



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Friday, June 3, 2016**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 3, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*English*]

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 1

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-15, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** There are nine motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-15. Motions No. 1 to 9 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 9 to the House.

#### MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 26.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 34.

[*English*]

**Hon. Bill Morneau (for the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour)** moved:

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-15, in Clause 212, be amended by:

(a) adding, after the paragraph 12(2.8)(c) that it enacts, the following:

“(c.1) the region of Southern Interior British Columbia described in subsection 7 (1) of that Schedule;”

(b) adding, after the paragraph 12(2.8)(e) that it enacts, the following:

“(e.1) the region of Southern Saskatchewan described in subsection 9(3) of that Schedule;”

(c) adding, after the paragraph 12(2.8)(g) that it enacts, the following:

“(g.1) the region of Edmonton described in subsection 10(2) of that Schedule.”

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP)** moved:

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 233.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 234.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 235.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 236.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-15 be amended by deleting Clause 237.

• (1010)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-15 at report stage.

I was a member of the Standing Committee on Finance, which studied the bill. Unfortunately, I have to say that history is repeating itself. I was on the Standing Committee on Finance for three years during the previous Parliament. If I remember correctly, in those three years, during which we studied six budget implementation bills, the committee considered thousands of pages of amendments but adopted only one, and that was only after a government MP amended the amendment.

In this case, although we were told the government would be more open and willing to co-operate with the opposition, once again, even though our amendments were totally reasonable and intended to correct certain shortcomings in the bill, not one of them was accepted. In fact, during the three or four meetings we had with witnesses, the committee heard some very interesting things about the bill's content, and more importantly, about some of its flaws. Unfortunately, although these flaws were pointed out to the government, it chose not to fix them. In the end, the only amendment that was accepted was a Liberal member's amendment that simply corrected an oversight in the bill. That is another common characteristic of omnibus bills.

The government claims this is not an omnibus bill. After all, it is only 179 pages long. After all, only 35 acts are amended, added, or corrected. However, it is undeniably an omnibus bill, and this means that it is impossible for the committee to properly study the bill and thoroughly analyze its content. Goodness knows that this bill contains important elements that deserve our attention, but unfortunately, we were not able to give it that attention.

*Government Orders*

As the opposition, we managed to draw the government's attention to a flaw in this bill, and the government is trying to rectify that at report stage. As far as employment insurance is concerned, 12 regions are being given the option of extending benefits. Again, that is an arbitrary number chosen by the government. On May 13, the Prime Minister made a statement that caught my attention. He announced that three other regions would be added: Southern Saskatchewan, Edmonton, and British Columbia Southern Interior. During clause-by-clause review of the bill, we were quite surprised to see that those three additions did not actually materialize. The government seemed to have completely forgotten its promise.

We did try to make a correction. Initially, we proposed a bill whereby all regions in the country would be eligible, including those in Quebec, where no regions are currently eligible. This was declared out of order by the Speaker of the House. Then, we tried to add an amendment that added all the eligible regions in the pilot project that was abolished by the Conservatives in 2011-12, which extended benefits by five weeks for regions with high unemployment. That amendment was also declared out of order.

We really tried to reach out to the government by presenting an amendment regarding the three regions that it had already announced would be added to the bill. That amendment was also ruled out of order because we did not have a royal recommendation. The interesting part of all this is that the government did not seem to know what we were talking about. The Liberals were completely confused. We asked the official who was there for more information. She was extremely helpful in answering our questions. However, in the end, we still did not get an answer and we do not know whether the government even realized that there was a problem with the provision or that it was failing to keep the promises it had made not during the election campaign, but two weeks before the committee examined the bill.

Most of this bill seems to be improvised. Some of the decisions set out in it are completely inconsistent with the promises that the current government made during the election campaign. We are now making amendments at report stage.

•(1015)

[English]

One of the changes we are recommending at report stage is to have the government respect and fulfill the commitment it made during the last campaign regarding small and medium-sized businesses.

In 2008, for the first time, the NDP brought forward the idea of decreasing the tax rate for small and medium-sized businesses from 11% to 9%. We did the same in 2011, and in 2015. Although there was not much that we supported in the Conservative government's last budget, to its credit, it actually announced a decrease to this tax rate from 11% to 9% over a period of four years. Therefore, it was an NDP commitment that the Conservative government decided to implement. We were thankful, but wanted it to be sped up by having it implemented over two years rather than four years. However, at least the gesture was there.

It is not often that all three major parties agree on a single measure, but that was the case for the small and medium-sized

business tax cut. We all agreed on it. We all ran on that, including the Liberals.

However, in the first Liberal budget, it states that the tax cut will be frozen at 10.5%. The Liberals even took credit during the budget speeches for that decrease, which was in the previous budget. They basically took credit for not raising it to 11%. I found that disheartening. We brought this topic forward over and over again because small and medium-sized businesses expected it and really counted on that tax cut. They were planning for it because all three parties had agreed. I can say that not one single small and medium-sized business representative, either from the CFIB, my riding, or even other ridings, has applauded the Liberals for this. On the contrary, the comments were scathing. It is disappointing to see the Liberals trying to justify breaking this key electoral promise by talking about anything else.

Although I do not have much time left, I would like to also point out that the Standing Committee on Finance does not seem to understand the key role it has to play in our democracy. This is no reflection on the individual members of the committee, who have actually worked hard and asked good questions. However, the role of the finance committee, like all committees, is to hold government to account.

[Translation]

The government is proposing new laws and amending others. Unfortunately, as we have already said, this government does not seem to listen to the opposition. By introducing omnibus bills, the government is giving us very little time to examine extremely complex measures. That means that we cannot do our job properly, which seems to suit some government members just fine.

Take for example the recapitalization of banks. This measure is extremely important. Honestly, at first glance, I was in favour of it. However, pages 20 to 25 of the bill are extremely technical and they completely change the way that our banks, their shareholders, and depositors are protected if they run into difficulty. We barely talked about that. No witnesses appeared to talk about it. We heard from one official, Mr. Campbell, who was extremely helpful, but we did not have the opportunity to carefully examine, scrutinize, and analyze the ins and outs of that part of the bill, which is extremely important to the future of our country.

I do not think we have managed to do a good job in such little time. I know that Bill C-15 will pass, even though we are going to oppose it, since the government has a majority. However, I would like to tell the government that if it sincerely wants to keep its election promise to increase transparency, it should introduce budget bills that actually deal with budgetary issues. It should not introduce bills that include measures in another law, like Bill C-15, and that include sections that are 25 to 30 pages long on topics that are very important to our country's future. We hope that this government will learn from its mistakes.

*Government Orders*

• (1020)

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his important contribution to the Standing Committee on Finance.

I listened to my hon. colleague's speech. He raised many of the points he raised today in the Standing Committee on Finance. We heard from a number of witnesses, and my colleague had the opportunity to ask questions, get answers, and contribute to the legislation.

During the election campaign, my colleague spoke about supporting families and the middle class. The government has announced measures, such as the tax cut for nine million Canadians and the Canada child benefit, which will help nine out of 10 families and give each family an additional \$2,300 or so.

My colleague represents a rural riding, as do I. I would like to hear his thoughts on how this will affect the communities in his riding.

I would also like to talk about small and medium-sized businesses. My colleague touched on this topic. On this side of the House, we think that a strong economy, in which we give money to middle-class families and Canadian families, will help small businesses.

I would like to hear his thoughts on how the social measures in the budget for middle-class families will affect his riding in Quebec.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As a parliamentary secretary, he attends committee meetings regularly. We have had many opportunities to talk.

His question is an important one, and it was raised many times during committee meetings. When I talked to my constituents about the small business tax cut, they were very supportive. Now that the measure has failed to appear, they no longer have such nice things to say about the government.

The government talks about the middle-class tax cut. A lot. It keeps saying that nine million taxpayers will benefit. That is true, but if you look at it from another perspective, 17 million taxpayers will not benefit at all.

Now I would like to talk about the Canada child tax benefit, which will help a lot of families. It will not, however, help people without children.

I am trying to understand the government's logic when it talks about the so-called middle-class tax cut and the small business tax cuts, which were promised but will not be implemented, in the same breath.

Basically, the Liberals are saying that they are keeping one of their key campaign promises, so they do not need to keep the other. That makes no sense. One is for people, and the other is for small businesses. I would like the government to realize that and act accordingly.

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very informative speech, which really clarified a number of details.

I have a question for the member regarding the tax cuts for small businesses that the Liberals cancelled in budget 2016. What kind of negative impact or repercussions will this have on small businesses? During the election campaign, the Liberals promised a tax credit for hiring young employees. That measure was cancelled, and there was no mention of it in the budget. Yet, this could have encouraged many businesses to hire young people, which would have given more young people jobs and ensured their future. Finally, this also could have helped revitalize our regions. It is hard to keep young people in the regions. Small businesses are often the most likely to be able to hire people and offer high-quality jobs.

**Mr. Guy Caron:** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question.

Although the government says it wants to grow the economy, that is always a very abstract concept. The Conservatives had their way of trying to grow the economy in the past, and now the Liberals are trying their own way. Will it work? I am not sure. Time will tell.

What matters in order for Canadians to trust the institution, in other words, the government, is for the Liberals to keep the promises they made during the election campaign. The small business tax cut, from 11% to 9%, was a key promise that this government did not keep. Canadians notice these things.

Another campaign promise that was broken is the small businesses tax credit for hiring young people. Maybe it will be introduced next year, or in two years, or in three years. Time will tell.

One thing that is clear is that the government seems to have no scruples about breaking its promises and cleaning up messes by simply drawing people's attention to other areas of its agenda. This will not necessarily be useful or beneficial for economic growth.

• (1025)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-15, part of our government's plan to strengthen the middle class and keep Canada's economy strong and growing for the long term.

The measures in the budget implementation act will enable us to move forward on our ambitious economic agenda. It is an agenda that restores hope for the middle class by making smart, necessary investments in our country's future.

It is a plan I was honoured to table in this House on March 22.

[*English*]

Let me begin by emphasizing that we intend to take advantage of a historic opportunity. Thanks to the leadership of governments in the 1990s, Canada's debt position is by far the best in the G7. With interest rates at record lows, now is the time to invest in people and the economy to prepare Canada for a brighter future.

*Government Orders*

Budget 2016 will support the middle class now by helping Canadian families with important and necessary measures, and it lays the foundation for sustainable, long-term economic growth. In particular, on December 7, 2015, we introduced the middle-class tax cut. Nearly nine million Canadians are now benefiting from lower taxes on every paycheck.

As a second step, budget 2016 introduced the new Canada child benefit. Compared with the existing system, the new Canada child benefit will be simpler, more generous, and tax-free. It will also be targeted to those who need it most. With the introduction of the Canada child benefit, about 300,000 fewer children will be living in poverty. In fact, the CCB represents the most significant social policy innovation in a generation. It means real help for real people, and putting more money in the pockets of moms and dads to pay for everything from summer camp to new clothes.

This is only part of what Bill C-15 does to help families directly. In the past, I have spoken in the House about measures that will also help seniors, veterans, and students. Through their efforts, their innovation, and their integrity, Canadians are building a stronger economy for today and for future generations. They rightfully expect their government to work with them in support of those initiatives.

Allow me to highlight a portion of the bill which I have seldom had the chance to address directly in the House.

As members will know, in addition to helping families and making important investments, Bill C-15 also introduces a number of measures in support of our plan to ensure tax fairness and maintain the integrity of the tax system. As we have said many times, we believe all Canadians should be paying their fair share of taxes.

The budget was tabled before this issue dominated the international headlines this spring, but when it did, I am proud to say that Canada was able to stand proud and highlight the action we had just announced in our plan to prevent underground economic activity and tax evasion, as well as aggressive tax planning.

A cornerstone of our action is a \$444-million investment over five years for the Canada Revenue Agency to enhance its efforts to crack down on tax evasion and combat tax avoidance. However, we all recognize that assessing tax revenues alone is not enough, and that is why budget 2016 invests an additional \$351.6 million over five years to improve the CRA's ability to go after and collect those outstanding tax debts.

In addition, Canada's tax system needs ongoing adjustment to ensure that it is functioning as intended and contributing to the objective of an economy that works for everyone. We believe a stronger revenue base will help support our new investments in education, infrastructure, training, and other programs that will help to secure a better quality of life for Canada's indigenous people, building a stronger, more unified, more prosperous Canada. These are just a few of the measures in the bill.

● (1030)

[*Translation*]

However, to ensure a brighter future for our kids and grandkids we have to plan much further ahead. As we look out over the horizon we see challenges and we see a world of opportunity.

For starters, Canada's population is aging. The global economy is volatile. Oil prices are unpredictable. We need to take steps to improve competitiveness and productivity in Canada so that we become drivers of our own success now, and in a generation from now.

[*English*]

As our workforce ages and shrinks, real GDP growth has been forecast to slow from about 3% enjoyed since 1970 to slightly less than 2% over the next 15 years, a one percentage point drop. Productivity is key to a growing economy because when output per worker is higher, firms can pay their employees more, families can work less while earning more, and companies can return larger dividends to their investors or reinvest in their businesses.

I am proud to be working with my cabinet colleagues, the ministers of innovation, trade, labour, and infrastructure, on delivering our long-term growth agenda, but we know that we do not have all of the answers and we are open to innovative new ideas. That is why, a few weeks ago, I hosted my inaugural meeting of the advisory council on economic growth.

Through this growth council, we have brought together some of the best minds, who bring a global perspective and wide-ranging experience that will help us shape the government's growth strategy. The council will help generate the bold and innovative ideas needed to create and sustain long-term economic growth that benefits the middle class and those who are working hard to join it. We want Canadians to be able to afford to send their kids to a quality day care or help their teenagers with a college education and tuition. We want to ensure that every Canadian can put away enough money for a safe and secure retirement.

To conclude, we know the challenges that we face will not be solved overnight or by a single budget, but we also know that good government is not just about today and tomorrow. It is also about the years and decades to come. That is where our focus will be and will continue to be.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and not only thank the minister for his speech but to inform the House that it is my birthday. I know that in the interest of non-partisanship, the minister wants to bring joy to any parliamentarian on his or her birthday and one way that he could do that is to announce that he will rise and vote in favour of the amendment to keep the Liberal promise to lower small business taxes to 9%. That would make the day of 700,000 middle-class small business owners, who are the leading job creators for our country.

I think that the Liberal Party understands that, because it committed in the last election to honour previous Conservative tax reductions for these great entrepreneurs. There was an unfortunate mistake in the budget drafting, which reversed that promise. I know that he will want to correct it. I wonder if he would rise today and announce that he will support this opposition amendment to the bill so that we can lower taxes for Canada's best job creators.

• (1035)

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying happy birthday. It is a great day, I suppose, for at least one member on the opposite side of the House.

I want to say as well that I think it is a great day for Canadians when we talk about a budget bill that is going to help them and their families. The member opposite pointed out that it is important to help those in the middle class. We recognize that so many Canadian business owners are themselves in the middle class.

Our focus has very much been around helping Canadians improve their lots in life. We have put a tax reduction in for middle-class Canadians, reducing taxes significantly, helping nine million Canadians. Importantly, the kinds of things we are doing, together with the change in the Canada child benefit that will help nine out of 10 families with children, will help people in this country who are working hard to have a good life for themselves and their families, and who are going to purchase the goods and services provided by small and medium-sized enterprises.

In that regard, we know that we are going to help our economy. We know that we are going to help small and medium-sized businesses by growing the economy. More importantly, in the future, the kinds of measures we are taking will improve our growth rate. That will raise the opportunity for all businesses in this country to be successful and I am sure will make future birthdays for my colleague across the way that much better.

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the budget included a temporary extension of employment insurance benefits, supposedly in response to the drop in oil prices. Initially, the government announced that 12 regions would be included. It then added three more regions, but failed to include them in the legislation, so the NDP has tried to help out by putting forward an amendment to include those three regions.

However, even with that change, we are still in a situation where among the eight EI regions in Alberta and Saskatchewan seven will receive the benefit extension, but Regina still will not. I wonder if the Minister of Finance could explain if he thinks it is reasonable to exclude this one part of the two main oil and gas producing provinces from the EI benefit extension and whether he could commit today to include Regina so that all of Alberta and

Saskatchewan would be part of this extension of EI benefits for laid-off workers from the oil and gas sector.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member shares with all of us in the House a deep concern for people who have been affected by significant changes in the global economy that have resulted in significant changes to the price of oil in our country. Those impacts are being felt by Canadians across the country, but in particular in some hard-hit regions.

We decided that we would like to focus on helping Canadians in multiple ways, generally, across the country, recognizing that Canadians need to be supported in a time of economic challenge, and more specifically in certain regions.

The general measures that we have put in around employment insurance are important. We made improvements in the EI system to allow people to get into the system more rapidly, and increased the training that they can access.

The specific measures help people in particular regions that have been particularly hard hit. We think they are appropriate, and we are pleased to do that to ensure that we allow our economy to do better in the future.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, people love to cheer on the underdog. Think of movies, like *Rocky*, *Rudy*, and Will Smith's *The Pursuit of Happyness*, or think of the great legends like David and Goliath.

Speaking of another legend, Robin Hood, our opponents are always telling us that the reason we need big government is to take from the rich and give to the poor, but big government always seems to send the money in the opposite direction.

The latest Bombardier bailout would take a billion middle-class tax dollars and give it to a company of billionaire owners and millionaire executives. Ontario's Green Energy Act forces low-income families to buy overpriced electricity from millionaire insiders. Government-mandated cartels in the taxi sector empower millionaire taxi-plate owners to rip off cab drivers and their passengers.

It is the insider economy. Those who can afford to lobby government and game the rules of government always win with bigger government. The underdogs are left to fight their own battles. We need to fight along their side. That means fighting for immigrants who are qualified as engineers or doctors, but who are forced into minimum-wage jobs because bureaucracy blocks them from their professions. It means financial transparency, so an aboriginal woman can hold her leaders accountable for how they spend her money.

