



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, December 1, 2016**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 1, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

### PARLIAMENTARY PRECINCT

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to lay upon the table the Memorandum of Understanding between the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and the Commissioner of the RCMP.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### ELECTORAL REFORM

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform entitled, "Strengthening Democracy in Canada: Principles, Process and Public Engagement for Electoral Reform".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

[*English*]

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks on behalf of all committee members to our clerks, Christine Lafrance and Danielle Widmer, assisted by Ariann Bouchard; and our analysts, Dara Lithwick and Erin Virgint, assisted by Gabrielle de Billy Brown; and Jill McKenny, our logistics officer.

[*Translation*]

We would also like to thank the interpreters and the staff at information and technology services, broadcasting, and publications. We could not have done our work or conducted our dialogue with Canadians without the dependable support provided by House services.

[*English*]

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, given the tremendous importance of the issue of electoral reform and the amount of work by all members of the committee, I would seek the indulgence of the Chair and the unanimous consent of the House to allow the government, the NDP, and the Green Party one minute each to put on the record the reasons for their supplemental opinions. This would allow the House, and indeed Canadians, to have all the information before it on this important issue as it relates to the recommendations contained in the report that was just tabled.

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

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order related to the request made by the government just a moment ago, I would like to go on record and say that New Democrats agree that the committee's report is tremendously important, but given that importance, we do not think having a half hour's notice is sufficient for such an issue—

**The Speaker:** That is debate.

#### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development entitled, "Supporting Peace and Development in Guatemala and Colombia for the Long Term".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

[*Translation*]

#### PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding membership of the committees of the House.

*Routine Proceedings*

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 17th report later this day.

[*English*]

## HEALTH

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-233, an act respecting a national strategy for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments. I want to say that amendments were proposed by members of all parties on the committee, and we really feel that we have strengthened the bill as we present it.

## FINANCE

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to the Canada pension plan child rearing and disability drop-out provisions. This bill is asking the government, at the next triennial meeting, to raise the issue of child rearing and persons with disabilities CPP enhancements.

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## INCOME TAX ACT

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-323, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (rehabilitation of historic property).

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill creates a tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic buildings in Canada. It is designed to help those who invest in our cultural heritage.

It is a meaningful measure to strengthen heritage infrastructure. By maintaining historic buildings and undertaking costly heritage renovations, citizens undertake a considerable private burden from which we all benefit through the preservation of our past and the places that have made our country. This bill seeks, in a small way, to provide some support for them for the considerable investment they make on behalf of all of us.

With the 150th anniversary of Confederation nearing, this bill is an opportunity for all members of the House to show their support for preserving Canada's built heritage. These changes will help save our most important historical structures for our children and grandchildren to enjoy for generations to come.

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

\* \* \*

• (1010)

## CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

**Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-324, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (production of or trafficking in substances).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to introduce a bill that would amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to prohibit

the possession, production, sale, or importation of anything if it is known to be used in the production or trafficking of certain substances included in schedule I of the act.

These substances would include methamphetamines, ecstasy, fentanyl, and W-18. These substances are a deadly scourge in our communities, which are now plagued by a full-blown epidemic of fentanyl overdoses. Those that traffic and produce these substances must face the long arm of the law.

I will always work to ensure the health and safety of all Canadians, especially my constituents in Markham—Unionville. I hope all members of the House will support this bill.

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

[*English*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Yukon have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of any Standing Order, for the duration of 2017, when a recorded division is to be held on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, except recorded divisions deferred to the conclusion of oral questions, the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than 30 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings*

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House,

(a) any recorded division demanded in respect of an item of private members' business from Thursday, December 1, 2016, to Monday, December 5, 2016, shall be deferred until immediately before the time provided for private members' business on Tuesday, December 6, 2016;

(b) any recorded division demanded in respect of an item of private members' business from Tuesday, December 6, 2016, to Monday, December 12, 2016, shall be deferred until immediately before the time provided for private members' business on Tuesday, December 13, 2016;

(c) any recorded division demanded in respect of an item of private members' business on Tuesday, December 13, 2016, shall be deferred until immediately before the time provided for private members' business on Wednesday, February 1, 2017; and

(d) any recorded division in respect of an item of private members' business deferred to Wednesday, December 7, 2016, pursuant to Standing Order 93(1), shall be deemed deferred anew until immediately before the time provided for private members' business on Tuesday, December 6, 2016.

•(1015)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

[*English*]

## PETITIONS

### NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present five petitions signed by over 100 constituents of mine in Battle River—Crowfoot. They call on the government to recognize natural health products as being just that: natural. They are concerned that the changes proposed by the Liberal government will be a step backward. They want the proposals by the Minister of Health to be null and void. The petitioners are from different areas of my riding: Bashaw, Camrose, Round Hill, Hardisty, Bawlf, Sedgewick, New Norway, Daysland, Strome, Killam, and Wainwright.

### RAIL CROSSINGS

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to present a petition submitted to me by residents of Capreol and Nickel Belt. The petition calls on the federal government to take action to minimize harm to the health of residents, to emergency services, and to the local economy and business community caused by long wait times at rail crossings in Capreol in greater Sudbury. It is my pleasure to represent the

residents of Capreol who have signed this petition on rail crossing wait times and to present it to the federal government.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present yet another petition, this time from the residents of Burnaby in Vancouver, calling on the government to oppose the expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline. It notes that there will be 50 permanent full-time jobs created by that project. It notes that it will increase the number of oil tankers coming into Burrard Inlet, up to 34 a month, putting at risk waterways and industries dependent on them. I believe it is a petition that still has validity today, notwithstanding the government's decision made recently.

### PORNOGRAPHY

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to present a petition signed by Canadians from Winnipeg, Manitoba. The petitioners are concerned about the accessibility and impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit material online and the impact on public health, especially the well-being of women and girls. As such, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to adopt Motion No. 47.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present three petitions, two on the same topic from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The petitioners are calling for the legislation of a tanker ban on the west coast of British Columbia, not solely the northern portion but the entire west coast, to protect B.C.'s fisheries, tourism, coastal communities, and natural ecosystems.

The second petition is related but different. It focuses on the critical importance of protecting the resident southern killer whale population from imminent extinction by setting limitations on noise and disturbances at specific levels of decibels underwater. These are cetaceans that are extremely sensitive to noise, and increased tanker traffic imperils their very existence.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 537, 538, 539, 540, and 541.

[*Text*]

Question No. 537—**Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and each First Nation reserve community: (a) how many First Nations communities have conducted an Asset Management Plan review focusing on fire protection services since 2005, broken down by year; (b) which communities have completed and filed an Asset Management Plan Report as mentioned in (a) with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada; (c) for each community that has filed an Asset Management Plan in (a), which communities have acted on the Asset Management Plan; and (d) which communities that have acted on an Asset Management Plan have staff from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada visited to confirm work done to improve fire protection and fire education for the community?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the term “asset management plan” is understood to be equivalent to the term that the department uses, which is “maintenance management plan”. Developing and implementing a maintenance management plan is the responsibility of the first nation band. As owners and operators of their assets, bands are not obligated to share their plans with the department.

Bands may use a number of tools to help maintain and operate assets. For example, fire service assessments, and community risk assessments, as well as maintenance management plans are recommended by INAC’s “Level of Service Standards—Fire Protection Services”, found at [www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010632/1100100010634](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010632/1100100010634), which came into effect on April 1, 2016.

First nation technical organizations and tribal councils provide significant guidance to bands on how to develop and implement such plans, as well as in many cases providing training for the operation and maintenance of the assets. The extent to which support is provided is negotiated between bands and their tribal councils or technical services providers.

**Question No. 538—Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to fire safety education in First Nations communities: (a) what materials are distributed or provided by Indigenous and North Affairs to First Nations communities; (b) how much has Indigenous and Northern Affairs spent annually since 2005 to educate and train First Nations communities on fire safety and firefighting; (c) what amount does Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada budget annually specifically for education of fire safety in First Nations communities; and (d) how much does Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada spend annually, since 2005, on travel and expenses for Ministry Staff to inspect and report back to the Ministry on the fire protection preparedness in Canada’s First Nations communities?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC, is concerned, the response is as follows. With regard to (a), INAC also works in partnership with the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada, AFAC, to provide on-line safety tips and limited materials. INAC also has a yearly contribution agreement to support this partnership, which is negotiated based on planned deliverables. Such deliverables include a number of fire prevention awareness and training initiatives, such as the #BeFireSafe education campaign found in the links provided below.

INAC provides fire safety information on the departmental website under the fire education and prevention web page at [www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1317842518699/1317842725065UU](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1317842518699/1317842725065UU).

It is also on the AFAC website at [www.afac-acpi.ca/](http://www.afac-acpi.ca/).

With regard to (b) and (c), at the beginning of each fiscal year, INAC provides core capital funding to each first nation community on an annual basis through the capital facilities and maintenance program. First nations prioritize spending to meet their requirements for community services, including fire protection, firefighter training, and activities for fire safety education.

With regard to funding provided directly to first nations for firefighter training, from 2005-06 to 2015-16, INAC allocated a total of \$49,461,237 for firefighter training, which is managed by first nations and tribal councils or technical organizations with first

nations. The breakdown of annual allocations is provided in Annex A.

For funding provided by INAC in support of educating first nations communities on fire safety, INAC has worked through its key partner, the AFAC, where a significant portion of AFAC’s annual contribution agreement supports the delivery of fire safety education to first nations. Please note that this effort is in conjunction with other annual deliverables, such as training, research projects, and more. From 2007-08 to 2015-16, INAC has provided a total of \$1,918,453 to the AFAC. The breakdown of annual expenditures is provided in Annex B.

With regard to (d), first nation band councils manage fire protection services on reserves and prioritize their spending to meet the needs of their communities, including fire protection services and preparedness. INAC recommends a number of tools that would support community fire protection preparedness. They are outlined in the Level of Service Standards for Fire Protection, which came into effect April 1, 2016. Fire service assessments and community risk assessments, as well as maintenance management plans, are recommended. These assessments, contracted by the first nations, are completed by qualified third-party technical organizations or firms. Assessments are used by the bands in their planning activities.

INAC’s policy for providing funding for fire protection services is presented in the Level of Service Standards—Fire Protection Services—Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program, found at [www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010632/1100100010634](http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010632/1100100010634).

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 539—Ms. Irene Mathysen:**

With regard to Veteran Affairs Canada, what are the: (a) total number of veterans claiming benefits due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, as a service related injury; (b) number of veterans claiming benefits in each of the last 10 years due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, as a service related injury; (c) total number of veterans claims regarding (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, that were denied as a service related injury; (d) number of veterans claims in each of the last 10 years regarding (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, that were denied as a service related injury; (e) total number of successful claims by veterans regarding service related injury due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma and, (iii) sexual assault; (f) number of successful claims by veterans in each of the last 10 years regarding service related a service related injury due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma and, (iii) sexual assault; (g) total number of claims by veterans regarding service related injury due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, appealed at the Veterans Review and Appeal Board; (h) number of claims by veterans in each of the last 10 years regarding service related a service related injury due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, appealed at the Veterans Review and Appeal Board; (i) total number of claims by veterans regarding service related injury due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, whose appeals were denied at the Veterans Review and Appeal Board; (j) number of claims by veterans in each of the last 10 years regarding service related a service related injury due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, whose appeals were denied at the Veterans Review and Appeal Board; and (l) number of claims by veterans in each of the last 10 years regarding service related a service related injury due to (i) sexual harassment, (ii) sexual trauma, (iii) sexual assault, whose appeals were granted at the Veterans Review and Appeal Board.

**Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Veterans Affairs Canada does not track data-specific information for veterans claiming benefits for sexual harassment, sexual trauma, and sexual assault, as a service-related injury and, therefore, is unable to provide the requested information.

Veterans Affairs Canada is committed to ensuring that veterans, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as well as their families, have the support they need when they need it. Veterans Affairs Canada provides a range of programs to promote the welfare of those who became ill or injured in the line of duty, including disability and related health care benefits, rehabilitation services, financial benefits, and support to families. Information on these services is available on Veterans Affairs Canada's website at [www.veterans.gc.ca](http://www.veterans.gc.ca) or by calling the department at 1-866-522-2122. Each and every veteran who feels that they may have a service-related illness or injury is encouraged to reach out to Veterans Affairs Canada so that their needs can be discussed and support provided wherever possible.

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board tracks applications by medical condition, not by the causes of medical conditions. For that reason, it is unable to provide any data in response to this question.

**Question No. 540—Mr. Kerry Diotte:**

With regard to the safety and security of Canadian embassies abroad: (a) how many security incidents have been reported at the Embassy of Canada in Moscow, Russia, since 2011, including, but not limited to (i) unlawful entries of the embassy, (ii) unlawful breaches of the embassy's security systems, (iii) unlawful interception of embassy communications, (iv) personal threats or harassment against employees of the embassy, (v) unlawful entry, disruption or vandalism of the personal residences or vehicles of employees of the embassy, including both Canadians and local employees; (b) what was the nature of each incident in (a); (c) what was the date of each incident in (a); (d) how many times has the government made requests to or has communicated with the Russian authorities regarding embassy security since

November 4, 2015; (e) what was the nature of each of the communications in (d); (f) what was the date of each communication in (d); and (g) what response was received from the Russian authorities to each communication in (d)?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. As such, the requested information has been withheld on the grounds that its release could be expected to be injurious to the conduct of international affairs; threatening the safety of Canadians, employees, or property of the Government of Canada.

**Question No. 541—Mr. Kerry Diotte:**

With regard to visa requirements for citizens of Ukraine entering Canada: (a) what formal visa exemption review has Global Affairs Canada undertaken since November 4, 2015; (b) what consultations have been undertaken since November 4, 2015, with respect to lifting the visa requirements, including for each consultation, (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the organizations and individuals consulted; (c) does the situation with respect to Ukraine differ from the situation with respect to Romania and Bulgaria; and (d) what is the criteria applied for lifting the visa requirement for the Czech Republic and what, if any, differences are there between the situation with the Czech Republic and that of Ukraine?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, IRCC, is concerned, visas are the primary tool in managing Canada's border. The requirement that foreign nationals first obtain a temporary resident visa to visit Canada is the norm, not the exception. Ukraine is among the large majority of countries whose nationals require a visitor visa in order to travel to Canada for business, tourist, or family purposes. Canada's visa policy decisions are made on a country-by-country assessment and follow a rigorous and evidence-based process. IRCC continues to assist Ukrainians in travelling to Canada, using such tools as the multiple-entry visa, which reduces the burden on those who wish to travel to Canada more frequently.

With regard to (a), IRCC has the lead for visa policy within the Government of Canada. IRCC continuously monitors country conditions and migration trends. The department has never undertaken a formal visa review of Ukraine.

With regard to (b), IRCC does not hold public consultations on matters of visa policy. Formal visa reviews involve extensive consultations with federal departments and agencies, as well as with international partners. The department has not undertaken consultations, since a formal review has never been undertaken for this country.

*Business of Supply*

With regard to (c), Canada applies the criteria established in Canada's visa policy framework equally to all countries when assessing eligibility for a visa exemption.

With regard to (d), Canada's visa policy criteria are applied universally. The criteria that were applied in assessing the Czech Republic's readiness for a visa exemption in 2013 would be equally applied to Ukraine, were a visa review to be undertaken. These criteria, reflecting Canada's immigration program objectives and broader national interests are grouped into seven categories: socio-economic trends; migration issues; travel document integrity; border management; safety and security issues; human rights issues; and bilateral and multilateral issues.

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government response to Question No. 542 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 542—**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:**

With regard to charitable and political tax credits administered by the Canada Revenue Agency and Elections Canada: (a) what is the annual cost of administering the Charitable Donations Tax Credit, including staff salaries, program administration, and the tax credits themselves; (b) what is the annual cost of administering the Political Contributions Tax Credit, including staff salaries, program administration, and the tax credits themselves; (c) how many Canadians claimed the Charitable Donations Tax Credit, broken down by year from 2012 to present and by contribution amounts (i) less than \$400, (ii) between \$401 and \$750, (iii) more than \$751; (d) how many Canadians claimed the Political Contributions Tax Credit, broken down by year from 2012 to present and by contribution amounts (i) less than \$400, (ii) between \$401 and \$750, (iii) more than \$751; and (e) what is the income quintile of each person and the credit they claimed in (c) and (d)?

(Return tabled)

• (1020)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION — CUBA

**The Deputy Speaker:** Today being the last allotted day for the supply period ending December 10, 2016, the House will proceed as usual to the consideration and passage of the appropriation bills. In

view of recent procedures, do hon. members agree to have the bill distributed now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Thornhill.

[English]

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC)** moved:

That, in light of the regrettable comments made by the Prime Minister on behalf of Canadians on the death of Fidel Castro, and in an effort to send a clear signal to Cuban people and the international community that his comments do not reflect the true sentiments of Canadians, the House: (a) reject the comments made by the Prime Minister on November 26, 2016; (b) recognize the past atrocities and repression borne by the Cuban people under the rule of Fidel Castro, including his long and oppressive regime of imprisoning critics and reported beatings during arrest, restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly, and the suffering and restrictions placed on the press, minorities, and the democratic process, including the LGBT community; and (c) express its hope and full support for the people of Cuba, that they may now begin to see freedom and a commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, in order to ensure a brighter and better future for the Cuban people now and for generations to come.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Calgary Shepard.

The debate on the motion before us today will enable members of all parties in the House to send a clear message to all of the people of Cuba, as well as to the international community, our democratic allies, and Canadians whose true sentiments are not reflected in the Prime Minister's regrettable condolences regarding Castro.

The Prime Minister, in expressing his personal sorrow at the passing of Cuba's communist dictator, made no mention at all of the Cubans whom Castro executed, imprisoned, tortured, and oppressed. The outrageously affectionate and nostalgic statement may be attributed to the PM's romanticized family connections; perhaps because of a shallow familiarity with Cuban history; perhaps due to the fact that he has never met a victim of Castro's tyranny; or, that he, on his recent quick trip to Havana, was wined and dined by Cuba's communist 1%, and that the representatives of civil society whom he met were not representative of Cuba's long-suffering, impoverished, underemployed, and oppressed society.

Today, we will remind our Liberal colleagues not of an idealized, cherry-picked, or confected Cuban history, but the facts.

It is true that Fidel Castro was a revolutionary hero. He overthrew a corrupt, brutal military dictator, Fulgencio Batista. But then Castro betrayed the Cuban people and rival rebel groups that had shared the revolution's victory. There were firing squads, prisons, and re-education camps for decades. Then armed and emboldened as a proxy of the Soviet Union, Castro enabled the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, which precipitated one of the most perilous moments of the Cold War. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s the Cuban dictator exported revolution widely. Castro sent tens of thousands of his soldiers to fight in a variety of Marxist revolutions and wars in Angola, Congo, Bolivia, Ethiopia, North Vietnam, and Syria and Egypt against Israel, and to Nicaragua and El Salvador.



The Prime Minister said in his overwrought condolences of last weekend that Castro made significant improvements to the education and health care of his island nation. Well, he did. Cuba has a world-class literacy rate and a health care system that is the envy of the developing world, but that is within and under the oppressive confines of a repressive communist regime. Doctors and nurses very often work part-time in unskilled jobs that pay better than their professional state wages. The Cuban education system is also notable for hosting revolutionaries from across the Americas and the Caribbean over the decades, providing technical and military training, propaganda skills, and political indoctrination.

That brings us to the fact that while educated and healthy, the literate, fine-fettled people of Cuba are brutally denied freedom of speech and freedom of association. Religion was banned for decades, and though recently restored, religious rights are very tightly controlled. The Communist Party of Cuba controls the army, all government offices, most civil institutions, all media organizations, schools, and universities, and even the official rigidly controlled gay rights organization. I will have more about that in a moment.

Although prisons today hold far fewer political prisoners than in previous decades, heavy-handed restrictions remain on any independent non-communist-approved organizations, unions, human rights groups, or political parties. Members associated with these groups are now the most often detained citizens. The systematic repression, for example, of Cuba's *Damas de Blanco*, Ladies in White, continues today. These are women, peaceful civil rights and human rights protestors, who regularly assemble silently in Havana's public spaces, where they are also regularly brutally harassed and detained or driven far into the countryside and dumped by the roadside.

I would like to speak now to the fact that Canada is one of only two countries that did not participate in the U.S. embargo against Cuba. Governments, both Liberal and Conservative, constructively engaged with Castro's communist government, albeit Pierre Trudeau's Liberals were flamboyantly and much more passionately and ideologically committed.

• (1025)

Canadian business and industry were allowed to participate in joint partnership with Cuban state enterprises, for example, in mining and tourism and services, partnerships that for decades were mutually beneficial. Sherrit International Corporation has been the largest Canadian investor, operating 50% jointly owned nickel mines in Moa, Cuba, and smelting and refining operations in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. However, in recent years, the investment climate in Cuba has changed for many Canadians and other international investors.

The Prime Minister said in his sorrowful tribute to the dictator Fidel on Saturday that it had been an "honour" to meet his brother two weeks prior, the successor dictator, and equally or perhaps even more ruthless, Raúl.

While the Cuban government has aggressively promoted new business opportunities in recent years, President Raúl Castro has launched a so-called anti-corruption campaign, using Cuban interior ministry forces, a secret police force modelled on the East German

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Stasi, to crack down not only on domestic Cuban corruption but also effectively steal foreign companies and their assets.

A constituent of mine, a businessman engaged in joint partnerships with the Cuban government for decades, who was even given awards of excellence by President Fidel, was detained under house arrest in 2011, including then in the notorious La Condesa prison outside Havana for more than three years, many of those years without formal charges. I visited the prison. It was a terrible place. He professed to his innocence throughout, despite intimidation and psychological torture. He was eventually convicted in a rigged trial on a range of flawed corruption charges, sentenced to 15 years in prison, with his \$100 million in companies and assets seized, and then suddenly deported back to Canada, to Thornhill, because the bad publicity was hurting Cuba's investment campaign.

His is not the only cautionary tale for any Canadian considering investment in Cuba or joining in partnership with Cuban state enterprises. My colleagues across the House who are looking for Christmas gift reading might consider another similar equally outrageous true story of British businessman Stephen Purvis. His book *Close But No Cigar* has just been published and is available through Amazon U.K. The dust cover states quite accurately, "As tourists flock to Havana", like our Prime Minister, for example, "to marvel at a city frozen in time, [Purvis] shows that despite reforms and international reconciliation the Castro regime remains a corrupt, dictatorial" regime. The book could also be relevant reading for those Canadians whose Cuban experience is limited to the cheap sand-and-sea resort bubbles, and who, like the Prime Minister, may have a romanticized perception of the regime.

