It has provided training to Italian, European, German, Netherlands, United States, and Great Britain forces. It continues to offer training to many of the allied countries that want to continue training in that part of our country, and we have seen a lot of that training happen. It is part of the NORAD exercise that will be carried out over the next five years in Canada. We are delighted to be a part of that program, and to support the military with respect to its efforts in our community and region in carrying out the important work that it does on behalf of all of our armed forces.

I come from a long line of military personnel. I have never served in the military myself, but I have a number of family members who have served and continue to serve, both in the Canadian air force and navy, and also in the RCMP. I know first-hand the valuable services that these front-line people provide to our country. Today, as I recognize those members of my family, I also recognize those members in all families across the country who work hard to protect our rights and freedoms and our country. I congratulate them.

I also come from an area that is inhabited by tremendous indigenous people who are proud of their culture, and proud to be the indigenous people of this great country. They work hard each and every day to make gains, both in their Inuit culture and in their first nations lands.

Our government has made a strong commitment to indigenous people. I could not be prouder than I am today to stand in this House

and recognize that our government will undertake a review of nation-to-nation governance and the relationships between Canada and our indigenous people. It is a remarkable commitment by our government, and I look forward to ensuring that we work diligently with all indigenous people in this country to make this happen.

There is so much that I would like to speak to today, but time will not permit me. However, just like in many ridings across the north and many rural ridings across Canada, I want to outline a number of the needs in my riding that we would like to have met.

● (1225)

I can commit to the House that I, as one member, along with many of my colleagues on both sides of the House of Commons, will be working harder to address issues around telecommunications, Internet, broadband and cellular service; transportation and air and road connections; housing; and around creating jobs and growing the economy of northern and rural regions.

I look forward to serving the people of my riding, and many others, for the next four years on those issues that are of critical importance in developing our country and allowing everyone a fair opportunity to grow and succeed.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my friend on her speech. I enjoyed being on political panels with her in the last Parliament, and I enjoyed her speech here today.

I am going to make an unfortunate prediction that in the course of this Parliament, 5 Wing Goose Bay will be part of the leaner Canadian Armed Forces that the government has already intimated. I fear it will close that base. I base that upon the fact that the member made a passionate plea to have 5 Wing involved in the Syrian project and it was not selected. Also, in the last Liberal government, the NATO low level flying was ended at that base.

Our government kept 5 Wing alive and invested in its infrastructure and other needs. However, the throne speech said clearly that the military is going to be a leaner military; we know on this side that means cuts. The Liberals almost closed 5 Wing Goose Bay in its last government, and I truly fear, despite the member's passion, it is on the chopping block already. Could the member confirm that to the House today?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, that is a very important question, and I am happy to speak to it. The difference between the previous government and our government is that we see opportunity in the future, and there is tremendous opportunity in 5 Wing Goose Bay to serve as part of the Arctic and northern mission. That is something that the former government did not see as an opportunity for that base and the people in that part of the country.

In fact, it was the previous government that continued to dismantle bases like 5 Wing Goose Bay. It tore down dozens and dozens of buildings and houses, and started to dismantle the entire base. Our job is going to be to strengthen military defence in the country, which we intend to do, and ensure that we make good use of the facilities and properties we have.

The Address

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member made mention in her speech of the importance of a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous people, the Inuit and Métis communities. In my community, we have the missing and murdered women coalition. The coalition has worked long and hard. It is comprised of family members, community advocates, and women's organizations. It has advocated for a national inquiry for a very long time. We finally now have an opportunity for that.

One of the things we must learn from this is not to make the same mistakes that the B.C. government made with the Oppal inquiry. Therefore, the missing and murdered aboriginal women coalition is asking for three things. First, it is asking that the government ensure that the mandate actually looks into the root causes of violence against indigenous women and girls. Second is that the family members and the organizations that have expertise and knowledge around the issue be funded, supported, and resourced, and given the opportunity to participate in the inquiry so that they are not shut out from that process. Third is to ensure that there is commitment and the resources to implement those recommendations coming out of the inquiry.

I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could respond to those three points and make that commitment to the coalition and the family members.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, we were very proud to move on implementing the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in our country. We know the value of doing this piece of work, but we also know the value of doing it right. That includes consulting with the families, which is ongoing at this stage. It will continue to be ongoing. As well, we will be consulting with others who have expertise to ensure that the inquiry will meet the needs, produce the outcomes, and see the follow-through that is required in order to do this successfully to ensure we honour the victims and heal the families.

•(1230)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my good friend, the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend.

It is a true privilege to rise in the House with my maiden speech in response to the government's Speech from the Throne.

At the outset, I would like to thank the tens of thousands of people in the St. Albert—Edmonton riding for placing their trust and confidence in me. I can assure them that I will work every single day to do my very best to represent their interests here in Ottawa.

Like every other hon. member in the House, I did not get here on my own. I got here because of the hundreds and hundreds of people who offered their support, commitment, and assistance, not just during the campaign but over the course of my entire life, in helping to shape the person I am today.

While it is not possible to thank each and every one of those individuals, I do want to pay tribute to and thank my family. In particular, I would like to thank my parents, Tom and Rita Cooper. At an early age, they instilled in me the importance of hard work, the value of education, and the need to be engaged and involved.

Indeed, it was they who encouraged me to get involved in the political process at a young age. They saw that I had been quite interested in politics and suggested that, rather than sit on the sidelines, I should roll up my sleeves. They themselves had never been politically active. I took their advice, and at the age of 14 I joined the Alberta provincial Progressive Conservative Party. I guess I have never really looked back since, in terms of my political involvement.

I would like to acknowledge my brother, Timothy Cooper, who is a medical doctor presently completing his residency in the area of the ear, nose, and throat at the University of Alberta, for his lifelong friendship.

I would also like to acknowledge my paternal grandparents, who came to Canada from Ireland, and my maternal grandparents, who fled communism and came to Canada from Lithuania. Like so many people from all around the world who come to make Canada home, they did not have much monetarily, but what they did have was a strong desire to work hard, contribute to Canadian society, and build a better life for their families. For that, I wish to pay tribute to their legacies.

I also wish to acknowledge Mary O'Neill, the former MLA for St. Albert, as well Doug Horner, the former MLA for Spruce Grove—St. Albert, who served in a number of cabinet portfolios, including deputy premier and minister of finance in the Government of Alberta. Both Mary and Doug are people with whom I first got involved and whom I supported in their campaigns. Over the years, they have been tremendous political mentors, and I was so very proud that they stood with me both during the nomination and during the election campaign.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Richard Plain, the former mayor of St. Albert, who served ably as my campaign manager during both the nomination and the general election.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the partners of the Edmonton law firm, Ogilvie LLP, for their support and understanding as I tried to balance, on the one hand, a busy civil litigation practice with the demands of seeking elected office.

•(1235)

With that, I turn to the substance of my speech, namely, responding to the government's Speech from the Throne.

The Speech from the Throne accurately stated that Canadians want to trust their government. If anything is clear in less than two months, it is very clear that Canadians cannot trust the Liberal government. The list of broken promises in less than two months is truly breathtaking. With each new day seems to come a new Liberal broken promise.

One such broken promise was the government's commitment to run a \$10 billion deficit in this fiscal year. It now looks as if we are looking at about a \$1.2 billion shortfall. It may be billions of dollars more to pay for the government's spending spree. Who is going to pay for the government's spending spree? Well, of course, it will be working Canadians, because after all there is only one taxpayer, something that the Liberal government seems to have already forgotten about, if the members knew it in the first place.

The Address

For working Canadians, living in Canada is going to become much more expensive thanks to the Liberal government. How is it going to be more expensive, one may ask? The government wants to impose a carbon tax. It wants to hike payroll taxes. It wants to eliminate income splitting for single income families. It wants to eliminate the universal child care benefit. It wants to roll back TFSAs.

It is clear that the government has no plan and no vision other than job-killing, tax-and-spend, redistributed schemes. This is evidenced by the fact that there was no mention in the Speech from the Throne about the trans-Pacific partnership, the biggest trade deal in Canadian history, which is going to allow Canadian businesses to get their products to market, to 800 million consumers, duty-free, but the government did not even bother to mention it.

There was no mention of Alberta's vital energy sector. There was no mention about any meaningful strategy to create jobs to get the economy growing and to get Canadians back to work.

When it comes to keeping Canadians safe, the government has been equally short-sighted. The greatest security threat to Canada comes from ISIS. ISIS is responsible for slaughtering tens of thousands of people in Iraq, Syria, and around the world. Entire villages have been upended and literally rivers of blood flow in Iraq and Syria, and yet the government's response is to cut and run by pulling out the CF-18s. The Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Prime Minister cannot explain how that is going to assist the international coalition to defeat ISIS. The reason is that it is completely unhelpful.