*Government Orders*

It means further lowering taxes for the poor, so that work always pays more than welfare. Speaking of welfare, we should get tough on welfare for the incompetent millionaire CEO who is coming back to the government for yet another bailout and another handout from working-class taxpayers.

I believe it is time we shut down the insider economy and open up the free market economy, which is the greatest poverty-fighting machine ever invented. In so doing, let us all become champions of Canada's underdogs.

That is the basis upon which I approach any budget question. It has been proven time and time again that bigger and more bureaucratic government makes for poorer and less prosperous citizens. There are exceptions, of course, people with connections and people with well-paid lobbyists. They always do better.

We can expect that with recent Liberal announcements of new so-called climate change initiatives, we will see certain insiders, who call themselves green energy entrepreneurs and consultants, make millions of dollars. They have made millions of dollars on the backs of working-class Ontarians ever since the passage of the so-called Green Energy Act. They will make hundreds of millions of dollars more with the Ontario government's recent announcement, backed by the Prime Minister, that it will impose new taxes and regulations on Ontario families to pay for the enormous costs of the province's so-called climate change agenda.

The recent budget set aside hundreds of millions of new dollars in new subsidies for these same insiders. It is incumbent upon all of us to see who ends up getting the money. The question of social justice should weigh heavy on every single policy decision a government makes. There are two questions we should ask, therefore, regarding social justice of every policy a government implements. Those questions are these. From whom? To whom? Any expenditure of money takes money from somebody and gives it to somebody else.

● (1040)

The government has made a great rhetorical priority for the question of redistributing wealth and I believe that it will redistribute a lot of wealth. I believe also on close examination that redistribution will take money from the people who need it most and give it to the well-connected millionaire insiders who are most linked to the current government and its decision-makers.

Over the next three and a half years, my goal, and I hope the goal of the entire opposition, will be to stand up for those underdogs who actually earn their own money instead of those who are privileged and powerful and use that privilege and power to feast off the labours of other people. I think we will see that the real champions of social justice are those who expound the free enterprise economy.

Over the last 10 years while the Conservative government was in power, people in the lowest 10% of income earners saw their incomes rise by 14%. That is after tax and after inflation. Middle-class Canadians saw their incomes rise by 10%, after tax and after inflation. The share of wealth controlled by the top 1% actually declined in Canada, bucking trends to the contrary all around the world.

How is it then that the Liberal budget produced a graph that suggested that the middle class had not had a raise in 40 years? The

information came from the Department of Finance. I said it cannot be true because we know that the last 10 years saw the middle class gain 10% after tax and inflation. How is it possible?

I looked at the data and the Liberal budget was right. The after-tax incomes of people were just slightly higher in 2015 than they had been 40 years earlier after accounting for inflation. How did that happen? The answer is that it actually took us 30 years to recover from the absolutely devastating economic policies of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The current Prime Minister is right. After accounting for the devastating decline in middle-class incomes that occurred in the seventies and early eighties under the national energy program and the big government centralized socialist approach to government, it actually took us three decades to recover the income growth of Canadians. Three decades and I am proud to say that the greatest growth of all, according to the Department of Finance data that was highlighted in the Liberal budget, occurred in the last 10 years when the previous Conservative prime minister was leading the government.

It is true that the middle class did not have an effective raise from 40 years back to the present, but in the last 10 years we have been correcting for that. What is most troubling is that the government does not learn from the graph that it put in its own budget. It is now repeating the very same policies that led to such devastating middle-class income declines: expanding governments, out of control deficits, more and more regulations that hold people down and suffocate our entrepreneurs.

I ask that the government learn from history rather than repeating history. We know what works. We know what has failed. Let us look at the evidence and the facts and choose the right path, the path of the underdog, where Canadians get ahead based on their merit, not on their connections, where people who work hard, pay their taxes, and play by the rules can achieve great things for themselves, their families, and their communities and where we shut down the insider economy and open up the free market economy as the greatest poverty-fighting machine the world has ever invented. Then and only then we can all say that we are champions of the underdog.

● (1045)

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for that thunderclap from the failed school of supply-side economics. I guess they were going to get to that in the fourth mandate.



*Government Orders*

[Translation]

My friend across the way talks about insiders, friends, as though he never had a file to defend. I have a question for him about friends. We define insiders or friends as, for example, the unemployed workers who fell victim to the drop in oil prices in western Canada, the parents of poor families who will have to raise their children below the poverty line, and the farmers whose Canadian Wheat Board was stolen from them under the previous government. Those people were not friends of the Conservative government.

I would like to know how my friend, the member across the way, defines these parents, these unemployed workers, and these farmers. How were they treated in our budget?

• (1050)

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I am thankful the member raised the plight of working low-income people, for example. Those people have benefited by our previous government's decision to raise the personal exemption, which literally liberated hundreds of thousands of people from taxes altogether. Many low-income people actually saw their income tax drop by 100% while we were in government. We were proud to reward their hard work. We wanted to ensure that work always paid more than welfare, so people who made the decision to enter the workforce and earn some money would always be better off. That was the approach our previous government took.

Speaking of supply-side economics, the Liberals are the ones who believe in trickle-down government, this notion that if they tax enough from working families, from the poor and the middle class, and then take that money and give it to powerful and wealthy insiders like the billionaires who control Bombardier and the so-called green-energy entrepreneurs who have made hundreds of millions of dollars off of artificially inflated electricity contracts, somehow that money will trickle down and help the poor. We know that does not work. It does not trickle down. It is people on the ground who work hard who lift us all up, and those are the people on whose side we will fight.

[Translation]

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Carleton for his speech.

Obviously, the NDP's economic plan does not have much in common with the Conservatives', but my colleague will agree with me that, if there was one thing that all three parties agreed on during the election campaign, it was that the tax rate of SMEs should be lowered from 11% to 9%.

When I talk to my constituents, particularly small and medium-business owners, they tell me that they had planned for new investments, new hires, and pay raises for their employees over the next two to four years. Now, they are being left disappointed. They have to quickly change their economic outlook and plan for growth.

Can my colleague talk about the reality of SMEs in his riding? How will these businesses have to adjust because the Liberals broke their promise?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that all of the parties agreed to lower taxes for our small and medium-sized businesses. That is why we included that measure in our 2015 budget. In their election platform, the Liberals promised to lower our entrepreneurs' taxes.

Because of their broken promise, the Liberals are going to take \$2 billion away from our SMEs over the next five years. Meanwhile, the Liberal governments of Quebec and Canada are going to give that \$2 billion to Bombardier, a company controlled by millionaires.

We would rather leave money in the pockets of the entrepreneurs who earned it instead of giving it, in the form of a subsidy, to a company that is far too cozy with the Liberal government. That is the difference in our approach.

[English]

We would leave the money in the pockets of small business people who earned it, rather than giving it to the billionaires who did not.

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, it might be a great day for the member for Cambridge because it is his birthday, but it is an even better day for Canadians. It will be a great year for Canadians. It might be a great day for him, but it is a great year for Canadians.

I was deeply disturbed when I listened to the member for Cambridge speaking against Canadian industries. That is not the first time I have heard him do that. Just yesterday he insulted our aerospace industry. When he talks about insiders, I wish I had the opportunity to ask him who he considered insiders among the nine million Canadians for whom we reduced taxes since January 1, 2016? Perhaps the nine families out of ten that will receive more benefits through our Canada child benefits? Perhaps the 300,000 children who will be lifted out of poverty. Maybe he is talking about the 250,000 students who will be better off with our student grants. Perhaps he is talking about 900,000 seniors who will be better off with our budget.

I respect the member for Cambridge a lot, but I am deeply perplexed when he talks about insiders. Maybe that was the Conservative way of doing government, but our government is about the middle class. It is about middle-class families, it is about helping Canadian families and it is about helping Canadians.

I had the great privilege of going across this nation with the Minister of Finance. I personally went from Moncton to Yellowknife, engaging with thousands of Canadians, talking about their dreams and their concerns. The Minister of Finance did the same. He went from Halifax to Vancouver. We engaged with Canadians. This was unprecedented. I think the member would be interested in listening to that, a different way of doing government, open, talking with Canadians, something the previous government did not do very much.

I wish members had been with me everywhere I went. They would have seen how many Canadians showed up in our meetings to engage with us and talk to us about their dreams and what they wanted for this economy.

*Statements by Members*

People said two simple things: they asked us to help them and their families, and help them to grow the economy. When people asked for help for themselves and their families, we responded.

I would like to apologize. I was referring to the member for Carleton, not to the member for Cambridge. He is listening carefully and he knows what I meant. If it is the only mistake I have made, I will take it. When I listen to the mistakes my colleagues on the other side have made, I would not be boasting in the House.

However, Canadians asked us to help them and their families. The first thing the government did was to reduce taxes for Canadians, nine million Canadians, the insiders who the member for Carleton is talking about, the nine million Canadians who are paying less taxes since January 1, 2016.

These people wanted help because they were hurting. They said that they had not seen growth in their income for the last 10 years of Conservative government. They had nothing to show for it. We therefore reduced taxes for them.

After that, we did something for families. The Canada child benefit is one of the most progressive policies since universal health care in our country. This policy is about helping the insiders, those who the member for Carleton talked about, the nine out of ten families. These insiders will benefit from a much simpler allocation to help raise children, buy clothes, and send the children to camp this summer. This allocation will even be non-taxable. We are talking about \$2,300 more, on average, in the pockets for Canadian families.

Let us get back to what it means for people. If we look at a riding like mine, Saint-Maurice—Champlain where the average income is probably one of the lowest in the country, that may give families 10% of additional disposable income, and that is significant. I am very proud to be on this side of the House because those measures will help families. These measures are meaningful for people. This is not about talk; this is about action.

We promised during the campaign that we would be there for families for once. This is a government of families. This is a government of middle-class Canadians and those who are working hard to join it, not a government of insiders to which the previous government liked to refer.

● (1055)

This is what people had to say. After they asked for help for themselves and their families, they said that they wanted to see the economy to grow. After 10 years of low growth, they wanted a bit of growth in the country. We answered that with our infrastructure program. We are talking about \$120 billion over 10 years. We are talking about \$11.9 billion in phase one.

Let us talk about that for a minute. We have talked about public transit, something that is dearly needed in our cities as goods and people need to move. I have been in many cities where people have said that they need public transit.

● (1100)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Order, please. We will break for statements by members. Once debate resumes, the hon. member will have another 4 minutes and 30 seconds, plus five minutes for questions.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

[*Translation*]

**KABYLE PEOPLE**

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Charter recognizes the right of peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they have the right freely to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

The right of peoples to self-determination is part of the movement in support of cultural and linguistic diversity around the world, in Scotland, Catalonia, Palestine, Kabylia, and Quebec.

I would like to acknowledge the presence in Ottawa of an activist for the self-determination of the Kabyle people, Kamira Nait Sid, who is the president of the World Amazigh Congress.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois and Quebec separatists, I want to express our solidarity with the Kabyle people in their fight for freedom and for their cultural and linguistic identity. Like them, we believe that fair and peaceful globalization is not achieved by domination, but by respect among peoples.

Long live a free Kabylia—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Order.

The hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

\* \* \*

**REPUBLIC DAY IN ITALY**

**Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Italy's Republic Day, which commemorates Italy's independence.

[*English*]

For over a century, Italians have successfully immigrated to Canada in search of a new life, and here they have found one. Whether through our skill, intellect, music, food, and yes our wine, Italian Canadians have contributed richly to the culture and prosperity of this great country.

Here in the House, it is a privilege to follow in the footsteps of many Italian Canadians who came before me, and to serve with colleagues now on both sides of the aisle who have Italian roots.

I invite them and indeed all members to join us for Italian Day on the Hill on June 15, when we will celebrate the heritage and values of over 1.5 million members of the Italian Canadian community.

*Vive l'Italie. Vive le Canada.*

\* \* \*

**SASKATCHEWAN RUSH**

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to tell the House about the Saskatchewan Rush, a professional lacrosse team based in my city of Saskatoon.

*Statements by Members*

The Rush is a member of the National Lacrosse League. The team relocated from Edmonton last year after capturing the championship. Now the team has a chance to win back-to-back championships. Tomorrow, it will host the Buffalo Bandits in the second game of a best-of-three championship. The Rush won the opening game in Buffalo last week. Over 15,000 fans will be on hand tomorrow night at SaskTel Centre.

We wish head coach Derek Keenan and the entire team the best of luck as Canada's national game, lacrosse, is highlighted tomorrow in Saskatoon.

\* \* \*

**ALEX HARRY**

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to pay honour and tribute to former Sault Ste. Marie mayor, Alex Harry, who passed away recently.

Mr. Harry was a great advocate for our community. He served as mayor and as an alderman. He was a successful lawyer, the area director for legal aid, and served on the boards of Sault College, St. Mary's River bridge company, Algoma Public Health, and others.

While mayor, he led the charge to amalgamate Korah to the City of Sault Ste. Marie. He opened the Centennial branch of the Sault public library and spearheaded the creation of Algoma College, which is now Algoma University.

He was a devoted husband of 60 years to his wife Shirley, a proud father, a proud grandfather, a good friend, and a staunch Liberal. He did many great things for the community. He helped me out when I started my political career. The people of the riding have described him as kind, intelligent, humble, devoted, but the best way to describe Alex is as a perfect gentleman.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in celebrating his life today in the House of Commons.

\* \* \*

**YWCA WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS**

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour to rise in the House today and recognize Ms. Maria Jane Linklater, an elder, mentor, cultural leader, and residential school survivor, living and teaching in Saskatoon West.

Maria was born on Thunderchild First Nation, is proudly Plains Cree, and is unmatched in her capacity for generosity, kindness, and strength. On May 27th, Maria won the 2016 YWCA Women of Distinction award for community building in Saskatoon, and duly received a standing ovation.

By almost any definition, Maria has raised and guided an entire community. Much of her life has been dedicated to child welfare. She has personally cared for over 350 foster children, each time providing these children with a safe and loving environment, while encouraging pride in their cultural identity.

As testament to her character, her acceptance speech consisted of the words, "All women are winners." I encourage members to join me in congratulating Maria on this honour.

● (1105)

**OTTAWA SENATORS**

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to salute the wonderful career and contributions of Chris Phillips, who played his entire 19-year and 1,293-game career for the Ottawa Senators in my riding of Kanata—Carleton. He also represented Canada as a world junior, winning the gold medal twice, in 1996 and 1997.

In addition to his on-ice success, Chris and his wife Erin have become pillars in the Ottawa community, lending support to over 20 charities: Candlelighters, CHEO, Hockey Fights Cancer, Movember, Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival, Project Step, Project North, The Snowsuit Fund, the Queensway Carleton Hospital Foundation, and so many more.

He has also worked hard to raise awareness and funds for his hometown of Fort McMurray.

Please join me in thanking Chris Phillips for his service to Ottawa, and in wishing him, his wife Erin, and their three children, a happy retirement.

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**COMMUNITIES FOR VETERANS FOUNDATION**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to speak about one of the many great organizations in my riding of Cariboo—Prince George.

In 2015, Paul and Terry Nichols founded the Communities for Veterans Foundation, riding across Canada on horseback. Their goal was to bring awareness to communities about the changing face of Canadian veterans suffering from PTSD, and to help veterans transition from military culture into civilian culture through equine therapy.

Beginning on May 22nd, 10 veterans from across the country, suffering from PTSD, took part in a 14-day equine therapy program. They were paired with a horse for the duration of their stay, learning to care for their horse's physical and mental needs. The course provided veterans with awareness and skills that are transferable outside of the arena and into relationships, work, and the community. Today, those 10 veterans graduate from this program.

I would like our veterans and first responders who are suffering from PTSD to know that they are not alone.

I would also like to thank Paul and Terry for the contributions they are making, not only in Cariboo—Prince George, but across Canada.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**MARIA LABRECQUE-DUCHESNEAU**

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about an exceptional woman. Maria Labrecque-Duchesneau, a farmer's daughter, is a psychosocial worker. In 2000, she founded Au coeur des familles agricoles, the only organization of its kind in Quebec, whose mission is to create a support network in the agricultural community.

I worked with her when I served as president of the organization, so I saw first-hand just how much she accomplished. I would like to share just some of her achievements. She developed the concept of farm outreach workers, created an LGBT farmers' club, produced the first rural good neighbour guidelines, and opened the first farmers' respite house. These wonderful accomplishments flow from her boundless dedication, a boon to farmers everywhere.

Today, Maria will receive an honorary doctorate from McGill University in recognition of her work and her involvement. That is why I am taking a few moments here in the House to salute her and thank her from the bottom of my heart.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CITIZENS FROM VIMY**

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, recognizing the accomplishments of deserving constituents enhances our community spirit. Today, I am proud to honour two individuals from Vimy.

[Translation]

Marie-Ève Gauthier, an early childhood educator, won the 2015 Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education at the Centre de la petite enfance du Pic Bois. The award recognizes contributions in care for ages 0 to 5.

Samuel San Vachon, a talented young musician, has been selected to join the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. After years of rigorous training and development, he will be travelling across the country, and around the world, to play for thousands of people.

[English]

I would like to congratulate them on their achievements and for exhibiting excellence in their personal and professional affairs. They are an inspiration for us all.

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**CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN ALBERTA**

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Camrose and district Chamber of Commerce for winning the 2015-16 Chamber of the Year Award for the under 650 member category.

Since 1908, the Camrose and district chamber has served our local businesses, entrepreneurs, and professionals. Most recently, the Camrose Chamber of Commerce has earned a high profile for its work on policy development with the Alberta Chambers of Commerce and also the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

In my large rural riding, there are other chambers and local organizations, both large and very small. Their members work hard to keep them strong and are able to serve the smallest towns and villages, and even the most remote communities. They host many events that help local businesses. They provide an educational role for our entrepreneurs and build a strong network for local business communities.

I congratulate all members of local chambers of commerce in Battle River—Crowfoot.

\* \* \*

• (1110)

**FILIPINO HERITAGE**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on June 4, at the Philippine cultural centre in Winnipeg, people will witness a flag raising ceremony which will begin a week-long celebration of Filipino heritage and pride. Here in Ottawa, we will be having a flag raising ceremony on June 9.