I said I would return to the Castro regime's state-controlled gay community. Cuba no longer puts LGBT people in labour camps, as the communist regime did in the 1960s and 1970s, but publicly manifested homosexuality remains illegal, except and unless LGBT people are vetted and accepted as loyal communist revolutionaries. Raúl Castro's daughter Mariela is the director of the state-run Cuban National Center for Sex Education, and patron of the annual Havana pride parade. However, this event is a propaganda device, a tool designed to misportray a modern socially liberated Cuba.

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I would be glad to address any number of questions in the moments that follow. However, in conclusion, I would like to offer a much better example of what the Prime Minister might have said last Saturday, using the template of Prime Minister Harper's statement on the passing of Venezuela's Marxist strongman president, Hugo Chávez, who was a protégé of Fidel. If we substitute Castro for Chávez, this is how Saturday's statement could have read: "I would like to offer my condolences to the people of Cuba on the passing of President Castro. Canada looks forward to working with his successor and other leaders in the region to build a hemisphere that is more prosperous, secure and democratic." Then our Liberal Prime Minister, speaking truly on behalf of all Canadians, could have said, "I hope the people of Cuba can now build for themselves a brighter, better future, based on the principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights."

With that, I echo the thrust of the motion before us today in calling on the House to reject the comments made by the Prime Minister on November 26, 2016.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. However, what struck me the most is what he said at the end about his hope that Cubans will be able to pursue a path towards democracy and respect for human rights.

Hope is not enough. We also need action. The Conservatives cut the budget of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which works specifically on protecting human rights across the Americas, particularly in Cuba.

The Conservatives say they want to protect human rights in Cuba, yet they cut resources to a well-known organization that does excellent work. There is not only a contradiction here, but also an element of cynicism.

Would my colleague like to comment on that?

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I pause and can only wonder at what the statement of condolences might have read like, had the NDP had the pen.

In answer to the question about Rights and Democracy, during our Conservative government, it was found that the organization, which was originally a worthy organization championing human rights around the world, had become very dysfunctional. There were financial management issues, and questions about the appropriate relationships of some members of Rights and Democracy with some unsavoury organizations and regimes around the world. It was decided that the organization had had its time, and it was closed down.

• (1035)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the major priority for us should be the Cuban people. To antagonize or ratchet up the rhetoric now in an effort to score political points, I would suggest would not advance the Cuban society today or the Cuban society we are working to

achieve for the Cuban people tomorrow. My question to the member is related to this issue.

If the issue is that of the Cuban people, as we believe it is on this side of the House, how does the opposition feel that attempting to antagonize the situation is healthy for the people of Cuba today?

**Hon. Peter Kent:** Mr. Speaker, I know that there are a number of members of the Liberal government who were as outraged as those on this side of the House as those around the world, and certainly those in Cuba who are still under the communist boot of oppression, that there was not a single word about the Cuban people in that statement.

The relationship with Fidel was glorified. The meeting with Raúl was described as an honour, and this man is even more ruthless than his brother, and has reversed some of the minor improvements in human rights on the island that Fidel brought in.

I would suggest that my colleague should perhaps go back and take a look at that statement, and then look at the statement made by Prime Minister Harper on the death of that other dictator in the Americas, Hugo Chávez, which were much more appropriate remarks.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Thornhill for his contributions and his introduction to this debate. He has made a lot of great points. This is an important motion we have before us today. It shows how poor the Prime Minister's judgment has been with the statement he issued upon Fidel Castro's death.

Furthermore, when I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs earlier this week why the Prime Minister was an apologist for dictators and why he was not saying more about empowering the Cuban people, he told me I should learn Spanish. That was his answer.

When the Prime Minister went sunbathing recently in Cuba, he had an opportunity to speak up about democracy. He ever so briefly mentioned human rights. I actually took the time to listen to the entire transcript, and "democracy" never left his lips when speaking to students at a Havana university.

Let us compare that to what the U.S. president, Barack Obama, said when he was there visiting in March 2016. That transcript is fully available on the state department's website. According to that transcript he said "We continue, as President Castro indicated, to have some very serious differences, including on democracy and human rights".

He went on to say further to describe these. He said:

...the United States will continue to speak up on behalf of democracy, including the right of the Cuban people to decide their own future. We'll speak out on behalf of universal human rights, including freedom of speech and assembly and religion. Indeed, I look forward to meeting with and hearing from Cuban civil society leaders tomorrow.

The Prime Minister did none of this when he was there. "Democracy" did not even leave his lips. Perhaps he did not want to insult the Castro family, with whom he shares such a close relationship.

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President Barack Obama continued by saying, "I'm very pleased that we've agreed to hold our next U.S.-Cuba human rights dialogue here in Havana this year", none of which the Prime Minister said.

I wonder why the government continues to romanticize Cuba when even Tony Keller in *The Globe and Mail* called Cuba "the East Berlin of the Caribbean", a fitting description, I believe, of what Cuba has become under Fidel.

Mr. Castro and his best buddy Che Guevara were murderers, oppressors as bad as Batista, and let us not forget both of them brought the world closer to nuclear war than it has ever been since. Just as one cannot kill one's way to a better society, one cannot praise murderous dictators when they die, especially when they die in the comfort of their own bed, surrounded by their family, unlike their many victims.

I remember the sanctimonious advice I got from the Minister of Foreign Affairs about being stuck in the past, so let us only talk about the very recent two years.

According to a U.S. Department of State report on Cuba's human rights record, the Communist Party is "the only legal party", and all candidates for political office must be pre-approved. It pointed out that when the United States re-established relations with Cuba, the regime at first released 53 political prisoners, six of whom would later be rearrested and given even longer prison sentences for their human rights activism. When Fidel Castro handed over power to his brother, 50 other political prisoners who had been held since 2003, for being accused of being mercenaries in the employ of the United States government, were then released on the sole condition that they be exiled to Spain. These included human rights defenders, trade unionists, journalists, and many other critics of the Castro regime.

That same U.S. state department report goes on to enumerate the many human rights violations of the Castro regime. It talked about the use of government threats, physical assault, intimidation, violence organized by the government, counter-protests against peaceful dissent, harassment and detentions to prevent free expression, and peaceful assembly. It goes on to describe harsh prison conditions, arbitrary short-term politically motivated detentions and arrests, selective prosecution, denial of fair trial, and travel restrictions.

On trials, it says they bring people in and try them on the same day, with spurious evidence, basically no evidence, and throw people into prison, still today, under the new Castro regime. It is the basic continuation of what they had started 30 or 40 years ago.

The report goes on to state:

The government did not respect freedom of speech and press, restricted internet access, maintained a monopoly on media outlets, circumscribed academic freedom, and maintained some restrictions on the ability of religious groups to meet and worship. The government refused to recognize independent human rights groups or permit them to function legally. In addition the government continued to prevent workers from forming independent unions and otherwise exercising their...rights.

• (1040)

Fidel Castro also did not deliver a better Cuba. It is a myth, one perpetuated by uneducated media and apologists for the Castro regime, like our Prime Minister.

Consider education for a moment. A study by Jorge Salazar-Carrillo and Andro Nodarse-Leon entitled "Cuba: From Economic Take-Off to Collapse Under Castro" pointed out that in 1954 Cuba spent 4.1% of its GDP on education, higher than the United States at the time. It had a higher literacy rate and a higher women participation rate compared to other Latin American countries. Cuba does not participate in any international metrics on education, including the international mathematics and science survey. It does not participate in the program of international student assessment, also called PISA. On health care, Cuba in 1957 had more doctors per 1,000 people than Norway, Sweden, and Great Britain. In the 1950s, Cuba had a longer life expectancy rate and the lowest infant mortality rate in Latin America.

These authors were comparing Cuba to other similar Latin American countries.

They also said pre-revolutionary Cuba had a GDP per capita of \$2,363. That was middle of the pack at the time, compared to other Latin American countries. Post-revolutionary Cuba by 2008 when Fidel stepped down had a GDP per capita of barely \$3,764, barely an improvement over every single other country in the region. Now Cuba is in the bottom one-third compared to other Latin American countries when it is compared to similar types of countries.

Cuban physicians still today are routinely sent overseas. Cuba gets hard currency in return for these Cuban physicians serving overseas. Cuba gets a cut of the doctors' salaries and then the doctors get paid in Cuban pesos, which are almost worthless.

We could blame the American embargo for the lack of improvements on social programs, but was communism not supposed to provide for self-sufficiency? I was born in a communist country. I do not remember fleeing the free education and free health care that was afforded there. I distinctly remember my parents leaving because of the political and religious oppression.

If communism works so splendidly, should Cuba not have developed vast resources with the help of the Soviet Union, which considered Cuba an ally in its overview, and its overlords, the Castros?

The Salazar-Carrillo and Nodarse-Leon report on Cuba dispelled that contrived myth that the Castros did anything other than impoverish Cubans while enriching themselves. There are now two million Cuban Americans, Cubans who fled mostly to Florida.

South Florida has become a vibrant community directly because of the terror that the Castros spread, that they levied against the Cubans. Tens of thousands who braved choppy seas, rickety rafts, and uncertain treatment by the U.S. coast guard were not fleeing free education or free health care. They were fleeing the terror being spread by the communist Castro regime of Cuba.

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In a Human Rights Watch report in January 2016 it says, “The Cuban government continues to repress dissent and discourage public criticism. It now relies less on long-term prison sentences to punish its critics,” that is a bonus, “but short-term arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders, independent journalists, and others have increased dramatically in recent years. Other repressive tactics employed by the government include beatings, public acts of shaming, and the termination of employment.... Prisoners are forced to work 12-hour work days and punished if they do not meet production quotas, according to former political prisoners” who fled to western countries.

What I find most grating about the statement that the Prime Minister issued is when I compare Cuba to other countries. The only one I will be able to use is comparative statements by dictator Bashar al-Assad of Syria, who said that Cuba has “thus become a beacon for the liberation of the peoples of the South American countries and others around the world.” He said, “The name Fidel Castro will live forever in the minds of generations and remain an inspiration for all the peoples who aspire to achieve real independence and liberation from the yoke of colonialism and hegemony”.

When I have a hard time saying whether this statement was by Bashar al-Assad of Syria or the Canadian government, there is something deeply wrong. The member for Thornhill had a perfect example of what should have been done. A statement that emphasizes empowering the Cuban people, defending democracy, and promoting human rights and the rule of law is the right way to go. We must vote for this motion and retract that statement by the Prime Minister.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this would be comical if it were not so sad.

I hear my Conservative colleagues talking about the human rights situation in Cuba, which, yes, definitely needs some major improvements. There are some serious problems there. However, what did the Conservatives do when they were in power? I will tell you what they did. They cut funding to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

They cut funding to an organization that works specifically on defending human rights across the Americas, including in Cuba.

Does my colleague think that makes sense?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie. I greatly appreciate the work that she does at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development with my Conservative colleagues.

As she surely knows, I was not a member of Parliament in 2015. I therefore was never part of the Conservative government and I have never been a cabinet member. Accordingly, I am unaware of the details related to this group whose funding was cut.

We are talking about a motion on what the Prime Minister said about Mr. Castro. We are not talking about a group whose funding was reduced or eliminated. We can only make changes for the future.

It is up to the current government to reverse past decisions. That is something it has done quite a bit, in fact.

What we want to do is decide whether we are siding with the Cuban people or with the government of Mr. Castro today. What can we do to help the Cuban people?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

As the hon. member knows, Canada has shown its concern for the Cuban people on many occasions. This concern has been expressed repeatedly because Liberal prime ministers of Canada have gone to Cuba to talk about democratization of that country and human rights. They always tried to promote Canadian values, as we do around the world, and as Mr. Pearson did in the case of the Suez Canal.

We believe that we must engage with other regimes, even those we do not care for very much.

Does the hon. member not believe that the traditional Liberal policy of engaging with people and promoting the Canadian values of human rights abroad is the right approach in this case?

• (1050)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member for Gatineau.

I am going to repeat something that the former justice minister, Irwin Cotler, said when speaking about Cuba. He said that Cuba was one of the countries that could have never sat on the UN Human Rights Council because of its human rights violations.

That is what we must focus on. I believe that when we work with other governments it is important to put ourselves in the people's position and not the government's position. We should defend the opposition members when a government is dictatorial, authoritarian, and communist, rather than having discussions solely with the 1% who govern, as the member from Thornhill mentioned. We are on the side of democracy and of those who want democracy and the protection of human rights.

[*English*]

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that when the Prime Minister spoke to the students at the University of Havana, the word “democracy” never left his mouth. I find it ironic when we look at his statement.

Obviously some members in the House support the statement, which never mentioned the Cuban people. If democracy is not mentioned, if the Cuban people are not mentioned, it makes one wonder why the Prime Minister was even there.

Could my colleague please comment on that?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I will reply with a more personal anecdote. I have said this many times in the House before. My family fled Communist Poland. I was born in Poland and I fled here. Many of us consider Cuba to be the East Berlin of the Caribbean.

Had Poland been closer to the United States, maybe 50 kilometres off its shore, or 50 kilometres off the shore of Canada, we would have a very large Polish population in Canada and in the United States.

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Nobody wants to live in such a country. Nobody wants to see foreign leaders going to those types of countries. When Margaret Thatcher went to Poland and criticized the Communist government, she really earned the title of “Iron Lady”. That was the type of leadership Polish people living in a communist regime wanted to see. That is the type of leadership Cubans want to see.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister paid an official visit to Cuba on November 15 and 16, accompanied by the Minister of International Trade. This visit was the first by a sitting Canadian prime minister in nearly two decades. I am not sure why the previous prime minister did not visit in order to address the much-needed reforms so eloquently pointed out by my hon. colleagues.

By going to Cuba and meeting with officials, civil society, academics, and Cubans, the Prime Minister built on the already strong people-to-people ties that exist between the two countries. It is important to note at the outset that this work, and we are talking about the present and the future, while critical to accelerating our support for the Cuban people to chart a better, more prosperous and democratic future, is being built on a legacy of unbroken ties.

As my hon. colleague has suggested, this government is happy to talk about the future and the actions that we are taking. Canada has moved to a more prominent position on the world stage. This is where Canadians expect us to be.

During his visit, the Prime Minister was received by the Cuban Government and the Cuban people, affirming our historic relationship and our position as a determined peace builder, capable of building critical relationships with leaders to further Canadian interests. We are a trusted voice on the world stage precisely because we are not afraid to engage with the world. Canadians can be proud of their government because we are unafraid of raising tough issues directly.

In Cuba, the Prime Minister and the Cuban president discussed a wide range of issues, including our strong economic relationship, but also Canada's interest in collaborating with Cuba on inclusive and accountable governance, improving human rights and the rule of law, strengthening safety and security in the region, and addressing climate change.

Canada takes a comprehensive approach to its engagement with countries. Rather than subsume certain interests or concerns over others, Canada engages on every front, from development to diplomatic to commercial interests. We believe that is the only way to achieve real progress and ensure improvement in one area that is mutually reinforced in another.

I will now list a number of projects in areas of focus for this government, areas the Prime Minister worked hard to improve and expand upon during his most recent trip.

First, it is important to note that Canada is the western nation with the longest running development co-operation program in Cuba, appreciated every day by Cubans for its effectiveness, flexibility, and stability over the long term. Canada's development objective in Cuba is to improve the economic well-being of the most vulnerable

Cubans through initiatives focused on increasing food security and stimulating economic growth.

I neglected to mention that I will be splitting my time. Mr. Speaker, with the member for Mississauga Centre.

These development objectives are highly relevant in light of Cuba's economic reforms. They are consistent with Canada's desire for a more prosperous society, one that raises the hopes of the Cuban people. I know that members opposite will agree with that. We work with Cuba to foster trade, support economic liberalization, and promote peaceful and sustainable democratic development.

Building on our long-standing collaboration, Canada and Cuba agreed to collaborate on a \$6.5 million Canadian development co-operation project to increase food security in Cuba. The Prime Minister also acknowledged the launch of an International Development Research Centre program focused on research partnerships in agriculture, climate change, and economic growth. These programs will improve the livelihoods of many Cubans.

During the visit, Canada and Cuba agreed to work together to foster inclusive and accountable governance and to deepen co-operation on issues related to diversity and pluralism in society. These are the hallmarks of a democratic society.

They agreed to address climate change through the full and effective implementation of the Paris agreement, through smart agriculture and disaster risk reduction, and by exploring options for supporting Cuba's objectives for the greater use of renewable energy and clean technologies.

I will touch on the Prime Minister's visit and what he did when he was there. Youth is a significant priority for our government. During his visit, the Prime Minister gave a speech to the students at the University of Havana, as has already been remarked upon. He exchanged remarks with Cuban students, academics, and faculty that recognized both Cuba's achievements and challenges, similar to those faced in other countries around youth engagement, gender inequality, and climate change.

This was an opportunity to advocate Canadian values of diversity as a source of enrichment, respect for youth as a requirement for progress, and empowerment as a vehicle for improved governance. In this spirit, the Prime Minister encouraged Cuban youth to play a leadership role in their community through entrepreneurship and creativity.

● (1055)

While in Cuba, the Prime Minister hosted a round table discussion with members of Cuban civil society in order to have an open and frank discussion on the importance of human rights, pluralism, and diversity. Canada has sought to build bridges and encourage positive engagement with the Cuban people on contentious issues, ranging from human rights to gender equality and climate change.

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Religious leaders, environmental organizations, journalists, filmmakers, and LGBT advocates were just a few of the members represented on the panel. The diversity of the group ensured the coverage of a broad range of topics, the amplification, and elevation of independent voices, and the importance of civil dialogue.

It was the Prime Minister's leadership, his visit, that enabled the dialogue and provided a remarkable platform for engagement on human rights issues. The issues raised by participants included sustainable economic development, racial equality, improvements to freedom of religion, and for LGBT rights, freedom of speech, teen pregnancy, and sexual and child abuse.

Participants thanked Canada for being a strategic ally for civil society. I would like to repeat that last point. Canada was thanked by civil society in Cuba for the great work it did in promoting human rights in their country. This is not the first time we have heard of this unique and powerful value that Canada brings to the table.

A few weeks before, in the same region, our Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Honduras and Guatemala, where he brought a leading human rights advocate to join him on the trip, and to see first hand how our government was shining a light on human rights, never shying away from the issues. That leader said that this government represented a sea change with regard to advocating for human rights.

With regard to gender, and to underscore Canada's commitment to gender equality, Mme. Grégoire Trudeau hosted a live broadcast panel on gender inequality issues, highlighting the benefits that accrued to society as a whole through increased respect for the rights of women and girls. Supporting gender equality and opportunities for women and girls is a priority for this government.

The panel presented a unique opportunity for panellists to share their professional and personal perspectives on issues ranging from barriers to achieving greater gender equality, challenges such as domestic violence, and the under-representation of women in some sectors of the economy in Cuba. During this visit, both sides agreed to strengthen efforts and work together more closely on gender equality, in bilateral and international efforts.

The Prime Minister believes that constructive engagement is the best approach to supporting peaceful pluralism, prosperity, and the brighter future for Cubans and people struggling for what we hold dear around the world. Engaging with Cuba not only supports Canada's trade and investment interests, it supports our efforts to strengthen prosperity, stability, and security in our hemisphere neighbourhood.

Our unbroken history of engagement places Canada in good stead at this time. Cuba is undergoing an important period of transition, one that may lead to greater prosperity and new opportunities for improvements to the economic and political situation of Cubans. By engaging with Cuba during this period of change, we hope to serve as a model of transparency, inclusiveness, and sustainable economic growth.

Certainly this benefits Cuba, but most important it benefits the Cuban people. The Prime Minister's visit to Cuba was a significant step forward in advancing Canadian foreign policy priorities, and will have long-term benefits for Canadians and Cubans.

● (1100)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to one point the parliamentary secretary made. She said that this was a moment of transition. This is not a moment of transition. Raúl Castro is now the dictator of Cuba. He took over from his brother. What they are basically installing is a North Korea-style communist monarchy, where the kids will take over the dictatorship. All of Fidel Castro's kids are in charge of the apparatus of the state. They control about 60% of the economy directly through the military.

There is no transition going on. I encourage the member to actually retract that part of her statement, because it does not make any sense. It is not even factual.

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, this transition of power began a few years ago. It has also taken leadership and distributed it somewhat.

Regardless, Cuba is a sovereign country, and Canada is there to promote peaceful pluralism, inclusion, democratic rights, and human rights for ourselves as much as for the Cuban people.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as we are talking about the Americas and human rights, I cannot help but point out once again that the Conservatives made deep cuts to Canada's contribution to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, a key organization that does good work and has produced results in the entire region, including Cuba. A few months ago, it issued an urgent call to the Canadian government for support, which has yet to be acknowledged.

I would like to ask my colleague whether Canada will finally provide ongoing support for the Inter-American Human Rights Commission.

[*English*]

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, could the member repeat one sentence?

**The Deputy Speaker:** It appears the hon. parliamentary secretary did not have the translation available. We will go back to the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie. We will add a little bit of extra time to make this happen.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I think the issue with the parliamentary secretary was not an issue of translation. Now, if she was not listening to the question, we need to continue with the debate. I think the NDP member made her point very well. It is up to the parliamentary secretary to answer, and then to continue with questions and comments.

● (1105)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for his intervention.

The chair has some discretion in these matters, and that is the way we are going to do it.

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We will go to the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie. She will repeat her question, and then we will ask the parliamentary secretary to respond.

In the spirit of debate and exchange, in this part of the debate, it is important to do this. These things do happen from time to time to members on both sides of the House.

We will go to the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Lavergère:** Mr. Speaker, I hope that the parliamentary secretary will listen to my question and those asked by other members of the House.

As I was saying, the Conservatives cut Canada's funding to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, even though it is a vital organization that does a great job of defending human rights in all of the Americas, including Cuba. A few months ago, the organization issued an urgent call to Canada for help but never received it.

The Liberals and the Conservatives talk a lot about human rights. Talking is all well and good, but when will the government provide real support to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights?

[*English*]

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, I thank members for this patience. I apologize. I was looking through notes, and it was my fault. I also thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the rigour you bring to the House.

With regard to our government's role, of course, we are deeply committed to human rights. We have established the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion. I mentioned the funding that the Prime Minister announced when he was there with regard to a range of areas on which we will be working closely with Cuba.

I thank the member opposite for pointing out that the previous government made cuts rather than contribute constructively to the well-being of the Cuban people.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for her speech, although I do have to say that some aspects of it are very hard to take, on the substance of it.

In response to the question from my friend for Calgary Shepard, the member continued to insist that there is some kind of elongated transition of leadership. She talks about the Prime Minister having these round tables on climate change, youth engagement, and inclusion. I think there is just a fundamental lack of appreciation of what a communist society is, and the fact that no political activity outside of the Communist Party is permitted in Cuba.