I say to hon. members opposite, in closing, that in terms of a road to prosperity, it does not come by spending more, by regulating more, by taxing more, and by redistributing more. It comes from being fiscally responsible and trusting taxpayers and creating the conditions for growth.

ROYAL ASSENT

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on to questions and comments, I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall

Ottawa

December 11th, 2015

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 11th day of December, 2015, at 1:00 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to a certain bill of law.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Wallace

Secretary to the Governor General

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

[*English*]

I do take issue with a lot of what he had to say in his speech, but that is okay. It is important that we all sit here in the chamber and listen intently as members across the aisle speak their minds and represent their constituents. I am glad to see many of my hon. colleagues here doing the same with the respect that should be accorded in this place.

I was reminded last weekend in my community of Fredericton, at the Boyce farmers market, just how hopeful and positive people are with the tone of inclusive leadership, of collaboration, and of goodwill demonstrated on this side of the House toward Canadians and toward others in the chamber.

Does my colleague not also think that a tone of civility, collaboration, working together, and listening intently to the wisdom that is delivered when others are speaking is important, and will he commit to acting in such a way to make sure that we can be constructive and develop positive policies for Canadians?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Fredericton for his question and also to congratulate him on his election, no doubt a hard-fought campaign.

I certainly share the hon. member's sentiments that we are all here to represent about 100,000 people, on average, and we represent people in our ridings with diverse views and diverse interests. We all have to do our best to take the issues and priorities that matter to the people of our ridings and advance them here in Ottawa. I know that I am certainly committed to doing that, and I believe he is as well.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for his speech. He is very eloquent and very compelling, and we would like to welcome him to the House and thank him for putting forward both a bit of a personal history, which is very interesting, and more about the issues.

I must say that I did not share everything that the member talked about, particularly when he talked about the economy. I have a couple of questions to put to him, because we have just come through an election campaign in which Canadians made some decisions, I think in large part because they saw what the record of the previous government was. The record of the previous government was the largest deficits in Canadian history, the largest trade deficits in Canadian history, and probably most significant, the largest debt load on average Canadian families that we have ever seen in Canadian history.

The Address

Many people in my riding say that Conservative economic development is an oxymoron, and given the record of the former Conservative government, that is a truism; it is very true. So I would like the member to comment on all of these things—largest deficits, largest trade deficits, record debt loads on the average Canadian family—and how that might mesh with what the Conservatives might be championing and speaking on in the coming months in the House of Commons.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the record of achievement under the former Conservative government. For nine years the government provided sound economic management that made Canada lead the industrialized world when it comes to jobs, when it comes to growth, and when it comes to maintaining the lowest unemployment rate, on average.

With respect to deficits, it is true that the former government did run some deficits, but it was in the context of the worst global economic recession in decades; so there was some short-term stimulus spending that allowed Canada to turn around and grow at a faster rate than any country in the world, leading to long-term growth and prosperity.

I should remind the hon. member that, as far as debt to GDP ratio is concerned, Canada has the lowest debt to GDP ratio in the industrialized world thanks to the Conservative government. I do not apologize for the record of those nine years.

● (1245)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I should note that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

I wish to take this opportunity to say hello to my wife Rose, and our daughters Eliana and Natalia, who are watching from our home in Vaughan. I would also like to thank the voters of Vaughan—Woodbridge for placing their trust in me.

As a new member, it is a real honour to be here to offer my thoughts on the throne speech on behalf of the people of Vaughan—Woodbridge, but before I do, it is important to add some context to my remarks and explain why I am here today.

Earlier this week, the Prime Minister said that the throne speech was about what matters most for the people who matter the most. By delivering a throne speech with an emphasis on giving a hand up to students, seniors, communities, and families, this government is setting out a plan for our future and for the future of our children.

Fifty years ago, my grandparents left Southern Italy with nothing but what they could carry. They arrived at Pier 21 in Halifax with only a strong work ethic and a desire for a better future for their seven children. One of those children, my mother Vincenza, married my father Rocco and set out to build a life together. They worked hard and sacrificed every day. They transformed their entrepreneurial spirit and drive into a good and productive life because Canada allowed them to do it. They worked hard and Canada provided the opportunity.

I am concerned that the kind of opportunities my parents and I had may not be within the reach of my daughters. As a father and husband, I am eager to make sure that my two wonderful daughters, Eliana and Natalia, grow up and have the chance to succeed.

Certainly my wife Rose and I have worked hard to provide for our children, but like many families across Canada, a helping hand from a government that cares would make all the difference.

I understand there are those who would have us believe that hard work alone is enough to guarantee success, but that is not true. Hard work is a big part of it, but so is opportunity. This is why I ran for office. It is why I am happy to support the throne speech, because it promises opportunity for those who are willing to work hard. Most members here would agree that families and communities are the building blocks of this nation. I am immensely proud to be here representing the families of Vaughan—Woodbridge, but for too long, families and communities have been missing out. Better is always possible and it is time to put real people on the road to real change, change for the better, and that starts now.

Before I continue, I should again take a moment to thank the people of Vaughan—Woodbridge for their trust and support. This is my first opportunity to speak as a member of the House, but I temper each of my comments with the input and support that I have received from those I represent, and I thank them for their help, for their support, and for their trust. It is important for my constituents to know that this throne speech speaks to the priorities that are important to people living on Chancellor Drive, Davos Road, and Maria Antonia Road, and everywhere in-between.

This is not a throne speech written in Ottawa. Instead, it is a throne speech that takes its inspiration from the coffee shops, kitchen tables, and workplaces of this great country. This throne speech is for all Canadians. The focus of this new government is on good jobs, safe streets, and opportunity for all. I say to the people of Vaughan—Woodbridge that these are their priorities and they are mine, too.

Last week, this government delivered a throne speech that focused its energy entirely on the middle class, people like those living in my riding. This government recommitted to helping low-income seniors, students, families, and workers across Canada. It committed to using every mechanism at its disposal to create jobs, improve services, and restore Canada's glory for all citizens.

The middle class has not had a decent raise in years, and it is time for our working families and the unemployed to catch a break. It is time to again create a place where hard work can and will spark opportunity that delivers prosperity to everyone. This is what real change looks like and it is precisely what the government wants to achieve. I have heard critics to my left say that government should stand back and let the free market take over. I reject this hands-off approach because it ignores those at the bottom end of the income scale.

Certainly the world of international finance is not one that I am a stranger to. I have worked on Wall Street and Bay Street for nearly 25 years. I know the economy grows only with a strong middle class. Instead of sitting back, this government is doing what it can do to grow the middle class, invest in infrastructure to alleviate the gridlock that is choking our economy, to provide a clean environment, and to strengthen retirement security for all.

The Address

•(1250)

These are goals that we can and should all get behind, not because they are Liberal commitments but because they will strengthen us all. Canadians elected a government to bring us together. Canada is strong because of our differences, not in spite of them.

It is also true that the new Canada child benefit will direct substantial help to those who need it the most, and I am proud of this part of our platform. The new Canada child benefit will provide increased benefits to 9 out of every 10 families in Canada. The benefit will be tax-free and, most importantly, it will lift 300,000 children out of poverty.

Why is this important? Why not continue to pursue the short-sighted policies of the past? Why not allow the markets to decide everything?

Quite simply, there are too many Canadians who work two or three jobs with little benefits and still live in poverty. To make matters worse, public infrastructure is crumbling. The manufacturing sector is shrinking. Household debt is skyrocketing, and the cost of basic essentials continues to rise. These things are putting unimaginable pressure on the people I represent: families, students, and seniors, and this throne speech is trying to set things right.

This is the first debate of many, but it is tremendously important because it will set the tone for everything that comes next. New investments in public transit, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, and secure pensions each promise real and meaningful change for the residents I was elected to serve.

With this in mind, and with my wife Rose and our two daughters, Eliana and Natalia, watching, I am excited to support this throne speech, not just as a document, but as a plan for real change. I am pleased to vote in support of this blueprint for tomorrow because of what it represents for seniors, students, families, and workers in my riding and ridings in every part of Canada.

May God always bless Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we proceed to questions and comments, I erred in recognizing the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge ahead of the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend. We will come back to that order after we do questions and comments.