Both flag raising ceremonies are meant to recognize a significant date in history. It was on June 12, 1898, in Cavite, where the Filipino community witnessed the public reading of the Declaration of Independence. The national flag was also unveiled, along with the singing of the new Filipino national anthem.

The Philippines is a beautiful country, a place where I have been on many occasions, and most recently with my daughter Cindy, in 2014. My desire is to see an expanded relationship between Philippines and Canada, and as the co-chair of the Canada-Philippines Parliamentary Friendship Group here in Ottawa, we will promote Filipino heritage and a better relationship between our two great nations.

On behalf of the Prime Minister and my caucus, I stand to acknowledge 118 years of Philippine independence, and say to my kabayans and friends, let us celebrate our diversity and treasure our heritage.

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**REPUBLIC DAY IN ITALY**

**Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, June 2 was the 70th anniversary of the proclamation of the Italian Republic. This marked the beginning of a new era for Italy of rebuilding the country and its relationships. We now count the Italian Republic as one of our closest friends and allies.

In the past 70 years, many Italians looked abroad for a country which could give them a new beginning for themselves and their families. Canada was one of those countries. We now count 1.5 million Canadians of Italian heritage among us.

My riding of York Centre has a large and vibrant Italian community, who have built their lives, our communities, and our cities. I am proud to represent a riding that serves as such a model of our diversity.

*Auguri alla Repubblica Italiana per questo anniversario e grazie alla comunità italo-canadese per il suo ruolo nella vita del Canada.*

*Statements by Members***TAXATION**

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our friends in Newfoundland and Labrador are suffering from the provincial Liberal's tax increase on gasoline. Rather than provide a plan to grow the economy, Newfoundland and Labrador's Liberal government has chosen to raise taxes. The old Liberal tax-and-spend approach only succeeds in lowering the standard of living for hard-working Canadian families.

This disappointing choice made by the Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador should remind all Canadians that the low taxes we are benefitting from right now are not permanent and that governments can always raise them.

As a Conservative, I stand with my colleagues to keep taxes low for a better plan to grow our economy.

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**CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE**

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we are celebrating tourism in Canada, I am delighted to invite all members to visit beautiful Châteauguay—Lacolle, a region hugging the south shore of Montreal and boasting many attractions.

[*Translation*]

For example, it boasts the Circuit du Paysan, a route that winds through Montérégie and can be enjoyed by car or bicycle, allowing visitors to discover unique local products and magnificent heritage buildings.

Visitors can stop and see St-Cyprien-de-Napierville, the birth place of legendary strongman Louis Cyr.

There is also the Fiesta des cultures de Saint-Rémi, a festival all about discovering new cultures. Our foreign workers are celebrated, as festivalgoers learn more about Latin American history, gastronomy, and art.

[*English*]

Last but not least, Île Saint-Bernard in Châteauguay offers terrific eco-friendly activities, such as discovery cruises and a nature interpretation centre.

I am looking forward to seeing one and all in Châteauguay—Lacolle.

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**WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Sunday is World Environment Day, a day we celebrate in over 100 countries every year on June 5 to raise awareness about the positive steps we can take to protect our planet.

[*Translation*]

As always, NDP members remain committed to making sure that Canada sets a positive example in the fight against climate change. We are also committed to restoring the environmental protections that were gutted by the Conservative government.

● (1115)

[*English*]

Eight months into its mandate, we have seen not enough from the new government that moves us beyond the Conservatives' weak climate change targets and the protections for our lakes, rivers, and fish and wildlife habitat that the Conservatives tore to shreds.

[*Translation*]

This day is also an opportunity to celebrate Canada's positive transition towards a greener, cleaner economy.

[*English*]

This World Environment Day, New Democrats call on the government to take real action to repair the damage done and to get to work setting the course for a positive and prosperous future.

On behalf of Canada's New Democrats, I want to wish the House and all Canadians a happy World Environment Day.

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**FORT MCMURRAY FIRE**

**Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be forever grateful for the incredible support and compassion of the Canadian people. I can only begin to express how thankful I am to all the firefighters, emergency responders, and everyone involved in making the city safe. To all of those Canadians who have generously given to the Red Cross and to my colleagues here today who have continued to offer their generous support, I say, "Thank you".

In the coming weeks and months, residents of Fort McMurray will be returning to their homes where they will begin to pick up the pieces and rebuild from this tragedy. Business owners and residents alike, already hit hard by low oil prices, will need assistance from the federal government. We understand that no one will work harder or do a better job at rebuilding Fort McMurray than those people who call it home.

Contractors and construction companies in Fort McMurray that were hit hardest by the downturn must be on the front lines of rebuilding the city. Just as Fort McMurray will come together to rebuild, the House has come together and put aside its political differences to rally behind my city.

Also, I would like to wish my wife a happy birthday.

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**RAMADAN**

**Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, next week there will be hundreds of thousands of Canadians who will be celebrating Ramadan. In my own riding, there will be many thousands, and of course across the world, hundreds of millions. I want to take this opportunity to wish all those who are celebrating Ramadan, *Ramadan Mubarak*.

### Oral Questions

Last year, I had the opportunity to fast for the entire period of Ramadan. It is something I am going to do again in support of a charity called Give 30. People take the money that they save from fasting every day and give it to those who are more needy, particularly food banks.

When I fasted, it was an incredible experience to feel what it was like to be hungry. Of course, I got relief at the end of the day, but for many children, unfortunately, in Canada and around the world, that relief never comes. They have to make it through a day and try to learn and prepare for their future without the aid of food.

This charity gives an opportunity to reflect upon that and use the power of Ramadan to help others.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberals finally showed Canadians how they really plan to decide on a new electoral process, and it is the same old Liberal way: behind closed doors.

In typical Liberal fashion, they cooked up a deal that leaves Canadians on the outside looking in. Canadians do not want the future of their democracy decided by secret deals and party insiders. When will the Liberals open the doors to Canadians and agree to hold a national referendum?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we showed exactly how Parliament can work together by reaching across and finding common ground. The reality is that we reached out as well to the Conservative Party and asked if we could make this unanimous. I still hold out that hope, particularly when I read a tweet that the Conservatives sent on May 12 that says to the NDP, “this is one issue we can agree on” with respect to the motion that was put forward yesterday.

I am confused. If they agreed with it on May 12, if they thought it was a good idea on May 12, and if they thought this was a productive process, why are they not working with us now?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians overwhelmingly agree that we need a national referendum. In fact, almost 14 million Canadians, three-quarters of eligible voters, voted in the last national referendum, which was on the Charlottetown accord in 1992. To equal those numbers, 40,000 Canadians would have to show up in town halls across this country in every constituency in Canada. Why is the minister denying the average Canadians the right to vote in a referendum?

• (1120)

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the last Parliament we saw exactly how we do not want to deal with an issue like electoral reform. We saw the Conservatives bring forward an election act that did not consult Canadians at all. In fact, they did not even consult Elections Canada. They accepted no amendments. They refused to work with other parties.

What we saw yesterday is a new approach, reaching across the aisle and saying, “Let us find middle ground”, giving up a majority even when we have one, saying that we have to compromise to ensure that we improve our electoral system and make it stronger for Canadians. That recognizes that more than 60% of Canadians voted in the last election to have a new electoral system.

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, why do Liberals not trust average Canadians? Canada has the strongest democracy in the world. An overwhelming majority of Canadians believe that something as important and as vital as the way that we elect our members of Parliament—something that we have done over the last 150 years quite well, by the way—should be decided in a national referendum. Why are the Liberals more committed to backroom deals and secret deals than to giving Canadians a voice through a national referendum?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, they categorize reaching out to every single party and asking what their ideas are and trying to find unanimity as a backroom deal.

The reality is that the Conservatives had every opportunity in this process to move amendments yesterday. Did they move a single amendment? No. They had every opportunity today to talk about how they could improve this committee process to engage Canadians. Did they take that opportunity? No.

We provided an opportunity in the amendment we moved for them to discuss these issues. The forum is there in the committee. If the Conservatives want to discuss how to engage and get the support of Canadians, they can participate in the process and help improve our democracy.

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday Canadians were quite surprised to see the birth of this Liberal-NDP coalition.

I cannot believe that the Prime Minister said that referendums are a way of preventing change. This shows a real lack of respect for Canadians, and the NDP is condoning that.

Canadians are smart, and in any self-respecting democracy, they should have a chance to weigh in on such a fundamental issue, by way of a referendum.

Can the minister confirm to the House that a referendum will be held after the consultations?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we saw yesterday was certainly surprising.

It was definitely surprising that all parties of the House of Commons were able to work together and reach a consensus. I hope that the Conservative Party will work with us and that we will somehow reach a consensus on how to improve our electoral system.

*Oral Questions*

This is a huge opportunity for Canada. It is time to get to work.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not understand the Prime Minister's stubborn refusal to hold a referendum.

Yesterday, his own minister did not close the door on a referendum. The day before yesterday, the hon. member for Mount Royal said, "I am not against the idea. A referendum is a tool we could use." Last month, the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons initially rejected the idea, but then seemed more open to having a referendum.

The government wants to be open and transparent and to instill trust in Canadians. Then why does the government not tell Canadians that following consultation, it will give them the final say through a referendum?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party said online that it supported the idea of all parties working together without a Liberal Party majority. Now the Conservatives are against that. There is an opportunity here, and I hope that the Conservative Party will work with us, to discuss the issues in committee and improve our voting system.

\* \* \*

• (1125)

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport just asked his department if it is possible to take the DOT-111 cars out of service more quickly. Is that a coincidence? The Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities is in Lac-Mégantic today. It is hard to take that action seriously since it reeks of improvisation.

The minister has been in office for seven months, but he waited until today to decide to start thinking about taking action. Meanwhile, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada sounded the alarm a long time ago.

Will the minister stop with the public relations strategies and finally tell us when the DOT-111 cars will be phased out?

**Mr. Pablo Rodríguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government knows how important it is to make sure that our rail transportation system is safe. With that in mind, we are investing \$143 million to improve rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods.

This year, we will provide \$10.9 million to update over 400 level crossings across the country. These positive developments are in keeping with the minister's mandate to improve rail safety.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during his trip to Lac-Mégantic, the minister gave a geography lesson on valleys in Canada but refused to address residents' concerns. One resident summed up the minister's remarks, saying, "He seemed to be trying to placate the public, and I think he missed the mark."

The people of Lac-Mégantic have simple requests.

Will the minister finally listen to them and commit to repairing the existing railways and funding a bypass?

**Mr. Pablo Rodríguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the government knows how important it is to make sure that our rail transportation system is safe.

The minister did go to Lac-Mégantic. He listened to residents, who lived through this horrible tragedy, and he will continue to listen to them. Our hearts go out to these residents, and we are keeping them in our thoughts.

I want to point out again that the committee is there today to listen and look at possible measures, and we will listen. One thing is clear: safety is our top priority.

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[English]

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I smile because only Conservatives could call a proposal we made in public four months ago in a debate that we had on the floor of the House of Commons "a backroom deal".

After eight months of political impasse and a discredited process from the government, New Democrats were proud to put forward a motion to engage all parties in Parliament to create a process that is fair for the millions of Canadians we represent.

Now that the logjam has been cleared, what is the government going to do to ensure that all MPs have the resources and tools available so that all Canadians can participate in this historic process?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Before going on to the parliamentary secretary, my ears are getting older and all this chatter back and forth really makes it difficult for me to hear. I would ask everyone to respect the process and let the one person who has the floor speak.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite, not just for the motion but for the collaborative spirit with which he has been operating on this file. It is my hope that will pervade this entire process.

If we are going to change our electoral system, if we are going to ensure that Canadians have a better way to express their democratic will, then it is going to take everyone in this House working together. In terms of how we move forward from this point, I am glad that the motion has a clear date for when that committee is going to be set. It will be a maximum of 10 days after it is approved. The committee does need to be resourced so it can travel across the country. We need to support every MP to have town halls in all 338 ridings.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after decades of fighting for a more equal voting process, civil society groups are keen to mobilize Canadians for change. We have created together a historic opportunity to engage millions of Canadians who have been turned off and tuned out of our politics.

*Oral Questions*

We are looking for specific tools that MPs can use and that the government will create with us to reach out to young people, aboriginal Canadians, and people living in poverty to finally open the door to all Canadians.

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, certainly we want to work with not only the member opposite but with all members of the House to ensure that all Canadians are included in this process, particularly those who traditionally have been disenfranchised.

That of course will mean travel and going directly to talk with these groups. It will mean using innovative digital means to ensure that Canadians can engage, particularly when they are remote or where that connection physically is otherwise difficult for them.

I think the spirit that Parliament shows is incredibly important. In this, I turn to all members of the House and specifically to the Conservative Party to say that there is an opportunity to take the issues they have, the concerns they have, to focus them through the committee process. We have opened that door. Work with us and let us improve our democracy.

● (1130)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Before I go to the next question, I want to thank the hon. members. That was really much easier for me to hear.

The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think they all fell silent in anticipation of my question.

The Prime Minister favours a ranked ballot and always has. What a surprise, his government has turned around and hired an activist for ranked ballots to advocate on behalf of ranked ballots. This is all before any committee process.

The message is very clear. The fix is in, as it has always been for the Liberals' preferred system, but Canadians are sending the message back. The Liberals can choose the system, but they must let the voters vote on it in a referendum. Will the government allow a referendum so that Canadians can decide whether the new proposal is better or worse?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member opposite say not very long ago, maybe a couple of weeks ago, that there was no way the Liberals would change their position. They are intransigent, they are forcing through a committee we do not agree with. There is a better proposal that we support from the NDP, why can they not work with that proposal?

Of course, we did that. We talked to the member and said let us try to find unanimity and now the members do not support that. I do not know their position on this and I am confused by their refusal to work with us. I would encourage that we put wording into the amendment that we move forward on the main motion that allows them to have the type of discussion they want at committee. Participate and let us get this process moving forward.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to equal flexibility from the government on the issue of referendum. One good reason for that is that 73% of

Canadians are in favour of holding a referendum on the Liberal government's proposal to change the way we vote.

Canadians should have the final say. Canadians want the final say, but the government seems to have predetermined that it wants a particular proposal, ranked ballots. It has already hired a specialist to communicate in favour of ranked ballots.

Why does the Prime Minister not abandon that path and let Canadians decide in a referendum the appropriate method for allowing us to have elections in the future?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite himself has said that first past the post is not the best system. The member himself and critic in the Conservative Party has said that we can do better. What I would suggest is let us get to the work of making a better system, of creating a system that works better for Canadians. Then, if he feels that the process of working together and having consensus is not good enough, then let us talk about the ways that we can engage Canadians further.

However, to give up on the process before it began, to not even have a dialogue on how to improve our democracy, I do not accept that. Let us get to work. Let us be positive.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, regardless of the backroom deal that has been conjured up between the NDP and the Liberals, the facts are still straight on this. The Liberals are not bound by the decisions being made by the committee. The cabinet will go ahead and decide on the system that it prefers and at the end of the day, the Liberals still have a majority of members on the committee.

Canadians understand that their interests are not served by the committee's formation and they would like to have a voice on this matter. Will the members opposite agree to hold a referendum?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the committee has not even met yet, so to say that the committee is not working effectively, I think is a little premature. The reality is we do not have a majority on that committee, the opposition parties do. For anything to happen at the committee, it is going to require the consent and work of the House.

Where I did see closed-room deals, where I did see Canadians excluded, was unfortunately on the unfair elections act, or the in-and-out scandal, or on the prorogation of Parliament.

We saw a decade of Canadians being locked out of our democratic process. We do not want to continue that. We turned over a new leaf that includes working with other parties, including the Conservative Party.



*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister likes to talk about using social media. Perhaps she is unaware that only 20% of Canadians have access to Twitter. Meanwhile, 68% of all eligible voters showed up in the last election, and, historically on referenda, even more individuals have come out to vote. Therefore, a referendum will allow millions more Canadians to participate in this process than the minister's flawed initiative. Will the minister opposite give Canadians a say? Will the minister hold a referendum, yes or no?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, maybe it is because only 20% of Canadians are on Twitter that the Conservatives thought they could post that they would support the NDP proposal and then not. Maybe that is why they thought they could get away with it.

The reality is, the minister has talked about a myriad of ways for Canadians to engage, and of course those include digital means. We live in a digital age where many Canadians are in remote locations, have disabilities, or have other challenges that do not allow them to engage directly. The news is that Twitter is one medium but there are many media. We want to engage Canadians in every single one of them. That is the type of consultation they deserve. That is the kind of consultation they will get.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the election reform proposed by the Minister of Democratic Institutions is nothing but an attempt to manipulate the public.

Why does the Liberal government not trust the 26 million registered voters in Canada to vote freely on this issue in a referendum?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the last election campaign, we promised to change our democratic system and ensure that everyone has a chance to share their thoughts and ideas about the type of government that people want.

We will absolutely keep this promise. We must work together to change and improve our electoral system.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that a referendum would express the will of Canada's 26 million registered voters.

Why does this government believe that a committee made up of only 12 politicians should decide what changes to make to our voting system?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a committee, and it gives us an opportunity to speak, not only with members, but also with all Canadians about how to improve the system. During this process, there will be an opportunity to think about how to improve the system. I hope that the Conservative Party will work with us to do that.

[*English*]

**MARIJUANA**

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after the Liberal leader promised he would be the pro-pot Prime Minister, Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about the Liberals' rightward shift. They appointed a former police chief to handle the issue, who then encouraged police to crack down on marijuana, while continuing to hand out criminal records. Now they have appointed Anne McClellan, who has called pot "more dangerous than cigarettes", and who was even against medicinal marijuana. How can the Liberals justify sounding more "law and order" on pot than even the Conservatives who just voted for decriminalization?

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have said, our government is committed to the legalization of marijuana, strictly regulating and restricting access to marijuana, with the ultimate objective of keeping it out of the hands of children, and keeping the proceeds out of the hands of criminals.