The Prime Minister compliments in glowing terms the Castro regime when he participates in these Potemkin exercises, which everybody should know cannot involve real conversations, because those civil society activists always have the gun pointed at them if they say the wrong thing in the presence of a foreign leader. This just does not seem to be appreciated at a basic level by the parliamentary secretary and the government.

Could I ask the parliamentary secretary to clarify her appreciation of the facts on the ground with respect to the complete lack of political freedom or freedom of speech? Could I ask her to at least clarify her appreciation of that fact and condemn these gross violations of human rights in stronger terms than we have heard until now?

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones:** Mr. Speaker, Canada will not give up. We will not abandon the people of Cuba. We will not stand here and make it more difficult for our two countries to work together in mutual support of human rights, inclusion, and freedom of speech.

Precisely the constraints mentioned by the members across the aisle are the reasons we are there. The Prime Minister does not miss any opportunity to raise human rights, as he did on his most recent visit.

**Mr. Omar Alhabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House of Commons today to speak about this important motion. It is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate the contrast between us and the Conservative Party. This is an ongoing philosophical conversation in which the Conservatives seem to want to satisfy their own emotional frustration without really taking into account what it is that Canada can do to help people who really need our help.

Let me first start by saying that, when someone dies, we say nice things. It is not something that was unusual for the previous government. It is really not that hard to look through its record and see all kinds of statements that the previous prime minister, Stephen Harper, made when former heads of state who were controversial passed away, statements in which he offered his condolences and said pleasant things about them.

This is what Canadians expect their government to do. In fact, this is what Canadians expect us, among ourselves, to do when someone dies—at least talk about positive things and look toward the future. That is precisely what the Prime Minister has done.

To prove that point, as colleagues from the Conservative Party and the parliamentary secretary have already mentioned, when the Prime Minister was in Cuba a few weeks ago, he did not miss the opportunity to speak directly with the Cuban people about human rights, about inclusion, about fundamental rights of democracy and of self-determination.

Our government, our Prime Minister, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, and our members of Parliament, always champion these causes wherever we are, at home or abroad. This is a fundamental disagreement between us and the Conservative Party. We believe, as the government, that we have a role and that Canadians expect Canada to play a constructive role on the world stage. We need to be champions for human rights. We need to carry the voice of the voiceless around the world. We need to make sure that their rights are protected. We need to put pressure on governments around the world to ensure that their people are respected and heard and that they live in dignity.

*Business of Supply*

One of the ways of doing that is by setting an example here at home. I do not want to miss that point. It is really important if we want to set an example, if we want to send a message to the rest of the world that we here in Canada, first, acknowledge our mistakes of the past and, frankly, our current challenges and set a road map to deal with these issues, whether it is dealing with how to reconcile with our indigenous people, or how to set the law straight on transgender rights, or protecting women's right to choose how to dress. These are fundamental rights that, frankly, the members of the Conservative Party are still struggling with. They are still unable to figure out where they stand on these issues. In fact, I know some members of the Conservative Party oppose these rights. Currently, there is a leadership candidate of the Conservative Party who is going around promoting xenophobia. That is her way of thinking of winning the leadership of the Conservative Party.

If we really want to send a message to the rest of the world that we are champions of human rights, we need to do that at home. I encourage my hon. colleagues to deal with these issues, to deal with these skeletons in their closets, to fix their problems, to make sure that their next leader believes in human rights here at home. That is how they can be effective when they champion human rights abroad.

Speaking of leadership candidates for the Conservative Party, I want to quote another leadership candidate, the member for Milton. This is what she said last weekend:

Doesn't the Prime Minister travel around the world, talking about how wonderful he is as a feminist, how wonderful he is for the LGBTQ community, how wonderful [that] he will speak up for everybody? I mean he sets the bar...

• (1110)

This is precisely what that leadership candidate said on television last weekend. She is confirming what we have been saying ever since we took power. It is what we are saying today. Our Prime Minister does not shy away from championing human rights wherever he is.

We have also established the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion. We have tripled the budget of the previous office that was set up by the Conservative Party, and we gave mandated it to be an international voice for human rights, to ensure that people's rights around the world have a venue where they are represented, and to ensure that our government speaks up for those who do not have a voice around the world. We have also demanded that our heads of missions around the world ensure that human rights are a fundamental element of every policy that they advocate, and every time they speak with foreign governments to ensure that human rights are a fundamental element of their conversation.

The list of what we have done is long, and I want to go through some of it. We are supporting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with significant new funding. Canada has been elected to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. We have tabled new legislation to guarantee and protect the legal rights of transgendered people across Canada. We have announced our intention to adhere to the optional protocol to the United Nations convention against torture.

One other important action that we have done is this. Here in Canada, we do not believe in the death penalty, but there is something that the previous government did that puzzles me to this

day. It stopped a policy where Canada would ask for clemency for Canadian citizens who are sentenced to death. I do not understand why the previous government would stop that policy. The moment we took office, we reinstated that policy. Now Canada will always ask for clemency for Canadian citizens if they are on death row, because Canadians expect their government to speak up for Canadian citizens, and Canadians do not believe in the death penalty and do not believe that states should be executing individuals. I do not know why the previous government stopped that policy, but I am proud to say that one of the first things that our Minister of Foreign Affairs did when he took office was to reverse that policy.

I am curious as to whether the hon. members know how they are helping the Cuban people right now, when they want to antagonize about a past that we all agree was a dictatorship. We all agree there was a controversial figure. What we want to do is to help the Cuban people. We want to find the most effective way to work with the Cuban government to ensure that the Cuban people are respected and that their human rights are protected.

Canada has had an unbroken diplomatic relationship with Cuba for decades, and Canadians are proud of that. Canadians know that Canada has an independent foreign policy, that we as the Canadian government derive our foreign policies from the Canadian people. Frankly, I have to give credit to previous Conservative governments because they maintained that tradition. Perhaps it is the opposition benches that are having some kind of influence on them, so that all of a sudden now the Conservatives want to reverse the policies of their own party when it was in government.

With that, I just want to conclude that our government is a strong believer in being a voice for human rights here at home and abroad; and that our Prime Minister and our Minister of Foreign Affairs will never shy away from championing these causes.

• (1115)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure if there are any Cuban people who have managed to illegally tap into this broadcast to watch these debates, they will appreciate that the member took this opportunity to educate us on his views on the Conservative leadership race. However, memberships are selling like hotcakes in Mississauga Centre.

He spoke about the death penalty. I also oppose the death penalty. In particular, I oppose it for white-collar crime and for people who happen to be members of a religious minority. That is why I strongly oppose the government's desire to sign extradition deals with China. So much for human rights.

It is important to underline that the member has made some very clearly false distinctions. All of us in the House agree with the importance of certain kinds of strategic engagements that advance Canada's interests and values. Indeed, no Conservative government, no Conservative member has ever proposed replicating the American embargo. However, our previous prime minister was always very clear about human rights in Cuba.



*Business of Supply*

The issue is that the Prime Minister is parroting Cuban propaganda. He issued a statement which praised Fidel Castro. The worst the statement said was that he was a controversial figure. It also praised health care and education in Cuba. In Cuba, there is no independence of education whatsoever. There is no alternative points of view that are allowed. Why is the government parroting Cuban propaganda? I wish it would promote human rights. It is just not the reality of the statement that was issued.

• (1120)

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the hon. member was expecting a dissertation for a short statement on the passing of the Cuban leader. We are not disputing the fact that he was a dictator. In fact, when the Prime Minister was there, he was a voice for human rights, for inclusion, for democracy, speaking directly to the Cuban people.

I would be happy to provide the hon. member with copies of statements that his former leader made when former leaders died, and they were very complimentary.

I also want to wish him luck with his leadership competition.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to come back to a point that I have raised in the past, and that is the fact that the Conservatives' indignation seems to work on a sliding scale.

In this case, it is over the death of the leader of the country we are talking about today, Cuba. However, when the King of Saudi Arabia died, the government of the time issued a very similar statement to the one the current Prime Minister gave about the Cuban leader. The statement about the Saudi Arabian king was almost exactly the same. I believe, as do many people in Sherbrooke, that human rights is a huge problem in Saudi Arabia. One of my constituents is the wife of Mr. Badawi, who is imprisoned there for having publicly criticized the Saudi Arabian regime.

What does the member think about the fact that the Conservatives' indignation works on a sliding scale when it comes to speaking out against international leaders and issuing statements at the time of their death?

[*English*]

**Mr. Omar Alghabra:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I know that consistency has never been the hallmark of the Conservative Party. Let us be honest. Human rights are fundamental values of Canadians and this government. Wherever we are, whoever we meet with, we always promote human rights.

I want to share this with my colleague. The president of the Saudi Arabian human rights commission visited Canada a couple of weeks ago. Our government, in addition to private bilateral meetings, organized a round table with Canadian human rights NGOs to have the opportunity to speak directly to the president of the human rights commission. We even invited members of the opposition parties. My colleague from Thornhill was there. What surprised me was that after the meeting, he issued a release, a long laundry list of complaints about Saudi Arabia. However, did he ever have the courage to raise

these issues during the meeting? No, he never did. I was puzzled by this.

We gave him the opportunity to speak directly to the president of the human rights commission, but he would not utter a word. That is disappointing.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to begin, I think that the Prime Minister can be said to have truly shown some lack of judgment when he issued his news release following the death of Fidel Castro.

However, what is happening here today is that the Conservatives, in moving this motion before us, want to devote an entire opposition day to ganging up on him and scoring political points. They are going to use an entire day that we could have used to talk about major foreign policy issues.

We could have talked about what is going on in Aleppo at the moment; we could have talked about reconstruction and reconciliation in Iraq; we could have talked about Yemen, the Central African Republic, Haiti or North Korea. However, the Conservatives want to talk all day about what the Prime Minister said. We are not even talking about what the government is doing or what we could be doing.

Of course they are going to tell us that this is an issue that affects Canada's reputation. I find that rather funny, given that the Conservatives have done such harm to Canada's international reputation. In any case, the Conservatives and the Liberals are much alike in this respect. Canada's reputation is not built simply by blowing trumpets and making big speeches. It is built on facts and specific actions.

Does the motion before us propose concrete steps Canada could take to support and promote human rights in Cuba? One need only read it to see that that is not the case. It refers rather to hope. So we are going to cross our fingers and remain in our seats, doing nothing.

Does it propose anything at all for the many Canadians who have very close ties with Cuba, whether they are tourists who go there in large numbers, investors, academics or artists? No, there is absolutely nothing.

Does it propose any avenues of multilateral action? Again, nothing at all.

On that subject and the subject of human rights, the most flagrant example is this sort of hope that the motion holds out for an improvement of democracy and human rights in Cuba. This comes to us from the party that did away with Canadian funding for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, an important institution that gets concrete results on the ground and that works to defend human rights all across the Americas, including in Cuba. I would like to have seen them put their money where their mouth is, for this shows an absolutely fascinating lack of consistency.

Does the motion say that the election of the new President of the United States might complicate relations between Cuba and the U.S., which were improving, and that Canada might play a mediating role? No, it offers nothing concrete. The objective, I repeat, is to score petty political points.

*Business of Supply*

Does the motion mention anything about our development aid, namely whether we should increase it or base it primarily on support for civil society organizations, democratic development, or anything that might change the situation? No, they are simply playing petty politics on a subject that is nonetheless important.

However, the Conservatives do not hold the monopoly in this area. The Liberals are saying that Canada is back and that we will have a policy of engagement with countries like Russia and China.

●(1125)

They are telling us this, but there is no concrete plan to that effect. It is not enough to say it for it to miraculously come true.

They talk of the Americas. They would like to see a concrete plan for the Americas. What does Canada want to do in the Americas? They also say that they are feminists and are trying to defend human rights, which is important. However, they don't want to look too closely into arms sales to Saudi Arabia, because that is too troubling. What is more, they are prepared to sign an extradition treaty with China. Now all of a sudden, it is a good thing to defend human rights.

When it comes to torture, they say it is bad. However, they are still not amending the directive permitting the use of information obtained through torture. They are also refusing to open an inquiry into the transfer of Afghan detainees who were subsequently tortured. That is a long-standing issue that continues to be current. They do not want an inquiry; they want to sweep it under the rug.

I will add a word on cluster munitions, although it is a less familiar issue. When they were in opposition, the Liberals were saying that the bill passed by the Conservatives was not adequate. Is the government going to change the law? All indications are that it will not.

Let us talk now of nuclear disarmament. Suddenly, Canada does not want to participate in the international efforts that would allow us to live in a world free of nuclear weapons. There is nothing on this issue.

The government says it is being open and transparent; it says that there will be conventions and conversations. We suggest that a parliamentary committee be formed to study the whole issue of arms exports on an ongoing basis, since this is an issue of immense concern to Canadians. I leave it to my colleagues to guess the response: they don't want to talk about it.

Foreign policy is not just about photo opportunities, family relations, and grand words. Action is necessary. In that regard, we realize that there are certain striking similarities between the Conservatives and the Liberals.

One of them is this sort of black and white approach. I still remember the former foreign affairs minister, minister Baird—I can name him since he is no longer an MP—going to the Middle East and saying, “these are the good guys and those are the bad guys”. Not only is that overly simplistic, but it solves nothing. On the contrary, it stands in the way of progress.

We now have other similar examples. On the one hand, the Prime Minister made a very rosy statement. He said that his father was

proud to call Fidel Castro a friend. He spoke of Fidel Castro's love for the Cuban people. However, as we know, it was a problematic love. The human rights issue was a real concern.

On the other hand, the Conservatives moved a motion in which all was black, but there are in fact many shades to the situation with respect to Fidel Castro. He was a man who meant different things to different people. He did some positive things. He improved the quality of life of the poorest people. He did some work in the field of education. We would be proud to have the same literacy rate in Canada that they have in Cuba. He did important work in the field of health. He ousted a brutal dictator.

●(1130)

However, he suppressed freedom of expression, imprisoned his opponents, and crushed freedom of the press. A particular target of attack was the LGBTQ community. What we need to do now, instead of playing petty politics, is turn to the future and consider what we can do to help Cuba on the road to upholding human rights and democracy.

As I was saying earlier, this motion in no way does that. This motion does nothing positive and nothing concrete. It is in fact a cynical exercise in petty politics, politics with such a small *p* that we could say it is virtually invisible and we should talk about “olitics”. It contributes nothing of substance.

●(1135)

[English]

This is pure cynicism and small politics. It is pursuing politics using what could be an important issue. Rather than proposing concrete action on what we can do, it is meant to score political points by underscoring the lack of judgment the Prime Minister showed in his statement after the death of Fidel Castro.

Does the motion suggest anything positive about what Canada should do with respect to human rights? I think that single example tells the whole story about this motion. The Conservatives are saying in this motion that the human rights situation is very bad in Cuba, yet they cut the funding to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which is doing concrete work, with results, in all of the Americas, including in Cuba.

If we want to promote human rights, we have to take concrete action. We have to give ourselves the tools and help those who are working on the ground improve human rights. We will not improve human rights by standing here and giving big speeches.

There is nothing in the motion about Canadians with links to Cuba, such as tourists, investors, academics, and artists. There is nothing about development assistance. We have a very small budget for development assistance in Cuba. Should we increase it? Should it focus more on democratic development and support for civil society? There is nothing about that in this motion.

*Business of Supply*

I will repeat as often as is needed that this motion is just about politics. Not only are the Conservatives using a full opposition day to play politics and take a shot at the Prime Minister, it is a day we could have used to talk about huge issues and what Canada could contribute. What do we do about what is happening in Aleppo? What do we do about Iraq? What do we do about Yemen, the Central African Republic, and North Korea? I could talk about the potential list for probably 20 minutes, but rather than talk about big issues and what Canada could do, the Conservatives have made it about small political gains.

Let us talk about hope. The Conservatives hope it will get better in Cuba. We do too. However, this is not a magic wand. If we want things to get better, we have to start acting, and there is absolutely no concrete proposition in this motion.

What is funny is that it is so one-sided. The Liberals and Conservatives are being one-sided in their statements, when the reality is a lot more nuanced. Fidel Castro did some good things in education and health care, but he also repressed dissidents and the press and imprisoned political opponents. It is not a black and white reality.

I would suggest that we use our time in the House to actually propose things that will make the world and Canada better, rather than playing small politics. Canadians are not paying us to do that in this place.

• (1140)

**Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague distinguished herself in her previous diplomatic career. I wonder if she could comment on the fact that in 2015, Canada and Cuba celebrated the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Cuba was the first country in the Caribbean where Canada established a diplomatic mission.

I would like the member's comments on the importance of diplomacy.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Speaker, I have heard the hon. member's question and I thank her for it.

We do indeed have very close relations with Cuba. I am a Quebecker. It is not just in Quebec, but in Canada that a lot of people choose to go to Cuba, if only to visit. There are a lot of Cubans in Canada. We have some very substantial investments. We have long-standing economic, cultural, and personal relations. As with many other countries, we are not obliged to agree on everything, but it is important to maintain a dialogue, and in that dialogue it is important to be firm on those issues where we are not in agreement. It is important as well to take concrete action.

I again call on the Liberal government to respond to the urgent appeal from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for Canada to renew its funding.

[*English*]

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing I would like to point out is that when one looks up Cuba on travel sites, they say that it is like stepping back in time. With the old cars, it is like stepping right back into the 1950s. Cuba

has not progressed under Fidel Castro. People say that education and health care are so great, but it has not made any progress. They advertise that people step back in time when they go to Cuba.

An interesting thing that has been pointed out on Twitter by other members in this place is that Fidel Castro stood against imperialism. It is interesting, then, that he was one of the wealthiest political leaders in the world.

Who will miss Fidel Castro now that he is gone?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Speaker, I think I made it pretty clear in my speech that things in Cuba are far from perfect.

All the same, that is not the issue here. The issue is that we have before us a motion that does not actually propose anything, that is just a political ploy to score a few political points but that will result in nothing tangible at all and offers no suggestions for making things better.

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said, there were some good things, but there were also some very bad things. Fidel Castro's death may inspire the Cuban people to seek change, to regroup and start building what they want for the future.

I would like the member to tell us about the expertise Canada can make available to the Cuban people to help with that transformation as they work toward becoming a more democratic society with greater respect for human rights.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

There are many things Canada could do. To begin with, and since this organization has already been mentioned, I must point out that we lost a very valuable tool when the Conservatives literally killed Rights and Democracy, a Canadian institution that existed for 25 years and did exceptional work.

That being said, obviously, not everything is lost. First of all, we do have some expertise in democratic development and in institutions that promote respect for human rights. That is one thing we can do. I mentioned development assistance, particularly to support civil society organizations. We can also do political work, since there are so many uncertainties around the transition and what will happen in the future.

We can do political work with Cuba, especially considering the current situation between the newly elected president in the United States and Cuba itself. We can also support multilateral organizations, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, that do crucial work on the ground to defend human rights.

• (1145)

[*English*]

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that there are a number of other things Canada could contribute.

*Business of Supply*

Niall Ferguson, in his book *Civilization: The West and the Rest*, says there are six key things needed for a successful society: competition, science, property ownership, modern medicine, consumerism, and a proper work ethic.

The education system and medicine have been championed in this House as good work in Cuba. I am wondering if my colleague is interested in some of the other things that need to be in place to make it a successful society.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière:** Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely interested in those things as well.

My answers focused on democratic development and human rights. However, as I pointed out, we have many investors in and business ties with Cuba. We can do a whole lot of things in that regard.

However, when I heard the question, I wondered why there was no mention of these aspects in the Conservative motion if we wanted to debate what we could do for Cuba. Why does the motion just express the hope? As I said, its sole purpose was to bring up and highlight the Prime Minister's error of judgment in his statement on the death of Fidel Castro. I agree that it was an error of judgment, but this motion is basically a political ploy. I would have liked to spend the day debating what we can do for Cuba and other countries.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we should acknowledge that Canada has had a unique relationship with Cuba for decades now. There is a substantial difference between the United States and Canada in terms of how that relationship has worked over the past decades.

Could the member illustrate, from a New Democratic Party perspective, how she sees that relationship as positive, as opposed to Cuba's relationship with the United States?

[Translation]

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

I believe that our relationship was more positive. I am one of those people who believe that in order to solve issues we have to work together, talk to one another, and have a dialogue. It is not enough to talk about having a dialogue. There has to be a concrete plan and we need to take concrete action.

My colleague also raised the issue of relations between the U.S. and Cuba. This relationship has been very problematic, but the Obama administration has made progress in recent years. We really do not know what will happen under the new administration. Based on its excellent relationship with the U.S. and its historic relationship with Cuba, Canada may eventually play a role that will facilitate dialogue between these two countries.

That is what we can do. That is the sort of thing I would have liked to see in today's motion.

• (1150)

[English]

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Fidel Castro was not a kind man. He was not an admirable man. He was in fact a tyrant.

Wherever he went, he left behind a wake of violence, death, and misery, which is why it was alarming to those of us on this side of the House and to Canadians at large to hear the Prime Minister mourn his death as if Castro were a relative or a close family member. What is worse, however, is that the Prime Minister had the audacity to speak on behalf of all Canadians when he heaped praise on this abusive dictator.

This is not a partisan issue. Canadians at large confirmed this sentiment. In fact, Liberal MPs and supporters share the view that Fidel Castro was an oppressive dictator who ruled by terror. The Prime Minister's comments were inappropriate and do not reflect the beliefs of the Canadian public.

Castro was known for degrading women, murdering innocent people, and terrorizing anyone and everyone who disagreed with him. We do not, nor should we, condone these actions in Canada.

Here, we cherish freedom and democracy. There, Castro imposed his will through dictatorial rule. Here, we value tolerance and debate among political ideas. There, Castro imprisoned, tortured, and murdered those with a different view from his. Here, we reward entrepreneurs for investing their time, their talent, and their money to grow the economy, whereas Castro nationalized all businesses and arbitrarily outlawed or took over successful small entrepreneurial ventures.

Castro was in fact the antithesis of freedom.

International experts have documented these abuses of fundamental human rights for decades. Amnesty International said:

Over more than five decades documenting the state of human rights in Cuba, Amnesty International has recorded a relentless campaign against those who dare to speak out against the Cuban government's policies and practices.

The Americas director of Human Rights Watch, José Vivanco, stated this week:

As other countries in the region turned away from authoritarian rule, only Fidel Castro's Cuba continued to repress virtually all civil and political rights. Castro's draconian rule and the harsh punishments he meted out to dissidents kept his repressive system rooted firmly in place for decades.

Meanwhile, Christopher Sabatini, a Columbia University expert on Cuba who advised Barack Obama's administration and Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, has publicly said:

Unfortunately, his human rights record will not get the weight it deserves.... Let's be honest: [at the end of the day] this was a regime which when it came to power lined up its opponents and shot them.