We will go to the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend, after which we will then go to the hon. member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

Again, I apologize, particularly to the member for Edmonton Riverbend. To the House's indulgence, I hope that this change in the order will be acceptable.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his first speech here in the House. He mentioned the middle class and the tax cut the Liberals have offered. I would like to say that the middle class will still not get a raise, as the member indicated, with tax plans that leave out 70% of Canadians.

He mentioned the coffee shops. These are the places in my riding where working-class people gather, and they will no doubt be asking

the Liberal government why 70% of Canadians are being left out of the tax changes the government has proposed. Why do they not get a break as well?

What will the member tell them, or does he only represent the 30% that he worked with on Bay Street?

•(1255)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my ongoing support for the auto industry, which is so important for southwestern Ontario, all of Ontario, and our manufacturing footprint.

I would like to add that in our platform, we included a number of measures and one of those measures, which I spoke to in my earlier comments, relates to the new Canada child benefit. If we look at and read studies from such sources as the Caledon Institute, this new child benefit that will be arriving, hopefully, next year, will be tax-free to families in Canada. It will provide 9 out of every 10 families with increased benefits and will lift 300,000 children out of poverty.

I think that that is great news for families in Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: It seems that I am doing everything backward here this afternoon. Now, we will go to the official opposition in questions and comments.

The hon. member for Durham.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is our final day in the House in 2015, so we will all cut you some slack. You do an exceptional job in the chair and it is appreciated by all sides.

I would like to congratulate the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge for his first speech and his passion to serve the public.

However, what I find most ironic about the government and the Minister of Finance, in particular, and this member, given his experience on Bay Street and Wall Street, is that the deficit is now running out of control. The hope is that it will be somewhere between \$10 billion and \$20 billion per year.

Would the member not agree with me when I say that a deficit is either one of two things: it is either future tax increases or future cuts? If the government is sincere about getting to a balanced budget by the end of its mandate, it will have to do one of those two things. It will either have to raise taxes dramatically or cut services.

I would ask the member what he favours. Does he favour higher taxes or cuts to services?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, it is a bit rich for the hon. member for Durham to address deficits and debt when the Conservative government added \$150 billion to our national debt in the last 10 years. It took a \$15 billion surplus and moved it to a deficit position before the great financial recession even set in.

I will state that we are in a very low interest rate environment. My humble advice would be for the government to undertake strategic investments in infrastructure to help grow our economy.

With that, our debt-to-GDP ratio will continue to decline under this government and we will balance the budget, as we have indicated, at the end of the four-year period.

The Address

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for a fantastic speech, recognizing his family back home and so forth, but one of the things I noticed is that he picked up on the important points of the automobile industry.

I am wondering if he might want to provide further comment on the importance of the automotive industry for the province of Ontario, in fact for all Canadians.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, as someone who has worked in finance for 25 years and covered the auto sector for the last 15, it is close to my heart and something that we need support in this country.

We need to maintain those jobs here in Canada, and our government will do everything it can, through consultation with its partners, on the automotive OEM base, the auto suppliers, and the small parts manufacturers throughout southwestern Ontario to make sure that those jobs are maintained here and that we maintain a very strong, robust global auto industry.

We need those jobs and our government is dedicated to ensuring that those jobs remain in Canada and that we can grow the OEM base, the supplier base. That is very important and we will move forward with it.

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed the following bill: Bill C-3, an Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016.

* * *

● (1300)

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker. You are now our ambassador both inside and outside these walls. For that, I admire you, and I challenge you to hold our Parliament to one of the greatest parliaments in Canadian history. It will not be easy, but you have my full support. I pledge this to you. If I make the grave mistake in the pursuit of heckling across the aisle, I will ensure that it is done in the most stealthy of fashions so you will never know it was me.

I am here and ultimately humbled, at the age of 34, to have been elected both provincially and federally. Of that I can be proud. However, what I am most proud of are two very smart, thoughtful, and generous little girls, Molly and Lily Jeneroux. These are my girls and my reason for being here. I recognize this is a world where we need people to put service before self and I am proud of who they are at the ages of six and eight, but I cannot wait to meet them as they grow into what I am certain will be remarkable young women.

Speaking of remarkable young women, I am also incredibly lucky to have the most beautiful, thoughtful and most kind person in love with me, my partner in life and all things, and soon to be Dr. Elizabeth Clement.

I also want to recognize the former member of Parliament for my region, James Rajotte. He is a man of great principles and dedication to our country. I am deeply honoured and humbled to be following him in this chair. He is a man who knows how to work hard, and that is a trait I plan to carry forward to represent our nation's best constituents, those from my home in Edmonton Riverbend.

However, this is where I would like to stop talking about me. Quite frankly, there are much more important things to talk about. I would like to focus this time—my time—to speak on what the Speech from the Throne means to our future generations. I thought it might be interesting because, quite simply, I get both excited and scared for our future leaders. I am excited because I truly feel there is nothing they cannot accomplish, but also scared because we are a country that is admired by so many in this world for its freedom and prosperity. It is the decisions we do not make today that could put all that at risk.

However, we are only a generation away from losing this way of life that we have worked so hard to achieve. I want our future generations to have a better life, a successful life. Let us take the message forward together. Deep down, we all have a dream for what Canada can become in the next 20 to 50 years, but we need to take responsibility for that dream. I challenge our future generations to make their dreams for our country a reality. I challenge them to say “yes” to their dreams, not to settle for mediocrity, and to work hard. Things in this life are not easy. They are hard. Do what is hard. Trust me that it will be worth the work.

There are many distractions in this world: Facebook, Twitter, social media. However, for our future generations, they should focus on their goals and dreams. They are responsible to our country to do just that.

Our future generations are certain to face many difficult challenges in the years to come. However, I want them to remember, each and every day, to embrace the Canada they want to see. There will be thousands of people lined up around each and every corner to tell them no, but they should not listen. I want our future generations to push themselves to do better, to be better for this world, and to be better for us. It is hard to push oneself, but that is the point: do what is hard. Their integrity and their honour are what define them. They should never let anyone tell them they cannot do something. If they want something, work hard. It is honestly that simple. I want our future generations to remember these words, as what we do inside this chamber for all of them is not something any one of us should ever forget.

I want to focus my remaining comments on my home province of Alberta.

The Address

I have grown up in a province that has taken action, a province that does a lot of the heavy lifting for the economy, but a province that is under attack both by its own NDP government and the federal Liberal government. I am fearful for our future there. If people do not believe me, the very decision to remove the responsibilities for the west and roll them into a minister from Toronto does not sit well with everyday Albertans. There are decisions like giving up on pipelines and tankers on the west coast. I ask members to please not take these decisions lightly. These decisions impact the lives and futures of many. I also ask members to please not make a political decision. The west is truly Canada's land of opportunity during economic hardships and we can be that way again.

We need a government that will join with us across the aisle and fight to ensure we have the jobs, the people, and ultimately the support to bring forward the next era of the golden west. We have been the strongest economic region in North America for the past 10 years. For the men and women who have lost their jobs in the oil patch, this Conservative team is here for them. For the farmers feeling threatened in their way of life, this Conservative team is here for them. For the working moms and dads who are now bracing for the burden of more debt, I pledge to them that this Conservative team is here for them.

● (1305)

I will be bold and I will make this promise on behalf of the 99 incredible Conservative MPs. We will all be here to fight with every last breath we take while we are here.

However, our time is limited here and I want to ensure we are all here considering our future leaders. I want all members of this chamber to ensure we are making the best decisions in here that will enhance their way of life. Decisions being made here already are being based more on political ideology and electioneering, more so than thinking of our daughters, sons, grandkids, and my kids.

With references to marijuana, CBC funding, and electoral reform all outnumbering jobs in the Speech from the Throne, I am concerned and downright disappointed that the Liberal government has already failed Canadians, not giving any opportunity or chance to enhance our way of life.

Finally, I would like to end with the challenge to the members on the government side to work hard as we build on what our forefathers have left before us. It will not be easy, but this job should not be easy. Future generations are watching and future generations rely on the very decisions we make.

We are all humans put together to make up the House of Commons. We will forever be bonded together. Let us not forget that. It takes courage to work together. I want our country to do better and be better because I was here. Quite simply, that is why I am here as the member of Parliament for Edmonton Riverbend.

I move:

That the motion be amended by adding, after the words "tax burden for Canadians", the words "and back away from its undemocratic plan to scrap Canada's current voting system without consulting Canadians in a referendum first, as most democratic minded governments, such as the Governments of British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have done".

The Speaker: The subamendment is in order.

ROYAL ASSENT

● (1315)

[English]

A message was delivered by the Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, it is the pleasure of His Excellency the Governor General that this honourable House attend him immediately in the chamber of the Senate.