I am looking forward to working with my colleagues the ministers of health and public safety to, in the coming weeks, announce a task force that will engage on this issue. The task force will be composed of representatives from the justice system, public safety, and health. I look forward to the recommendations they will provide in this regard.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals made a big promise to legalize marijuana. However, the government just assigned the file to the former justice minister, who has said in the past that she is opposed to the medical use of marijuana.

Let me summarize. A former police chief and now a pot opponent are in charge of the legalization of marijuana. That is like putting Colonel Sanders in charge of the henhouse.

Is the Prime Minister preparing to kill his own plan to legalize marijuana?

[*English*]

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, our government is committed to legalizing marijuana, strictly regulating marijuana, and doing this in a careful and orderly manner.

I am pleased to work with the parliamentary secretary. I am pleased to work with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Public Safety. In the coming weeks we will be pleased to announce a task force that will look into the work of the legalization process, what is required, what is necessary to do it in a careful way. There will be perspectives from health, justice, law enforcement, and public safety.

*Oral Questions*

● (1140)

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are disturbed with the appointment of the government House leader as the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard. The Ethics Commissioner has banned the House leader from participating in any discussions or decision-making involving the Irving Group. The Irving Group is an important participant in the government's shipbuilding strategy for the Canadian Navy and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Could the Prime Minister explain how the new Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard can do this job without breaking the Ethics Commissioner's ban?

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said several times yesterday, the minister has been very proactive on this. He contacted the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner regarding his friendship with Mr. Irving.

The department will implement a rigorous process to ensure that the minister is not in a conflict of interest.

I repeat that the minister has already raised this issue with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and that he will follow all of the commissioner's recommendations.

[English]

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve to know how the new Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard can do his job effectively without breaking the Ethics Commissioner's ban on communications with the Irving Group. The fact is that J.D. Irving has a position on the minister's very own advisory committee on Atlantic salmon. In light of the restrictions on the minister, the Liberals owe Canadians a minister of fisheries and oceans who can do the job.

When will the Prime Minister respect the commissioner's ban and appoint a minister who can serve Canadians effectively?

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the minister took the initiative of informing the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner of his friendship with Mr. Irving and asking her for advice.

The commissioner recommended that the minister's staff use screening measures. The minister will follow to the letter all of the advice provided by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Once again, our government and its ministers demonstrate high ethical standards. That is what we are doing, and that is what the minister will do throughout his mandate.

**MINISTERIAL EXPENSES**

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are shocked at the infrastructure minister's extravagance. They do not understand why he would feel the need to spend nearly \$1 million on TVs and toasters. While the Edmonton minister was busy spending on his vain new offices, Liberals could not bring themselves to support Edmontonians looking for extended EI benefits.

How can the minister justify so much money on himself when thousands of Albertans are struggling?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I explained yesterday, before November 4, 2015, Infrastructure Canada did not have a dedicated minister. There was no deputy minister, either, and no office space for the department's employees.

This file is important to our government, which is why these positions were created. Accordingly, offices had to be furnished for the minister, the deputy minister, the employees, and the teams. The minister followed all the Treasury Board directives and will continue to do so.

[English]

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I furnished my office I took the opportunity to save money by outfitting it with furniture used from previous MPs. I currently have a TV from the 1990s, a file cabinet that has been used for generations, and clocks that remind me of my elementary school. My office is able to perform its functions without exorbitant spending.

Why did the Edmonton Minister of Infrastructure need to spend almost \$1 million on brand new TVs, file cabinets, and clocks to do his job?

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member's question is also very old.

[Translation]

I will repeat: the minister has been very clear. The minister and the deputy minister needed to be provided with their own offices. Why? We are introducing the biggest infrastructure plan in the history of Canada: \$120 billion in green and social infrastructure.

We will be there for young people and seniors, for a greener Canada and for our children's future. That is what it means to invest in infrastructure and our country's future.

*Oral Questions*

• (1145)  
[English]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, a new report is warning that the TPP will make our growing trade deficit with Asia even worse. It will hurt employment, kill growth in manufacturing and high tech, and damage our ability to diversify the Canadian economy.

To make matters worse, the Canadian Nurses Association warned us at committee this week that it could even block us from ever implementing pharmacare. The evidence is clear.

Will the minister finally stand, put the interests of Canadians ahead of corporate rights, and reject the damaging TPP trade deal?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her work on the committee.

We are aware of the more recent report. I was in committee this week when the nurses presented. This is all information that we are taking in, and it will form part of the basis upon which we make our final decision on whether to ratify the TPP.

This is what we promised Canadians, and that is what we are doing, through consultations, gathering information, and creating our own base of information, which is going to form the basis for a good decision.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for months, the Liberals have been telling us that they support the Canada Health Act, but they certainly are not working too hard to enforce it.

The Pointe-Saint-Charles Community Clinic recently launched a class action lawsuit against the Government of Quebec and three private clinics for levying ancillary fees. Under the Canada Health Act, ancillary fees are illegal.

Will the government finally put an end to illegal fees charged to Quebeckers who use the health care system?

[English]

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we fully support the principles of the Canada Health Act, which are meant to ensure that all Canadians have reasonable access to medically necessary physician and hospital services based on need and not their ability to pay.

We are committed to working with our partners to strengthen our publicly funded universal health care system, while at the same time upholding the principles of the Canada Health Act.

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**CONSULAR AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Salim Alaradi had spent almost two years in jail in the United Arab

Emirates before being acquitted of all charges on May 30. He has since had to face additional obstacles, including not being immediately released from jail, and facing a travel ban. We can all understand his family's eagerness to put this ordeal behind them and continue with their lives.

Will the government please update the House on the efforts to bring Salim Alaradi home?

**Mr. Omar Alhabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Brampton East for his championing the interests of Canadians abroad.

I am happy to report that Salim Alaradi is on his way home. I thank his courageous family, his legal team, and our consular officials who worked tirelessly in getting him home. I also want to thank our Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, my colleagues, and members of the House for raising his issue.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and all members of the House, we look forward to welcoming Mr. Alaradi home.

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**MINING INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, junior exploration companies play a major role in Canada's mining sector. They need the predictability of a longer-term extension of the mineral exploration tax credit to finance their operations. It is critical to supporting our mining sector and to keeping investment in Canada.

The 375,000 Canadians who work in the mining sector need certainty. Are the Liberals going to provide a predictable, long-term extension of this tax credit and the flow-through shares provisions?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the mining sector has been under significant stress with changes in the global economy.

We did take measures in budget 2016 to extend this situation to help the mining sector. We remain focused on how we can work to ensure our economy is successful so this sector of our economy can indeed be successful.

Additionally, we will be working on long-term opportunities for infrastructure and innovation that we hope will also help these companies to be more successful in the future.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals dither on their decision on Pacific NorthWest LNG, communities in my riding suffer the consequences. In an area that once had a jobless rate so low it could not be reported, we now have the highest unemployment in British Columbia. This week, B.C. Premier Christy Clark has publicly questioned the continued dithering.

This project has gone through a rigorous environmental assessment process already. When will the Liberals stop the dithering, do what is best for the people in northern British Columbia and the global environment, and approve B.C. LNG?

• (1150)

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe the environment and the economy go together. We are overseeing a fair and thorough environmental assessment process that is grounded in science.

Significant concerns have been raised with respect to this project and we are looking into those concerns. We are working with the proponent to address them, including impacts on salmon.

We have said that once we receive the necessary information, we will make a decision within 90 days. We look forward to working together to make this happen.

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**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing is, hang in there.

The 100-day deadline is fast approaching on the Liberal's promise to have a new softwood lumber deal, yet the only thing we know from the past 100 days is we still do not have an agreement.

Small producers do not have a voice. There is more uncertainty in an already volatile industry. Unfair tariffs and lawsuits for our small forestry producers are on the way. There will be job losses for the hundreds of thousands of Canadians employed by the forestry sector.

Why are the Liberals failing to stand up for Canadians and doing nothing to bring home a new softwood lumber agreement?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are doing a great deal to ensure we get a good deal for Canada with regard to softwood lumber.

The government obviously recognizes the importance of the forestry industry to Canada. We understand the various dimensions and nuances of the industry across the country, province to province, big and small producers.

Officials from the USTR met with our team in Ottawa last week, and they will meet again. The minister has spoken to her counterpart, USTR Michael Froman. We have had meetings and contacts at the ambassadorial level.

We are going to get a deal done, and a good deal.

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are a lot of talk, but they are no action. Friendship centres provide vital services to urban first nations, including counselling and suicide prevention support programs.

Our House of Commons committee was told yesterday that promised base funding is delayed, facing layer after layer of new Liberal red tape: two months, no money, laying off staff, and shrinking necessary programs. What is the holdup? Why is funding for vital, life-saving programs being delayed?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we can be very clear on is that our government made a sincere, genuine commitment to establishing a relationship with our indigenous people. We recognize there are many things at which the government needs to look. One of the issues before us is in regard to our young people. Their friendship centres do play a significant role.

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**PARKS CANADA**

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week, UNESCO's world heritage committee called on Canada to better protect Newfoundland's Gros Morne National Park from industrial development if it is going to keep its world heritage site designation. It recommended a buffer zone, including for oil and gas. Despite government claims there are existing protections, we have routinely seen adjacent industrial activity impact the ecological integrity of our parks.

Gros Morne is a unique area, a place Canada should be proudly protecting on behalf of Canadians and the global community. Will the government now agree to put a buffer zone in place?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe in the ecological integrity of our national parks and we are committed to maintaining the ecological integrity of them. That applies to all parks, including Gros Morne National Park. We look forward to working together with the member opposite to ensure we do maintain the ecological integrity.

## HOUSING

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the crisis in affordable housing in Vancouver has reached the boiling point. Young people cannot afford to buy or rent a home in the city they grew up in, and they are being forced to leave. Employers cannot attract and retain employees. With the average house price now well over \$2 million, middle-class families are priced out of the market altogether.

Liberals promised to address this crisis, but so far they have done absolutely nothing. Where is the government's plan to make housing more affordable in Vancouver?

• (1155)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the idea that we have done absolutely nothing is not correct. We have done a number of things.

Within one month of coming into office, we changed the rules around down payments for people on homes at the higher end. That would impact, in particular, pockets of risk in the housing market in Toronto and Vancouver. We put money into our budget to examine the impact of foreign buyers into the Canadian housing market. We recognize this is a critically important issue.

I want to thank the member for bringing it up. We remain focused on the housing market because we know how important housing is to Canadian families. For most, it is the most important asset they own.

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## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for decades the Baha'i community has been the most persecuted peoples in Iran, but in the past few weeks the ruling Mullahs have orchestrated an increasingly hostile and systematic attack on the Baha'i Iranians. The situation is surely grim for the Baha'i.

The eyes of the world are on Iran, and much of the international community is speaking out and putting the appropriate pressure on Iran. Why have the Liberals been so silent in denouncing the latest wave of hatred? Why are they not speaking out and pressuring the Iranian regime to stop the attack on the Baha'i people?

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have repeated our commitment to re-engage with Iran in a step-by-step and cautious manner.

Canada's severing of ties with Iran had no positive consequences for anyone, not for Canadians, not for the people of Iran, not for our allies, like Israel, and not for global security.

It was fortunate, for instance, at the end of the 1970s that we had a Canadian embassy in Tehran, when it was time to help the U.S. hostages. Our allies are also re-engaging with Iran, most recently a European Union delegation.

The Conservatives seem to want Canada to stand alone, which helps no one.

## Oral Questions

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the situation facing China's religious minorities is not improving either.

Tibetan Buddhists engaged in a peaceful struggle for autonomy within the framework of the Chinese constitution are denied many of their basic human rights. Many Uighur Muslims will likely be denied the right to fast during Ramadan this year. Falun Gong practitioners and Christians also face denial of their basic rights.

Were any of these specific issues raised during the foreign minister's visit to Canada?

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe that engaging with China in a comprehensive way is the best option.

We have regular high-level interactions with China on a range of issues that allow us to continue to be frank and honest on conversations such as human rights and freedom of the press.

Canada consistently raises human rights concerns with the Chinese government, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs did this week with the Chinese foreign minister.

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## CONSULAR AFFAIRS

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Chinese government has its way with the Liberal government. It tells our Prime Minister when he can meet with them, and it berates Canadians while the Minister of Foreign Affairs stands meekly off to the side.

If the Liberals want to stand up for Canadians, they could start with Kevin and Julia Garratt. After almost two years of being threatened, harassed, and living under phony charges, it is time for them to be freed.

When will the Liberals tell the Chinese government to quit playing games with the lives of Kevin and Julia Garratt, and bring them home?

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is very concerned about the well-being of the Garratt family.

I encourage the hon. members not to play politics with issues of concerns of Canadians who are struck abroad. Our government continues to raise this issue at the highest levels with Chinese officials. We will persist, and we will not stop until the Garratts return home.

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I just want to remind the hon. members that we were really doing well up until that question. Please kind of keep it down a bit.

*Oral Questions***THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, budget 2016 contained the most innovative development in social policy in a generation, the Canada child benefit.

With cheques set to start flowing to hard-working Canadian families next month, the parliamentary budget officer has completed an independent review of our new benefit. Would the Minister of Finance please share with the House the results of that review?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by recognizing the important work of the parliamentary budget office.

We were so pleased to see that its report confirmed that millions of Canadians would be helped through the Canada child benefit, which will be implemented in budget 2016. It has said that this is the case. We know that 300,000 children will be lifted out of poverty, and 9 out of 10 families with children will be better off.

The new Canada child benefit will make a real and measurable difference in the lives of so many Canadians, and we are very pleased to have that as part of budget 2016.

\* \* \*

• (1200)

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since coming to power, the government has been silent on the subject of official languages. Official languages are no longer part of the minister's title, and nobody seems to want responsibility for this file.

I would like to know if there is someone at the helm of the good ship official languages or if the government intends to keep ignoring this file.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

I want to make it clear that our government has official languages well in hand with its whole-of-government approach. Not only is there someone guiding the ship, but there are many capable hands on deck because our whole-of-government approach represents Canadians from coast to coast and upholds our government's rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis official languages. We intend to stay the course.

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**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians with disabilities face challenges every day that prevent them from fully participating in activities in their communities and in their workplaces.

We have a duty to reduce barriers to accessibility and provide equal access and equal opportunities for all Canadians. Everyone deserves a level playing field.

Can the minister tell the members of the House about the measures she has taken to reduce barriers to accessibility?

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Laurentides—Labelle for his question.

Earlier this week, I invited businesses and community organizations to apply for funding under the 2016 enabling accessibility fund, which will receive an additional \$4 million thanks to budget 2016.

This funding plays an important role in ensuring that all Canadians, regardless of their ability, feel welcome in their workplaces and their communities.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member for Ottawa Centre has slammed on the brakes for a replacement of the 92-year-old Ottawa Hospital in her own riding. She does not like the location that the hospital's expert panel selected after it thoroughly studied 12 possible sites. If she has a better site in mind or if the NCC is considering different locations, they should know by now. After all, it has been six months.

Further, they should tell the residents of her community and mine what those alternative sites are. Why will they not?

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government understands emphatically the need for a state-of-the-art hospital in downtown Ottawa and we support that project. For this reason, the Minister of Canadian Heritage has asked the National Capital Commission to review possible sites for the Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus through a rigorous and transparent process in order to provide the government with a recommendation.

It is important to note that the member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre also supports this project and she and we support a transparent and open process so that a Civic hospital in Ottawa may be built.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, people have been worried ever since what happened in Lac-Mégantic.

During the election campaign, Sécurité ferroviaire Rive-Sud launched a petition calling for the end of oil transportation between Saint-Lambert and Sorel until the train tracks are moved. The petition was signed by thousands of people, including myself, the Green candidate, and the Liberal candidate.

We learned that the petition was very quietly presented in the House by the Liberal member for Montarville on April 19. There has been radio silence ever since.

Will the Liberals keep their promise or will we have to wait until Quebec becomes sovereign?

*Points of Order*

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that might take a while.

I said that the government recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety of our rail transportation system and that is why we invested in it significantly; \$143 million was allocated to improving rail safety and the transportation of dangerous goods.

Obviously we continue to hold consultations and discussions on this, as we did in the case of Lac-Mégantic and elsewhere. Studies are being done. We will make the necessary decisions, while keeping Canadians' safety in mind.

\* \* \*

● (1205)

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the UN just added Saudi Arabia to the blacklist of states that violate children's rights during conflict.

We are talking here about groups and states that commit grave violations against children, such as murder, sexual abuse, mutilation, and the bombing of schools and hospitals.

The government needs to stop feeding us excuses about business and spouting rhetoric about creating a committee.

When will the minister stand up and finally stop the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia?

[*English*]

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian LAVs have been sold to Saudi Arabia for over 20 years, and all of our checks to date indicate that they have not been used inappropriately. The Minister of Foreign Affairs retains the power to revoke at any time the export permit, should the assessment change.

As members know, Canada has some of the strongest export controls in the world. A big part of that is working diligently to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty. We will improve the export controls process going forward with the greatest rigour and increased transparency.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the worst thing you can do in business is to do nothing. The government's inaction when it comes to Bombardier sends a clear signal to the business community. Ottawa is disavowing Quebec's flagship company. That sends the message to invest in Boeing and Airbus, since they are getting funding from their governments, but not to invest in Bombardier. Even Quebecers who do not usually make a point of making demands for the province are fed up with the government's inaction. I am talking about Philippe Couillard, Carlos Leitão, and Jean Charest for heaven's sake.

What I want to know is how much longer the government is going to continue to do nothing about Bombardier. A week? A month? A year? Four years? Longer?

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I disagree with my colleague. The government and I understand how important the aerospace industry is. That is why we are engaged with Bombardier. I am very confident that we will be able to find a solution that is good for the companies, the sector, and the public.

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** That terminates question period. I thank everyone very much for respecting my hearing. We have a point of order from the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

\* \* \*

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it happened yesterday, but at least twice today, the parliamentary secretary for infrastructure stood and claimed there was no Minister of Infrastructure in the previous Parliament.