The most recent report by Human Rights Watch on Cuba states:

Under Fidel Castro, the Cuban government refused to recognize the legitimacy of Cuban human rights organizations, alternative political parties, independent labor unions, or a free press. He also denied international monitors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and international nongovernmental organizations like Human Rights Watch access to the island to investigate human rights conditions.

And this is to say absolutely nothing about the treatment of the LGBTQ community. From 1950 to 1979, members of this community were arrested, put in forced labour camps, and worked to death because they were considered “incompatible” with the socialist revolution. Since 1979, “publicly manifested” homosexuality and “persistently bothering others with homosexual amorous advances” remain illegal under Cuban law.

Fidel Castro left a legacy of broken people and made Cuba even poorer than when he seized power, but then we know that this is true about socialist regimes.

It is clear that the values of Castro are not congruent with the beliefs and practices we hold here in Canada. Canadians value freedom, value democracy, and respect the rule of law. Cubans lack the freedom to express political views, to establish their own businesses, or to travel between different regions of their country without government approval.

• (1155)

Canadians, as witnessed by our actions here today, function with the freedom to express their political views on any subject without fear of reprisal. Our journalists publish a wide variety of opinions on the government without fear of punishment. No Canadian journalist has been roughed up, sent to a forced labour camp, or exiled for criticizing the government of the day.

Canadians are incredibly proud of the beautiful land we call home, and we travel freely from province to province and into the territories without impediment, without borders, and without needing government approval.

In Cuba, there is no rule of law. Arrest and detention are arbitrary and entirely at the whim of the Castro brothers. Connections within the Communist Party of Cuba allow others to ignore the law or use the law to make themselves wealthy by punishing their competition.

In Canada, we celebrate the fact that even the prime minister is bound by the same rules that guide us. It does not matter how connected people are to the government of the day; the justice system is there to hold them accountable.

In Cuba, more than 80% of the land that could be used for agriculture sits entirely fallow. Why is that? It is because no one can be bothered to pick the weeds or plant a plot of land, because there is no incentive to work, no reward for labour. In Cuba, the locals are forbidden from eating local lobsters that they catch. This is not a health precaution. In fact, the lobsters are simply saved for the tourists who prop up the Cuban economy.

In Canada, we have free markets, and those free markets reward individuals for their hard work. We celebrate our entrepreneurs, who through vision and hard work build successful businesses.

As a self-declared feminist, a defender of human rights, and an advocate for the middle class, the Canadian Prime Minister should have stood against the acts of brutality committed by the late Fidel

### *Business of Supply*

Castro. Instead, however, Trudeau took the opportunity to praise Castro, calling him a “remarkable leader” and even went so far as to state that Castro had a “tremendous dedication and love for the Cuban people”.

Based on the public outcry of Canadians, including hundreds of my own constituents, I know with confidence that the Prime Minister's sentiments are not widely shared among the Canadian people. The outrage over the implication that Canadians support Castro is one of the most visceral reactions that I have seen from the people in my riding. Castro is not viewed as a paternal or warm and fuzzy figure who wanted the best for his country, who loved his people, and who advanced it. He is seen as a repressive dictator who chronically mistreated his people, who had zero tolerance for women, and who viewed the marginalized as a problem to be solved by imprisonment or forced labour.

I understand that the Prime Minister has some family connections to Castro, but as the Prime Minister of Canada, one would hope that Trudeau could put aside his personal affections—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, I would ask the hon. member, as this was the second occurrence, just to recall that we do not use the given name of other hon. members in the House. We can use their position, or their riding name is certainly appropriate.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker.

I would expect the Prime Minister to speak in a way that represents Canadians as a whole.

Today, I invite all members in the House to listen to the words of international experts and to the Cuban dissidents who were jailed, tortured, and beaten; and to take a stand with those with religious beliefs or sexual orientations that were viewed as opposing the revolution and resulted in their being sent to labour camps. I invite all members of the House to take a stand for the oppressed people of Cuba who have been denied their fundamental human rights for 50 years. I invite members of the House to take a stand for justice, human dignity, and freedom.

The eyes of Canadians are on this Parliament. The eyes of the world are on this country. Today, we have a choice. By supporting the motion put forward, we show that we support the aspirations of all Cubans to live in a free and democratic state.

• (1200)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in the opposition motion put forward today. It is very important to emphasize that we have a Prime Minister and a government that have never shied away from raising the issue of human rights, both here at home and abroad.

Listening to the debate thus far, and reading the motion, one has to ask how it is that the Conservative Party believes it is advancing the interests of the people of Cuba by introducing such a political, partisan opposition day motion.

My question for the member is this. From the Conservative perspective, how is advancing this sort of vote going to assist the people of Cuba?

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**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Mr. Speaker, first off, the hon. member made a number of points with regard to the government having “never shied away from” standing for human rights. We are looking at a government in power that is creating deals with China. China is a country that is known for its vindictive and compulsive commitment to actually abusing human rights.

We brought forward a motion. We had been working on it for more than a year in this place. This side of the House has been asking the government to bring Yazidi women and girls to Canada to give them the opportunity to live a new life. Right now they are under the hands of ISIS genocide.

That being the case, I stand by my point that the government absolutely lacks integrity when it comes to standing for human rights.

**Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, being as how the hon. member is concerned with human rights and with the situation in Cuba, just having said that there has been inaction by the government for the last year with regard to human rights, in terms of standing up for oppressed people of Cuba, I could not agree more.

Is she not concerned that this motion today is an absolute waste of time when we could be actually talking about the human rights advances that we could make, such as the conduct and accountability of Canadian mining companies that her colleague mentioned a little earlier in his speech today; and when we could be talking about the ways that we could, as an honest broker with a healthy relationship with Cuba, be enticing them to allow the human rights monitors in to be inspecting the prisons?

There are myriad ways that this opposition day could have been utilized for really constructive ways in which we could be embracing the tone that is intended with this opposition day motion. I am giving the hon. member all the benefit of saying that I know the motivation behind this is ultimately for the Cuban people, but this is an absolute waste of time, and I would like to know what she would like to see happen in terms of the real tangible ways that we can address the human rights that she says are oppressed.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Mr. Speaker, she said this motion is for the “human rights” of people; therefore is it not a “waste of time”. Is that enough said? No, it is absolutely not. It is exactly that. It is for standing for the human rights of people, the dignity of people, a people who have been oppressed for 50 years. Absolutely, this is worth our time, and to call this a waste of our time, a waste of our energy, a waste of this collaborative approach that should be taking place in this House, that is a disgrace to call that a waste of time.

•(1205)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the motion in front of the House today is one of great import. It deals with the message that Canada is sending to the international community in terms of our official position on human rights in light of the Prime Minister's statement about the death of Fidel Castro.

The motion in front of us reads, “That, in light of the regrettable comments”, and I would have used a stronger word, but nonetheless, I will support this motion.

The motion continues:

...made by the Prime Minister on behalf of Canadians on the death of Fidel Castro, and in an effort to send a clear signal to Cuban people and the international community that his comments do not reflect the true sentiments of Canadians, the House: (a) reject the comments made by the Prime Minister on November 26, 2016;

I will start with this first component of the motion.

My colleagues in the NDP and the Liberal Party, a couple of parliamentary secretaries as well, applauded when the suggestion was made that this was a waste of time. I do not think that they understand the gravity of the statement that the Prime Minister made and how embarrassing it was for Canada in terms of our ability to stand up and be honest brokers of human rights policy in the world.

Frankly, when I saw this statement come forward, I thought it was a hoax. I could not believe that this was actually true. I thought it was from *The Onion*, or *The Beaverton* in Canada, I guess. I actually had to double-check to make sure that it was true.

However, I should not have been surprised. Why? The Prime Minister stood up after the international community derided this statement, and it was universal derision, except from other brutal dictatorships around the world, which makes me question where his policy allegiance lies, quite frankly. However, under harsh criticism of the statement, he stood up and said that he always stands up for human rights, which is just not true. Why? When one stands up for human rights, it has to matter. The statement that he made, the whitewashing of Fidel Castro's record in his country, is the exact opposite of standing up for human rights. It is not even a whitewashing of it, but a complete celebration of the man as a person, which is embarrassing.

Moreover, the Prime Minister has had several chances to stand up for human rights in this place, but has not done so. In June 2015, two days before a UN report came out stating what everybody in the world knew, the United States knew and voted on it, the U.K. knew, Germany knew, the Prime Minister had an opportunity to stand up here and declare that the crimes of ISIS against the Yazidi people were genocide. He had the opportunity to stand up for human rights. What did he do? He sat down. He stayed in his seat.

Moreover, this statement here is cementing Canada's lack of backbone on our ability to stand up for what is good and right. Why is this motion not a waste of time but something that is so important? This motion is vitally important, because we have to give the Canadian people some sort of hope that the people in this place understand what is good and right. It is because the Prime Minister did not have the backbone to stand in front of a group of press corps and say, “You know what? I got this wrong. This was wrong. I should not have whitewashed a despot's record.”

We have to have this vote in the House of Commons, because the world not only laughs at us, but the world is raising their eyebrows and asking what role Canada has. This is why every member of the House, especially the Liberal Party, especially those who espouse a stand for human rights for groups of minorities in Canada, especially those people, need to stand up and support this motion. They need to send the Prime Minister a message. They need to say, “Hey, when I woke up on that morning, I also thought that your statement was wrong, and I thought it was a hoax. I'm sending a message to you.”

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If they do not do that, if the Liberal caucus cannot stand up to say that celebrating a brutal dictator's record in a formal statement from the Government of Canada is wrong, then they are doing a disservice to every one of their constituents of every political stripe. Moreover, they are sending a very dangerous message to the international community about what Canada is about, and that is wrong. That is why this motion is so important here today.

I will take no lessons from the current government saying that this is not an important motion. We need to repudiate what the Prime Minister said. Why? Every single government that we want to have a relationship with and a partnership in standing up for human rights is saying, "What did you do? What is this? This is crazy."

This is crazy. It is insane. I cannot believe that the Prime Minister of Canada wrote this statement. It is disgusting. It is immoral. It is just so profoundly wrong.

•(1210)

When we have NDP members and Green Party members agreeing with this, when there is unity across party lines in Canada that this statement was an embarrassment and danger, every member in this place should stand up and vote for this motion. The Liberals are trying to make out that it is partisan.

This motion is what is right and it is the second component of the motion that Canada should stand for:

recognize the past atrocities and repression borne by the Cuban people under the rule of Fidel Castro, including his long and oppressive regime of imprisoning critics and reported beatings during arrest, restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly, and the suffering and restrictions placed on the press, minorities, and the democratic process, including the LGBT community;

That is partisan? No, that is fact. That is what the Prime Minister conveniently forgot to mention in his wonderful celebratory statement of Fidel Castro. It is that component of this motion.

Every person in this place is going to have the opportunity to stand up and say, "I recognize this happened". If we do not recognize that something happened when it comes to human rights, if we try to whitewash it or forget it, that is when atrocities happen. That is when we forget who we are and what policies we should be putting forward or who we should be fighting for.

I could go on and on. My colleagues have spent a lot of time here today talking about the abysmal, which is not a strong enough word, disgusting, and inhuman record of Fidel Castro when it comes to human rights in his country. I could talk about imprisoning members of the LGBTI community; the complete lack of free speech; and the oppression of his people; the complete, utter, abject failure of their economy. I could go on and on.

This motion is important because in this place we are recognizing that those things happened. We are not turning our back on it or forgetting it as a country that purports to stand up for human rights. If this Prime Minister wants to say "I always stand up for human rights", then stand up for this motion and admit this happened.

The third component of the motion states:

express its hope and full support for the people of Cuba, that they may now begin to see freedom and a commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, in order to ensure a brighter and better future for the Cuban people....

A parliamentary secretary stood up before and said, "Why would we be doing this instead of talking about the future of the Cuban people?" This motion is all about the future of the Cuban people. I want them to be ruled under a free democracy with freedom of expression and complete rejection of the things that have been happening under the former military dictator's rule. I want to see the Cuban people free and prosperous. The people who were celebrating on the streets in Florida after he died were doing that for a reason. In Canada, we should be standing up and recognizing it, not issuing a shameful, embarrassing statement that celebrates the rule of a dictator and completely whitewashes his record.

Time and again, if we hear from groups of people around the world who have suffered genocide, who have suffered human rights atrocities, they will say, "always remember, we must remember". This weekend, we remember the Holodomor. In this House of Commons, we voted to recognize the Yazidi genocide because we must remember.

When the Prime Minister of a G7 country stands up and forgets to mention an abysmal human rights record and the death of thousands, and then says that this is a waste of time and has his parliamentary secretaries applaud when it is suggested that correcting that grave mistake is a waste of time is shameful and embarrassing. I hope every Canadian watches this vote next week and watches the members opposite stand up and not remember. We need to remember what happened there so it does not happen again.

There are people across the aisle who have worked with me and implored their caucus to stand up for motions around genocide and to stand up even if it means standing up alone when something is right. This is not a partisan motion. This is what the entire world is thinking. If the government will not stand up and vote for it, then it stands against the world.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and for the little taste she gave us of the same old Republican rhetoric we have been hearing for the past 50 years.

She mentioned Canada's backbone. I will tell her what our backbone consists of. It consists of the tradition established by Liberal prime ministers who visit countries like Cuba to show their solidarity with the people of Cuba and who go on television and to universities to talk about Canadian values, human rights, and respect for gay, lesbian, transgender, and other communities.

That is Canada's tradition. That is solidarity. History has shown that co-operation with Cuba and the rest of the world is the right way to go and the right solution. The ignorance demonstrated by successive Conservative governments over the years is not the right approach.

Perhaps my colleague would like to withdraw her statement because the Liberal approach to international relations has always proven to be the right one. Does she not agree?

*Business of Supply*

•(1215)

[English]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons on what a spine means, in terms of human rights. That member voted against recognizing the genocide of the Yazidi people. That member is in negotiations with the UN to send our men and women in uniform on peacekeeping missions, with no vote in the House of Commons, while they are pulling out our military assets from the fight to contain ISIL.

Over and over again, and listen to his rhetoric, he said, “Oh, Canada talks about these things.” I do not want Canada to talk. I want Canada to act. He talks about standing up for human rights. When we stand up for something, we stand up with our vote in this place. If the member opposite sits down on this, he has also sent a message to the world.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

When we say that this is a very partisan debate and that the NDP objects to this issue being politicized, it is because the Conservative motion does not include any concrete measures calling on the Government of Canada to do something constructive to improve human rights in Cuba.

If the Conservatives really want to talk about improvements, why do they not ask the Liberals to start making significant investments in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights again? The Conservatives cut funding for that organization in 2011. As my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie said, this organization does excellent work on the ground to improve human rights. We could also talk about poor state of food security or the fact that there are many political prisoners.

What do the Conservatives propose that Canada do to really assist Cuba and help improve human rights there?

[English]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel:** Mr. Speaker, the first step in trying to figure out how we help the Cuban people is by recognizing that there is a problem to begin with. That is what this motion does.

One of the NDP members, I believe he is the member for Don Valley West, issued a tweet, saying, “Sad to hear of passing of #FidelCastro. He stood against imperialism & was a man of monumental vision, courage, justice. He shall be missed.”

An NDP member is standing here, lecturing me about we should be doing next for Cuba when everybody thinks that it is hunky-dory, that the passing of their leader was something that was just fine, everybody is great, and everything is okay.

Why is this motion the first step and why is it important? It will be Canada's first acknowledgement of the fact that Fidel Castro was a despot and left his people in a situation where they do need the aid that she is talking about.

**Ms. Karina Gould (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has a long-standing development co-operation program in Cuba. Ours is the longest-running development program of any western nation.

Canada had a modest international development relationship with Cuba between 1968 and the establishment of our formal bilateral development program in 1994.

In the early days, Canada supported ad hoc initiatives, such as research and agricultural development and academic exchanges.

[Translation]

Over the years, Canada's international development presence in Cuba has adapted to the changing Cuban context, to meet the needs of Cuban people. Also, over the years, Canada's development program has gained respect from Cuba for its effectiveness, flexibility, and stability over the long-term.

Today, Canada's international development objective in Cuba is to improve the economic well-being of the most vulnerable Cubans. We work toward that objective by supporting projects that focus on two priorities: increasing food security and stimulating sustainable economic growth.

•(1220)

[English]

These priorities are clearly relevant in Cuba today in light of the economic reforms currently being implemented, and align well with Canada's interest in fostering trade, supporting economic liberalization, and promoting peaceful and sustainable democratic development.

I neglected to mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Laurentides—Labelle.

In that sense, Canada's development program in Cuba is an effective vehicle to promote Canadian values and interests. Canada is ranked third after the European Union and Switzerland in terms of development assistance to Cuba. Relatively speaking, Canada disburses a modest amount of official development assistance in Cuba each year. Annually, we support about \$4.5 million in international development projects. These projects are implemented by Canadian international and multilateral executing agencies.

Over the years, projects supported by Canada have contributed to a number of key achievements in Cuba, making a real contribution to modernizing the Cuban state and encouraging liberalization.

Canada and the other donor countries and agencies that are engaged in Cuba continue to pursue development assistance in the country based on a recognition of ongoing needs. While Cuba leads the Caribbean region in life expectancy, equity, education, health, social spending, and disaster preparedness, it struggles economically. Additionally, food security is a national issue, as Cuba still imports 70% to 80% of its food. Predictably, women and the elderly are most affected by food insecurity.



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[Translation]

Deep inefficiencies in its central economy, limited investment, and the US embargo continue to inhibit economic growth. The average monthly wage for Cuban people is \$30. Cuba is working to build a more productive workforce at home, including by allowing increased space for an entrepreneurial class and certain elements of the free market into the economy.

The success of Cuba's reforms will depend on new economic approaches taking hold and existing ones becoming more efficient. Both will require significant investment, institutional and individual capacity building, and shifts in economic governance. This is a key area in which Canada has been able to provide assistance to Cuba, through the projects focused on sustainable economic growth.

[English]

For example, one project funded by Canada works with the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and Cuba's Ministry of Energy and Mines to help cultivate a skilled and competitive labour force that reflects emerging economic requirements in Cuba. This project has trained thousands of Cuban men and women in high demand occupations, such as the instrumentation, electrical, and millwright fields.

Another project that Canada supports works with Cowater International and the Office of the Comptroller General of Cuba. This project has introduced modern auditing approaches and techniques based on Canadian and international models, enabling Cuban auditors to contribute significantly to the strengthening institutional accountability in Cuba.

Boosting domestic food production and improving food security are also high priorities for Cuba's government, which recognizes the need for modern farming practices, better land use, and more efficient food value chains. This is another area in which Canada has been able to provide assistance to Cuba, through its projects focused on increasing food security. For example, a project that Canada supports, alongside the World Food Programme and Cuba's Ministry of Agriculture, works with farmers to increase their yields of healthy foods, particularly beans. These beans are eaten by children at day care centres, and are served at community meal centres for vulnerable people.

Another project with CARE Canada, Oxfam Canada, the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture, and the Cuban soils institute, the Instituto de Suelos, is increasing urban and suburban agricultural production, while working to increase sustainable production of diversified food products close to urban centres, especially by Cuban women producers.

Of course, during his recent trip to Cuba, the Prime Minister announced that Canada would be supporting a new project in Cuba with the United Nations Development Programme and the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture. This project will contribute to economic growth and livelihoods development among poor Cubans through agricultural development. It will create new job opportunities for women, who are currently under-represented in the farming sector in Cuba.

After hurricane Matthew hit Cuba on October 4, 2016, another aspect of the Canada-Cuba development relationship came into play.

Canada provided more than \$500,000 to international humanitarian assistance organizations working in Cuba to supply drinking water and sanitation facilities, basic shelter, and food aid for residents in the hardest-hit regions of the country. At the same time, the Government of Cuba assisted in the safe evacuation of Canadian tourists who had been vacationing in hurricane-affected areas.

These projects all involve participation by many actors, both Cuban and Canadian, across a number of spheres. They are contributing to the changes that many Cubans and Canadians want to see realized in Cuba. Canada's development program in Cuba is just one aspect of the healthy relationship we maintain with Cuba, which encompasses diplomatic relations, trade, and consular services. Together, each reinforces and strengthens our overall relationship with Cuba.

I think it is extremely important to mention today that Canada in all of our diplomatic efforts always champions human rights. It is something our government has done. It is something that previous governments have done and it is something that we as Canadians do every single day.

● (1225)

**Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after listening intently to my hon. colleague's speech, I would like to ask her this. Was the former president of Cuba, Fidel Castro, a dictator; and if so, why did she not reflect at all on Fidel Castro in her speech?

**Ms. Karina Gould:** Mr. Speaker, it is incredibly important that we state clearly that in Canada we do not celebrate death. Therefore, while we recognize the controversy with respect to Mr. Castro, that he was a dictator and that there were and are human rights offences that have happened and continue to happen in Cuba, our commitment as a government, and what Canadians expect of us, is to engage and have that conversation based on real action. That is what is important.

There is a group in Cuba called Ladies in White, which goes to the central square in Havana every Sunday to protest human rights abuses. Those women have decided that during this two-week mourning period, they will not do that out of respect, because they understand that we do not celebrate death. I hope the members opposite would respect that as well.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I am wondering where we are heading with this debate. Both sides of the House are hyper-partisan. It is either white or black, with no shade of nuance. They are not talking about what Canada could do to help the people of Cuba or other people strengthen human rights in their own country.

Today they are talking about Cuba, but they are not saying what Canada should do. Are the Liberals about to respond to the urgent call received by Canada from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights for increased funding?

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Will there be any help on political prisoners or on food security? The Liberals say that they are open to dialogue, but what exactly will they do to strengthen human rights in Cuba?

**Ms. Karina Gould:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her remarks. I believe that my speech was simply based on what Canada is doing to help people and the people of Cuba. I spoke about food security and economic growth in Cuba. However, it is especially important that Canada engage with Cuba to strengthen human rights, and we are doing that.

I appreciate my colleague's question regarding the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. We are in discussions with them, and I believe the commission is a very important tool for human rights in this hemisphere. When I was working at the Organization of American States, I was able to see the good work they are doing. It is a highly important forum, since it promotes human rights throughout this hemisphere.

I am very happy to answer that question and to say that we must continue to work with them on this vitally important issue.

• (1230)

[English]

**Ms. Kamal Khara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Cuba is a priority country for Canada. Canada and Cuba have a long-standing, dynamic relationship based on strong, historic, commercial, and cultural ties, and our constructive engagement based on traditions of dialogue and mutual respect. Therefore, my question for my hon. colleague is this. Could she comment on why the trip by our Prime Minister, the Minister of International Trade, and the Minister of Small Business and Tourism to Cuba was so important to Canada's relationship with Cuba?