Accordingly the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

And being returned:

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend His Excellency the Governor General in the Senate Chamber, His Excellency was pleased to give in Her Majesty's name the royal assent to Bill C-3, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2016—Chapter 42.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, of the amendment and amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was particularly enthused by the fact that the member spoke about the future. The Liberal government is concerned about the future of young people and young families like mine. That is why we are investing in our future. That is why we are investing in our youth. We are going to create thousands of new jobs for young people and fix infrastructure that frankly has been falling apart for ten years.

Does the member not think that it is important to invest in our future and in the future of our young people?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, our future is bright, particularly if we make the decisions that were quite present with our previous Conservative government. We made decisions about the UCCB. Our government made decisions on TFSAs and income splitting. I hope that these decisions will be reconsidered by members on the other side because they are things that could help young families and future generations.

● (1320)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Edmonton Riverbend on his election and a great speech. I appreciate that he elaborated on important things like the future of our children and taking care of our grandparents and the mothers in our country. We have a lot in common; we both want to grow the economy while protecting the environment.

The Address

The member talked about oil and pipelines, and about making sure that we get our resources to market. I want to hear from the member about bringing oil to market and making sure that British Columbians are heard on that issue, because it is the mothers and the grandmothers and the daughters of British Columbians who are concerned about pipelines. We had a small bunker spill in English Bay recently, and it was not adequately taken care of. We had a spill on my beach in Tofino, in 1988, which damaged the ecosystem that we rely on for our food security, for our recreation and for our cultural needs.

I would like the member to tell me how we could work together to protect coastal British Columbia and look forward to a new economy which he talked about.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, I have friends in Tofino. I am sad to announce that they did not vote for the member, but he seems like a decent guy.

We need to build the pipelines to get our oil to market because that is what drives our economy. That is what drives the Alberta economy. There are a lot of trains out there as well. We would like to ensure that pipelines are built, because if oil is spilled from trains, it is something we should consider in terms of the environment.

What is particularly disappointing from the Liberal government is that when the announcement was made that Keystone would not go ahead, we had barely a word from the Prime Minister, a Prime Minister who quite frankly loves to say a word or two here and there. However, he was not anywhere to be seen. Now he is quite excited, as we all saw yesterday, to go to his fancy dinner with President Obama.

At the end of the day, we need to make sure that we are fighting for Alberta and for Canada. It is important to fight for Alberta because its oil drives our economy.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague and good friend and neighbour in Edmonton for his election to the House. It is well deserved. I have seen first-hand the relationship that he has with his girls, and it is something special to behold.

Thinking about his girls and Canadians of that generation, maybe the member could talk about the importance of balanced budgets in Canada in terms of securing their future.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the hard-hitting question, as usual.

It is important to hear that, of course, we balance budgets, and of course, we are looking at the opposition over here who once ran one of the largest deficits in the history of our country. They are not thinking about future generations when they do that. This is one of things we heard at the door time and time again in Alberta.

We are experiencing it on the provincial side and we are now going to experience it on the federal side. I would ask, beg, and plead with hon. members on the other side to please consider not running a deficit for our kids, their kids, our grandkids, and for future generations. It is important for them and it is important for all of us in this chamber.

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is the first time that I am rising in this honourable House, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the residents of Mississauga—Streetsville for electing me to be their voice here in Ottawa. I would also like to thank my family, past and present, for their unwavering support.

Over the last two years, I was able to speak with thousands of residents. More importantly, I had the opportunity to listen to their concerns, concerns that were addressed in the Speech from the Throne.

The riding of Mississauga—Streetsville is home to various areas: Lisgar, Levi Creek, Meadowvale, and the quaint areas of Streetsville, and old Meadowvale Village. It is with great pride that I stand here and say that I grew up in Streetsville and I am now the member of Parliament.

However, this middle-class riding has faced a number of challenges in the past. I have spoken with single parents who find it difficult to provide for their children. Having volunteered at both the Eden and Seva food banks, I have seen families struggling day to day to make ends meet.

In a country as wealthy as Canada, every child deserves to have access to the essentials of life. This is why it gives me great pride to have heard in the Speech from the Throne that our commitment to the Canada child benefit will raise 315,000 children out of poverty.

We are also committed to creating more opportunities for young Canadians. One of the biggest concerns that parents have in the riding of Mississauga—Streetsville is that their children will not have the same opportunities that they did. It is imperative that future generations are educated in order to ensure the continued prosperity of our great nation.

In addition to hearing the concerns of our residents, I have also consulted with the mayor of Mississauga, city councillors, and our provincial counterparts. In order for the riding to thrive, the municipality requires dedicated and predictable funding for infrastructure with an emphasis on transit investments. Those living in my riding who work in downtown Toronto can barely make it back for dinner.

On July 6, 2013, we all watched in horror the tragic events of Lac-Mégantic's derailment. Residents of Mississauga—Streetsville were shocked to hear that that very train passed through our backyards and our shopping centres. This particular issue was once again brought to the forefront as a similar train caught fire during the campaign. That train was situated between shopping centres, a day care, and the backyards of some residents.

Another concern in regards to infrastructure is that of affordable housing. Social and affordable housing currently has a seven- to 10-year wait time in Mississauga. Our riding also has multiple co-op housing units. My colleagues and I visited one of these co-ops and were surprised to learn that they only required a mere \$50,000 in government assistance to keep a lot of those people from being kicked out onto the street. This is why our infrastructure investment of \$125 billion is not just an investment in infrastructure, but an investment in Canadian families. Ultimately, we need a federal government that respects municipalities.

The Address

During this previous election, I was contacted by various groups and individuals of all parties to discuss electoral reform. Residents often felt their vote could potentially be wasted. When our party announced that 2015 would be the last election under the first past the post voting system, it was an announcement that our government is going to be one that listens to the concerns of citizens, has progressive views, and is truly about real change.

Some of my fondest memories of growing up in the riding involve our parks and trails. Our riding has a multitude of green spaces, conservation lands, bike paths, ponds, and a lake, and of course, the Credit River. I often take my cousins along with me to tree planting events so that not only can they enjoy these spaces, but understand how we need to preserve them.

This government has committed to preserving the environment and will take on climate change. As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, we will make decisions that are informed by scientific evidence.

Our government will introduce new environmental assessment processes. However, most importantly, our government understands that a clean environment and a strong economy go hand in hand.

● (1325)

The government's agenda also reflects that Canada's strength is its diversity. There is no greater testament to this than me standing here today.

Canada truly is the land of opportunity. My dad moved here from India to give his family a better life. From odd jobs, to driving a taxi, saving, and eventually growing his own small business, Canada rewarded him for all his hard work and ambition. My younger brother is an emergency room doctor and saves lives every day. I am a lawyer and small business owner, and have the honour of being a member of Parliament. Only in Canada is that possible.

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to attend law school in London, England. One of the benefits of studying abroad is easy travelling to neighbouring countries. Back then, when people found out I was a Canadian they greeted me with warmth and mentioned how Canada is so well known for being a peacekeeping nation. However, that sentiment has been lost for many years now. Our government will contribute to greater peace throughout the world and renew our commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Inevitably, this will restore our reputation on the world stage as those who stand up against intolerance and keep the peace.

Here at home, many of my constituents have told me they moved from their country of origin because Canada is safe. Naturally, this is ideal to grow a family. Recognizing this, the government will continue to work to keep all Canadians safe.

I would like to again thank all my constituents for electing me their member for Mississauga—Streetsville. The riding actually mirrors that of Canada. It is full of history, commerce, is ethnically diverse, and home to small villages within a large city. I could not be prouder to call it home. I know that our mandate will serve the people of the riding well.

● (1330)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question about taxes mentioned in the throne speech. The middle-income tax cut excludes about 70% of Canadians, while eliminating the expanded TFSA. We wait for the other shoe to drop, which means higher taxes to pay for the spending it is committing to and the new schemes that we have yet to see in the House, which will mean less savings for Canadians.

We know that nearly 11 million Canadians took advantage of the TFSA, 60% of whom were holders earning less than \$60,000 a year. More than half of them were seniors. When people are empowered financially they save for the future. We know this from experience. What we do not need is a cradle-to-grave, two-nanny state system. We all heard about this in the House.

There was a BMO survey report released in September that found that 56% of respondents had less than \$10,000 available in emergency funds. I think the TFSA is an amazing program. Keeping it at \$10,000 ensures that Canadians can save for themselves. Therefore, why will his government not reverse its decision and restore the TFSA, the best new savings vehicle in a generation?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, during the campaign I actually heard the contrary. There were not many people I spoke to who had \$10,000 lying around at the end of the day to invest in a TFSA. They were putting food on the table, paying bills, like utility bills. Mississauga—Streetsville, within the GTA, is an expensive place to live.