I would like to let the parliamentary secretary know that the member for Lac-Saint-Jean was the Minister of Infrastructure in the last Parliament, which disputes their claim that they had to spend a million dollars for—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I believe that is turning into debate now.

On another point of order, we have the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions said that no amendments were accepted to the Fair Elections Act.

He knows that giving false information to the House is a serious matter. In fact, over 40 amendments were accepted to the Fair Elections Act. I would appreciate it if the parliamentary secretary might want to take the opportunity to correct the record on that point.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I believe that is getting into debate as well.

On another point of order, we have the hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I think you would find the chamber distressed today that we did not hear a report on “free the beer”, and I think if you seek it you would find unanimous consent to hear a report on “free the beer” so that we could have great interprovincial trade and make sure that all Canadians have access to their beer.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings*

Some hon. members: No.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

\* \* \*

• (1210)

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in relation to Bill C-210, an act to amend the National Anthem Act (gender).

The committee has studied the bill and decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

\* \* \*

### EXCISE TAX ACT

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-282, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Income Tax Act (extra-energy-efficient products).

He said: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the great member for Essex for seconding the bill.

In just two days, June 5, is World Environment Day. I am honoured to stand in the House today and introduce a suite of three environmental bills that will help Canada make progress in this important area. This bill is the first of them.

This enactment would promote greater energy efficiency among Canadian households by removing the sales tax on consumers and businesses for the purchase of eligible energy efficient products, and by providing a tax credit under the Income Tax Act for the purchase of these products.

The bill would provide financial incentives for individual families to lower their carbon footprint by reducing their energy consumption and use.

The existing energy star program helps consumers make informed choices by highlighting energy-efficient products, but the bill would go one step further by exempting such products from the GST or HST.

I urge all members to support this legislation and help save our environment.

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

### CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-283, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (electronic products recycling program).

He said: Madam Speaker, once again I would like to thank the hon. member for Essex for seconding this bill.

With June 5 coming up, being World Environment Day, it is important that this chamber start moving to bring in legislation that would help Canada meet its global responsibilities to deal with climate change.

This bill would amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to require that a recycling program be put in place for electronic products that contain a substance that is specified on the list of toxic substances in schedule 1.

We all know that electronic products are increasingly common. There is no Canadian household that does not have a lot of them. They contain toxic substances that we should be proactive in ensuring do not go into our environment.

This legislation would work to create a national recycling program to divert these products from landfills and make sure we can help preserve our earth for future generations.

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

\* \* \*

### NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY ACT

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-284, An Act respecting a national strategy for the development of renewable energy sources.

He said: Madam Speaker, once again this gives me a chance to highlight and thank the hard-working member for Essex for seconding this legislation.

This enactment would require the Minister of Natural Resources, in consultation with the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for energy, to develop and make public a national strategy for increasing the proportion of electricity generated from renewable energy sources in Canada to 90% as soon as possible, but not later than December 31, 2030.

The bill calls on the government to develop a national strategy to ensure that Canada ambitiously transitions its energy production toward renewable sources, such as solar, wind, or biomass.

I urge all members of the House to do their part in 2016 to ensure that our children and their children in generations to come can ensure they have a clean environment, with energy generated from renewable and sustainable sources.



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

\* \* \*

• (1215)

[Translation]

**NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE ARMoured  
TRANSPORT OF CURRENCY AND VALUABLES ACT**

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-285, an act to provide for the development of national standards for the transport of currency and valuables by armoured car.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the hard-working member for Vancouver Kingsway. I would also like to acknowledge all the unionized Unifor workers who transport our valuables every day, across the country.

Currently, there are no national standards regulating the transport of valuables. This job requires training and equipment, and it is important to consider the size of the teams as well as workplace health and safety.

Since national standards for the health and safety of the general public just make sense, I hope that all members of the House will support this bill.

[English]

I want to shout out to the unionized workers of Unifor, who every day transport our valuables by armoured car right across the country. However, as members know, there is simply not the kind of national standards in place that we need for training, equipment, crew size, and health and safety regulations. That is a concern for the employees and the public as well. Therefore, I hope that members from both sides of this House will support this important legislation to put in place these national standards.

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

\* \* \*

**PETITIONS**

**PROPERTY RIGHTS**

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a petition today signed by 4,355 Canadian citizens with respect to property rights. It was presented by Shawn Bevins. I want to give him credit for the work he has put into this.

The petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons and Parliament to amend section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to include property rights. They propose that section 7 be amended to read, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

JUSTICE

**Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have three petitions which call upon the House of Commons to pass legislation that would recognize preborn children as separate victims when injured or killed during the commission of

*Routine Proceedings*

an offence against their mother, allowing two charges to be laid against the offender instead of one.

PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by over 100 constituents of Toronto and Windsor asking that the health committee study and review access to online violent sexual material.

IRAN

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have two separate petitions on two different subjects.

The first petition calls upon the Government of Canada to maintain the listing of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state supporter of terrorism, pursuant to section 6.1 of the State Immunity Act, for as long as the Iranian regime continues to sponsor terrorism.

• (1220)

FALUN GONG

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** The second petition is a large petition that calls upon Parliament and government to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, to amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting, and to publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

[Translation]

THE SENATE

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a hundred or so signatures from my constituents in Hochelaga and elsewhere in Montreal who are calling on the government to abolish the Senate once and for all, since it is made up of unelected individuals who are not held accountable.

[English]

JUSTICE

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have two petitions from the good people of Cariboo—Prince George and all across Canada asking that preborn children be recognized as separate victims when harmed or killed during criminal attacks against their mothers.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, people across Canada hear that all of the members in this House have the backs of women and believe in their rights. More and more petitions continue to come to this House from those people, calling on the current government to realize that forcing upon a pregnant woman the death or injury of her preborn child is a violation of a woman's right to protect and give life to her child.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a petition to submit, signed by several hundred residents of the Edmonton area. The petitioners are calling on the House to pass legislation which would recognize preborn children as separate victims when they are injured or killed during the commission of an offence against their mothers.

*Routine Proceedings***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 114, 116, and 117.

[Text]

Question No. 114—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:**

With regard to indigenous women who reside on-reserve: (a) what analysis has the government completed into pay equity on-reserve; and (b) what are the details of any reports that have been completed, broken down by date?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, and its special operating agency, Indian Oil and Gas Canada, are concerned, the response is as follows.

Regarding part (a), Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada has not conducted specific analysis on pay equity. There are, however, a number of reports that provide a portrait of socio-economic conditions of Indigenous women, including education, labour force and income outcomes.

In response to part (b), the completed reports are “The Aboriginal Economic Progress Report”, 2015, <http://www.naedb-cndea.com/reports/NAEDB-progress-report-june-2015.pdf>;

“Aboriginal Income Disparity in Canada”, 2013, <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1378411773537/1378411859280>;

“Aboriginal Women in Canada: A Statistical Profile from the 2006 Census”, 2012, <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1331664678840/1331838092221>; and

“Aboriginal Women in the Canadian Economy—The Links Between Education, Employment and Income”, 2012, <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1331046626766/1331046698685>.

Question No. 116—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:**

With regard to the government’s commitment to implement each one of the 94 recommendations prepared by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: (a) which stakeholders does the government plan to meet with to discuss implementing the Calls to Action; (b) on which dates does the government plan to meet these stakeholders, broken down by stakeholder; (c) what travel costs will the government be covering, broken down by stakeholder; (d) what per diem costs will the government be covering, broken down by stakeholder; and (e) what accommodation costs will the government be covering, broken down by stakeholder?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, and its special operating agency, Indian Oil and Gas Canada, are concerned, the response is as follows.

On December 15, 2015 the Prime Minister accepted the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and announced that the government will work with leaders of first nations, the Métis nation, Inuit, provinces and territories, parties to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, and other key partners, to design a national engagement strategy for developing and implementing a national reconciliation framework, informed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s calls to action.

The 94 calls to action are directed to a wide range of institutions, including the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial

governments, churches, corporations, and schools. The federal government is currently putting the appropriate mechanisms in place to coordinate engagement strategies and ensure that reconciliation efforts advance.

The federal government intends to hold pre-discussions with key partners on the design of a comprehensive engagement strategy for a national reconciliation framework over the coming months. This approach will allow for multiple discussions, including engagement on the calls to action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other priorities.

Reconciliation can, and must, be part of the day-to-day operations of the government. Many meetings and discussions naturally include reconciliation and these discussions will inform the government’s ongoing consultation on implementing the calls to action.

Some calls to action are already being implemented with the government’s commitment to a national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls as well as budget 2016’s historic investments in indigenous people.

Canadians will be kept apprised of our progress on this commitment, including any related costs.

Question No. 117—**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:**

With regard to the decision by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to stop all discretionary compliance measures related to the First Nations Financial Transparency Act: (a) did the Minister undertake consultations prior to reaching this decision; (b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, (i) which stakeholder groups were consulted, (ii) which individuals from these groups participated, (iii) where did the consultations occur; (c) did the Minister receive any unsolicited views from stakeholder groups, and if so, from which stakeholders; and (d) has the Minister received communications from individual Canadians related to this decision?

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, and its special operating agency, Indian Oil and Gas Canada, are concerned, the response is as follows.

Regarding part (a) of the question, the minister has, as a matter of course, met and heard from numerous individuals and groups; however, there have been no formal consultations with respect to discretionary compliance measures available under the act.

Part (b) of the question is not applicable.

In response to part (c), the minister has received unsolicited views or been made aware of views of stakeholder groups, first nations representative organizations, and individual first nation governments, through press releases, and results of informal meetings or discussions. The minister has also been informed by the results of stay applications that were actioned by select first nations, and upheld by the courts, with respect to court action taken by the Government of Canada.

Regarding part (d), the minister has received a number of letters, emails, and telephone communications from individual Canadians related to this decision.

## Government Orders

[English]

## QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Furthermore, Madam Speaker, if Questions Nos. 107 to 109, 112, and 115 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 107—**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault:**

With regard to the exchange of information between Canada and the United States (US) under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA): (a) how many individuals were reported, in total and broken down by (i) Canadian citizens, (ii) permanent residents of Canada, (iii) temporary residents of Canada; (b) how many individuals were reported, broken down by (i) individuals with Canadian addresses, (ii) individuals with US addresses, (iii) individuals with addresses in other countries; (c) how many accounts were reported, in total and broken down by (i) bank accounts, (ii) credit union accounts, (iii) investment accounts, (iv) insurance accounts, (v) other types of accounts; (d) with respect to (c)(iii), what types of insurance accounts were reported; (e) with respect to (c)(v), what other types of accounts were reported; (f) of the accounts reported, how many were (i) under \$50,000 US, (ii) between \$50,000 and \$1,000,000 US, (iii) over \$1,000,000 US; (g) of the accounts reported, how many were (i) Registered Retirement Savings Account accounts, (ii) Registered Education Savings Account accounts, (iii) Registered Disability Savings Account accounts, (iv) Tax Free Savings Account accounts; (h) of the accounts reported, how many were held jointly with one or more non US persons, broken down by type of account and indicating the type of relationship between the joint account holder and the US person, if it is known; (i) how many accounts of organizations were reported to the IRS because a US person had signing authority, interest in, or other connection to the organization; (j) of the accounts that were reported, how many were (i) business accounts, (ii) professional accounts, (iii) charitable or non-profit organization accounts, (iv) connected to other organizations, broken down by type of organization; (k) what agency, organization, and individuals was the information provided to; (l) what measures were taken to ensure this information will not be provided to any other agency, organization, and individuals; (m) what measures were taken to ensure that information transmitted will not be subject to identity theft, fraud, other criminal activities, or breach of privacy; (n) how many records did Canada receive from the US, in total and broken down by (i) individuals who live in Canada, (ii) individuals who live in the US, (iii) individuals who live in other countries, broken down by country; (o) how many accounts did Canada receive information about; (p) what type of information was in the records Canada received; (q) did Canada receive information regarding (i) income from the accounts, (ii) total assets in accounts, (iii) account balances, (iv) transactions, deposits and withdrawals, (v) account numbers, (vi) names of account holders, (vii) Social Insurance Numbers, (viii) other related information; (r) what type of information did Canada receive that was not provided by the US prior to the FATCA Intergovernmental Agreement; and (s) when did Canada receive the information?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 108—**Mr. James Bezan:**

With regard to the upcoming Aerospace Trade Mission to Kyiv, Ukraine, May 22-25, 2016, organized by the Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association, in collaboration with Export Québec, and Global Affairs Canada: (a) which individuals and organizations are listed as participants for this trade mission; (b) how much funding will be provided by Global Affairs Canada in support of this trade mission; (c) how much direct and indirect funding will be provided by the Canadian Embassy to Ukraine in support of this trade mission; (d) with regard to (b) and (c), how will these funds be allocated; and (e) were the Embassy of Ukraine to Canada and representatives from the Ukrainian-Canadian community consulted during the planning stages of this trade mission?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 109—**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:**

With regard to the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component, National and Regional Projects, of the New Building Canada Fund, for the amounts budgeted for projects of interest: (a) what amounts were allocated to each province and territory; (b) what is the expected number of projects in each province and territory; (c) what amount was set aside for each project listed in (b); (d) what data was used to determine which projects would be selected; and (e) when will these projects be announced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 112—**Mr. Wayne Stetski:**

With respect to railways running through Canada's national parks: (a) how many train derailments have occurred in, and within 5 km of, Canada's national parks over the last 15 years, broken down by year; (b) of the derailments in (a), how many have been investigated by the Transportation Safety Board, broken down by year; (c) how were each of the train derailments in (a) classified by the Transportation Safety Board; (d) in how many of these derailments in (a) was grain or another substance spilled, and what were these other substances, broken down by derailment; (e) in each derailment in (a) what action was taken by the government in relation to the spilled substances, broken down by derailment; (f) what policies does the government have in place regarding substances spilled by trains running through Canada's national parks; (g) what analysis has the government undertaken of the potential risks to wildlife related to rail transportation through national parks, and what were the results of this analysis; (h) what policies does the government have in place to mitigate threats to species-at-risk and endangered species posed by rail transportation through and near national parks; and (i) how often does the government review its policies and procedures regarding railways running through Canada's national parks?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 115—**Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to the hiring of the current Chief of Staff to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food: (a) what are the details of any information which has been created or exchanged between the Department and the Minister's office detailing the interim process designed to avoid a real or perceived conflict of interest; (b) since its implementation, has the interim process prevented a real or perceived conflict of interest, and if so, in what particular cases; and (c) what action has the Department or Minister's office taken in response to instructions from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, if there has in fact been a determination?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

## CITIZENSHIP ACT

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (for the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship)** moved that Bill C-6, an act to amend the Citizenship Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act, be read the third time and passed.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.)** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to support Bill C-6, an act to amend the Citizenship Act.

I would like to begin with a list.

[*English*]

This list includes Afghanistan, Argentina, China, Germany, Grenada, Haiti, India, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Somalia, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, Trinidad, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

What do these countries have in common? They are all nations from which members of the House hail. Forty-one members of the chamber, spanning four different parties, are citizens of Canada who were born outside of this country. I am one of that group of 41 members. I was born in Uganda and arrived here as a young refugee in 1972.

Bill C-6 says to me and 40 of my fellow MPs that our citizenship is no different than that of our Canadian-born colleagues. In fact, Bill C-6 says to millions of Canadians who naturalized here after arriving from overseas that their citizenship has the same value and is accorded the same respect as the citizenship of those born in this country. It tells them that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian. Allow me to explain.

Bill C-6 would reverse the divisive legacy of legislation enacted by the previous government. Under what was then Bill C-24, the previous government enacted legislation that allowed persons born abroad to be stripped of their citizenship on the basis of acts against the national interest—treason, spying, terrorism—but this applied only to those born abroad. Therefore, if someone was born in Canada and committed the exact same criminal act against the national interest, their citizenship could not be stripped. Canadian-born individuals would be dealt with by the criminal justice system alone, whereas foreign-born Canadians were subject to a double penalty: punishment under the criminal justice system, together with revocation of their citizenship under the Citizenship Act.

The old legislation, enacted by the previous government, was wrong for two reasons. The first is that it was unfair and unequal. We heard about the unfairness of the old Conservative legislation from strong immigration advocates, such as Legal Aid Ontario's refugee law office and Romero House in my riding of Parkdale—High Park. The inequality of the old legislation was laid bare by the litigation it caused. The B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers brought a charter challenge to Bill C-24 contending it created two tiers of citizenship.

The second and more important reason is that the old Bill C-24 was flawed because it sent the wrong message to newcomers. People like me, who fled their homelands to make a fresh start in Canada, are thankful for the opportunity to be here, but ultimately, we all seek the same thing: full and final integration. The previous government's Bill C-24 failed such Canadians, precisely because it rendered them more vulnerable. It told them that they are citizens, but citizens with an asterisk. By retracting the odious legislation the previous government passed, I and millions of Canadians who came here

from other countries are being told that the politics of division are over and that they do, indeed, belong.

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

That is enough talk about the old legislation. I now want to talk about the merits of Bill C-6.

[*English*]

Bill C-6 meets what we like to call the triple-E test. It is evidence-based, it makes economic sense, and the bill is ethically sound. Allow me to address each of these points in turn.

The first point is that Bill C-6 is evidence-based. Our government campaigned on a commitment to return to evidence-based policy, and that is precisely what Bill C-6 represents. Studies demonstrate that facilitating a path to not only obtaining but maintaining citizenship promotes a better integration of newcomers and their sense of belonging. This point has been reinforced to me time and time again by settlement and community groups doing important work in Parkdale—High Park, such as Ukrainian Canadian Social Services, the Four Villages Community Health Centre, the Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society, and the Canadian Polish Congress.

The second point is that Bill C-6 is good economics. These very same studies show that the bill would have clear economic benefits for Canada. Immigrants who are given a path to permanence through citizenship have higher educational and economic outcomes. This point has also been communicated to me in my riding by terrific organizations on the front lines of settling newcomers in Toronto, like the Parkdale Intercultural Association, the Parkdale Community Recreation Centre, CultureLink, the Parkdale Community Health Centre, and Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services.