**Ms. Karina Gould:** Mr. Speaker, this is a pivotal moment not only for Cuba but also for relations in the western hemisphere. We are at a point where one of the greatest stalemates in our hemispheric history has begun to thaw and open up. Canada can play an incredibly important role in working with Cuba and the Cuban people to open up its economy and to advance democracy and human rights. Our long-standing relationship has built years of trust between our two countries and we are in a position to really assist, support, and work with the Cuban people to achieve those objectives that we share.

[Translation]

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will say a few words concerning Canada's trading relationship with Cuba.

Cuba is a market with over 11 million people. It is the largest market for Canadian exporters in Central America and the Caribbean.

In fact, Canadian exports to Cuba are roughly equivalent to our exports throughout Central America. Despite the current liquidity crisis in Cuba, these exports have remained stable.

As the second mostly densely populated market in Central America and the Caribbean and as the largest island in the Caribbean, Cuba has the potential to become an attractive export market as its economy recovers, particularly if the American embargo is lifted.

In actual numbers, bilateral merchandise trade in 2015 totalled over \$1 billion.

Canadian exports totalled close to \$495 million, covering a wide range of products such as grain, machinery, meats, vegetables, vehicles, and electrical equipment.

In 2015, Cuban imports to Canada were valued at \$520.1 million. The top import was unwrought nickel ore, from a Canadian joint venture's mining operations. The nickel ore was imported so it could be refined in northern Alberta.

Canada is Cuba's second-largest export market, after Venezuela, and its fourth-largest trading partner.

When it comes to trade in services, there is no doubt that Canadians love visiting Cuba. Although Statistics Canada does not track Canadian service exports, Cuban figures suggest that Canadian tourists make up over one-third of all visitors to Cuba. In 2015, 1.3 million of Cuba's 3.5 million international visitors were Canadian tourists.

Every major Canadian airline flies to Cuba, and a Canadian company operates 13 hotels on the island. According to Cuban statistics from 2008, Canada is Cuba's second-largest source of direct foreign investment after Spain.

Sherritt International, which is active in the mining, oil and gas, and hydro development sectors, is Cuba's second-largest foreign investor, with an estimated total investment of \$3 billion. We do not have official figures on non-mining-related Canadian investments, but Canadian firms are also known for investing heavily in food production.

Ever since the Obama administration announced its intention to restore relations between the United States and Cuba, Canadian interest in the market has grown significantly. The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service has received 160% more requests for information from Canadian companies. Cuban government representatives are excited about Canadian investment and trade and have always sought to boost Canadian companies' participation in the Cuban market.

Everyone knows that getting into the Cuban market is not without its challenges. Operations and market approvals still get bogged down by excessive red tape in Cuba. The U.S. embargo is still an obstacle for Canadian companies wishing to do business in Cuba, particularly those whose products have American components or that have major interests in the United States.

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The embargo, along with Cuba's poor credit risk assessment, makes financing tricky to arrange with Cuba. Canada has always been and will continue to be outspoken about its opposition to the American embargo. Another obstacle to increased Canadian investment and trade with Cuba is the lack of access to insurance and financing products.

Despite these obstacles, Canada has a number of competitors on the Cuban market, including Brazil, China, Spain, and Mexico, who recognize the market's obvious potential.

In an effort to attract inward foreign direct investment, Cuba undertook major economic reforms over the past two years. Cuba decided that these reforms would help spur the economy, create wealth among the population, and provide and improve key social services for Cubans.

While progress has been rather slow, these economic reforms are far-reaching. They have led to the establishment of a small private sector, enhanced the role of co-operatives in the economy, allowed banks to provide credit to individuals and private companies, attracted more foreign investment, and made public corporations more accountable.

●(1235)

At the same time, Cuba tried to improve its international credit rating by meeting its financial obligations with respect to payments and outstanding debt. The December 2015 agreement that Cuba concluded with international lenders, through the Paris club, will further contribute to rebuilding its financial image.

Even though we do not anticipate that Cuba will fully engage in liberal reforms in the short term, these measures are positive signs for the future of the country's economic growth. They illustrate an understanding of the fact that economic reform to stimulate growth requires thinking outside the box.

Along with the regulatory changes in the U.S. that have been reducing the scope of the U.S. embargo over the past two years, the reforms will make things a little easier for foreign companies that want to set up in Cuba and could introduce more cash flow. As such, the reform process could also present new opportunities for Canadian exporters. In the short term, we are taking steps to better prepare Canada to engage with Cuba in a post-reform and post-embargo era.

Since December 2014, the world seems to have taken notice of Cuba and of its potential. Not a week goes by without a foreign delegation together with a commercial delegation, a list of bilateral agreements, and a credit facility arriving in Cuba. These missions have become a symbol of the world's interest in Cuba. Competition is heating up on this market.

Canada has programs to help Canadian businesses penetrate the Cuban market. Even though Export Development Canada, EDC, considers Cuba to be a high-risk market, it has established stable relations with the Cuban government and several Cuban financial institutions, and it has helped Canadian exporters do business in Cuba through Canadian banks with a presence in Cuba.

The Canadian Commercial Corporation, the CCC, has had success in Cuba. Since 1991, it has facilitated export sales of almost \$1 billion in Cuba.

With respect to bilateral agreements in support of our trade commitments, Canadian and Cuban negotiators managed to reach an agreement in May 2015 to expand the Canada-Cuba air transport agreement. Cuba is Canada's third largest international air travel market and all major airlines fly there. Canadian and Cuban spokespersons are talking about ways to reduce obstacles to foreign investment.

Canada's trade relationship with Cuba is obviously important. A closer bilateral trade and investment relationship is in the best interests of Canadians and Cubans. Many Canadians depend on that relationship to earn a living. Similarly, Canadian investments in Cuba have made a significant contribution to the country's development and have helped to improve the livelihoods of countless Cubans.

Although there are still many obstacles to the robust growth of trade and investments, there is no question that the future looks bright. The measures that we are currently taking to position Canada are important. That is why the Prime Minister raised the issue of improving trade and investment when he visited Cuba earlier this month, and our representatives will continue to work with Cubans to strengthen these important ties.

Our goal was to encourage the Cuban government in its economic reform efforts and to ensure that Canadian businesses are well positioned when those economic reforms are implemented. That is what we are going to continue to do.

●(1240)

[*English*]

Before I wrap up, I want to come back to something the member for Calgary Nose Hill said earlier. She went into a long speech about the what the Prime Minister has said with regard to human rights, and how it was totally inappropriate.

I want to read something that I think all members will find quite interesting:

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today issued the following statement on the death of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia:

On behalf of all Canadians, Laureen and I offer our sincere condolences to the family of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and the people of Saudi Arabia. King Abdullah was recognized as a strong proponent of peace in the Middle East. He also undertook a range of important economic, social, education, health, and infrastructure initiatives in his country. I had the pleasure of meeting King Abdullah in Toronto when Canada hosted the G-20 and found him to be passionate about his country, development and the global economy.

We join the people of Saudi Arabia in mourning his passing.

I am curious if the members on the other side believe that was an appropriate statement for a prime minister to make on the passing of a dictator.

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for giving us—

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

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**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** It is not very often I get complaints from one side or the other because their side is screaming loudly. I want to remind the hon. members that there is a process. The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock stood up, she was recognized, and it is her turn to speak.

**Ms. Dianne L. Watts:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his overview of trade relations, tourism, red tape, and all of the things that go on with the mining company. However, this motion is about the comments the Prime Minister made on behalf of Canadians on the death of Fidel Castro.

Does the member feel that the Prime Minister's official comments accurately reflect the sentiments of the Canadian people?

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Mr. Speaker, leave it to the Conservatives to filibuster themselves. It is always entertaining.

The member is completely missed what I said. The Conservative prime minister talked about how he joined the people of Saudi Arabia in mourning the passing of King Abdullah. I can assure the member that not everybody in Saudi Arabia felt the same way. Not everybody in Canada felt the same way. However, that is the appropriate thing for a prime minister to say, whether it is theirs or ours, when a foreign leader passes away, regardless of what is going on.

It is very important that we respect our foreign leaders and their own systems. We do not interfere with how other governments run themselves. That is not our position. Our position is to help the people as best we can.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question.

He mentioned the possibility of the United States easing the embargo on Cuba several times in his speech. Unfortunately, he failed to mention that the United States just had an election and that the new president-elect, Donald Trump, seems to have no intention of improving relations with Cuba and lifting the embargo, far from it.

What does my colleague think about that? What could Canada possibly do to help? Does he realize that, under the new President of the United States, an end to the American embargo on Cuba is far from guaranteed?

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Mr. Speaker, there are obviously many questions about how things will play out in the United States over the next few years. We do not know yet.

As Canadians, our job is to engage with the people of Cuba and to work with them to help as much as we can. We have always done that, ever since the Cuban missile crisis, which lasted 13 days.

I do not know what the Americans will do. Our job is to do what is best for Canada and Cuba.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was quite intrigued by my hon. colleague's speech. I would like to put a question back to him.

If we are looking at administrations that have reached out to the Cuban regime and have had a very positive relationship, the

Mulroney administration stands out. Under Mr. Mulroney's leadership, relations between Canada and Cuba were quite cordial. In fact, in 1985, Mr. Mulroney enacted the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act. This legislation has been called unprecedented because it made it illegal for firms operating in Canada to comply with any U.S. attempts to destabilize the Castro regime.

This is going much further than this government has done to engage with Cuba. Did my hon. colleague know that and has he any thoughts on it?

• (1245)

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Mr. Speaker, it really hearkens back to when the Conservatives dropped the word "progressive" from the party name, they dropped all essence of progress. This is very good evidence of that.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

[*English*]

It was just a few days ago that I was looking down at my BlackBerry, saw a message and read it. It said, "It is with deep sorrow that I learned today of the death of Cuba's longest serving President". I was stunned and wondered how he had done that. I quickly forwarded it to my wife with the same comment.

It was a very odd point of departure for the Prime Minister that his description and praise for Cuba's late president was that he was Cuba's longest-serving president. The answer to the question of how he did that is clear. He was a communist dictator and he did it using the pages out of the textbooks of his great teachers: Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and the succession of Kims in North Korea.

What was that textbook? That textbook was very simple: the complete extinguishment of democracy, the suppression of freedom of expression and freedom of speech, the shutting down of any different political parties, the use of imprisonment, executions, and the complete suppression of human rights. That is how he became Cuba's longest-serving president.

It was a very odd point of departure. The rest of the statement from Canada's Prime Minister went on in a similarly shameful fashion. I think it was not just embarrassing to Canadians but actually made Canada into a global laughingstock. The world has figured out what communism and communist dictators are all about. World leaders everywhere have figured that out, save but one. It is so self-evident that it is not a matter of outrage, it is a matter of laughing at Canada and Canada's leadership that clearly is simply not ready to assume serious responsibilities in a serious, difficult, and challenging globe.

*Business of Supply*

I like to think of Canada as being a country that has established moral leadership. Certainly in the time the Conservatives were in government it did. It has been done through world wars. It has done it through refusing to recognize the annexation, for example, of the Baltic states, which I will get to later. It stood with Ukraine as it sought to achieve its freedom. It took sanctions against Russia as it threatened the successors of Ukraine, led by a KGB leadership, and annexed parts of Ukraine. We showed clear moral leadership and an understanding of what was right and wrong on human rights. Canada has lost that moral leadership and the world is laughing at us as a result.

Fidel Castro was able to maintain his position largely with the support of the Soviet Union, the USSR. His textbook for taking power in that Cuban revolution identically followed that of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. It started with a broad-based coalition that was a revolution against a government that was generally not supported by the people. However, once getting control, it began to target and eliminate any competing political leadership, executing them, extinguishing them, consolidating that power, and abandoning any of the promises made before the revolution of democracy, freedom, and even what one might call social democracy, as we would think of it in the west. That is exactly what happened in the Soviet Union. That is exactly what happened under Castro's leadership in Cuba.

In the Soviet case, it went on to expand after that, through World War II and beyond, that Soviet empire, exporting its particular brand of repression of human rights and suppression of freedom. Cuba was part of that frontier. It almost reached its apogee by bringing the world on the verge of world war III with the Cuban missile crisis, another one of Castro's great contributions. Talk to anybody who was young at the time. The fear was palpable.

It was Castro who brought this world closest to global nuclear annihilation with his reckless actions in the Cuban missile crisis, when John F. Kennedy, the American president, had the fortitude and clear moral thinking to understand that it had to be stood up to. The Kennedy type of thinking is apparently lacking in our current Prime Minister.

●(1250)

I know something about this, because my family lived some of the experience. My background is Estonian, and those who know Estonia know that it gained its independence during World War I. With the coming of World War II and the Nazi-Soviet pact, the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact, they carved up eastern Europe, and Hitler agreed with Stalin that the Soviets would get the Baltic states. The tanks rolled in. The occupiers rolled in. Initially, the occupation was not gentle, and freedom was entirely suppressed within the Baltic states, but there was a pretence that it was a popular revolution and that it was democratic.

My family was in a special circumstance. My grandfather was an agronomist, an agricultural economist, for one of the counties in a largely agricultural society. Those people were seen as community leaders. When the Soviets put together a phony drummed-up election, all the Estonian parties got together and selected the most august and clear moral leaders to be their candidates in the election. My grandfather foolishly took on the task of being one of the

candidates. On election night, a few hours before the polls closed, a contingent of 30 or 40 Red Army soldiers came up the farm path to the door and told my grandfather that they were there to accept his concession of defeat. My grandfather was a fairly strong-willed, principled man and foolishly said, “You will not decide. The people will decide”. My grandmother was a bit more pragmatic. The soldiers said that they would wait for him at the end of the driveway and would be back after he thought about it a bit. In the intervening period, my mother, my grandmother, and my grandfather, with the help of some of the hired hands on the farm, fled into the woods. It was one of many times my grandfather would be in flight.

Shortly thereafter, the Germans occupied the country. Then the Soviets came back, and much of my family was extinguished either in Siberian concentration camps or by execution by the Soviets, or otherwise.

I grew up learning these stories and understanding that freedom and democracy and human rights are fragile and easily lost. They are lost at the hands of people like communist dictators like Stalin and like Castro and the revolution that was supported by the Soviets.

Raised on that, I became interested and involved in politics. As a young child, I was a champion, believe it or not, of a guy named Pierre Trudeau. I was not a normal child. I was interested in politics. Pierre Trudeau said he stood for freedom, democracy, and human rights. Shortly thereafter, I saw him parading around on Parliament Hill and elsewhere with figures like Kosygin and Brezhnev, the people who were imprisoning what was left of my family in the Soviet Union, essentially imprisoning them in their homes and depriving them of all freedoms, and their colleague Castro, with whom that friendship was so strong.

By the age of nine, the wisdom of age was upon me, and I ceased to be a Liberal. I understood that the commitment to freedom, that principal commitment, could not coexist with that kind of affection and love of communist dictators in that day and age. I knew there was one party that was truly committed to freedom, and that is why I became a Conservative.

My family was horrified. Why? It took a few years after I became involved in politics, but my grandmother finally explained to me why. She said that after the communists took power, the very first thing they did was get the party membership lists, and those were the people they went after.

In the case of my grandmother and grandfather, she was a lawyer in the 1920s and he was an agronomist. They were natural community leaders. They only fled for their freedom when they were given the heads-up that they were on the list to be sent on the trains to Siberia the next day. That is when they fled.

This is what communist dictatorship is about. I could give the House many more graphic stories that I grew up on.

The driving force for me to get into politics was the belief that freedom and democracy are fragile and easily lost and that we must fight to preserve them. We must also fight to preserve the memory of those who have suffered from the loss of it. We have to fight to preserve the memory the way we do so well with the Holocaust and the Nazi horrors, for example, so that the world does not repeat them.

*Business of Supply*

We are not well served by people who lack the moral leadership to call communist dictators what they are. We need not celebrate their death to describe what they are and to recognize that there are some people who are not worthy of the kind of praise we heard.

● (1255)

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a dictator is a dictator is a dictator, whether communist or not. Let me be clear. For me, Fidel Castro was a dictator. Fidel Castro was a loathsome individual who ruined the lives of many, many people and was a human rights abuser. Fidel Castro was not a good man. I want to be clear.

King Abdullah was also a human rights abuser. King Abdullah was also not a good man. He also ruined the lives of many, many thousands of people.

Personally, I would agree with sections (b) and (c) of the motion. If sections (b) and (c) of the motion were there and section (a) was deleted in reference to the Prime Minister's statement, I would vote in favour of the motion, because I believe in condemning the human rights abuses in Cuba, and I believe in saying that we want the Cuban people to have a better future.

However, I would like to ask the hon. member, given that the statement the Prime Minister made was very similar to the statement Stephen Harper made about King Abdullah, why he feels it necessary to condemn the statement of the current prime minister when he did not condemn Stephen Harper's statement on King Abdullah.

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, there is a considerable difference in tone between the two statements. The tone of Mr. Harper on the matter of King Abdullah was very restrained. There was no gushing about great friendship. There was no suggestion that the people of Saudi Arabia celebrate him as their *el Comandante*. There was none of that. There was a very restrained focus on the things Saudi Arabia has done positively in co-operation with Canada in trying to preserve peace in the Middle East. That is a critically important thing.

We know that former Prime Minister Harper, as a great defender of the State of Israel, recognized the importance and role of Saudi Arabia as a stabilizing force, albeit far from perfect. He put particular emphasis in his statement on the reforming aspects, the willingness to change, in Saudi Arabia as a form of encouragement of that change. That is very different from a gushing, positive statement.

I thank the hon. member for the words he said about Fidel Castro. I only wish his leader had the same kind of courage to say the same kinds of words.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I complete disagree with my colleague regarding his answer to the question from the member for Mount Royal.

The people promoting change in Saudi Arabia are in prison. One of them is Raif Badawi, the husband of a woman from my riding, Sherbrooke. She asked the Conservative government a long time ago to act and to speak on his behalf.

My colleague is way off base when he says that change will soon be coming to Saudi Arabia. Those calling for change in that country, including on the Internet, are imprisoned and flogged.

When my colleague was a cabinet minister in the previous government, the Governor General went to Saudi Arabia, at a cost of \$175,000, to celebrate the life of an authoritarian ruler. I wonder if my colleague approves of this expense.

[*English*]

**Hon. Peter Van Loan:** Mr. Speaker, I did not say that Saudi Arabia has been dramatically reformed. I said that there have been indications of gestures of moving in that direction. I think it is to be encouraged. We should all encourage that. We should also encourage any stabilizing element Saudi Arabia can be in the Middle East. God knows, we need allies and help to encourage peace and stability in that part of the world.

The issue here is not that. The issue is, of course, Fidel Castro. That is what the motion is about. In my view, what we saw from the communist regime in Cuba has not been any kind of significant liberalization. It has taken some baby steps out of economic necessity only recently as it lost economic support first from the Soviet Union and later from Venezuela, which has been its patron historically. Even those baby steps have been essentially stopped.

It is positive that we are encouraging those baby steps. Our government was part of encouraging those baby steps, as people know, including the effort to open relations between Cuba and the United States. That was a positive step. However, at the same time, it has to be done with an ongoing, continued moral clarity where we do not shut up and stop talking about human rights simply because we are trying to encourage progress in another area. We have to understand that progress is about encouraging human rights.

● (1300)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleague's remarks. He clearly has plenty of experience both personal and in cabinet. We should all draw on that experience as we reflect and consider the consequences of our words.

I also want to salute my colleague from Mount Royal, who spoke courageously. This is not the first time my colleague has told it like it is in the House, possibly at some risk to himself. I do not know how things work in his caucus, but it was courageous of him to admit the truth about Fidel Castro a few minutes ago. It was also courageous of him to say that he is prepared to support these two of our motion's three paragraphs:

(b) recognize the past atrocities and repression borne by the Cuban people under the rule of Fidel Castro, including his long and oppressive regime of imprisoning critics and reported beatings during arrest, restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly, and the suffering and restrictions placed on the press, minorities, and the democratic process, including the LGBT community; and (c) express its hope and full support for the people of Cuba, that they may now begin to see freedom and a commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, in order to ensure a brighter and better future for the Cuban people now and for generations to come.

Our colleague across the aisle is prepared to support those two paragraphs. I can understand how cabinet solidarity would make it impossible for him to support the first paragraph about rejecting the comments made by the Prime Minister on November 26, 2016. I think he would like to, personally. Regardless, maybe he wishes he could suggest other words that the Prime Minister might want to add to the statement that resulted in our debating this important matter in Parliament today.

What I am about to do is rare, but I am going to give the Prime Minister credit for his statement, as it has resulted in the House today debating human rights. Today, certainly, we can remind people what the Castro regime was like, how the people of Cuba suffered all those years under that dictator, all because the Prime Minister recklessly praised the Castro regime in a statement that was very offensive to Canadians and to the international community. When we hear what other world leaders said and we add the Prime Minister to the list of other dictators who praised the Castro regime, we can see this statement was shameful.

When we go back to our ridings, during the holidays or for the weekend, or when we attend events, particularly over Christmas, people rarely come up to us to talk about federal issues or about what is happening in Ottawa. However, on the weekend, even though I understand why, I was astounded that people talked to me about the Prime Minister's statement on Fidel Castro. They spoke about his attitude, the international reaction and the tweets literally mocking the Prime Minister. It is unfortunately because, whether we like it or not, the Prime Minister is the prime minister of all Canadians, and when the Prime Minister is made fun of, the whole country is being made fun of at the same time. The whole country bears the brunt of it. I took it personally.

However, it would not have taken much at all. All the Prime Minister had to do was acknowledge in his statement that the Castro regime was the regime of a dictator who oppressed his people all those years. We cannot get good results by doing bad things. That is what is most unfortunate. History is full of episodes where people wanted to do good, but unfortunately for their own good, not for the good of their fellow citizens.

I was also astounded, not by the comments made by my colleague from Mount Royal, but by the speech made by my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle, a speech that focused only on trade.

• (1305)

I think it is a shame that in their successive speeches, my Liberal colleagues keep making the same mistake that the Prime Minister made in his initial statement.

In his speech, the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle did not say a single word about the Castro regime. He only spoke about trade relations between Canada and Cuba. He did not say a single word acknowledging that Mr. Castro was a dictator. He did not say a single word in favour of the Cuban people, freedom of expression, and people who have the right to speak but could not do so. He did not say a single word about that.

In fact, the only negative thing he had to say during his speech was against the big bad Americans and their embargo on Cuba.

### *Business of Supply*

Sometimes we have to say things that make us uncomfortable. Unfortunately, instead of being straight, the members across the way prefer to sweep this under the rug and focus on other comments or allegations in order to avoid facing reality.

I do not want to reach too far back, but people have done this throughout the course of history. People prefer to ignore what is happening. People prefer to sweep things under the rug because it does not concern them and it happened outside the country. We will nevertheless continue to do business there because it pays. Entire nations have suffered. The Cuban people continue to suffer greatly even today.