Our government understands the needs of Canadians and sees they do not have \$10,000 lying around at the end of the day. That is why we have introduced a robust mandate that will actually help them in growing their families.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his excellent speech. I have to agree with much of what he said.

As the former mayor of Cranbrook in British Columbia, I would like to talk a little about infrastructure. In 2014, the Conservative government announced its build Canada program. There was not one dollar that came out of that program to our communities in 2014 or 2015. Part of the challenge for municipalities was the formula asked that the municipalities come up with the first one-third of any of these projects.

Would the member support the new government having a formula that is a little more favourable to municipalities in the future?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, Streetsville is home to our former mayor, Hazel McCallion, who is in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, for being a long-standing mayor. She has openly stated that she has never received the co-operation she needed from the federal government, and our current mayor has those same sentiments.

I will support an open dialogue with municipalities to get a lot of the infrastructure funding to them, so that they can use it as they see fit.

The Address

•(1335)

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member on the opposite side has done a great job.

I have a quick question. We have talked in the House about the tax benefits our government will be offering with respect to children and the middle class. However, in terms of the infrastructure contributions we are going to make to the different municipalities, as a mayor for the past 14 years, I do also recognize some of the impacts that will have on the property taxpayers as well as the wastewater ratepayers. How will our government move forward with the infrastructure contributions to municipalities and add more savings to the taxpayers, specifically the property taxpayers and the water and sewer ratepayers?

Mr. Gagan Sikand: Mr. Speaker, one benefit we see is with respect to our location relative to Toronto. If we invest heavily in public infrastructure and public transit, that will naturally increase the property values for areas like Mississauga—Streetsville, because now you will have more accessibility to the downtown core of Toronto.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. We are back on track with the regular record. However, before we resume debate, I would like to share a casual observation for the benefit of all hon. members.

Members speaking in this place use third-party terminology, which is a bit different. I have two tips for hon. members when they are in the course of either questions and comments or in the course of their speech. If hon. members find themselves wanting to use the words “you” or “your”, which is a common occurrence that comes up in normal language, in the House we tend to flip to the “hon. member” or “hon. members”, as the case may be. A second way to help with that is, when members direct their commentary generally toward the Chair, they pivot toward the Chair, so they will not necessarily have the hon. member to whom they are addressing their comments in full view, and they will be less likely to use the words “you” or “your”.

That is just a tip for hon. members. I know it is a bit of an adjustment, but members are doing splendidly, I must say.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.
[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

Since this is my first speech in the House, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot for putting their trust in me on October 19. It is a great privilege to represent them in the House of Commons.

I will continue to work hard to deserve this honour and to give my constituents a voice. I would also like to thank all those who supported me and worked by my side during the election campaign: the volunteers, as well as my friends and family. Without the support they gave me every day, I would not be here today.

I am fortunate to represent an extraordinary riding and I invite my colleagues to discover it. It includes two RCMs, the RCM of Acton

and that of Maskoutains, which are made up of 25 municipalities and three towns, namely Acton Vale, Saint-Pie, and of course, Saint-Hyacinthe. Saint-Hyacinthe is an innovative region, as demonstrated by the fact it won the title of Canada's Jobs Capital in 2015. We have also held the prestigious title of agri-food capital of Quebec for a long time.

I, along with many Canadians, listened closely to the throne speech. I was happy with a number of commitments this government made, but there were some omissions, and I was disappointed by other aspects.

Agriculture is a very strong economic driver in my riding. Saint-Hyacinthe is known around the world for being an agri-food technopole, in particular because it is home to educational institutions, such as the CEGEP, the Institut de technologie agroalimentaire, and the only French-language veterinary medicine faculty in North America. It is also home to research centres and a number of biotechnology innovation companies. Agriculture is the backbone of our economy back home.

On a daily basis, I hear from farmers who are worried about the trans-Pacific partnership. I am concerned that the Liberals still seem prepared to move forward with the Conservatives' trans-Pacific partnership agreement. This agreement will put our farmers at risk. In my riding, in the RCM of Les Maskoutains alone, more than 250 family businesses will be affected by this agreement.

Furthermore, although the Liberals made an election promise, I did not hear anything in the throne speech about holding public consultations anytime soon. There was also nothing about the compensation promised to the farmers who will suffer the consequences of this agreement. I must admit that people back home are very worried.

In my riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, a number of major infrastructure projects are waiting for federal funding. This government promised Canadians change—rapid, urgent, and positive change—in how it does things. It promised to make massive investments in infrastructure, among other things.

In my riding, we need a rail overpass on Casavant Boulevard in Saint-Hyacinthe. This project is vital to the economic development of the city because it will open up the industrial park. We have been waiting for federal funding for this project for over 10 years. I am very familiar with this file as I was a municipal councillor in Saint-Hyacinthe for six years.

The City of Saint-Hyacinthe invested more than \$20 million in a ring road, which is located in my area and presently leads to a dead end because of the rail line. Furthermore, negotiations between the city and CN are difficult, if not impossible, and the railway's demands account for most of the project's cost.

The Casavant Boulevard extension is necessary for the development and growth of Saint-Hyacinthe. It is critical that the federal government act quickly and decisively on this file so that we can build this road infrastructure.

Another major project is currently under way in Saint-Hyacinthe. In 2012, a shock wave went through the business tourism industry in my region with the closing of a large hotel complex.

The Address

● (1340)

Many jobs were lost, and many businesses felt the sting. Now we are all working together to help the sector recover. With support from the federal and provincial governments, the City of Saint-Hyacinthe hopes to build a brand-new convention centre adjacent to a new hotel.

This partnership would help revitalize Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot's business tourism industry and create lots of good jobs while strengthening the city's business sector. This partnership includes the Société d'agriculture de Saint-Hyacinthe, which already has a fair centre. Together, the convention centre and the fair centre will make Saint-Hyacinthe the biggest destination for such events other than Montreal and Quebec City.

The city of Saint-Pie is working on making a new community centre proposal a reality. This infrastructure project connects recreational and community activities, schools and the municipal library. This is a good example of a community that is taking action to make the most of the available resources to truly improve life for families.

Once again, this is a major project that deserves the government's attention and shows how urgent it is to implement an infrastructure funding program that is both generous and flexible.

These major projects, to name a few, are very important to my riding. I expect the government to commit adequate funding to help the communities achieve their full economic development potential based on their own priorities.

I have the honour of being the NDP critic for families, children, and social development and the deputy critic for health. I am delighted at the prospect of working with my colleagues on these important areas of responsibility, and I offer my full co-operation.

I listened closely to the Speech from the Throne and the measures that relate to my responsibilities as critic. I am pleased to hear that the government is going to improve the Canada pension plan after so many years of Conservative inaction. However, I must admit that I was very disappointed to see that there was no mention in the Speech from the Throne of the fight against poverty here in Canada and no mention of a plan to fight poverty and reduce inequality in Canada.

I did not hear anything about the promise to improve the guaranteed income supplement to help lift seniors out of poverty or anything about cancelling the cuts to old age security.

I also did not hear the government announce any measures to change the retirement age back from 67 to 65. I did not hear it say that it will improve the employment insurance program by reversing the harmful changes made by the Conservatives. Those measures would serve to help our communities, reduce social inequality in a meaningful way, and help our seniors.

The Speech from the Throne states, and I quote:

...the Government believes that all Canadians should have a real and fair chance to succeed.

Yesterday I mentioned in the House that, unfortunately, some children are still going to school with empty bellies and some seniors

are still living in poverty. That is happening right here in Canada in 2015 and that is unacceptable.

It is high time we fought poverty and created a national anti-poverty plan in order to ensure that everyone really does have a fair chance to succeed.

As the deputy health critic, I would have liked to see some concrete commitments to cancel the health care cuts made by the Conservative government. We need to invest in care for our seniors and in coverage for prescription drugs, and the government needs to take action to make it easier to access family doctors.

We hope that the Liberals will not try to backpedal on the commitments they made to Canadians. As the progressive opposition, we will continue to put pressure on the Liberal government to keep its promises.

Canadians must have the assurance that from now on this Parliament will fight for their jobs, their families, and their communities.

● (1345)

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on her speech. As an anti-poverty member of the association and founder in our area, a lot of things rang true with me.

I will ask my question first, and the member can think of it while I finish my comment.