Bill C-6 is also ethically sound. Until the previous government's decision to enact the old Bill C-24, we never had two tiers of citizenship in this country. It is not morally justifiable to divide citizens among those fortunate enough to be born here versus those who naturalize after arriving from overseas.

[*Translation*]

Our new bill does a lot more than just eliminate the two classes of citizenship created by the Conservatives. As I said, Bill C-6 also makes it easier to obtain citizenship in several important ways, which I will now address.

● (1230)

[*English*]

The barriers to citizenship that would be removed by this bill are many. I propose to address four.

*Government Orders*

The first relates to the length of time required to qualify for citizenship. Our legislation will require an applicant to be present in Canada for three years over a five-year time span, rather than the current four-year requirement over a six-year time span. Therefore, the bill would expand the pool of potential citizens and allow them to apply earlier.

More specifically, Bill C-6 is more flexible. It does not require a person to be in Canada for at least 183 days per year over each eligible year. Instead, one needs simply to be here for 1,095 days over a five-year period. What does that mean? It means flexibility. If one's job takes one overseas for an extended period, this would not make one automatically ineligible for citizenship.

Second, Bill C-6 would restore the knowledge and language testing requirement to the previous age range. The previous government passed legislation indicating that testing would be required for any applicant aged 14 to 64. We are restoring that age range back to the previous norm, which is age 18 to 54. This change would improve access to citizenship for the very young and for those 55 and over, thereby helping to speed up their formal integration.

Third, the intent to reside provision is being removed. Bill C-6 would no longer make it a requirement to declare one's intent to reside in Canada before becoming a citizen. That requirement was unmerited. All Canadians have mobility rights. More importantly, the old requirement created a great deal of confusion. Over 200 applications were returned to individuals who failed to complete the intent to reside portion of the application, because they did not understand it. They feared their citizenship could be revoked if they moved abroad. It cannot.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, Bill C-6 would allow time spent in Canada prior to becoming a permanent resident to count towards one's three-year requirement to become a citizen. This provision allows for a 50% credit for time spent in Canada prior to becoming a permanent resident, up to a maximum credit of one year.

Who will this help? It would help temporary foreign workers, international students, and protected persons by speeding all of these groups on their path towards citizenship. This makes sense. These people have already spent time here. They have already worked and studied here. They have already built an attachment to Canada.

I turn now to one of the criticisms we have heard about the bill, which is safety.

Allow me to be crystal clear. Bill C-6 would not imperil the safety of Canadians. Our government's commitment to safety is unwavering. We have a place for terrorists and it is called "jail". We have a place to prosecute terrorists and that is called the "criminal justice system". When one commits a crime in Canada, one is prosecuted by the criminal justice system. We do not need a Citizenship Act tool to address a Criminal Code problem.

However, there is also a broader more philosophical underpinning to Bill C-6. When we boost integration and put in place mechanisms for success, we strengthen ties and loyalty to this country. This does not threaten our safety. It is part of a host of initiatives, such as our response to the Syrian refugee crisis, which demonstrates Canada's openness, our inclusivity, and our compassion. These efforts counter radicalization and reduce threats to our safety. In fact, I would say we

do this better than any country in the world, and I am proud to be part of a government that is restoring this reputation both here and abroad.

[*Translation*]

It is also important to understand that Bill C-6 is not an outright rejection of all aspects of its predecessor, Bill C-24, passed by the previous government.

[*English*]

What, from Bill C-24, have we decided to keep? There are provisions we have kept, but there are also provisions we have actually improved.

For instance, we have kept the physical presence requirement rather than the term "residence" because physical presence is easier to verify.

Revoking citizenship based on fraud and misrepresentation has existed since 1947, and this power remains in Bill C-6. Bill C-24, passed by the previous government, facilitated fraud detection, which is very important, and we have kept provisions that make this possible, as well as provisions that permit government to strip people of citizenship quickly when they have committed fraud. More importantly, we have also enhanced some of these provisions. For example, we have added a section that allows us to seize documents used in the commission of fraud. Finally, we have also committed to implementing all of the Auditor General's recommendations regarding preventing citizenship fraud.

Another improvement relates to conditional sentence orders. If convicted, time served in the community on a conditional sentence order can no longer count toward the three-year residence requirement and if one is on a conditional sentence order, one cannot take the oath of citizenship. Again, these are improvements on the predecessor legislation.

Let us talk about the committee. The bill has just returned from the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. We are also a government that believes in working across the aisle. At committee when amendments were proposed that made sense, that conformed with the policy direction we are pursuing with this legislation, that improved the bill, we did not hesitate to accept those amendments. Those amendments help us create a more diverse and inclusive Canada.

One of the amendments by the NDP added the term "statelessness" as a ground on which citizenship may be granted at the discretion of the minister. Another NDP amendment requires the minister to consider reasonable measures to accommodate the needs of citizenship applicants with disabilities. Those are amendments proposed by the opposition that we accepted on their merit and we welcome them as part of this new bill.

In conclusion, I want to return in my remarks to where I began.

*Government Orders*

When I provided a list of the 22 different nations that make up the homelands of members of the House, it was simply to provide a snapshot of the diversity of this chamber. This chamber serves as a proxy for this country, a country that is made up of literally millions of individuals whose provenance extends to every corner of the globe. To that diverse group, Bill C-6 says, “Your citizenship is no less valuable, no less respected, than that of a citizen born in this country”.

I believe one of the lasting attributes of the bill is one that has been rarely discussed. In facilitating pathways to citizenship, Bill C-6 also facilitates pathways to participation. Only citizens can cast votes in this country. Only citizens can stand for election to this chamber. By breaking down barriers to citizenship and putting in their place opportunities to obtain and retain citizenship, Bill C-6 promotes the highest level of engagement possible, engagement in our democratic process.

The ultimate job of any government, regardless of its political stripe, is to promote an engaged citizenry. That is precisely what Bill C-6 would do. I am proud to endorse the bill as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

● (1235)

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, congratulations to the member opposite. I am glad he mentioned that he is among the 41 members of Parliament who are immigrants and I am one of them too. One thing I like to highlight is that we succeed in this place and in Canada and are able to come to the Canadian Parliament and become parliamentarians because we consider Canada our home. Just because of that we have succeeded.

Someone who is considering Canada a target of terrorism does not deserve Canadian citizenship, does not deserve to be Canadian. Our Canadian citizenship has the highest value of integrity and of honour. If someone wants to use it to go across the world to have access to all the other places in the world just because he is a Canadian citizen, he does not deserve to be a Canadian citizen. If someone does not want to commit to live in Canada, he does not deserve to be a Canadian.

I would like to remind the hon. member of the 1947 immigration act, which at that time was presented, implemented, and adopted by a Liberal government. Bill C-24 is a similar act to the 1947 act that was introduced.

Whether it is three to five years, or four to six years, members opposite agree that Canadian citizenship deserves to be worthwhile for those who decide to take it or not.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, I applaud the diversity of this chamber that is represented by all parties in this House. It is a testament to the kind of electoral system and the kind of Parliament we have created here.

In response to some of the comments raised by the hon. member, I would reiterate a couple of things because sometimes the nuance gets lost in the discussion. If one is applying for citizenship and commits a Criminal Code offence, including a terrorist offence, one is prevented from accessing citizenship in this country.

That is the law in Canada. That has always been the law in Canada. The Liberals believe in that law. The Conservatives believe in that law.

The difference is that once one has already obtained citizenship, what was added by the Conservative government, which we fundamentally and ideologically disagree with, is that once one is here and is a citizen here, if one had naturalized, one was given an extra penalty after the commission of crimes against the national interest.

We believe that the Criminal Code and the criminal justice system can address terrorism and crimes against the national interest, and that is the vehicle for addressing those crimes. That is a fundamental difference which we do not agree on, and that is what this bill represents.

Also, importantly, there is a very fundamental distinction between the 1947 Citizenship Act and what was enacted under Bill C-24 by the Conservatives. That difference is that until Bill C-24, there was only one means of revoking citizenship, and that was based on fraud. Sometimes the fraud was less dramatic, and sometimes it included people who pretended they were not war criminals in World War II. We believe that is the only basis for revoking citizenship, and that is what this bill restores.

● (1240)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I commend the parliamentary secretary for his speech on this important bill.

I represent the riding that is the most diverse in the entire country. I am very proud to represent New Westminster—Burnaby. There are over 100 languages spoken in that small riding. It is really at the centre of where new Canadians come, from the four corners of the world.

There was a very strong reaction when the previous Conservative government established two-tiered citizenship, and understandably. What those new Canadians felt was that essentially the government was saying that they will never be full Canadians in the way that somebody who was born in Canada is.

I wanted to ask the parliamentary secretary what the reaction was in his community. Did people speak out against this legislation? Why is it so important to actually move forward to establish a common citizenship for all Canadians?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for all of his advocacy on behalf of the diverse constituents in his riding.

The reaction in my riding is very similar to reactions we have heard from ridings around the country, be they urban or rural. The reaction was simply that people who were not born here, who naturalized here or were on the path to naturalization, felt disserved and underserved by the previous legislation. They felt stigmatized. They felt vulnerable. They felt they were being valued less.

That is a very strong statement, but that is a statement I heard again and again on the campaign trail, and I heard it in my capacity as a human rights lawyer prior to becoming an elected representative in this House.

*Government Orders*

That is what we are trying to cure by enacting legislation of this type. It is not about pithy phrases. It is not about clichés on the campaign trail. What it is about is giving people a sense of value that they can vote, sit in this House, and participate in the electoral process. They can feel that their citizenship, regardless of where they were born, is valued the same as anyone else who has been here for multiple generations. That is what we are trying to do with this bill.

**Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, just like the member opposite, I, too, am an immigrant to this country. I thank the hon. member for highlighting Scotland as one of the destinations that members of this Parliament have come from.

My riding of York Centre is a wonderfully diverse riding, with so many immigrants adding their voices and adding value to Canadian society each and every day. I heard concerns, not just about two-tiered citizenship but also about things like language testing requirements and residency requirements.

Can the parliamentary secretary inform us again of the changes that are going to be made under this act?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member who has come from United Kingdom, specifically from Scotland, represents a diverse riding, equally as diverse as Parkdale—High Park in Toronto.

The provisions that are in place that have not gotten enough attention are ones that facilitate pathways to citizenship. When we talked about language testing and knowledge testing, we heard an uproar about the previous legislation and about how it created, again, barriers to accessing citizenship.

Our position is that people do not need to have a language test applicable to people aged 14 to 17, because they are getting that kind of language training in the school system already. We also heard a great deal from people aged 55 and older who said that language testing can be a significant barrier for people who are otherwise well integrated, well ensconced, and very learned about what takes place in Canada, and very knowledgeable about our culture and our political institutions.

Those people are served by immigration settlement agencies. We also understand that there is no reason for us to put a barrier in place to their citizenship, because when we look at the studies, we realize that citizenship helps people feel a sense of permanence and helps achieve better overall integration.

• (1245)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, the parliamentary secretary, for his remarks, in particular his praise for the electoral system that gave rise to such diversity. I do not doubt the Minister of Democratic Institutions appreciated that as well.

He did neglect to mention Malta in his list of countries, a grievous omission certainly.

I want to ask him specifically about the issue of the intent to reside. He implied, I am sure not intentionally, that the intent to reside provision in some way restricted people's mobility rights. He knows of course that there was absolutely no restriction of mobility rights. It was clearly about an intent to reside.

Canadian citizenship should not be merely transactional. People should not come here to get their citizenship and then leave with absolutely no intent to have a long-term commitment to the country. There was no restriction on mobility rights. If he is afraid that this led to fear in some people's minds, perhaps it is because of misinformation about the original provisions, not their substance.

I wonder if he would be willing to clarify that there was absolutely nothing about the original provisions that restricted mobility rights.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Madam Speaker, the list of countries that I outlined at the outset was provided to me by the Library of Parliament. I do apologize if there is a member born in Malta in the chamber, perhaps even the member himself. I have been to Malta. It is a lovely place. There are a lot more churches than there are days of the year. It is very sunny and warm. I will acknowledge and add that to the list of now 23 countries.

In terms of the intent to reside provision, the problem with the previous legislation is that it changed the application form, which people needed to fill out prior to taking the oath of citizenship. Are mobility rights respected in the charter? Of course they are. I am a constitutional litigator. I appreciate that. However, the intent to reside provision sowed confusion in terms of the requirement of the date of taking the oath but also going forward whether people were allowed to actually move and leave our country. They are indeed allowed to move. Mobility rights are protected. What we are doing is clarifying that provision that caused a problem and a barrier rather than a facilitation of citizenship.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise and address this important debate; and certainly an honour for me to follow my friend, the parliamentary secretary from Parkdale—High Park. I did not agree with much of what he said in his speech, but I appreciate his work in this place, and particularly the opportunity we have to work together on Parliamentary Friends of Tibet.

Before I get into the specific provisions of this bill, I want to spend a bit of time setting the philosophical groundwork, at least in terms of how I see it and many on this side of the House see it, on the substance of this debate, underneath these provisions, in terms of what Canadian citizenship is all about.

I will say at the outset that I believe that we live in the best country in the world. I do not say that lightly. I have lived abroad and I have travelled quite a bit. For many reasons, we live in the best country in the world. One of the proof points of that is the fact that we have so many people who want to come here. Over the last 10 years, we have had the highest sustained immigration levels in this country's history. However, comparatively as well, many more people want to come to Canada relative to our population than want to go to many other countries.

*Government Orders*

As we think about what our citizenship is and what it means, perhaps it is important to start by asking why Canada is such a great country, and what we can do to ensure that in the context of our ongoing definition and redefinition of citizenship we preserve what is essential about our country. We are all very proud of Canadian diversity. The parliamentary secretary spoke eloquently about the diversity that we have in this country. However, many countries around the world have diversity and perhaps have a different experience of that diversity. I was thinking as I prepared for this about the visit of the Chinese foreign minister. China is a very diverse country, but a country in which religious and ethnic minorities face significant difficulties. Russia is a very diverse country. Syria, in fact, is a very diverse country. So we have many countries around the world that are diverse where perhaps the experience of that diversity is not positive for those in the minority.

It is clear, if we look at this comparison, that it is not diversity alone that makes us great and it is not diversity alone that makes us who we are; but it is in fact what we do with that diversity, how we work together in the context of that diversity, and in particular our ability as a nation to build together around shared values. If we have diversity without any kind of shared values, there is always a risk of conflict. I am very proud of our history as a country that has both great diversity and has managed to maintain a strong sense of shared values. That is particularly important for our success.

It is worth underlining what some of these shared values are. We have a belief in this country in freedom. We have a belief in democracy, in basic principles of human rights and, to some extent, in universal concepts of human dignity that underline those ideas of human rights. We have a belief in the rule of law; in universal human equality and value regardless of race, religion, caste, ethnicity, linguistic background, et cetera. We have a belief as well in gender equality, which is very important to who we are in this country. We have unity around these common values in the context of our own diversity. Our experience of not just political unity, not just sort of general accommodation of one another, but of practical community and common purpose, is quite unique in this country.

I will just share this anecdote because it is important. I was in a European capital a number of years ago, meeting with a Canadian friend of mine who was working there. We were in a very diverse part of this city. There were people from all different parts of the world. We noticed around us all of a sudden that we did not see any mixed-race social groups. We saw a group of people from one racial group together, and then a group of people from another. We looked around us in the crowded centre of this European capital and it was a bit jarring to realize that in spite of the fact that this was a very diverse place there were no obvious signs of community, of at least people sitting together within that place.

• (1250)

The advantage we have in Canada is in building substantive community between different people of different backgrounds.

I thought about that experience later when, at the time I think it was the British prime minister, similar comments were made by French and German leaders, talking about the alleged failure of multiculturalism in the European context. As much as I would regard that as not correct, even in the context of Europe, it is worth

understanding that there is a different experience of multiculturalism in Europe compared to the Canadian experience.

Canada, from the moment of its founding, was a country founded on shared values and on ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity. We can compare that to many European states, which obviously emphasized elements of shared values, but also have measures of ethnic nationalism built into their founding as well.

We have to welcome newcomers in a way that understands that background without compromising what George Cartier called our concept of one political nation. I will read from a book called *Straight Talk*, which is a book on federalism that captures this well.

That dual quest for the universal and for cultural diversity has been with us since the birth of our Confederation. We have often strayed from it since then, and committed grave mistakes and injustices, but the result is this admirable human achievement that is Canada.

We have had this history from the beginning of combining the universal values in the context of diversity. The same book continues with:

Finally, Cartier wanted Canada to be a “political nation”, a nation of solidarity which transcends race, religion, history and geography to ensure that the French in Quebec would never want to break their solidarity with other Canadians. If we seek a contract at the birth of our federal union, it is certainly the one expressed by Cartier, which has inspired all of Peter Russell's work. Quebecers of all origins have helped other Canadians a great deal to achieve that ideal; they must not renounce it.

*Straight Talk* was written by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I think he has had some very good things to say in the past about the importance of common values in the context of this diversity.

Where are we going from here then? What is the philosophy which underlines this legislation advanced by the government?

Early in the new government's term, the Prime Minister was talking to *The New York Times* about aspects of Canadian identity. Here is what he said, which is something very different than the words I just quoted from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He said, “There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada...Those qualities are what make us the first postnational state.”

Therefore, we have in the House, at least between our side and the Prime Minister, very different visions of what the Canadian nation is supposed to be.

Ours is one of unity around shared values in the context of ethnic, linguistic, religious, and other forms of diversity. However, the Prime Minister's concept is one that goes beyond or outside of this idea of shared values and emphasizes the diversity, but at the same time wants to perceive Canada as a postnational state, not as a political nation.

It is with that in mind that we come to legislation put forward by the government, which would allow convicted terrorists to retain their Canadian citizenship. I think we can understand what the Liberals' thinking is on this bill in light of the Prime Minister's comments to *The New York Times* and in light of that underlying philosophy.