Canada and Cuba have a significant trade relationship. In some way, it is normal for our country to want to help improve Cuba's situation. We want the Cuban people to be better off. We want to contribute to their well-being. However, that is not done by making a dictator wealthy. Things must be done right, and the first step is to recognize that.

The Liberals have been saying from the beginning that this is a partisan debate. The reactions from the left since the death of Mr. Castro are hard to believe. They only point to the good aspects of the Castro regime. They spoke about education and health, something I will come back to in a little while, but they mention no reports from left-leaning organizations.

I have here the January 2014 report by Human Rights Watch. If I remember correctly, Mr. Castro was still the dictator and president of Cuba in 2014. The report states:

[*English*]

Nevertheless, the Cuban government continues to repress individuals and groups who criticize the government or call for basic human rights. Officials employ a range of tactics to punish dissent and instill fear in the public, including beatings, public acts of shaming, termination of employment, and threats of long-term imprisonment. Short-term arbitrary arrests have increased dramatically in recent years and routinely prevent human rights defenders, independent journalists, and others from gathering or moving about freely.

[*Translation*]

The situation is clear. Human Rights Watch is not some right-wing or partisan organization, and yet even Human Rights Watch recognizes that Cuba is ruled by a dictatorship.

For the past week, I have been hearing the highest praise for the Castro regime's education system. Let us look back at some history. The first thing dictators do is something called indoctrination. What do dictators do to ensure that the people think like them and accept their decisions as dictators? They try to convince their subjects, from a very early age, that what they are doing is fair.

At a previous time in history, as my colleague has mentioned, this group was called the Hitler Youth. Young people are indoctrinated very early on, so dictators take control of the education system to ensure that they have regime supporters and propaganda agents going forward. That is what happened in Cuba. No one believes that everyone was educated with the simple goal of educating everyone. The dictatorship absolutely had to convince young people, or indoctrinate them, so they would believe that its way was the right way. That is what happened there.

*Business of Supply*

I would now like to talk about health care. Of course they wanted to train doctors, so that they could do many things. In any case, no one earns a salary. Fairness and balance did not exist in Cuba. One person decided where the balance was. When one person decides where the balance lies, that is a dictatorship. That is why we are asking the members to support the motion, and that is why Canadians need to know what really happened in Cuba. That is also why we must denounce the Prime Minister's comments.

• (1310)

[English]

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, no one on this side of the House is denying that there are serious human rights issues in Cuba. That is why our Prime Minister raised this in meetings. We can do that when we engage.

I want to ask my hon. friend, if he is so offended with what is going on in Cuba, why was it that his party in fact, under Mr. Mulroney, had very cordial relations, very warm relations with the Cuban regime, the Castro regime?

Jean-Paul Hubert, Canada's first representative to the Organization of American States, appointed by Mr. Mulroney, called for Cuba to be reinstated into the organization in 1990.

In 1985, Mr. Mulroney enacted an unprecedented piece of legislation called the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act. It was unprecedented because it made it illegal for firms operating in Canada to comply with any U.S. attempts to destabilize the Castro regime.

Again, this all came under a Conservative administration.

I want to ask my colleague what his thoughts are on this matter.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, what kind of orders were my colleagues given that they are refusing to admit that Fidel Castro was a dictator and that their Prime Minister made a mistake by praising him and calling him a remarkable leader?

When we say that someone is remarkable, it is because we want to hold them up as an example. However, Fidel Castro will never be an example for Cubans or Canadians.

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to ask my colleague a question because I was surprised that he criticized the member for Laurentides—Labelle for focusing too much on the economy and trade with Cuba and not saying enough about human rights and the dictatorial regime. I was surprised because his own government placed economic and trade interests far above human rights in Saudi Arabia.

On several occasions, I endeavoured to get the Conservative government to help Mr. Badawi, who is being held prisoner in Saudi Arabia. I was under the impression, rightly so it would seem, that prime minister Harper had priorities other than human rights and the authoritarian regime that imprisons any Saudi who dares speak out.

If human rights should be a priority in diplomatic relations, does my colleague not agree that the Conservative government should have talked about human rights before thinking about trade interests?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I have had frequent occasion to make speeches here, and I sincerely believe that the NDP misses us being in government, since it keeps asking us questions about that period. We no longer form the government.

If my colleague from the NDP is so concerned with human rights, why does he not support our motion today? Why does he not tell the government that Cuba has a problem with human rights? That is what we are talking about at the moment. Why does he not support this motion? That is the big question.

The NDP certainly wants to defend the great Castro philosophy that everyone should have an education and an equal salary. However, when it is applied, it is not egalitarian and it is not fair to anyone.

• (1315)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us imagine for a moment that we are November 16, 2016, at the university of Havana.

The room is full of students and professors, president Raúl Castro is in attendance, and the scene is broadcast on radio and television, reaching Cubans and other Latin Americans beyond. All are hanging on the words of our prime minister. What is he talking about? He is talking to them about universal rights, diversity as a source of enrichment, the emancipation of youth, and good governance.

I would like to give the reaction of a Cuban human rights activist, as quoted by the CBC. Her name is Miriam Leiva Viamonte, and her husband was imprisoned by Fidel Castro. I will cite her words, not in Spanish, but in English:

[English]

I think the young people who go to these events will always listen to what the guest has to say, and even if the government doesn't want them to be influenced by it, some of them will be, and when they leave there, they'll talk about it.

Then she added, "Canada has had an attitude that's been discreet, but not absent. I think it's important that they maintain this connection with the Cuban government".

[Translation]

I think that says it all, not just on our prime minister's leadership, but also on our policy of engagement with Cuba and other countries and on the reasons why we will vote against this motion. The Prime Minister has criticized the Cuban regime, but he carefully chose his words in doing so, to keep the lines of communication open and to open Cuban minds to the idea of change.



*Business of Supply*

If he had launched a personal attack on Raúl Castro right there at the university of Havana, some of us may have been happy for it, but it would not have been in the interests of the Cuban people and would have considerably undermined Canada's capacity to accompany Cuba down the road to reform. That is what diplomacy is. It is not about letting off steam for one's own selfish pleasure, no matter the consequences to others. I am talking about responsible diplomacy, not megaphone diplomacy, which was too common in Canada under the previous government and which the official opposition seems to miss so much.

[English]

We should not resign ourselves to simply shooting from the sidelines—the sterile diplomacy of bellicose belligerents.

[Translation]

Let us turn to the day that Fidel Castro died.

[English]

It is both respectful and appropriate to make positive remarks about someone's passing, regardless of whether that person is a family member, a friend, a foe, an acquaintance, or a public personality. Numerous other official statements from world leaders on the passing of former Cuban president Fidel Castro reflected this approach.

[Translation]

Of course, Fidel Castro was a dictator, but hardly anyone felt the need to say so on the day of his passing. Instead, our Prime Minister and others focused on the positive, such as the significant progress Cuba has made in the areas of education and healthcare.

As for the Cuban people's transition to freedom, democracy and the rule of law, I am sure that this is supported by all of us in the House, but I would argue that the best way to help this happen is to engage in the responsible diplomacy that I just described, not megaphone diplomacy.

The best way to help the Cuban people is not to encourage them to stir up old conflicts, but instead to encourage them to work together for a better future. After all, this is how other countries successfully transitioned to democracy. Look at countries from the same cultural era, such as Spain and Chile. They turned to the future and built their democracies. We must wish the Cuban people the same good fortune. Despite the very different opinions they may have of Fidel Castro, they must work together to provide a better society for their children.

As Canadians we must help them. We are in a position to do so, precisely because we never turned our back on Cuba.

● (1320)

[English]

Canada, along with Mexico, was one of the only two western hemispheric countries that did not sever its relations with Cuba following the revolution of 1959, a revolution that was both preceded and followed by significant human rights abuses.

In fact, the relationship between Canada and Cuba dates back to the 18th century, when Atlantic Canada began trading codfish and beer for Cuban rum and sugar. Canada has managed to build a strong

relationship with Cuba because our approach over the past half-century has been based on a policy of constructive engagement. Engagement is not agreement. If I say it twice maybe the opposition will understand. Indeed, engagement is not agreement. In fact, we needed to engage precisely because we profoundly disagreed with the kind of regime that ruled Cuba. For the sake of the Cuban people, Canada was there and must stay there with the right approach. We have consistently advocated against the U.S. economic embargo and policies that lead to the isolation and impoverishment of the people of Cuba.

Thanks to this consistent policy of engagement, Cuba trusts Canada. Cuba trusts our Prime Minister. This principled and pragmatic policy has delivered strong results for Canadians. It has allowed us to engage proactively with Cuba in all domains, including human rights issues. During all these years, we have encouraged Cuba to take measures to improve freedom of expression and of the press, to improve transparency and due process in its judicial system, and to implement international agreements on civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

Our policy of constructive engagement has allowed Canada to work with a wide range of Cuban partners and to support a number of local initiatives within Cuba that promote dialogue and diverse opinions.

[Translation]

Over the last few years, while Cuba has slowly and rather timidly, it is true, started down the path to reforms, Canadians have been there to assist them in all areas—and I do mean all. For example, it was Canada that provided the first optical fibre to the University of Havana for its Internet connections. The Internet develops pockets of freedom.

[English]

Canada is there to promote independent cultural spaces, human rights publications, university conferences by Internet, and diversity. As Cuba is entering a historic time of transition wherein it is revisiting and updating its economic and governance systems, it needs and sees Canada as a trusted partner and possible model in some areas of governance. For example, Cuba has a great interest in the cooperative models of banking and agrifood business in Quebec.

Canada has built a strong development cooperation program in Cuba, through which we support, among other things, sustainable economic development, greater food security, and women's rights.

Now, let us look at the economic ties. Through our policy of engagement, Cuba has become Canada's largest export market in Central America and in the Caribbean, worth an estimated \$495 million per year. Canada is the second-largest foreign investor in Cuba.

*Business of Supply*

As Cuba looks to grow its trade and investment with the world, Canada is working with it to identify opportunities to promote mutual prosperity. Canada has the knowledge and technology needed to meet the needs of Cubans in a wide range of sectors, particularly agrifood products; infrastructure; and sustainable technology, including renewable energy, and life sciences.

As Cuba continues to promote reform of its economy, and the Cuban middle-class expands, there is significant potential for growth in trade and investment.

Beyond trade, we have also built strong people-to-people ties. Just as Cuban Canadians have made an immeasurable economic and cultural contribution to Canada, Canadians make up more than 40% of foreign tourists to Cuba, who represent an important source of income and employment for the Cuban people.

One of the aspects of Cuba that Canadians admire is how passionately Cubans celebrate life and culture. The many Canadians who visit Cuba every year can attest to the spirit of the Cuban people and their love of music in particular.

• (1325)

Next year, during the 150th anniversary of Confederation, Canada will share our own culture with Cuba, as we are featured as the country of honour at the Havana Book Fair.

Our engagement has also positioned us to co-operate with Cuba on common challenges to safety and security. The Caribbean is a region where millions of Canadians travel every year, which has impacts on their safety and security, in the form of transnational organized crime and narcotics trafficking. It happens that Cuba has the lowest level of crime and violence in the Caribbean. During his recent visit, our Prime Minister took the opportunity to strengthen our co-operation with Cuba to address illicit trafficking of drugs—

**An hon. member:** Oh my goodness, for shame. So does North Korea. He is going to praise the crime policies of a totalitarian regime. That is absolutely disgraceful.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I want to remind the hon. members that there is a process here, and screaming across the floor is not the process. I do not want to name the member who was shouting, but I just want to remind him that this is a respectful hall.

The hon. minister.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, I was saying that during his recent visit, our Prime Minister took the opportunity to strengthen our co-operation with Cuba to address illicit trafficking of drugs in the region.

We cannot take our historical friendship with Cuba for granted. In the past year, countless leaders have been arriving in Havana, eager to court the Cuban government and to take advantage of trade and investment opportunities that may arise as Cuba moves its economy toward reform and toward greater private sector involvement.

Ongoing positive engagement by Canada not only protects our existing investments in Cuba, but also ensures that Canadian businesses and investors will be significant players in the emerging

Cuban economy. It also provides a positive model for Cuba from a long-standing and trusted partner.

Canada's governance model, including elements of transparency and accountability, are admired and respected by many Cubans as good practices and experiences. Indeed, Cuba has actively asked Canada to share our expertise and experience in this regard. It is important to note that Canada has supported these efforts, not in spite of the Government of Cuba but in open and transparent co-operation with its leader; not because we agree with them, but because that is the way to be there for the Cuban people.

Over the coming years, we must continue working to support Cuba in achieving the necessary reforms, which, hopefully, will make Cuba a prosperous democracy and a great partner for Canada. We must do it because, once again, through a policy of engagement and co-operation and frank dialogue, we became an influential and trusted voice that can push to move Cuba further in the direction of reform, both economic and political.

There is another crucial task that we almost fulfilled alone over the last decades, and that we will need to continue with more determination than ever during the coming years: to be a bridge between Cuba and the United States. The truth is that both the Cuban and American governments appreciated this role. At a time when the president-elect of the United States has indicated that his administration may shift away from the current policy of rapprochement with Cuba, the role of Canada as a respectful and dependable partner takes on even greater importance.

Our government will continue our policy of constructive and respectful engagement. When we disagree with Cuba's approach to domestic or international issues, we will advocate our position through frank and open discussion; when Cuba seeks to share its perspectives with us, we will listen with open minds; and when one of its leaders passes, we will send our condolences in a respectful way without seeking to cause affront to those who mourn his passing.

To conclude, our government has made human rights a priority and will champion respect for them, including in Cuba, where we will continue to press for democratic reform. It is because of this strong relationship with the Cuban people that our Prime Minister is in a good position to support democratic advancement going forward. We are committed to working with the Cuban people, as we have always done, and to support them as they build a more hopeful and democratic future in which every Cuban is free and the Cuban government recognizes the universality of all human rights.

• (1330)

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the minister's remarks. Many on both sides of the House have commented today on Canada's constructive engagement over the decades by previous Conservative and Liberal governments. The minister did forget to mention that in fact it was our government that enabled the re-establishment of communications between the United States and Cuba, which led to at least a temporary rapprochement.

*Business of Supply*

I think the minister, like so many of his Liberal colleagues, is drifting somewhat off the topic of the motion before us, which is to reject the over-the-top nostalgic statement of condolence issued by the Prime Minister last Saturday. It has made Canada the laughing-stock of the world.

While we know that the Liberals are engaged in an indecent pursuit of Security Council votes from countries both democratic and despotic, when he refers to Canada's "influential and trusted voice", I hope that he realizes today that that influential and trusted voice has been sadly bruised by the unbalanced remarks by the Prime Minister last Saturday.

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, I will agree with my colleague that the policy of engagement with Cuba had been done under Conservative and Liberal governments, and it was the right thing to do. It is much better than an embargo.

Isolation is rarely a solution to improve the situation of people in a country. Engagement and frank dialogue is the policy we must follow. I thank God that we have not used the tone that many of my Conservative colleagues have used in the House to describe the situation with Cuba, because that would endanger our ability to have a positive result in Cuba.

I would mention to my colleague that almost all world leaders have been very careful to insist on the positive aspects when Fidel Castro passed away. None of them, as far as I know, has taken this opportunity to mention the fact that he was a dictator. However, that being the case, we need to improve the human rights situation in Cuba. The only way to do so is to have diplomacy, the wise and firm diplomacy I just described, and not to shoot from the sidelines, like my Conservative colleagues would like us to do.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech.

I think we all know that there are serious human rights problems in Cuba.

That said, there is absolutely nothing in the Conservative motion before us to deal with and correct this situation. Worse yet, when the Conservatives were in power, they cut funding to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which is working on the ground to promote human rights, throughout the Americas, including Cuba, and is getting results.

They did that, but the Liberal government has not renewed its support for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Can we expect Canada to do so, and soon?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's view that today the official opposition wants to carry on a debate that is not warranted. We should all strive to help the Cuban people achieve reconciliation and work together to provide a better future for their children, rather than stir up old conflicts surrounding Fidel Castro. I completely agree with that.

As for the problem she just raised, I am well aware of it, Canada contributes 10% of the budget. There was a rather serious financial crisis a few months ago. It appears to have subsided, and Canada will be there to make sure that things go smoothly.

● (1335)

[*English*]

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his remarks. It is wonderful as a member of the government caucus to stand and listen to our minister and be proud of every word that he said and to be in agreement with them all.

Could the minister comment both on the previous relationship we have had for the last number of decades with the Cuban people and its government, and what it is going to look like in the next 20 or 30 years? Does Canada have a role to play in a future engagement with the Cuban people as Cuba continues to develop its democracy and its partnerships around the world?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to be able to predict what will happen, but all of us have hope. It is more than hope. The motion speaks only about hope. We have a duty to act because it is in our interest to see the Caribbean stabilized and to be democratic, but it is also a tribute about what we owe to our own Cuban community in Canada, which is so vibrant and helping Canada. We need to be there in Cuba. We have a strong capacity to help the country precisely because over decades we have had an approach of engagement and some diplomacy, not the megaphone diplomacy it would seem that some of us in the House would like to adopt that would do no good. We will see how step by step and as speedily as possible, Cuba will become a respectful democracy like Chile and Spain, and so many other countries that have been successful in reconciling themselves and focusing on the future, whatever the disagreements about the past.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we all agree that we are here to support the Cuban people, just not the dictatorship of Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, and the crime family that the Castros have become. We are talking about not supporting the Potemkin-style visits they organized for foreign leaders to show all the good stuff they are doing and to pretend the Cuban people are happy to be abused and terrorized by the dictators there.

The statement that the Prime Minister issued could have ended something like the Hugo Chávez statement: I hope the people of Cuba "can now build for themselves a better, brighter future based on the principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights." None of that is negative commentary. All of that is hopeful looking toward the future.

Why did the Prime Minister not include that type of terminology in the statement that he issued and why is it that the statement pretty much reads as a very positive obituary, saying all these wonderful things about Mr. Castro when we all know he was a brutal dictator who oppressed his people?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister went to Cuba to speak about rights, the necessity to move to moderate reforms and to give the support of Canada for these reforms to be sure that universal human rights would be respected in Cuba. It is what he did and it is what we will do. It is the approach we take.

*Business of Supply*

However, I understand what my colleague said at the beginning of his statement and the words he used may be a way for him to express his feelings, but it is not the way to help the people of Cuba to go ahead, to reconcile themselves, not to forget about the past, but to move toward the future instead of antagonizing them about the past. It is what we need to do now all together in choosing the best approach, which is sound diplomacy as is described in my speech.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear about promoting strategic engagement that reflects our values. Indeed, that is the history of the Conservative record when it comes to Cuba. What the member just did is the same thing the Prime Minister did in his statement, which is to feed Cuban propaganda. It is to say positive things about the mode of government that exists in Cuba. He praised the low crime rate of a country that kills innocent people. He praised an education system that does not permit freedom of thought. He praised the health care system that is well known to be replete with limitations in medications and all of those claims are based on data that comes out of the Cuban government.

I do not object to the government engaging with Cuba. I object to us being the useful idiots of the Cuban regime. Could the minister stand and clarify that the way Cuba governs itself, that the information he cited is simply not correct, that it is not based on real facts?

• (1340)

**Hon. Stéphane Dion:** Mr. Speaker, you can see why Canadians want to have a diplomacy that makes sense and that helps the world to progress instead of antagonizing, instead of belligerence, it is completely sterile for what we intend to do. Of course, there are huge problems in Cuba regarding human rights. Of course it was a dictatorship with Fidel Castro, we do not dispute that. Now the goal is to see how the reforms may lead Cuba toward democracy and where universal human rights will be respected. The fact that Canada engaged Cuba despite disagreement with the regime is the key way by which our Prime Minister, our government, and the whole of Canada will be able to be an asset for this endeavour in this journey toward freedom and democracy.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share my time today with the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

One can tell much about a regime by the direction the rafts are travelling. In the decades following Cuba's revolution, 20% of Cuba's population, over one million people, fled the country, often taking the small boats in an attempt to cross the Straits of Florida to reach the United States. Castro subjected those who remained to a brutal regime of repression, terror, and poverty.

Over the nearly 60 years of this revolutionary regime, Castro executed at least 5,600 Cubans by firing squad, murdered over 1,200 in extrajudicial killings, dispatched tens of thousands to forced labour camps, and exiled over 1.2 million. Fidel passed away apparently peacefully in his bed last Friday night, a fate far kinder than that of his many victims.

My purpose in this speech is not to criticize Cuba nor its long-suffering people, nor is it to call for sanctions or embargoes. Far from it. I believe that Canada can play a productive role in

facilitating freedom and human rights in Cuba, partly due to our history of relations with the island.

Some of our companies do business in Cuba. Some of our citizens vacation on Cuba's beaches. Canada retained diplomatic relations with Cuba throughout Castro's long reign, and a succession of our governments kept communication channels open. Under the previous Prime Minister, Canada even facilitated discussions between the United States and Cuba, discussions that led to a degree of rapprochement and re-establishment of relations between those two countries. However, offering goodwill and an outstretched hand does not require whitewashing a history of oppression.

It is generally unfair to criticize a son for the acts and attitudes of his father, but in his recent eulogy for Fidel Castro, the Prime Minister highlighted the close relations of himself and his family with the Castro family and had so invited comment. Friendship with the Castros was part of a pattern of admiration for dictatorship in the Trudeau family from Havana to Beijing. Lest we forget, Pierre Trudeau praised the genius of Mao in his book, *Two Innocents in Red China*, a glowing report of China in 1960, without mention of the tens of millions of Chinese starved or executed by Mao's regime during its so-called "great leap forward".

It was Pierre Trudeau who went on to establish this family friendship with Castro, among other brutal dictators of the left, such as Erich Honecker and Nicolae Ceausescu. In 2006, the Prime Minister's brother wrote a special for the *Toronto Star*, in which he said of Castro:

His intellect is one of the most broad and complete that can be found... Combined with a Herculean physique and extraordinary personal courage, this monumental intellect makes Fidel the giant that he is. He is something of a superman.

As recently as November 2013, the Prime Minister himself expressed in his own words, "There's a level of admiration I actually have for China. Their basic dictatorship is actually allowing them to turn their economy around on a dime."

Just this past May, the Prime Minister continued his disturbing affinity for dictatorial regimes by attending a Liberal Party fundraiser, of all things, also attended by a Chinese Communist Party official and claimed right here in this House last week that he was doing so to attract investment in Canada, the only evidence of which was a generous donation to his family foundation and the promise of a statue for his father.

Last Saturday morning the Prime Minister made the shameful public statement that is the subject of this motion. Now that he is Prime Minister, the member for Papineau does not speak merely as a private citizen, consoling personal friends, but as the Prime Minister of Canada, responsible for upholding our nation's principles and prestige on the international stage.