My question goes back to infrastructure. There are different ways of delivering infrastructure, some of which municipalities, provinces, and territories like more than others. I wonder what her comments are on the best way to deliver infrastructure.

On poverty, I am happy and excited about our platform. We will keep the promises to reduce the age for OAS back to 65. We are going to increase the OAS. We are going to improve the Canada pension plan. We are going to build more housing for seniors, and there are huge amounts for home care. At the other end of the spectrum, the poorest of the poor, we will be dealing with the homeless with the biggest influx of housing infrastructure in history. For our children, of course, probably the most important of all, nine out of ten families will be helped by the biggest child benefit in history, which will take 300,000 children out of poverty.

I think we would agree on that, but I will ask my question on infrastructure delivery.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the problem. Those remain just promises. All week I was told that they had some good ideas and that they were going to implement them. Why did they not talk about these various items in their throne speech?

The Address

First, with regard to infrastructure, municipalities must set their own priorities. With respect to federal-provincial agreements, the Quebec government establishes its own priorities. However, it is important that our government stop telling us what it is going to do, that we have to wait and that we should not worry because it will happen. I cannot be patient for too long. Instead of all the talk about promises, I would like to hear when and how the government is going to follow through on them.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech, and I congratulate her on her election win.

Since the beginning of the week, since arriving in the House of Commons, I have heard the government go on and on about promises that will cost Canadians dearly. Because of those promises, deficits will be not just modest but extremely modest.

I listened to my colleague's remarks and, considering everything she would like to see done, I would like to know how much more she thinks we should add to the deficit that the Liberals have already announced. Can the member put a dollar figure on the promises she would like to see fulfilled during the government's term and tell us how much she would like to add to the Liberals' deficit?

• (1350)

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, we are here in the House to make decisions. Obviously, when we make certain things a priority, other things have to be set aside. I think that the priorities pertaining to the fight against poverty are important. Canadians decided to elect a Liberal government that announced that it was willing to incur a deficit. The minute the Liberals made big infrastructure promises, they created a lot of expectation in our communities. The two RCMs that I represent invited me to meet with them in the coming weeks, because they have their lists ready. The government created a lot of expectation in our communities. Obviously, we will have difficult choices to make. It is important to always keep that in mind.

Since the member who asked me the question also worked at the municipal level, he knows how difficult it is to set a budget and make choices. Obviously, we hope that the budget will be as balanced as possible. The government announced that there will in fact be a deficit, but it is important to make budgetary choices that will fight poverty and help the municipalities achieve their priorities. We are here to make decisions. The questions that I asked this week have to do with where I think the government's priorities should lie.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak for the first time. I would like to begin by thanking the voters of South Okanagan—West Kootenay for placing their trust in me to speak for them in the chamber.

I would especially like to thank the many volunteers who worked hard to elect me as the first MP in the big, beautiful riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay. I also thank my wife Margaret, who was one of the hardest working of those volunteers and has always been a pillar of strength for me. As well, I would like to mention the hard work of Alex Atamanenko, the respected and newly retired MP for the old riding of British Columbia Southern Interior.

As someone born and raised there, I am somewhat biased, but I think that my riding, from the vineyards and orchards of the South Okanagan, the ponderosa pines of the Kettle, the big Columbia River rolling through the West Kootenay, and the ice-capped peaks soaring above the Slocan and Arrow Lakes, has to be the most beautiful riding in the country. As an ecologist, I love both its diversity and uniqueness since it is home to a host of species found nowhere else in Canada.

It is also the unceded territory of the Syilx, Sinixt, and Ktunaxa peoples, and we are all the richer for their traditions, culture, and knowledge. Other communities add to that cultural diversity, including the Indo-Canadian and Portuguese communities in the South Okanagan, the Doukhobors of Grand Forks and Castlegar, and the big Italian community centred on Trail.

While it is beautiful, my riding faces serious challenges. From the desert grasslands of the South Okanagan to the forests of the West Kootenay, climate change is bringing longer, hotter summers, shallower snowpacks, and more frequent wildfires. Just this summer, the communities of Oliver, Osoyoos, Grand Forks, and Christina Lake were threatened by a series of fires. One catastrophic fire destroyed 30 homes in the village of Rock Creek. I want to take this opportunity to register in the chamber the thanks that my constituents give to the brave men and women who fought those fires and the many volunteers who fed and housed both the firefighters and the residents who had been forced from their homes.

Climate change is a clear concern to the residents of my riding, and I hope that the government backs the elegant words about climate change in the throne speech with a clear plan, bold targets, and prompt action. Hotter summers and diminishing rainfall are also forcing local agricultural operations to adapt quickly to remain competitive. Agriculture has always been the heart of the economy in the western half of my riding. I grew up on a small apple orchard, and the region is justly proud of its apricots, peaches, cherries, wine grapes, tomatoes, peppers, melons, apples, and beef. Many local residents are concerned about food security issues. I was deeply disappointed, therefore, to note that agriculture was not mentioned once in the throne speech. I sincerely hope that the government will take up the national food security strategy prepared by the NDP in the previous parliament.

South Okanagan—West Kootenay is a very important tourist destination, with its sparkling lakes, sandy beaches, hiking and biking trails, rock climbing opportunities, and world-class ski hills. Tourism is a huge part of our economy, not just in my riding but across this spectacular country. I have to say I was disappointed to see that there was not one mention of it in the throne speech.

We need to market our country more skilfully, and I have to give a shout-out here to the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association for its cutting-edge marketing programs. The federal government would do well to invest in programs such as these through a larger contribution to Destination Canada.

The Address

As is the case across this country, natural resources are a big part of the economy of South Okanagan—West Kootenay, from the huge Teck smelters in Trail to the Celgar mill in Castlegar, and other mining and forestry operations throughout the riding.

• (1355)

I was proud to be named the deputy critic for natural resources for the NDP, and I look forward to working hard on this file, which is so critical to Canada's wealth.

We must continually improve the sustainability of our resource extraction methods and process our resources here in Canada so that we do not export good paying jobs.

The natural beauty and mild climate of South Okanagan—West Kootenay is attractive to retirees from across Canada. Real estate prices are relatively high, and that factor, combined with the generally low wage rates across the riding, results in a large population of constituents who are struggling to make ends meet. Affordable housing and homelessness are big issues in all of my communities.

Seniors also make up a very large part of the South Okanagan—West Kootenay population. Many of them have inadequate pensions, and the health issues that go along with an elderly demographic have been straining our health care system.

Young people also face a difficult future in this riding. Some had left for the energy sector jobs in northeastern British Columbia and Alberta, but as that sector contracts, many have returned home, hoping to find similar work. Hopefully they have listened to the government's promises of infrastructure funding and investments in green technology that could change the face of hundreds of communities across this country.

Many others have gone on to post-secondary education. Some go to large universities outside the riding, while others go into apprenticeships and the trades. Many attend Okanagan College and Selkirk College, two fine post-secondary institutions in this riding. They are well known for their innovative programs, such as the sustainable construction program at Okanagan College, and the rural pre-med program at Selkirk.

To be a successful country in the 21st century, Canada needs to provide its young people with a grade A education, so I am also proud that I am the NDP post-secondary education critic. The Speech from the Throne briefly mentioned the plight of students facing increasing debt loads, but we must look at the root cause of these debts, the soaring tuition rates caused by a long-term decline in federal funding.

In the last election, Canadians voted for change. In that long campaign, the Liberals promised much regarding the environment, a more positive role in foreign affairs, and social infrastructure, housing, poverty reduction, pension reform, and health care. The people of my riding will be watching the government closely to make sure it delivers on those promises. As part of the NDP progressive opposition, I will also be watching over the coming months. We remain optimistic and hopeful, but we will be diligent in holding the government to account.

Now I will simply say merry Christmas to all, and I hope everyone in this chamber and across the country has a happy and healthy new year.

• (1400)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my hon. colleague across the chamber for his great speech, another one of passionate conviction touching on many things. He certainly touched on a lot of things that are near and dear to the hearts of all Liberals on this side of the chamber.

One thing that the Liberals certainly ran on was increased infrastructure spending across the country. I do not think it is any secret that over the last 10 years we were in an infrastructure deficit. Infrastructure across Canada was crumbling and the Liberals have pledged to double it.

Another very important thing to highlight is the Liberal promise to institute the Canada child benefit. That would be better for nine out of ten families across our country. It will bring 315,000 children out of poverty and it will be a good thing for a lot of our communities.

I come from Saint John—Rothesay, a city that unfortunately leads the country in child poverty. Things like the Canada child benefit would be very, very good for communities across this great country.