*Government Orders*

It is clearly a problem to our historic concepts of Canada as a political nation to say that convicted terrorists should be able to retain their citizenship. A terrorist is not just someone who wants to do violence and mayhem. Terrorists are people, in our current conception of it, who disconnect themselves from our Canadian values, who embrace a wholly distinct set of values than the ones I have outlined, gender equality, universal human dignity, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, and instead commit themselves to fighting for the destruction of those very values. A terrorist is not someone who is pushed outside of the fold of Canadian values. A terrorist is someone who chooses to leave the fold of Canadian values, and that is very clear.

● (1255)

Our concept of diversity that emphasizes shared values says that diversity does not extend to those who wish to destroy us. There have to be parameters or limits ensuring that we remain the country we have always been, a country of unity in the context of our diversity.

The Liberals' view of diversity in many ways bends over on itself. It permits those who are deeply at odds with things in which the Liberals themselves clearly believe, gender equality, human rights, the rule of law, democracy. Yet it allows people who reject those things, who want to fight against those things, to remain in the Canadian family and to use the advantages of their membership in the Canadian family, of their Canadian passport, for example, to then wreak havoc against the very values that we espouse.

I think all of us in all corners of the House deeply believe in the idea of diversity, but we also believe the diversity is necessarily bounded as a practical matter, as a matter of our own survival. There are certain things we must agree are simply not welcome here and they include the desire to destroy our way of life.

I ask Canadians who are watching this to reflect on these differences of vision, the one espoused by the Prime Minister and the one espoused by George Cartier, the question of Canada as a postnational state or of Canada as being part of a common political nation.

It is important to specifically counter some of the arguments that were made by my friends across the way. Members of the government have said many things on this that are substantially true but do not really apply to this legislation. My friend, the parliamentary secretary, praised the importance of having a path to citizenship. We have always had a path to citizenship in our country. Nobody is proposing, or has seriously ever proposed, the creation of a sort of UAE style of citizenship where an individual would have to be born here. We believe very much in a path to citizenship, and we can disagree over the difference of one year here or there in terms of being in a country without disagreeing on that fundamental point.

For those who have a commitment to Canada, there is no substantial problem with saying let us wait another year. Those who do not have a commitment to Canada will perhaps have a different perspective. All of those who have a commitment to Canada, whether it is an additional year, it is not clear to me what the breaking point is about those changes.

There is an important issue alleged by the government, and we hear this talking point many times, of two-tiered citizenship. There are two things that need to be said about this. First, the government has been clear that its intention is to retain the ability to revoke citizenship that was acquired on the basis of fraud. This means that people who acquired their citizenship could have it stripped from them on the basis of fraud.

Fraud is in my mind a much lesser crime than terrorism. For the government to say that on the one hand citizenship is irrevocable for someone who clearly parts ways with Canadian values and then say on the other hand, citizenship can be lost if someone cheated on a form is just not consistent.

If the government really takes this idea that citizenship is irrevocable to its logical extreme, it is hard to understand why it would be dealing with a more extreme issue, yet leaving in place the revocation possibility for a relatively less extreme offence.

I want to say this as well about the regime the government put in place. The government's bill would institute a system of two-tiered citizenship that did not exist before. Under its system, people who acquired their Canadian citizenship could have it stripped on the basis of fraud. Under our system, anybody could have their citizenship stripped on the basis of fraud or involvement in terrorism.

● (1300)

Under the Liberals' citizenship process, nobody who was born in our country or who was born with Canadian citizenship could ever lose their citizenship. Our system treats equally those who were born abroad and those who were born here. Therefore, I am perplexed by the Liberals continuing use of their talking point, in spite of their total unwillingness to actually implement the fullness of this supposed principle that they are espousing.

The fact is that where an individual was born does not matter for our original legislation. People could lose their citizenship if they were involved in terrorism, and it did not matter if they were born here or somewhere else. The value of Canadian citizenship is dependent on their commitment to our shared values, not on where they were born. That is an important principle and a principle for which we have stood.

Of course, as a practical matter, we cannot strip the citizenship of someone who only has one citizenship, and that is true whether individuals obtained their citizenship by a fraud or whether they obtained their citizenship in spite of then going on to commit or be involved in some form of terrorism.

That is a practical matter, and obviously we are limited in the House by certain features of the practical world in what we can do and cannot do. However, as much as possible, we should hold fast to that principle, that Canadian citizenship has value. It expresses the substance of who we are as a country, a country that has unity around shared values in the context of our diversity, and this, unfortunately, is simply not appreciated by the arguments made on behalf of the bill.

*Government Orders*

Some more clarifications need to be made about the original system we had in place. It is a bit perverse, frankly, that members of the government talk about new Canadians being worried about the provisions of the bill because of misinformation about them, and then go on to continually imply things about the bill that are incorrect. If some Canadians were worried about the provisions of the bill and did not have a proper understanding of what the original bill would do, I would hope the members of the government, who were maybe talking to these Canadians in the context of a campaign, would have provided correct information about the bill.

They might have clarified that actually there is no restriction whatsoever in the original Bill C-24 on mobility rights. There is no possibility whatsoever that people could lose their citizenships for a minor crime. In fact, people who commit a major crime, a violent crime, still could not have their citizenships revoked, regardless of where they were born, regardless of whether they were dual citizens. It is only in the case of terrorism.

The crucial point with respect to terrorism is that this is where individuals have stepped fully outside the parameters of Canadian values. They have said that they have no interest in being part of the Canadian family. They have acted in a way that put themselves fundamentally at odds with it in terms of their values.

One of the arguments we have heard as well from my friends across the way is the assertion that putting them in jail is enough, that someone should not face both imprisonment and then the loss of citizenship. However, these are two completely different kinds of sanctions to deal with different kinds of issues. Of course, somebody who is involved in violent crime or terrorism should be punished through incarceration, but there is also the issue of whether this person has retained his or her commitment to be part of the Canadian family or not. These are different issues that should be both dealt with and certainly both considered.

However, there is another practical matter that I think the government ignores in its reasoning. It is the fact that individuals could well be outside of the country and become very involved in terrorism, be fighting for Daesh, perhaps, or another terrorist group, and clearly, in the process of their actions and their involvement in that, take themselves outside the Canadian family. Those people, as long as they retain their Canadian citizenship, have the benefits of Canadian citizenship, can ask for assistance by diplomatic staff and Canadians would be on the hook to bail that sort of an active terrorist out.

Of course, we do not have the ability to incarcerate people if they are abroad fighting on behalf of another terrorist organization. This is perhaps a context in which this would have to be considered, and I do not think it is properly considered by the government's arguments.

It is important to underline in that context at the same time that it is not the conviction in a foreign court that would lead to these considerations. It would only be a decision of the Canadian courts or an adjudication on the basis of equivalency, an evaluation that was done based on Canadian law with respect to terrorism. It still would not require someone to be in the country.

● (1305)

In terms of the underlying philosophy, Canadians should go with George Cartier, not the postnational anti-identity fantasies of the Prime Minister. It is also important to dig into the substantive provisions of the bill and realize that it does not fix problems that were real, that we were addressing significant problems. Terrorists should not—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his comments, his advocacy in the chamber, for the frequency of his speaking engagements, and for his work on the Parliamentary Friends of Tibet.

I raise two points in respect to what he spoke about. The first is on the European limitations. He identified at the outset of his remarks, concepts in Europe versus concepts in Canada. I agree with that, and that is the first part of my question. The genius of the Canadian model is that not only do we accept people into our country, but we put them on a path to permanence. That is something we should be exporting to various countries in Europe as they struggle with things such as a migrant crisis.

Second, the concept of citizenship informed a lot of his comments about different ideological perspectives, different historical perspectives, and different citations that he was mentioning. Citizenship does have value. We on this side agree with the member opposite on that notion. The exact value that is being attached seems to be somewhat different. His conception seemed to be that allowing a convicted terrorist to keep his citizenship is somehow anathema to this concept of citizenship and anathema to the concept of the Canadian tradition. I would ask him, as the second part of my question, that if there is some uniformity of the conception he is articulating, then why did the Conservative governments of Diefenbaker, Clark, and Mulroney cease to touch this provision in the Citizenship Act when they were in the office? It clearly is not in conformity with the conception that he is articulating.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I will answer the last part of the question first. We know we are dealing in a very different kind of world than was dealt with by those previous prime ministers. We live in the kind of world today where non-state actors are much more influential, and much of the conflict we engage in involves non-state actors. There was not the same pressing need to deal with individuals who may be Canadian citizens affiliating themselves with non-state, armed groups abroad, and seeking to inflict violence upon the country. This explains that part of the question. Countries obviously deal with the problems that are in front of them.

*Government Orders*

Let me just underline again what my concept of citizenship is all about. It is citizenship rooted in shared values, and citizenship with a wide breadth of permissible convictions and values. However, a person who chooses to fully reject all of the things that are foundational to Canadian values, all of our concepts of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and freedom of gender equality, at that point choose to separate themselves from our concept of citizenship. If we do not have some definition or limits on that concept of citizenship, then it is hard to understand what the Prime Minister means when he talks about citizenship, in fact when he talks about us being a postnational state.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague about something that is not in the bill. It concerns a change that was made whereby a person found guilty of a criminal offence abroad that is also a criminal offence in Canada would be denied Canadian citizenship.

As the hon. member knows, many justice systems around the world are very corrupt, and many people convicted of a criminal offence in a foreign system, sometimes in some of these corrupt systems, are not actually guilty, but are caught up in a vendetta by a corrupt system or government.

Is it not risky to disregard the context of the charges and whether due process was followed and then deny citizenship to someone who in fact never committed a criminal offence, but rather was the victim of a corrupt system?

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. It is not something that is specifically addressed by the bill, but it is an important issue.

Generally, in these cases, my understanding is that equivalency assessments can and should be done. The member is quite right. Someone may be convicted of a crime in another state without actually having committed that crime. Another state may not only have different kinds of offences, but different ways of adjudicating offences that do not respect the fundamental rights of the individual. Therefore, it is important to have that process of equivalency assessment to assess the validity of convictions or charges that may have happened in other countries.

As much as it is not addressed in the scope of the bill, having that equivalency assessment is important.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his great speech on this topic. I always find him very interesting to listen to.

I have a couple of points that I would like him to broaden. We have talked a lot about citizenship and values. I am wondering if he could talk a bit about the value of citizenship, the whole concept of why we have citizenship in a country, as well on the other side, the value of Canadian citizenship in particular, and what having citizenship status in Canada looks like to someone who is not from Canada. Also, could he talk a bit about dual nationals? We are one of the few countries in the world that allows dual nationality, which has

put us in this particular predicament. I would appreciate it if he could speak to those points.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, those are great questions from my colleague. I do not know if I will be able to address all of those points.

Canadian citizenship has incredible value. We work to help Canadian citizens in troubled regions of the world come home, and it is right and important that we should do that. Canadian citizens have access to the many benefits of living in this great country, such as the social services we provide, the ability to come here, to come and go freely, and to be part of the community. Therefore, it is important to me that Canadian citizenship not be viewed by those who acquire it as a transactional good, that it not be viewed purely on the basis of value, but that it be viewed in the sense of a deeper value, that it be viewed on the basis of a person's commitment to the country.

Citizenship should not be used, to paraphrase Kant, as merely a means. It should not be a means to an end. Rather, it should be an end or a goal in and of itself, something that expresses a deep value and appreciation for this place. That is why some of the provisions in the original bill were important. They were ways of affirming that people were intending to make a meaningful commitment to this country, which did not slow down the path to citizenship. In 2014, the last full year that the Conservatives were in government, over 250,000 immigrants became Canadian citizens. Is that not evidence of a successful path to citizenship? It shows that valuing Canadian citizenship does not deter new citizens; it actually encourages them.

• (1315)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):**

Madam Speaker, I would tend to disagree with the member, on a couple of points. First and foremost, the previous Conservative government was no friend with respect to the whole issue of citizenship and landed immigrants becoming citizens. As the member was not here at the time, I would remind him that we saw huge delays in processing times. There were 80% of those putting forward applications who had to wait well over two years, and for the unfortunate remaining 20%, it could end up being many more years. Also, the expansion of the requirements to become a citizen made it difficult for many people.

The member put on the record that the Conservative Party is saying that if a terrorist is a dual citizen he or she would be deported, and if he or she is not a dual citizen but a Canadian citizen, he or she would not be deported. My question to the member is this. Why does he believe that the Conservative Party supports two-tier citizenship?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I will briefly list some numbers that explicitly refute the assertions that the member has made without numbers.

During our term in office, 1.6 million immigrants became Canadian citizens. I am proud of that record. In 2014, 262,625 immigrants became Canadian citizens, which was more than ever before in Canadian history. If we compare the average number of immigrants who became citizens, it was 180,395. That was the average over our term in office, beating out the previous Liberal average of 168,806.

*Government Orders*

Those are the numbers. If the member wants to make assertions about Canada's performance under the previous government, he should actually back it up with facts, which he did not do.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand and speak on behalf of the New Democratic Party to this important piece of legislation.

During the 41st Parliament, the previous Conservative government brought in Bill C-24 that made a number of changes to the Citizenship Act. The most controversial of those changes, Canadians are well aware, was the change that effectively created two classes of citizens. There was one in which naturalized Canadians, or Canadians who were born abroad but became a Canadian citizen here, were treated differently than a Canadian citizen who is born in Canada. The Prime Minister expressed it quite eloquently when during the campaign he talked about a Canadian being a Canadian being a Canadian. That resonated with Canadians as well. However there are many other parts of that bill that also were seriously flawed and problematic. Many experts pointed out that the bill was in a number of ways unconstitutional and/or did not respect international law.

From a political point of view, the bill was ill-conceived. It was conducted in haste, and in many ways proposed changes to the law where there had been no demonstrated problem. It was a repeated attribute of the previous Conservative government to make decisions not based on evidence but based on ideology. Bill C-24 was a classic example of that. The bill turned out to be very unfair, divisive, was ideologically driven, and most important it was unfair.

The NDP opposed Bill C-24 from the very beginning, and we called for it to be withdrawn and amended. We proposed dozens of amendments, all of which were rejected by the previous Conservative government. The bill before us today, Bill C-6, would amend that flawed and very damaging piece of legislation, so the New Democrats are very happy to support this bill at third reading.

Bill C-6 will amend Bill C-24 in a number of ways, but not in all of the ways that we think it ought to be amended. I will cover both of those.

I will start with where it would amend Bill C-24 in a positive fashion.

Bill C-6 will remove the ability to revoke citizenship based on certain specified grounds. It will remove the obligation for a new citizen to declare the intent to reside in Canada. It will restore the length of time that a permanent resident must actually be present in Canada to qualify for citizenship. It will restore it back to the three-year period over five years, from the desire of the previous government, which wanted to expand that to be permanent residents of Canada for four years out of six years. This bill will restore the right to count up to two years of temporary residence before one becomes a permanent resident toward the amount of days that someone has to be resident in Canada to qualify for citizenship. It will eliminate the requirement that an applicant must have been present in Canada for 183 days in four of the last six years. It will remove the requirement for the language and knowledge examinations, which the Conservatives broadened to apply to young people aged 14 to 17, and seniors aged 55 to 64. I will expand on that.

Bill C-6 would also add to Bill C-24 by preventing offenders from counting time served for conditional sentences—that is a sentence served in the community with conditions—toward the calculation of required presence in Canada. That was a very large gap in the bill that the Conservatives missed. Bill C-6 will also give citizenship officials the power to seize fraudulent documents, which is another important provision that would allow our administrators of citizenship to be able to do their job.

This bill, as I said, is not perfect, and we would like to see additional changes. Bill C-6 does not address certain provisions of Bill C-24 regarding the following: the power that Bill C-24 granted to the minister to revoke citizenship based on a paper review with no judicial hearing; and it does not address provisions in Bill C-24 that provided a prohibition on citizenship for people charged with or serving a sentence for a criminal offence abroad, which also has to be an indictable offence in Canada. This bill also would leave in the minister's discretion to privately grant citizenship to individuals, which is another power that the New Democrats do not believe ought to be exercised in such an executive and non-transparent manner.

● (1320)

The New Democrats are pleased to support the bill because it repeals many of the harmful and unconstitutional changes to citizenship made by the previous government. We are disappointed that the bill does not go quite far enough in the ways that I just mentioned and we also point out that the narrow scope of the bill did prevent many amendments recommended by expert witnesses, including the Canadian Bar Association, from being admissible at the committee stage.

The Minister of Citizenship has explicitly acknowledged this and suggested that the Liberal government will need to introduce another immigration bill in the fall to address those shortcomings. We want to encourage the minister to keep his word on that and we look forward to working with the minister as he tables a truly comprehensive bill that will improve the Canadian citizenship process and comprehensively restore proper, sound, and fair law to this very vital part of Canadian political life: citizenship.

I am going to talk about the background to the bill. It was introduced by the Conservative government in February 2014, so essentially within a year or year and a half of the last election. The reason I point that out is that the previous Conservative government tended to act on ideological and political wedge reasons, not on sound evidentiary-based reasoning. We think that the bill was motivated politically as Conservatives tried to speak to a base and intolerance in Canadians by creating wedges between people. I will talk about that in a few moments because we think it is always a very unsound way to create legislation in this place.

At second reading in the last Parliament, the NDP tabled a broad amendment calling on the government to withdraw that bill and we also asked the government to send that bill to committee before completing second reading to allow that bill's obvious flaws to be addressed before continuing debate.

Not surprisingly, the Conservatives refused and despite our opposition, they adopted Bill C-24 without amendment. Bill C-24 received royal assent in June of 2014. Since then, the New Democrats have been asking for the bill to be revoked, especially regarding the provisions that increase the powers in the hands of the minister, including the authority to grant or revoke citizenship in executive fashion without a judicial process, the provisions to eliminate the recognition of time spent in Canada as a non-permanent resident, the parts of the bill that prohibit the granting of citizenship to persons who have been charged outside Canada with an offence, and the provisions that increased the residency requirements and the knowledge and language requirements in the bill.