I would not begrudge him a private letter to the family of a personal friend, dubious as I consider that particular friendship to be, but I must object to him publicly praising a dictator on behalf of all Canadians. Diplomacy may require acknowledgement of the death of a former head of state, and such courtesies should be observed, but the Prime Minister must do so with an eye to history, to posterity, and to Canada's reputation, not just his family's friendships and his own personal feelings on the subject.

*Business of Supply*

Instead of a measured acknowledgement, keeping strictly within the bounds of protocol, the Prime Minister issued a now infamous eulogy which has been mocked around the world and has diminished Canada's prestige as a serious country with clear eyes on foreign affairs and clear commitments to human rights.

● (1345)

News of the eulogy spread quickly with *The New York Times*, CNN, *The Guardian*, and other international news sources reporting on the widespread scorn for these remarks.

In response to the opposition demanding an explanation and apology from the Prime Minister in question period earlier this week, the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied that other heads of state “chose to say something positive” about the late Fidel Castro because “the intention was not to revive old antagonisms” and that we should not “agonize” over the facts. Really?

It was as if the Minister of Foreign Affairs was saying to our side of the House, “You would bring up the murders, the torture, the repression, and the exiles. Why can't we just forget about all of these unpleasant things? We wouldn't want to hurt anyone's feelings by mentioning these things and the fact that they happened, would we?” Glossing over the atrocities of the past will not help the Cuban people build a brighter future.

As South Africa's truth and reconciliation program has demonstrated, acknowledging injustice is the first step for a nation to heal from oppression. I am deeply concerned for Canada when our foreign affairs establishment actually perceives dictators in such naive and hopeful terms. Indeed, it sends a dangerous signal of woolly-headed weakness when the Prime Minister publicly praises a murderous dictator and minimizes his bloody history by calling him merely a “controversial figure”.

When the Prime Minister elevates the trivial by putting his personal feelings above Canada's reputation, it shows others that we can be trifled with. It shows our allies that our leaders can be taken in by cults of personality and charismatic despots. It shows others that our leaders are swayed more by personal feelings than national principle or perceive the world through dangerously naive rose-coloured glasses. It shows those around the world who draw inspiration from Canada as a defender of human rights that such devotion can be set aside if those abusing human rights appeal to our leaders personally.

When the Prime Minister opened his statement referring to Cuba's longest-serving president without even acknowledging that Castro's Cuba never held a free multi-party election, employed a vicious security apparatus that suppressed dissent, and banned all opposition, it destroys the Prime Minister's credibility as an advocate for democracy at home and abroad. When the Prime Minister says of a man who executed thousands of his citizens that he was merely a “polarizing figure”, but praises him for his “deep and lasting impact on the Cuban people” and speaks of warm friendship with him, he shows which pole he gravitates toward.

The Prime Minister's fawning eulogy, his subsequent remarks justifying it, and the doubling down by the Minister of Foreign Affairs all minimize the suffering of Cuban exiles, those whose families and friends were tortured, murdered, sent to gulags, or

drowned while trying to flee. Brushing aside crimes, and just merely referring to concerns about human rights, goes beyond diplomatic courtesy into the realm of outright denial of reality.

The fact that the Prime Minister issued the eulogy while in Madagascar, lecturing la Francophonie about the importance of protecting human rights, of respecting racial, religious, and sexual minorities, and of upholding the rule of law, adds bitter overtones of hypocrisy to this embarrassment. How can the Prime Minister reconcile his friendship with a man who persecuted minorities, eschewed the rule of law, and stripped his subjects of human rights with his duty to uphold Canadian principles on the international stage?

On behalf of myself and Canadians like me who believe that human rights and devotion to the rule of law may not be abandoned for personal friendship, who believe that Canada's reputation is at stake whenever the Prime Minister speaks, and who believe that diplomatic courtesies do not demand denial of crimes against humanity, I urge the House to recognize the atrocities suffered by the Cuban people and reject the comments made by the Prime Minister on November 26, 2016, and, instead, remember the victims.

● (1350)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am quite disappointed in the members of the official opposition. There is no way they could justify or explain to me how this motion is in the best interests of the people of Cuba.

The Conservatives have chosen a rather peculiar issue on which to actually spend a day of debate. My question for the member is very specific. It is regarding the former prime minister, Stephen Harper, when he issued a statement back on January 22, 2015, on the passing of a king. The statement said:

On behalf of all Canadians, Laureen and I offer our sincere condolences to the family of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and the people of Saudi Arabia.

King Abdullah was recognized as a strong proponent of peace in the Middle East. He also undertook a range of important economic, social, education, health, and infrastructure initiatives in his country.

I had the pleasure of meeting King Abdullah in Toronto when Canada hosted the G-20 and found him to be passionate about his country, development and the global economy.

We join the people of Saudi Arabia in mourning his passing.

No Liberals stood up criticizing the prime minister at the time, and the king was a dictator. It seems to be a double standard. Why do the Conservatives not care about the people of Cuba?

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member who perhaps would have made a great member of Castro's team for his ability to stand up in the House and always be able to defend his own government, no matter what the government has said.

The member for Winnipeg North asked what the motion does to help the Cuban people. The answer to that question is that, by not whitewashing over the past, not ignoring the facts, and not ignoring the history, we are going to help the Cuban people overcome a legacy of repression.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I did not hear many potential solutions for improving Cuba's political system. It seems that the only proposal, the only approach considered by the Conservatives on files related to international relations, is isolation. They want to try to isolate that country as much as possible. There must be more constructive solutions than simply ganging up on those countries, shutting them out, and sending them off to a corner, thinking that this will improve their situation and that human rights will improve by adopting a policy of isolation.

Does my colleague think that is really the correct attitude and the best approach to helping those countries, to helping other people obtain more rights and respect from their leaders?

[English]

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, time does not allow me to read my speech all over again, because I believe my hon. friend missed most of it.

I did mention in my speech that we are not debating Canada's decades-long history of relations with Cuba. In fact we support it, and I very much support these past policies.

We are not talking about many of the broader issues that were the subject of his question. We are talking about the statement that the Prime Minister made. That statement is a national embarrassment and ought to be retracted. Of course we support democracy and freedom for the Cuban people, and support delivering them from the grinding poverty that is the reality for most Cuban citizens. We absolutely believe in engagement with Cuba. We wish the best for the Cuban people.

The Prime Minister's statement made no reference to any of the victims of that regime, and it provided no solutions either. The subject of the motion is the Prime Minister's statement and the shame it brought on Canada.

• (1355)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I want to remind hon. members in the House that we are proceeding with debate, and if they are having a discussion, it is nice to see people talk among themselves, but there are people trying to make a point, and we owe them the respect to listen to what they have to say.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka. I want to remind the hon. member that he has five minutes, and then we will continue after, for another five minutes, once the debate resumes.

**Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure you will make sure that I stay within the bounds of the decorum of this place and the rules of this place.

May I say that it is always good to be in the House at the same time as a fellow northern Ontarian like you? I know that we try to represent the common values of northern Ontarians in this place, and outside it. That is why I am standing here today. Cuba may seem far away for many of my constituents, although some of them do frequent it on occasion, in the winter months; but of course,

Canadian principles are not expendable just because we get a nice, cheap vacation. I know my constituents feel that way, and I am sure many Canadians across the country feel that way.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge—I guess I have already made that clear.

What I want to do in the first couple of minutes is just talk a bit about the iron-fisted rule of Fidel Castro over the last nearly half-century.

This was not an accident. This was the actual cultivation of a repressive communist dictatorship that punished all forms of dissent. It did not matter whether people were marginalized because of their sexual orientation or because of their political beliefs or because of their religious beliefs; Fidel Castro was an equal opportunity, dictatorial, authoritarian thug. That is the person who received the eulogy of the Prime Minister.

Thousands of Cubans have been incarcerated in deplorable prisons, thousands more were sent to Gulag-inspired labour camps, and countless others have suffered from harassment and intimidation at the hands of Mr. Castro and his cronies.

This is not just something that happened at the beginning of the revolution or at the end of the revolution. This was the course of conduct over decades. He denied entire generations of Cubans basic political freedoms. He left thousands upon thousands to live in poverty, while he lived like an emperor. That is the reality of life in Cuba.

Let us remember that the revolutionary forces took over the island on January 1, 1959. Fidel, his brother Raúl, who was there at the conception, and Che Guevara, himself, as soon as the revolution took hold, unleashed a wave of terror, including executions by firing squad, designed to reduce the population into submission.

I believe my time is up. I will be happy to resume debate after question period.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka will have seven minutes remaining when we come back from question period.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** News flash: Mr. Speaker, a parliamentary committee has found as fact that first past the post is inappropriate in any democracy with more than two parties contesting elections. That is actually not a news flash. That was the finding of the first parliamentary committee in 1921.

I admit there has been something of an interregnum between 1921 and now, and in that time there have been many other studies done across Canada, provincial studies, citizens assemblies, and a study by the law commission. No group of Canadians that has studied the first past the post voting system has ever concluded we should keep it. It is flawed. It distorts voters' intent.

Our parliamentary committee has found that the Prime Minister is right. The election in 2015 should be the last election held under first past the post.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

#### WHITNEY PIER YOUTH CLUB

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on Monday November 21st, the Whitney Pier Youth Club reopened its doors following \$800,000 in renovations.

Whitney Pier is a strong, proud, and resilient community in my riding. It is descendants of people who came from all over the world to work in the former steel plant.

The club has an expanded kitchen, recording studio, computer lab, and many activities available for the youth in the surrounding community. The club is home to more than 100 children each day. It has a total membership of 230. This is a tremendous asset to the community and has been serving the youth since 1989.

I rise today to recognize the Whitney Pier Youth Club, devoted club director Chester Borden, and the surrounding community for their commitment and determination to make this new club a reality.

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#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment listed 84 municipalities and reservations that are under drinking water advisories or boil water orders.

It is unacceptable that in 2016, many families in Saskatchewan and across Canada do not have reliable access to clean drinking water. Yet, despite this deplorable situation, the government spends millions of dollars in pursuit of an abstract climate change policy that has no foundation in real science.

The people of Saskatchewan and all Canadians need and deserve an environmental policy that focuses on real problems, such as providing access to clean drinking water. Instead, Canadians are being threatened with a tax on carbon dioxide. This carbon dioxide tax will kill jobs, but more importantly, it will drive up the cost of living for everyone in Canada, especially middle class and low-income families, the people who can least afford it.

The people of Saskatchewan want the Liberal government to end its war on Canadian oil, gas, and coal and instead focus on delivering clean air and clean water.

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#### NEWMARKET—AURORA SPORTS HALLS OF FAME

**Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, sports play an important role in all communities across Canada. My riding of Newmarket—Aurora is no exception. We are blessed to have not one but two sports halls of fame in my community.

Recently, the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame moved into its new location at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Centre and inducted four

#### Statements by Members

new members: Olympian Karen Stemmler, NHLers Michael Murphy and Mike Kitchen, and figure skating coach Sheldon W. Galbraith.

The Newmarket Sports Hall of Fame, located at the Magna Centre, also recently inducted three new members: Stingrays swim coach Alan Swanston, international handball champion Harold McClean, and Newmarket's 1950s Gorman Smoke Rings hockey team.

I was proud to attend the induction ceremony and to celebrate the rich history of sports excellence in our riding.

I would like to thank the volunteers at both halls of fame and thank them for helping make our community the great place it is.

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#### WORLD AIDS DAY

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on World AIDS Day we remember the loved ones we have lost; we recognize the victories won through the dedicated efforts of patients, caregivers, advocates, and researchers; and we recommit to building a world where no one has to know the isolation, stigmatization, and pain brought by HIV and AIDS.

While the Prime Minister has rightly asserted that Canada should be a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS on the global stage, domestically his government has been denying assistance to many HIV/AIDS organizations in Canada, many who have received support for decades. If this is not reversed, there will be serious gaps in critical services in communities across our nation.

Today, New Democrats call on the government to immediately reverse these funding cuts and expand the federal initiative on HIV/AIDS.

Now more than ever, we must provide support and compassion to every Canadian living with these conditions. Working together, we can reduce new infections, increase access to care, improve health outcomes, and ultimately, forge a future without HIV/AIDS.

\* \* \*

• (1405)

#### WORLD AIDS DAY

**Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too rise today on World AIDS Day to salute the efforts of the many organizations working to rid the world of HIV/AIDS, and to bring attention to the often overlooked issue of TB-HIV co-infection.

Tuberculosis is the number one killer of people with HIV. In fact, for people living with HIV, contracting TB doubles their risk of dying. Last year alone, TB took the lives of 400,000 people living with HIV; that is 35% of all AIDS-related deaths.

*Statements by Members*

Therefore, as we work toward creating a world free of HIV/AIDS, let us ensure we also work to prevent further loss of life. That means taking action on tuberculosis and ensuring we do better for people living with HIV. By supporting initiatives that improve prevention and treatment of TB, we can create the conditions necessary for people living with HIV to survive and thrive.

\* \* \*

**BO COOPER**

**Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour a local hero, Bo Cooper, a firefighter in my riding of Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. A little over three weeks ago, Bo lost his life to leukemia.

Bo Cooper, who became known as Unbreakable Bo, battled hard against this disease since 2011. Twice Bo went into remission, and twice the cancer came back, but that did not stop him from fighting this disease, and inspiring people across the country.

Bo was only 27 when he passed, but despite being young, he touched the lives of so many. As a local firefighter in Fort McMurray, and a former mixed martial arts fighter, Bo was never one to back down from a challenge.

The people of Fort McMurray rallied around Bo, helping to raise money for his treatments. Bo's passing is deeply felt in our community, but he leaves behind an inspiring message: Never give up and never back down.

Bo will be sorely missed.

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**BC CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HIV/AIDS**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS opened in 1992, one British Columbian a day was dying from AIDS. Today, the centre for excellence, headed by Dr. Julio Montaner, is at the forefront of the pandemic, focused on health and social determinants, prevention, and new antiretroviral treatments. It is lauded by the World Health Organization for its major advances in antiretroviral therapy, adopted by many nations globally.

The B.C. government made “treatment as prevention” universal a few years ago, and coupled with social programs like harm reduction and Insite, B.C. now has the lowest number of new HIV cases in North America. Yet HIV/AIDS continues to rise alarmingly in other parts of Canada. Globally, there are still 2 million new cases a year.

I am proud my new government embraces evidence-based HIV/AIDS health policies focused on most-at-risk populations. I am proud we have committed to the WHO 90-90-90 target here and internationally.

Today, my friend Dr. Julio Montaner is on the Hill—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst.

[*Translation*]

**ISLAND FISHERMEN COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION**

**Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Island Fishermen Cooperative Association in my riding of Acadie—Bathurst was awarded the 2016 Business of the Year award by the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick.

The business was founded in 1943 by a coalition of co-operatives that wanted to build a cold storage facility in Lamèque in order to process cod.

Today the co-operative plays a critical role in the economy of the Acadian peninsula. It employs over 450 people and has one of the largest northern shrimp processing plants in Atlantic Canada. The plant also processes snow crab, rock crab, herring roe, and lobster, and it develops innovative products to identify new markets.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the management and employees of this business, which is a source of pride for the riding of Acadie—Bathurst.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**PACIFIC AUTISM FAMILY NETWORK**

**Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise and congratulate the Pacific Autism Family Network that has just opened its new family hub in my riding of Richmond Centre.

With family-friendly spaces created specifically to foster a calm and collaborative environment, the family hub will provide a network of support for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families. This organization has been working extremely hard to raise the necessary funds to open the centre, which will serve families across B.C. I was so pleased to join in recently at its ribbon-cutting celebration. I look forward to seeing the success of this facility in our community.

I congratulate all involved.

\* \* \*

●(1410)

**NORAD SANTA TRACKER**

**Mr. Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House knows that Canada's north is the home of Santa Claus, and that the North American Aerospace Defense Command was created to track his whereabouts on Christmas Eve.

I grew up in Goose Bay, Labrador, which is located in Canada's north, and is the home of an air force base that is part of NORAD. Because of this and because of my long-standing, long distance but nonetheless heartfelt relationship with Mr. Claus, I want to advise my colleagues that NORAD has begun tracking Santa's sleigh.



*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

I want to encourage all boys and girls in the House, in my riding of St. John's South—Mount Pearl, and all across the country to visit the online Santa tracker at [www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org) to track his journey or download the app to follow him in real time.

Happy holidays, everyone.

\* \* \*

[English]

**WORLD AIDS DAY**

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks World AIDS Day, a day dedicated to show support for individuals living with and affected by HIV, and to remember those who have lost their lives to HIV and AIDS.

In Canada, one in five people living with HIV is unaware of his or her infection. Many Canadians who have never been tested or may not consider themselves at risk could benefit from a test.

Earlier today, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Justice, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, National Chief Perry Bellegarde, and I received a rapid HIV test. Within minutes, we were able to know our HIV status. Knowing our HIV status is a critical first step in accessing life-saving treatment and care, if needed.

Let us lead the conversation with our fellow Canadians on the importance of getting tested for HIV, knowing our status, and ending the stigma, so we can all make Canada and the world HIV and AIDS free.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal plan to replace Canada's CF-18 fighter jets is an incoherent mess.

The Liberals say there is a capability gap which requires urgent action, but their plan is anything but urgent. They announce that next year they will enter into discussions with Boeing to buy 18 Super Hornets, but they have no idea what the price tag is or when new planes can be delivered.

If the need is so urgent that we must sole-source an interim fleet, why can that not happen immediately? Procurement rules are clear that non-competitive tenders are only allowed in actual or imminent life-threatening situations. If that is what the government truly thinks, then why is it delaying any decision on replacing our CF-18s for years to come?

The answer of course is that is politics, pure and simple. The Prime Minister made a contradictory promise based on his own whims rather than the advice of defence experts. Sadly, all Canadians will soon pay for the Prime Minister's mistakes, his lack of experience, and his arrogance.

**GLOBAL SKILLS STRATEGY**

**Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when immigration and innovation align, it makes for one great announcement.

Yesterday I welcomed the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to my riding. The two ministers announced our government's global skills strategy at one of the many great companies, Therapure Biopharma, a fast-growing biopharmaceutical company.

To be implemented in 2017, the global skills strategy will establish a two-week standard for processing visas and work permits for companies in Canada, create a dedicated service channel for companies looking to make large job-creating investments, and will also eliminate the work permit requirement for very short-term work.

I would like to commend the ministers for their work on this project. I look forward to working with them to implement our global skills strategy.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after six months of consulting and listening to people, careful consideration and a lot of hard work, the Special Committee on Electoral Reform finally landed on proportional representation.

Nobody thought it was possible, but we did it. All of the opposition parties agreed on where to go and how to get there. This is a great victory for everyone who believes that voting is important and that this Parliament should reflect the will of the people. People want their votes and their voices to count in this Parliament. That is what we are offering them, and it is what 89% of the experts and individuals told us during town halls.

The government seems to be taking a step back from this, but I hope the Liberals will take the committee's recommendations seriously. We are asking them to come up with an action plan. They can still keep their promise. We are trying to help them along. It is time to change our electoral system and ensure that every vote counts.

\* \* \*

●(1415)

[English]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what took place in the House the other night made me sick. Bill S-217 aimed to toughen our bail laws after the tragic murder of RCMP Constable David Wynn. The Liberal government will not support this common-sense change.

### Oral Questions

The killer in this case had hundreds of charges against him, dozens of convictions, several jail terms, routinely did not show up for court, and he still had 29 outstanding charges against him, including weapons and drug bans, at the time he killed Constable Wynn. Had the judge known about his history, he would have not been on the streets.

My blood boils. Without improving the system, learning from our mistakes, we are destined to repeat history. I have no hesitation in saying that the next time this tragedy happens, the Liberal government will have blood on its hands.

\* \* \*

#### CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the past few weeks have been difficult and stark reminders for all of us of the sacrifices members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families make on our collective behalf. It cannot be understated how grateful we are in this place to each and every one them.

[Translation]

The decision to wear the uniform is one that our soldiers make with pride knowing the risks both at home and abroad. Each and every person who served our country honourably will forever be remembered as a Canadian hero.

[English]

Our Canadian heroes are not the only ones who serve of course. Often it is said that their families serve along with them. The pride we feel for our serving family member is immense. From one family member to another, our heart goes out to the families, friends, and colleagues grieving at this time.

I ask my parliamentary family to join me in honouring our fallen heroes.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

#### DEMOCRATIC REFORM

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the report of the multi-party committee on democratic reform is in, and the recommendation is clear: If the Prime Minister wants to change the rules of democracy, then Canadians get to have a say in a referendum. This is a huge victory for democracy and a huge victory for Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister actually respect the recommendations in this report, and commit to holding a referendum if he wants to change the way we vote?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of the special committee for their time and effort in studying this.

We have received the report. I am going to review it carefully and I urge every member of the House to do the same. I know this was a challenging process, and the report shows just how challenging

electoral reform can be, because the only consensus that the committee found was that there is no consensus on electoral reform. In the coming days, we will be taking specific actions to continue this conversation with Canadians.

[Translation]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the multi-party committee on electoral reform presented its report, and its recommendation is clear: if the Prime Minister wants to change the rules of democracy, Canadians must have their say in a referendum. This is a major victory for democracy.

Will the Prime Minister heed the committee's recommendation and commit to holding a referendum if he plans to change the voting system?

[English]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we have received the report, and we encourage all members of the House to do the same. My first impressions are that there are some good ideas in there. For example, the only way that we can engage Canadians on their preference for an alternative to first past the post is through a values-based conversation. But on the main question and the hard choices that we asked the committee to make, the members of the committee took a pass. The NDP critic said, choose your own adventure.

I thank the committee members for their time, and we will continue this conversation—

• (1420)

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

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is unbelievable. The multi-party committee spoke and it was clear, and Canadians have also spoken, that a referendum needs to be held. The only thing that we are hearing from the other side is that the Prime Minister thinks he is smarter than Canadians and that only he can decide how we vote and what our vote means. That is an insult to every Canadian in this country. If he wants to change the way we vote, he has to have a referendum.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** To the contrary, Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister asked that we bring together a special committee to study the options available to us and to recommend a specific system as an alternative to first past the post. We asked the committee to help answer very difficult questions for us. It did not do that. We now have to make those hard changes, and I am looking forward to continuing this conversation with Canadians.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the insults just keep coming from the other side of the House. Every opposition party worked together, worked hard, and came to a consensus.

The problem here is that the Prime Minister does not want to listen to Canadians and he does not want to listen to the other parties, just like he will not have a referendum because he thinks that Canadians are not smart enough, that they are not as smart as he is to pick the kind of system that we are to rely on. The Prime Minister is wrong. Canadians are smart enough to cast a vote.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are smart, reasonable people and we are doing this for them.