I am also glad to see that the member across the chamber believes in civility and good relations back and forth. I certainly hope we would continue that across both ends of the chamber.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch on the infrastructure question. When I was campaigning throughout the riding, I met with almost all the mayors and councillors in the 41 communities. Infrastructure was at the top of their list at all times. They wanted the infrastructure funding from the federal government to be easier to access for small communities. So many of the funding programs are aimed at larger communities and it is very difficult to find partnerships for small communities.

As far as helping children in poverty and families in need, the NDP ran on a program to provide affordable child care across the country. That really resonated on the doorsteps in South Okanagan—West Kootenay. So many people thought said that was what could really help them much more than a lump sum payment.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague gave an excellent maiden speech in the House. As the proud NDP critic for national parks, we all know the value of national parks from a tourism and an ecological perspective, I am very happy to hear the Liberal government is planning to restore \$25 million of the cuts from the Conservatives and to invest \$25 million a year in ecosystems management.

However, I would like to hear from the hon. member a little about the proposal to create a new national park in the South Okanagan and what that would do for this community.

The Address

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I must grudgingly admit that the member's riding of Kootenay—Columbia is almost as beautiful as mine.

As I said, the South Okanagan—West Kootenay is an area that is unique in Canada. It is part of the dry interior of British Columbia that is one of the very last ecoregions of Canada that does not have a national park. There has been an initiative now over 10 years, since I think 2003, to initiate a national park in that area. I very much would like to see that move forward.

Parks Canada has been developing policy over the last decade to move the park idea forward, while protecting the livelihoods of ranchers and other stakeholders, and involve local first nations in close collaboration with that. I look forward to meeting with my provincial counterparts in the riding to move that idea forward.

• (1405)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Long Range Mountains.

I would like to thank the Speaker for the opportunity to address this assembly for the first time to give a speech in debate in the House. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, and all members for their successful elections.

As someone who has had a successful career in brain research and is a passionate advocate for brain and mental health, I would like to thank the member for Ottawa—Vanier for the courage he displayed as he announced his diagnosis of ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. His fearless announcement put a spotlight on neurodegenerative diseases, and for that I am personally thankful to him. I wish him all the best that research, hope, and my family's prayers can offer.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my predecessors who were present during the 41st Parliament, Pat Perkins and the late Hon. Jim Flaherty, who represented the town of Whitby and the villages of Brooklin, Ashburn, and Myrtle with extraordinary passion, conviction, and pride.

Ten years ago my husband, Vidal, and I decided to make Whitby our home. Over the course of the past 10 years, we have benefited from the friendships of our neighbours, access to top-quality schools for our three children, Desiray, Candice, and Johnny, and a retreat to a tranquil and embracing community.

The people of Whitby have placed their trust in me through a piece of paper, a pencil, and a vote. I am forever grateful and humbled by their confidence in my ability to be their voice here in Ottawa.

Whitby is a growing town with changing demographics, a strong chamber of commerce, a business community, wonderful academic institutions, both local and within the Durham region, and world-renowned health and recreation facilities, like Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Science and the Abilities Centre.

Therefore, in this, my first address to the chamber, I would like to highlight a few of Whitby's assets to the national and international community.

Over 50% of Whitby's population has completed post-secondary education. We have access to highways 401 and 407, literally wrapping around our town. Its great institutions, like Durham College, for example, have a direct impact on the economic and social well-being of Whitby, the Durham region, and the province of Ontario. The economic impact of Durham College is greater than \$800 million annually, and it has countless partnerships with businesses and other organizations in order to provide meaningful skills and experience to its students.

With our government's commitment to invest in public transit and social and green infrastructure, create jobs, and strengthen the middle class, the opportunities are endless for growth in Whitby's economy, because strong local economies lead to a strong national economy.

Whitby has recently been named one of Canada's best places for business, earning the fifth out of ten spots on Profit magazine's 2015 list. By leveraging our existing assets, national and international businesses can rest assured that an investment in Whitby is one that will yield mutually beneficial positive returns for years to come.

That being said, over 70% of the people in Whitby work outside our town. That is why I am proud that this government has committed to an infrastructure investment and public transit investment that could help create local jobs and keep the people of Whitby living, working, and playing in their own communities.

I will also highlight the men and women in uniform of the Whitby Fire Fighters IAFF Local 2036, the Durham Regional Police Services, Durham Region Emergency Medical Services, and the men and women in uniform across the country who need continuous and ongoing health support, especially related to PTSD. Daily, they run toward the kinds of situations and circumstances that make us run away. They deserve our unwavering support.

• (1410)

I am so happy that our government has pledged to give our men and women in uniform the support they need, and is committed to be a leader in this regard.

Further, mental health and addictions in Canada have devastating social and economic impacts. They are complex health issues that affect education, social services, employment, housing, and justice. In order to move forward with treatment and ultimately healing effectively, we must include all of those social systems.

I am encouraged by the desire of centres of excellence, like Ontario Shores in Whitby, to eagerly seek out collaboration in my riding to find new and innovative ways to improve treatment and care for those dealing with complex mental health issues.

The Address

I want to mention how proud I am of Ms. Beth Mah's grade 11 class at Donald A. Wilson Secondary School in Whitby who wrote a letter to our Prime Minister asking, among other things, that we think about including courses in school that address the whole student, including their mental health and stress management. These young leaders recognize the importance of mental health and I wanted to mention them today.

Lastly, I want to speak about Whitby's senior population. We have heard for many years that we will be faced with a number of issues related to the ever-increasing senior population. It is time we did something about it.

I applaud the Speech from the Throne's commitment to giving seniors a more secure retirement and supporting the health and well-being of Canadians with the development of a new health accord.

I believe that an integrated multidisciplinary approach to care is vital for our population. Complex and chronic care facilities are needed in order to ease the burden of our acute care hospitals. However, there is also a need to leverage the value of a home care strategy, which effectively utilizes the services of nurse practitioners in order to not only decrease health care costs, but allow our seniors in Whitby and across Canada to stay at home longer.

It is my honour and commitment to let this chamber know that the town of Whitby is not just a great place to be from, but it is a great place to be.

Again, I wish to thank the residents of Whitby and you, Mr. Speaker.

Happy holidays to all the members, staff, and families of the Government of Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to questions and comments, I see the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions among the parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the Standing Committee on Finance may hold organizational meetings on December 11, 2015, and that the membership of the said committee be as follows: Wayne Easter, Raj Grewal, Steven MacKinnon, Jennifer O'Connell, Robert-Falcon Ouellette, Francesco Sorbara, Lisa Raitt, Ron Liepert, Phil McColeman, and Guy Caron. During its considerations of proceedings pursuant to Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance, together with any necessary staff, may travel within Canada and may authorize the broadcasting of its proceedings, and that notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to present its report on the pre-budget consultations no later than February 5, 2016.

•(1415)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member on her first speech in the House of Commons.

I am curious, as a former first responder myself, as the hon. member spoke about post-traumatic stress disorder. It certainly is becoming more prevalent, not just in emergency services but the military. In my riding, there is a very strong advocate by the name of Natalie Harris who is doing a lot of tremendous work in the area of PTSD.

I am curious what the government is planning to do. What is the plan as it relates to the throne speech?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, the government has committed to not only raising the profile of PTSD and having a national action plan for the men and women in uniform, but it is my hope that it extends this plan to include all men and women in uniform across our country so mental health issues can be tackled. We know at present there is not a uniform system, especially for those in our communities who are afflicted with mental health issues. We hope that in consulting with our communities we will be able to have a national plan for all men and women in uniform.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her election and on her speech. I completely agree with the health care needs she talked about. However, as we know, the provinces need money to provide good-quality health care services. The first step to improving health care is to cancel the Conservatives' cuts, so that we can work with the provinces to improve health care.

Will my colleague urge the government to cancel the \$36 billion in cuts to health care imposed on the provinces?

[English]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, we all know how important and vital health care is to the sustainability of our communities and to every Canadian. As such, the Minister of Health said earlier this week that the government would continue to consult with the provinces to develop a new health accord, one which would take into account those affected by various conditions within our community, and ensure that there would be adequate resources supplied to our health care system to take care of Canadians properly.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in terms of our veterans mandate for care of veterans who are suffering from PTSD, we have committed to establishing staffing and fully funding a centre of excellence for the study of PTSD. The benefit of this centre would accrue to more than just military members. It would accrue to all of our first responders who also might suffer from this malady.