Once again, the Liberals have addressed most but not all of those issues in this new bill. I am going to drill into some of these important issues. First, let us examine the provision that we support in the bill about repealing the national interest grounds for citizenship revocation. Legislative changes of that former bill that came into effect created a new ground of citizenship revocation that allowed citizenship to be taken away from dual citizens for certain acts against what was described as the national interests of Canada. These grounds included convictions for terrorism, treason, spying offences, and for membership in an armed force or organized armed group engaged in armed conflict with Canada.

The bill repealed those grounds. I want to say at the outset that the New Democrats and I think every member in the House acknowledge the seriousness and unacceptability of those crimes. There is no question about that. Treason, terrorism, spying, acting in a foreign army engaged in conflict with Canada, these are all crimes that I think every Canadian would condemn in the most strenuous way possible.

However, the issue becomes what the proper remedy for that is. What the New Democrats, many members, and obviously the new Liberal government have now acknowledged in the bill is that the proper response to anyone who commits those acts is to be dealt with harshly and appropriately by the Canadian legal system. That is the proper way to deal with citizens, not to strip a citizen of their citizenship rights, which hearkens back to the old medieval concept of a king in the 12th century banishing a citizen from the kingdom as punishment.

•(1325)

That is the kind of spirit that infused the Conservative government with this law. Instead, any person who believes in modern democracy and modern concepts of statecraft, would agree that once people become citizens, they are citizens. Citizens should be dealt with together.

Here is the rub. I have heard the Conservatives say the word “equality” in the House before. They have never been able to satisfactorily explain this to anybody. If a Canadian citizen born in Canada committed a terrorist act, or a Canadian citizen born in Canada spied against Canada or a Canadian citizen born in Canada fought for an armed forces against the Canadian Armed Forces, why he or she would not be stripped of his or her citizenship, but a naturalized Canadian who committed exactly the same act could be stripped of his or her citizenship.

### *Private Members' Business*

This was the essence of the objection to that provision. It created two tiers of Canadian citizenship. I will stand in the House, and all MPs will stand here, and condemn each one of those heinous crimes, but we will equally stand in this place and say that it is a Canadian value to treat Canadian citizens equally before the law.

I am very happy to see the Liberal government enforce that very important concept.

I want to talk about repealing the intent to reside provision. Since June 2015, adult applicants must declare on their citizenship application, because of the Conservative law, that they intend to continue to reside in Canada if granted citizenship. This provision created concern among some new Canadians who feared that their citizenship could be revoked in the future if they moved outside of Canada. The Liberal government is proposing to repeal this provision, and I congratulate them on that because it is absolutely the right move.

All Canadians are free to move outside of this country and live where they wish. Again, we have another example of discrimination in law by the Conservative government where I, who was born in this country, could move to France if I wanted to and never have to worry about my citizenship being revoked. However, someone who was born in a different country and was naturalized here would have to worry. That is discriminatory. I am glad to see the government repeal that discriminatory provision.

•(1330)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member will have about seven and a half minutes the next time this matter comes before the House. It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### GOOD SAMARITAN DRUG OVERDOSE ACT

The House resumed from May 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-224, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (assistance — drug overdose), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley has six and a half minutes remaining in his time from the previous debate.

**Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am proud to once again rise in strong support of Bill C-224, the good Samaritan drug overdose act. I would like to thank the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for bringing up this vital piece of legislation. Now is the time to help our fellow Canadians in need.

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Drawing on my 20 years of experience as an emergency physician, I can say with confidence that, if passed, Bill C-224 would save lives. During my clinical experience, I have witnessed and treated many overdose victims in the poverty-stricken downtown core of Winnipeg. Emergency room doctors, nurses, and first responders are better able to help people when they know what the victims have ingested into their systems. Finding out what someone has ingested is vital when determining what one can do to help them.

The findings on physical examination are often too variable to yield any useful information and laboratory tests can take too long to be of benefit. I often have to ask these patients or those who accompany them what substances they have taken. Typically, they are reluctant to provide this information. However, once I explain that there is no risk of prosecution due to patient and physician confidentiality, they give me honest answers and I am able to provide better care.

Doctor and patient confidentiality should be extended to the individuals who accompany the victims and fear of the law should not prevent someone from potentially saving a life. As physicians, nurses, first responders, and as a society, we all have a duty to care for the most vulnerable in our communities. I believe this bill would help our vulnerable population be less afraid to ask for the help they need for their friends and themselves.

Some may argue that people who routinely ingest harmful drugs are responsible for their outcome and what happens to them is their choice. I disagree. It is almost unanimously accepted by the medical profession that addiction is an illness. Furthermore, it is not widely understood by the public that addiction is highly correlated with underlying mental illness. Someone with an undiagnosed or poorly controlled mental illness may take harmful substances in an attempt to self-medicate. This bill is vital to helping these vulnerable individuals.

Critics of this bill might claim that by preventing legal sanctions against drug users, this bill facilitates and encourages drug use, as is claimed with other forms of harm reduction. On this point, the evidence is also clear. Harm reduction saves lives, improves outcomes, increases access to rehabilitation, and does not increase either the use of drugs or incidence of crime. This is the conclusion of the Canadian Medical Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization.

While we have made steps in other areas of harm reduction, Canada lags behind other jurisdictions on this issue. In the United States, over 30 states and the District of Columbia have some form of good Samaritan overdose immunity law. In 2014, the House Standing Committee on Health recommended considering good Samaritan overdose legislation in the future. This recommendation has yet to be implemented. What are we waiting for?

When looking at this bill, we should consider the evidence. A Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council study found that fewer than half of respondents would call 911 in an overdose situation, citing potential charges as a major barrier. A study of Washington state, which passed good Samaritan overdose legislation in 2010, found that almost 90% of respondents aware of the law would make the call.

When considering this legislation, it is important to recognize these people are our sons, daughters, friends, and family members. Young people at a house party may be too scared to call for help for their overdosing friend if they fear charges. Too often we have seen this story in the news, how fear caused delay, and there should not be a need for hesitation or a second thought when calling to save a life. If this bill is passed, scared young people at a house party will be more likely to call 911 if their friend is in trouble. A bystander will be more likely to put compassion and conscience before fear and self-interest.

I expect this legislation will receive very wide support in the House, with very little opposition. In fact, if any members are considering opposing this bill, I urge them to please talk to a recovering addict, an emergency room doctor, or a victim's family. Members should ask these persons with direct experience if they think this bill could save lives, and then they should vote their conscience.

● (1335)

Evidence-based legislation should appeal to our hearts as much as it appeals to our logic. We need a law that responds to the rising fatalities associated with opioid use. With these rising fatalities, it is now more important to act. The future victims of an overdose cannot wait any longer. The sooner this legislation is implemented, the more vulnerable Canadians could be saved because someone made the right decision to make the call to save a life.

We are dealing with an ongoing and escalating tragedy. Let us wait no longer. The time is right to pass Bill C-224. As the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam has said, there is no time for saving lives like the present. Let us pass Bill C-224. Let us save lives.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for putting forward Bill C-224, an important piece of legislation. Not all of us are so fortunate as to get such an early spot for our private member's bills and to have a bill that is going to potentially make a lifesaving difference. It is truly a privilege.

I would like to provide a bit of perspective around what the issue is that my colleague is trying to address.

In British Columbia, the province both the member and I are from, between 2010 and 2015 there was a 50% increase in deaths due to drug overdose. In 2016 we have seen a really worrisome spike. There have been 201 deaths in three months in British Columbia. The situation is so serious that public health has declared a state of emergency. This is not only a big issue in British Columbia but it is a big issue across Canada.

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We think this perhaps happens only in some of our larger centres, such as the Downtown Eastside. That is not accurate. In Kamloops alone there have been 13 fatalities in three months from drug overdoses, and six of those happened in one day. Four individuals managed to get treatment and are fine.

These are not just numbers and facts. These are people. These are our friends. These are our children. In Kamloops, three families have spoken out directly on this issue. They want to raise awareness, especially about fentanyl and the tragic consequences of its use.

Ryan Pinneo's family has spoken out publicly. Their son was an athlete with a very supportive family. He struggled with addiction and succumbed to a tragic overdose.

There was another young man from Kamloops named Lance Ritchie whose parents have also spoken out. The reason they are speaking out is to raise awareness in terms of the incredible danger that is out there. Lance Ritchie loved the outdoors. He loved to fish. His family has beautiful pictures of him. They have shown the people of Kamloops the pictures and have told them that, yes, he did something wrong and foolish but he was a wonderful man.

Twenty-four-year-old Ben Coan is another whose family is grieving, and it is so tragic to hear the mothers and fathers talk about their children.

Someone that I knew from a very young age, and it was a fairly high-profile tragedy in North Vancouver, involved Hardy and Amelia, a couple of young parents. They made a foolish decision, no question about it. They were good people who made a bad mistake.

What would this legislation mean? The research the proponent of the bill shared was that sometimes there is a barrier to getting help quickly and that barrier is because the people who are with their friends or their classmates or their mothers and fathers are worried that there will be some consequences in terms of the substances. The research is clear that at times there has been a barrier because of possession. We also just heard from a doctor across the aisle who, in his own experience, found that there was a barrier for people in terms of self-interest or many reasons in terms of getting help quickly.

In the case of opioids, what does getting help quickly mean? I am a nurse by background. I can remember in the hospital there was a case, and this was a legitimate use of a narcotic for pain control. We had given a woman some pain medication post-surgery and just a couple of minutes later I happened to go into the room and she had stopped breathing as the result of an allergic reaction to the pain medication.

• (1340)

It was absolutely shocking to see someone who had stopped breathing and who was on the brink of death. The hospitals have something called Narcan or naloxone. We injected the naloxone, or Narcan as it was called, into her and she started breathing again. She opened her eyes and wondered what had happened. For someone who has never seen this, Narcan can reverse the effects an allergy to medications.

This is a multi-issue and this is one piece of the puzzle that our colleague has introduced in getting help for people quickly.

Removing barriers for them to seek help is a really important piece of the puzzle.

British Columbia has a take-home naloxone program to make it readily available. Health Canada worked rapidly, going through a process to make naloxone available, not a prescription. It is cheaper for patients who have a bee allergy. We will often see their kits and learn how to do an injection to reverse the effects of the allergy to the bee. This particular injection can be easily learned and is truly life-saving.

The other important feature is that lay people can learn how to deliver naloxone. It is absolutely life-saving and there are very minimal adverse effects.

I noted that some people have said that we perhaps should be criticizing this because we are endorsing drug use. That is not actually what is happening. It has been very clear that what is happening is life-saving, whether it is someone who is suffering from an addiction who has taken an overdose, or whether it is a young person who has been at a party and who has made perhaps a foolish decision.

If we put this bill into the context of what is a dramatically escalating situation in British Columbia and across Canada and provide some basic life-saving tools, then we have a good bill. I too hope all members in the House will support the bill. Again, even if it saves one life, it is a bill well done.

• (1345)

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we will be supporting the bill before us, which would provide an exemption from drug possession charges when someone calls 911 to report an overdose. It is a simple, common-sense, proven policy that will save lives. I thank the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for bringing the bill forward.

We know all too well how desperately our communities need action to end this crisis. As the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo mentioned, British Columbia's health officer has declared a public health emergency. This is the first time that such emergency powers have been used. The province took this step, because in the first three months of this year, there have been more than 200 deaths from overdoses of fentanyl. At that rate, we could see 700 to 800 British Columbians dead by the end of this year. We are talking about an opiate that is exponentially more powerful than morphine or heroin.

We have seen provincial task forces created and police alerts issued in major cities across Canada. We know that this problem will not go away on its own. Indeed, it could get much worse.

Recently, police in Edmonton seized a shipment of white powder from China before it could be prepared for street sale. Lab testing revealed it to be a substance called W-18, a synthetic opiate that is unimaginably deadly. It is 100 times more powerful than fentanyl, and 10,000 times more potent than morphine. To put that in perspective, the amount seized recently in Edmonton, four kilograms, according to public health officials, is enough to kill every person in Alberta 45 times over.

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However, this drug is so new that it has not yet been included in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Therefore, it is clear that in the face of such a complex crisis, many things need to be done, and done quickly. Bill C-224 is one essential step, and we must take it without delay.

One study cited by the Pivot Legal Society suggested that most people who witness an overdose do not call 911. Fear of arrest for drug possession is one barrier among many, but it is one that we have the power to lift.

This is a step that many jurisdictions have already taken. In the United States, New Mexico was the first to pass a good Samaritan law in 2007, and 31 states have followed suit. By all accounts, these laws have been successful in reducing the fear of police involvement as a barrier to calling emergency assistance during an overdose.

We need to do more, as well, to ensure that drugs that counteract opiate overdoses are more readily available where they are needed. Naloxone was delisted by Health Canada on March 22. This followed the unanimous recommendation of 130 community groups, health experts, and other groups. However, this still leaves it up to the provinces to ensure broader access.

In B.C., naloxone is now available without a prescription and is in the hands of almost all EMS personnel. In Alberta, more than 500 pharmacies are offering free kits without prescriptions. However, access is not as open in some other provinces, where it is still available only to trained responders, or through a doctor's prescription to friends and family of opiate users. Furthermore, cost and access in rural areas still present barriers to saving lives from overdoses.

There remains a federal role to play in encouraging access to easier forms of dosage, for instance, replacing an injection with a nasal spray. Of course, we must also do more to prevent overdoses by increasing awareness about fentanyl-laced street drugs and by reducing its availability by tackling illegal production.

On the former, I note, for example, the recent initiative by Toronto Public Health to create a simple website, ReportBadDrugsTO.ca, to allow fast, anonymous reports of tainted street drugs so that warnings can be spread immediately to opiate users through community agencies. On the latter, I note the recent introduction in the Senate of Bill S-225 by Senator Vernon White. This bill would add the ingredients of fentanyl to the schedule of controlled precursors in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

• (1350)

Together with the provinces we must do more to control the use of highly addictive prescription opioids. These initiatives must be considered as elements of a broader response by all levels of government to a crisis that is overwhelming too many communities.

The bill deserves to be praised in the context of removing the ideological blinders of the previous Conservative government and instead adopting the evidence and public health based approach to drug policy for which New Democrats have long been proud advocates.

I salute here the work of Libby Davies, the former member for Vancouver East, who has been a powerful advocate for harm reduction, public health, and safer communities for many years.

If we are to make this long overdue paradigm shift real it will take much more from the government. We need to see the government's promise to repeal Bill C-2 honoured and to support supervised consumption sites. We need to see a review of criminal justice laws, including mandatory minimum sentences in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. That, as we saw in the Supreme Court just days ago, may not only be costly and ineffective but also unconstitutional.

I know I speak for many communities when I say that this is not an issue that we can afford to leave on the back burner. In communities across Canada, overdoses are an epidemic, and we need action now.

Just last week, the CBC printed an interview with a Winnipeg opiate user named Amanda. She reached out to reporters after a close friend died of an overdose. She said, "I've had 15 contacts on my phone and two of them die in three days. That's scary enough, that says it all."

There are many things we can do to help Amanda and the thousands of Canadians struggling with addictions and to renew and strengthen the health and safety of the communities they call home. This is one step we can take now, and I believe we should do it without delay.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will keep my comments short, but I would first like to address the member's concerns in regard to W-18. We know it is a very powerful drug that has caused a great deal of damage to society. I can assure the member that the Government of Canada has acted very quickly on it. It is now on the illegal substances list. That means it is illegal in Canada for production, possession, importation, exportation, and trafficking. All of that is now illegal for the W-18 drug. We see that as a good thing, showing that the government can respond to incidents of this nature.

I want to compliment our colleague, the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for the efforts he has put in to provide us with Bill C-224 today. It should be acknowledged that through the efforts of the member he will in fact be saving lives if we pass the bill. There seems to be a will of the House to give it, potentially, unanimous support. That speaks volumes.

We have a member who recognized just how important the good Samaritan bill on drug overdose is not only to the community he represents but the community as a whole. I did get a chance to go over the comments the member provided and listen to the two examples. They were both young people, one in Ontario and one in Saskatchewan. These types of stories of overdoses and unnecessary deaths are very sad and tragic. It happens today in a very real and tangible way.

I rise with pleasure to indicate not only my support, but the government's support for Bill C-224 in hopes that we will ultimately see unanimous support.



• (1355)

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise at the end of this debate to acknowledge and thank the many members on both sides of the House who have risen in support of Bill C-224, the good Samaritan drug overdose act, many of whom have shared with us their personal, powerful stories about why the bill is so important. This support has resonated not only on a multi-partisan basis throughout the House but throughout Canada as well, from coast to coast to coast.

We have, for instance, received strong expressions of support from the ministers of health in several provinces. In B.C., there is support from the B.C. chief coroner and the B.C. public health officer, as many have noted already, who has just recently declared a public health emergency due to the surge in overdose deaths, a dramatic increase that has in fact echoed across the whole country.

In my own tri-cities community as well, a great many of our local public officials have stepped up, from the mayors of each of the tri-cities to school board trustees and a large number of city councillors. Indeed, Port Coquitlam city council passed a unanimous resolution of support.

We have heard from police, firefighters, and paramedics as well, for first responders know that they can only save lives if they actually get the call. We have heard from religious leaders and ordinary citizens, as well as, throughout the country, families of victims who might have lived if only someone had picked up the phone and made that call a little earlier. By providing limited immunity from simple possession charges, we would remove a significant barrier to making that call. This means more lives will be saved and more people will live to have a chance to make better choices.

In my opening speech, I spoke of Austin Padaric and Kelly Best, two young men who tragically died too young and who might have

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lived if someone had made that call earlier. Austin and Kelly are just two of the all too many unfortunate victims throughout this land who on a daily basis needlessly die because someone was afraid to call for help. Austin and Kelly, let these names stand now on behalf of all those victims through all the years, but better yet, let them stand as well for all of those we might yet save in the years to come by passing this bill.

The bill will not end the scourge of drug overdoses and we will not end the intolerable toll of death, but surely, we can stem the rising tide. We will not slay this dragon in this one fell blow, but we can bring it to its knees.

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

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

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

• (1400)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being two o'clock, the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2 p.m.)



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