The Address

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes: Mr. Speaker, I believe it is very important to have a holistic approach to fighting mental illness. As I said in my speech, students are very concerned about their mental state, and it ripples all the way up to our military. We appreciate that our government is taking the issue of PTSD seriously, and all mental health issues, for our men and women in uniform. We hope this is further extended to our young people to ensure that suicide rates and other issues with mental health are decreased.

• (1420)

The Deputy Speaker: We are resuming debate with the Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism. I will let her know that we are just shy of the 10 minutes that we would normally take for her speech. It does not mean that she should have to rush through it at all, but if we are just 30 seconds over, I am sure members will be gracious enough to go 30 seconds past 2:30 p.m.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election, and each and every one of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on their recent election or re-election to this wonderful honourable House.

Given that this is my maiden speech in this historic place, I would like to say what a privilege it is to rise and speak in the heart of our Canadian democracy. I want to thank the many friends and volunteers who were part of my election team. If had not been for each and every one of them, I would not be here today. They worked tirelessly for me.

I also want to thank my family. As so many of my colleagues have noted, it is not possible to do this job without the support of our loved ones. I want to thank my son David, my three sisters, and my 95-year-old mother, who watches this every day. They were with me every step of the way and provided the love and encouragement that I needed to make it here.

First, I want to thank the people of the new riding of Long Range Mountains for placing their trust in me as their first member of Parliament. Long Range Mountains is made up of nearly 200 communities scattered all along the western and southwestern part of the beautiful island of Newfoundland. Many of these communities were originally founded as small fishing villages. Their continued sense of community and tradition is a testament to the commitment, resiliency, and character of Newfoundlanders throughout our riding. My parents, both native Newfoundlanders, instilled in me these same ideals of hard work, giving back, and perseverance, and I want all of my constituents to know that I will be a strong, positive voice for them here in the House.

It is an honour to rise in the House today in support of our government's throne speech. The priorities that it lays out should make all Canadians as proud of our government as it makes me. Each of these commitments will create a positive impact throughout our great country, and especially in my riding.

As our Prime Minister has said, there is no relationship more important to Canada than with our indigenous peoples. The commitment to re-engaging with our indigenous peoples in a

nation-to-nation relationship based on respect, co-operation, and recognition of rights is essential to the Canadian mosaic evolving in the 21st century. As the member for Long Range Mountains, this is particularly important to me because it will be a new dialogue with the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band.

Our government's commitment to transparency and openness is what will hold us to account and give Canadians the faith in government that has been absent for far too long. This is especially relevant in Newfoundland and Labrador, where broken promises have led to the relationship with federal representatives being at a historic low for far too many years. Nowhere is this felt more clearly than in the historic Newfoundland fishery. There is no question that the declines in past years of certain areas of the industry have hurt many of my constituents. When we speak with them, and I have spoken with thousands in the last 14 months, they will say that what has made the situation even worse was a lack of consultation with local groups and the lack of evidence-based policy.

Our government's commitment to open, transparent, and science-based decision-making will mean a new approach to all issues, including fisheries issues. It will be an approach that engages the local communities. It will empower scientists and promote the role of science in the process. This will allow for a prosperous, stable, and, most importantly, sustainable fishery for generations to come.

I am sure that all of my colleagues heard from their constituents about rising housing prices, increasing costs of living, and stagnant wages. Many Canadians are struggling to get by, and that is no different in my riding. That is why I am so proud of our government's plan to grow and sustain the middle class.

Moreover, the pledge to nearly double infrastructure spending over the next ten years will make a significant difference in ridings across the country, especially in rural ridings like Long Range Mountains. We have a historic opportunity to make an investment in our future if we act now. Together, working with our municipalities and provincial and territorial partners, we will make a difference.

Agriculture is another pillar of the economy in my riding of Long Range Mountains, as it is in many ridings throughout the country. Investments in our crumbling roads and bridges will allow farmers and our fishermen to get the products to market more quickly and more cheaply. They will also provide the resources for our small resources to compete in global markets.

The Address

Broadband access is just as important. Throughout the Long Range Mountains, and in many rural communities across Canada, there is limited or no access to high-speed Internet. Without this access, it is difficult for our small businesses to compete. It limits their ability to reach new markets and conduct day-to-day business. It also limits education in communities and reduces the capabilities of our health care system. Remote care is quite common for seniors in my province, especially in the rural areas.

● (1425)

These investments are not just an investment in our economy of today. They are an investment in our economy of tomorrow. If we are willing to seize this unique opportunity we will empower our children to succeed in the future and, hopefully, they too will improve our country for the next generation.

This idea of investing in our future was present throughout the throne speech. Our government has proposed an ambitious agenda, based on a vision of Canada that we all share. It is a vision of economic growth, driven by our middle class, of equal opportunity for all our children. It is looking after our seniors and preserving our environment for our next generation.

This agenda does not just make moral sense. This makes economic sense. Accounting for 80% of all new jobs created across the country, small and medium-sized businesses are the biggest driver of economic growth in Canada. To continue to grow our economy, we must invest in our small businesses and empower them with the resources they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive global economy.

As a small business operator in Newfoundland and Labrador, I understand the challenges our small businesses are facing. Today's economy is built on ideas and innovation, and in order to succeed it is essential for small businesses to have access to a highly skilled workforce. That is why I was very pleased to see the priority of working with territorial and provincial leaders to make post-secondary education more affordable. Whether it is the skilled trades, college, or university, post-secondary education is the key to our youth succeeding in today's economy. In the Long Range Mountains, we are lucky to have three top-flight post-secondary institutions: Memorial University's Grenfell Campus, the College of the North Atlantic, and Academy Canada. By working to make post-secondary education more affordable, we can ensure that our small businesses can harness their talents to build an economy that will be competitive not just today but for decades to come.

I would like to touch on Memorial University and the Grenfell Campus for a minute. The Grenfell Campus is located in Corner Brook. It was named after Sir Wilfred Grenfell, a medical missionary on the rugged coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. Memorial University itself was founded in honour of the 1,500 Newfoundland and Labradorian soldiers who died fighting in the First World War. It was named by their mothers. They wanted to commemorate their sacrifice, and their memories live on in Memorial University.

We will always remember our fallen and we will always be proud of those who choose to serve, just as we all are of our Canadian Forces. I was very pleased that the additional support for veterans will mean the reopening of the Veterans Affairs offices throughout the country, one of which is in my riding of Corner Brook. These

offices are an important source of care and assistance for the hundreds of thousands of veterans across the country.

The throne speech laid out the theme of investing in our future. Perhaps nowhere is this more important than our relationship with our environment. The pledges in the throne speech to tackle climate change and to focus on the growing economy while protecting our environment are great steps forward for all Canadians. We are lucky to be blessed with a beautiful country and an abundance of resources. By caring for both we will preserve these treasures for the next generation.

In my riding of Long Range Mountains, we enjoy two UNESCO world heritage sites, L'Anse aux Meadows and Gros Morne National Park. Both of these sites, and the many other tourism treasures, contribute to the growing tourism industry, to our small businesses and, most importantly, to our culture and heritage, which is a tad unique in Newfoundland and Labrador. I am thrilled our government has placed a priority on protecting our environment.

I believe the Speech from the Throne laid out an ambitious agenda with a vision that Canadians share, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle delivering for the constituents of the Long Range Mountains and for all Canadians.

As I am the last speaker for today, I would like to take this opportunity to say merry Christmas. Have a safe and happy holiday. We will see everyone in the new year.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary will have five minutes remaining for questions and comments when the House next returns to debate on the question before the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the minister of innovation, science and economic development had indicated he was rising on a point of order. I do note that we are past the usual time of adjournment. I will let him have a brief intervention, but we are out of time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

● (1430)

Mr. Greg Ferguson: Thank you very much for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

There have been discussions among all parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, the Standing Committee on Finance may hold organizational meetings on December 11, 2015 and that the membership of the said committee be as follows: Wayne Easter, Raj Grewal, Steven MacKinnon, Jennifer O'Connell, Robert-Falcon Ouellette, Francesco Sorbara, Lisa Raitt, Ron Liepert, Phil McColeman, Guy Caron, and during its consideration of proceedings, pursuant to Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance, together with any necessary staff, may travel within Canada and may authorize the broadcasting of its proceedings; and that notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to present its report on the pre-budget consultations no later than February 5, 2016.

The Address

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: I know that the hon. House leaders from both sides have intimated this, but as we adjourn the House and get back to our ridings, on behalf of the Speaker and the speakership

generally, I wish all members a very wonderful and happy holiday season and a wonderful New Year to come. May you all have safe travels throughout this holiday season.

It being 2:38 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday, January 25, 2016, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:32 p.m.)

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