The committee did not offer a specific alternative to first past the post. Instead, it offered us the Gallagher index. So the hon. member wants us to have a referendum on the following: Would Canadians like to take the square root of the sum of the squares of the difference between the percentage of the seats for each party and the percentage of the votes passed?

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, World AIDS Day is when we show our support for those living with HIV and AIDS. But the Prime Minister is planning to cut funding to many community-based organizations, including the Canadian AIDS Society and the All Nations Hope Network, the only aboriginal AIDS network in Saskatchewan. It is on the front lines fighting against HIV/AIDS, and it may be forced to close its doors.

Instead of just raising flags on World AIDS Day, will the Prime Minister commit to stable, long-term funding for these important organizations?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is deeply committed to addressing HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C in Canada, with community-based organizations being central to this. The funding we provide through the community action fund remains steady at \$26.4 million annually. While 124 organizations were successful in the application process, some were not, which is why the Minister of Health has asked the Public Health Agency to assist these impacted organizations by working with them to extend transitional funding for another year.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after six months of hard work, the electoral reform committee is proposing a proportional system. This is a great victory for all Canadians who are fed up with our outdated and unfair system.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister promised to put an end to the current system.

Can we count on the Liberal government to act on the committee's recommendations to implement a proportional system?

[*English*]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his passion and the committee for the time it spent studying alternatives to first past the post.

When we made the commitment to introduce a new option, we did so based on the understanding that a committee would come together and recommend alternatives to first past the post, that it would help us answer the difficult questions. Instead, what members across the

aisle and the NDP critic have suggested is that we choose our own adventure. If we were going to choose our own adventure, why did we put together a committee to study electoral reform?

• (1425)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if it looks like, if it smells like, it should be.

[*Translation*]

What part of “proportional” does the minister not understand? The minister responsible for democratic reform launched an online consultation that included questions like, “Do you like to take risks, or better the devil you know?”

Does this not undermine the colossal consultation work the committee has done over the past six months? Is the government going to listen to the recommendations of the committee and to the hopes—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

[*English*]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the committee for its hard work. We will be reviewing the committee's report and I urge all members to do the same.

Complementary to the work of the committee, to the outreach that my parliamentary secretary and I have done, we committed to introducing another channel to hear from Canadians. This new digital initiative, which the member opposite has not yet even seen, so I am not sure what he is referring to in his question, will include an invitation to every Canadian. Canadians can expect their invitations in the mail this Monday.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is another channel. It sounds like they are trying to change the channel.

What a day. I would like to start by thanking all the members of the committee for their incredible work. We managed to do something that has never been done before. Skeptics said that it would all fall apart, that there was simply no way forward to finding agreement among all of these parties, and yet Canadians defied the cynics and told us, in overwhelming numbers, that they wanted a proportional voting system. That is a good day for Canada.

Can the minister tell us when the government will announce a clear plan and timetable to implement all of the committee's recommendations?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the NDP critic for his work on the committee and his continued commitment to strengthening our democratic institutions.

*Oral Questions*

I have to admit that I am a little disappointed, because what we had hoped the committee would provide us with was a specific alternative system to first past the post. Instead, it provided us with the Gallagher index. While it did not complete the hard work we had expected it to, this is consistent with what we heard from Canadians. We will continue—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. We are taking up time from question period.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I appreciate the feedback, but the committee worked together. The committee worked across party lines. The committee reflected back what it heard from Canadians. That may be a bit of a radical notion for some of my Liberal colleagues, but that was the work of the committee, and the work of the minister is to fulfill the promise of the Prime Minister when he stood in front of Canadians on multiple occasions and said that 2015 was going to be the last election under first past the post.

The minister's job is to work with the rest of us and work with Canadians to achieve that goal, rather than throwing on skepticism, rather than heaping on false notions of broad support. We wonder where the Liberals' broad support was when they declared war and announced pipeline recommendations. Let us get the job done for Canadians.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has a point. There were some good recommendations in the report. For example, the best way to have a conversation with Canadians about their electoral system is through a values-based approach.

To that end, we will be continuing this conversation with Canadians through a digital initiative. Members of the House are expected to allow their constituents to know that it is happening and ensure that their voices are heard. We will be introducing recommendations to the House based on all the feedback we receive.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**JUSTICE**

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, another subject is very important. Some provinces are having difficulty bringing criminals to justice. Canadians are watching the Minister of Justice and wondering what she can do to improve the system. Some criminal trials may not go ahead.

What will the minister do to ensure that justice is served in Canada?

• (1430)

[*English*]

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly recognize that we are working in a concerted manner, in concert with the provinces and territories because we share jurisdiction over the criminal justice system with them, to ensure that we can improve the efficiencies and the effectiveness of the justice system, while recognizing that there are court delays. We are working in a coordinated manner to ensure

that we address the many realities of what leads to court delays, and I look forward to continuing this work.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when people commit crimes, they do so at the expense of others—the victims.

Today, victims are looking to the current Government of Canada to see how their rights will be defended and how criminals will be brought before the courts so justice can be served.

What will the minister do?

[*English*]

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been tasked by the Prime Minister to do a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system. I am committed to doing that in partnership with the provinces and territories, recognizing the need for public safety, recognizing the need to support victims of crime, recognizing the need to ensure that we are compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and ensuring that we look at all sources for innovative solutions to improve the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, including looking at the interim report that was just released by the Senate committee.

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**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on November 3, the Minister of Democratic Institutions told *The Huffington Post* that she wanted the Special Committee on Electoral Reform to “help us understand and answer this question. When we come up with a reform, how do we figure out if it has that legitimacy, that it has that broad support? Is it through a referendum? Or is there another way?”

The answer for the minister from the committee is this: it is a referendum. There is no other way.

Therefore, will the minister commit to not change the way Canadians vote unless she first gets their consent in a referendum?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his work on the special committee and his commitment to a healthier democracy.

However, what he has recommended as part of the committee's report is a referendum on an incomprehensible formula. In the dissenting reports that the NDP and the Green Party have provided, they have contradicted and undermined a referendum.

I thank the committee for its work. We will continue this conversation with Canadians before introducing legislation in this House.

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the incomprehensibility of that response.

*Oral Questions*

A month ago, the minister also said, “if the committee comes back—and this is how much respect I have for this committee’s work—if the committee comes back and says a referendum is the only way to legitimize this process, then I have to take that very seriously.” The minister did in fact say in this majority report, from which only the Liberals dissented, that a referendum is the only way to legitimize changing the voting system.

Therefore, will the minister commit to not change the system unless she has the consent of the Canadian people in a—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Democratic Institutions.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to remind the member opposite that the committee did not offer a specific alternative to first past the post, that the NDP and the Green Party, in their dissenting reports, undermined and contradicted their position on a referendum.

Therefore, we will continue this conversation with Canadians before arriving at a final outcome.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the best way to have a conversation with Canadians is to hold a referendum. The best way to determine what Canadians think of the electoral system is to hold a referendum. The best way to take politicians out of the equation and to give the power to Canadians is to hold a referendum.

When will the government see reason? When will the government agree with the Minister of Foreign Affairs who said, not so long ago, that they had to hold a referendum? The best way to know what people want is to hold a referendum. The government must hold a referendum and it will find out.

[*English*]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member. He too served quite a bit of time on the committee and contributed to the final report.

The final report, while it does not outline a specific alternative to first past the post, does raise some good points: that we need to ensure that those Canadians who belong to marginalized communities are better heard and reflected in our elections; that the conversation about electoral reform has to be a value-based one.

To that end, we will be reaching out to Canadians through a new digital initiative starting next week.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians believe that there should be no changes to the way they vote without a referendum first, and an Angus Reid poll showed that 75% of Canadians feel this way. Now the special committee has agreed that a referendum is required. What has been the Liberal government’s response? Some vague notion of citizen engagement and some postcard about values.

There is no other form of citizenship engagement that is a replacement for a referendum, so will the Liberals finally acknowledge that they cannot change Canadians’ voting system without giving them a direct say in a referendum?

● (1435)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out again that there was no specific system advocated for on behalf of the committee. The only thing there was consensus on in that regard was that there was no consensus on a specific system to first past the post.

That said, we take this seriously. We are not done hearing from Canadians. We will be reaching out to them through an invitation they will receive in their mailboxes as soon as next week, and we are looking forward to hearing from as many voices as possible before making introductory legislation in this House.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on World AIDS Day, it is unfortunate to note that the Public Health Agency of Canada has cut funding to dozens of HIV/AIDS organizations, many of which have received support for decades.

If the Liberal government does not reverse these cuts, there will be serious gaps in critical services for communities across Canada. This means cuts to services for first nations and Inuit, inmates in corrections, and vulnerable Canadians in rural and urban Canada.

In 2003, Liberals pledged to increase HIV/AIDS support. Will this Liberal minister follow through and invest these critical funds?

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, addressing HIV and AIDS in Canada is a significant priority for our government. I was pleased to meet with the Canadian AIDS Society today. This year, our government is investing almost \$76 million across the country to tackle HIV and other related infections in Canada.

In terms of the community action fund, we remain steady at \$26.4 million, and we have asked our department to assist impacted organizations by working with them to extend transitional funding for another year.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister announced a 20% increase in Canada’s contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, we learned that organizations here in Canada are going to have their funding cut. Some of them will lose up to 70% of their funding, which will jeopardize their very existence.

How can the government justify increasing international funding while cutting funding for Canadian organizations? Can the Liberals hold off on this new process and maintain the status quo?

[*English*]

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, our government is deeply committed to addressing HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C in Canada, with community-based organizations being central to this.

*Oral Questions*

The funding we provide through the Canada action fund remains steady at \$26.4 million annually. While 124 organizations were successful in the application process, some were not, which is why the Minister of Health has asked the Public Health Agency of Canada to assist these impacted organizations by working with them to extend transitional funding for another year.

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**ETHICS**

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know that on November 16, stock trading on the TSX was halted for Canopy Growth after its stock doubled for no apparent reason. There are serious allegations that insider information was used to influence stock trades.

Can the Minister of Justice confirm that an investigation has been launched into a possible leak and insider trading? Yes or no.

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make it very clear that neither I nor my ministerial colleagues have seen this report. This was confirmed by the chair of the task force yesterday. The report was not available.

The member should know that capital markets are strictly regulated, and any investigation into this matter in terms of irregularities is the responsibility of the Ontario Securities Commission.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, former Liberal Party CFO and big marijuana kingpin Chuck Rifici and the justice minister would have us believe that there is nothing here to see. They claim that the pot surge is because of the American election a week earlier, but Canadian companies cannot ship pot across the border, and guess what? No American pot companies saw their stock surge like the Liberal-connected companies here in Canada.

Will the Prime Minister and minister tell us if an investigation has been launched into this potential leak?

• (1440)

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, any irregularities in the market, the member should know, are monitored and regulated by the Ontario Securities Commission.

I want to reiterate once again that I have not seen this report. There is no evidence that this report has been leaked. My ministerial colleagues and every member in the House and the public will see the report at the same time I do, in the middle of December.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, \$1,500 for appetizers and access to ministers and a \$1-million donation from a wealthy Chinese businessman suggest that the Liberal government's friends will now be entitled to kickbacks.

The work of the marijuana task force constitutes privileged information that could influence the markets. Can the Minister of Justice assure the House that an official investigation has been launched into the possible information leak?

*[English]*

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will get up again and address this somewhat absurd line of questioning. There is no evidence that this report has been leaked. I, to be clear, have not seen the report, nor has anyone. I will see the report once it is translated, along with every member in the House, in order to have a discussion, in order to move forward with our government's commitment to legalize and strictly regulate and restrict access to marijuana.

I value the work the task force has undertaken and the commitment the task force members have made to providing recommendations so we can proceed in a manner that is consistent on this—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear that when someone wants something from the Liberal government, all one has to do is pay the entry fee to one of its consultations. Its friends at Canada 2020 and Bluesky Strategy Group know it. Their friends at Apotex know it, Chinese billionaire bankers know it, and their pot friends know it too. Everyone can see it. The Liberals are only fooling themselves. When will the Prime Minister finally do the right thing and put an end to his cash for access fundraisers?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how many times I need to rise in the House to remind the member that in Canada we have some of the strictest rules when it comes to fundraising. The member knows very well that only Canadians can donate to Canadian political parties. Even the Chief Electoral Officer has stated that the rules are some of the strictest in the world.

The member needs to listen to the answer and get real and do the work Canadians expect us to do to respond to the very real challenges—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Essex.

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**HEALTH**

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, while the minister continues to deny that CETA will increase prescription drug costs for Canadians, it is clear that she has something to hide. Last year the parliamentary budget officer wrote to at least four federal departments trying to track down the figures. We know that the information exists, because Health Canada handed over its data.

Why is the minister hiding the facts from Canadians? When will she reveal just how much CETA will increase the cost of medicines, and for once, will she answer a direct question?

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is already working to include the affordability of and access to prescription drugs. We joined provinces and territories as a member of the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, which negotiates lower drug prices on behalf of public drug plans. To date, the pCPA has completed more than 95 brand drug negotiations and has achieved price regulations on 18 generic drugs, resulting in annual savings of more than \$712 million. In the coming months, the Minister of Health will continue to work with provincial and territorial counterparts to identify—

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

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**SOFTWOOD LUMBER**

**Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, again yesterday, I asked the government a very simple question that seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

The softwood lumber industry is on the brink of another major crisis. The Minister of International Trade is congratulating her government, but more and more people are calling for a loan guarantee to support the industry. Thousands of jobs are at stake here, and an important piece of the puzzle, a plan B, is missing.

Can the minister assure workers right now that the government has a plan B ready?

• (1445)

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber agreement expired under the previous government.

We are working closely with producers, workers, and the provinces and territories, and we will continue to work with them. Canada is prepared for any eventuality, and our government will vigorously defend the interests of Canadian workers and producers. We do not want to reach just any old deal. We want a good deal for Canada.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**TRANSPORT**

**Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government recently announced the oceans protection plan. The House should know that investing in marine safety not only benefits coastal communities but watershed communities, like my riding of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Could the minister tell the House about the measures the OPP takes with regard to improving marine safety?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the \$1.5 billion oceans protection plan will indeed seriously improve marine safety. It will make us more quickly aware of any marine incidents. It will help us respond more effectively and more rapidly. It will involve our coastal first nations, who will be trained and equipped and given the authority to respond to local marine incidents. It will improve our hydrographic services for better navigation. It will ensure that certain critical fish habitats are

protected, as well as marine species. We want to make sure that our coasts are safe, clean, and healthy for generations to come.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know three things for sure.

First, the Minister of Procurement does not know how much Super Hornet fighters cost. Second, in negotiations with Boeing and the United States, the Liberals put their cards on the table before the game even started. Third, the process to replace our fighter jets will not be done before the 2019 election.

Obviously, either the Liberals are totally incompetent, or they have a hidden agenda.

Can the minister tell us which is true?

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me confirm for my colleague once again that the government is committed to an open and transparent process to make sure that the men and women in uniform get the equipment they need to do the job expected of them.

With respect to the interim, it is really important for us to fill the capability gap that has been identified. We will do that, working with Boeing, but nowhere would anyone commit to a figure before the negotiations actually take place.

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

**The Speaker:** Order. I have heard a lot today from the member for Abbotsford while he has not had the floor. I would like him to try to restrain himself. I know he can do it.

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the public works minister has misled Canadians on the scope and cost of the Phoenix pay fiasco every step of the way. Now she is adding her personal touches to the jet fighter program by placing a lifetime gag order on over 200 public servants and is manufacturing evidence to support a fake capability gap. She has even told the House that it would be foolhardy to negotiate pricing before committing to the sole-source purchase.

With this track record, how can Canadians possibly trust the minister to buy the right jet at the right price for our air force?

**Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we will not do is what the previous government did, and that was put up figures that were totally irresponsible. In fact, they put up so many figures when it came to procurement for DND that they kept having to change them because they were so unrealistic.

### Oral Questions

We will not do this. We will be responsible with Canadian taxpayers' money, and we will get the best deal we can for the men and women of our Armed Forces.

\* \* \*

#### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the minister's ill-advised and weak-willed decision on lifting the visa requirement for Mexicans without a formal review will come into effect. However, yesterday we learned exactly how much this will cost Canadians. The minister's own officials say that it will cost Canadian taxpayers over \$261 million above any benefits we might receive, mostly for processing and deporting bogus Mexican refugees.

Can the minister explain to the House why he made this unsafe and politicized decision, when he knew the cost?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am particularly grateful to my colleague for her question today, because it gives me the opportunity to announce the very good news that it is today that we are lifting the Mexico visa.

This is good news for the Canadian tourist industry. It will create many jobs. It is definitely good news for our beef farmers who will be able to export their wonderful product to Mexico.

• (1450)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure why the Liberal caucus would stand up and applaud the waste of \$261 million of Canadian taxpayer funds. These are not fun coupons. These are people's hard-earned taxpayer dollars. He is going to be wasting it on deporting bogus Mexican refugees when his department officials told him this. Why does the minister even have a job?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Why do I not have a job? I think I do have a job, Mr. Speaker.

As I just said, there are many benefits coming from this accord. As in any undertaking, there are risks. We are working very carefully and strongly with the Government of Mexico to manage those risks in a responsible way.

\* \* \*

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Youth Unity Journey for Sacred Waters grew from Stanley Mission, in my riding, and is walking to Standing Rock. They stand in solidarity with peaceful protesters who are facing state violence. Some have been severely injured.

We need to support indigenous people in their right to protect their land and resources. Will the government take a stand with us and condemn the violence against peaceful protesters, and stand with the people of Standing Rock?

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has said:

...one of the great things about Canada is people are more than free to express their opinions, to express their disappointment with governments in peaceful ways and we expect them and encourage them to [do so].

There are passionate voices on all sides of these decisions. Some people want everything built, some want nothing built. Our government is committed to making decisions based on facts and evidence. We believe the decisions that we took this week are in the best interests of Canada and indeed in the best interests of Canadians.

\* \* \*

#### EMPLOYMENT

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the question was about Standing Rock and the aggression that people are seeing, including Canadian citizens.

Let us talk about inequality, which is growing in our country. More and more Canadians are facing precarious work, as was shown in the CIBC report. We know that more and more young Canadians are stuck in low-wage work, and an alarming 61% of Canadians are earning less than the average yearly income.

The response of the Prime Minister and the finance minister: too bad, get used to it, with platitudes about the middle class—while that dream slips away from more and more people.

Why is the government catering to its billionaire and Bay Street friends instead of standing up for Canadians?

**Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this gives me the opportunity to talk about the good work this government is doing to address the serious challenges of the industrial revolution 4.0 that is facing every single country in the world. It is our goal to ensure that young people have a chance to be successful. This is exactly why we appointed the expert panel on youth employment, and we are looking forward to its interim report at the beginning of December.

\* \* \*

#### JUSTICE

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under our Conservative government, we had a judicial appointments system that served Canadians and the justice system well. It worked. Under the Liberal government, the system that worked so well was changed, and now we are faced with unreasonable delays in the Canadian criminal justice system.

It is a fact that the current system employed by the Liberals is broken. Why did they go and fix something that was not broken?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the reorganization and the new process that we put in place, not only for the Supreme Court of Canada, but with respect to the appointments of superior court justices. I was very proud as well to appoint 39 superior court judges across the country.

I am working to reconstitute the judicial advisory committee with the intent of supporting and promoting diversity, so that our benches reflect the diversity of the country, and ensuring that we have the highest quality of jurists that I can appoint to the superior courts across this country. I look forward to doing another round of appointments.

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister should get on with it.

Canadians were shocked by recent headlines that carried appalling news of a man charged with murder, whose trial was stayed for unreasonable delay. Now today he is a free man who lives and works among our families, children, and law-abiding Canadians.

There are hundreds of cases that could face the same fate across this country. Canadian confidence in our criminal justice system is fading.

When will the minister finally make victims of crime a priority?  
• (1455)

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, looking comprehensively at reform to the criminal justice system is a priority of mine, as instructed by the Prime Minister. I have been engaging across the country with my colleagues in the provinces and territories, and I will continue to do so to ensure that we find effectiveness and efficiencies in the criminal justice system.

The administration of justice is a shared responsibility. There are innovative approaches. The Province of Ontario recently introduced—today, actually—some suggestions in terms of advancing and dealing with court delays.

We are going to continue to do that in a collaborative manner, something that we have not seen in the last 10 years.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thousands of Canadians struggle to get access to a family doctor. Seniors, cancer patients, expectant moms, and people living in rural and remote communities suffer when they are unable to access timely medical care.

The Liberals are making it more difficult for Canada's most vulnerable to access care. Canadian doctors have warned that thousands of medical specialists could leave for the United States due to the Liberals' new tax hikes.

Can the minister not see that his plans to suck more money into Ottawa's coffers will come at the expense of our most vulnerable Canadians, who need help the most?

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing I can

reassure the member on is that the government is about tax fairness for all Canadians and making sure that Canadians pay their fair share of taxes.

What we have said, and the member knows it very well, is that for one small business or corporation, there will be one small business tax deduction. One corporation, one deduction. Canadians get it. This is about tax fairness, and that is why we are going to stand on that.

\* \* \*

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, December 3 will be the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Since 1992, this day is celebrated every year on December 3 all around the world. We know how important it is to educate people about the realities people with disabilities face.

Can the parliamentary secretary inform the House on this important journey and the actions taken by the government to ensure progress for persons with disabilities across the country?

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Brampton Centre for his question.

[*Translation*]

This year, we mark the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Canada is proud to be one of the first countries to sign the convention.

[*English*]

This year the theme of the international day is achieving 17 goals for the future we want. In line with these goals, we have had consultations across the country for establishing a new law on accessibility.

This would ensure that all Canadians are able to participate equally in their communities and workplaces, and make a better Canada.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Environment and Climate Change had done absolutely nothing, the people of Ottawa would now be on their way to building a big, beautiful hospital right across the street from the existing one.

However, she blocked it for research that her department says will be done before hospital construction even begins, not to mention that half the land is either a helicopter pad or salted and therefore useless for research.

Knowing these facts now, will she finally get out of the way and let us build a hospital?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have received the report from the National Capital Commission.

*Oral Questions*

The NCC has provided a space for the public to express their priorities in finding a new site for the hospital. I want to thank them. All levels of government need to be involved in order to achieve a final decision.

We look forward to further discussions with the city, the province, and the hospital itself in order to find a consensus.

\* \* \*

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week the Liberal government betrayed the people of Vancouver Island.

The Prime Minister says he is a grandson of British Columbia, so maybe he can understand. Our economy is tied to our ocean. Our culture is rooted to the sea. The health of the coast is the health of our environment, and it is the health of our communities.

After promising to put the Kinder Morgan pipeline through a new assessment process, why is this government now putting at risk everything we hold so dear? Why is it betraying Vancouver Islanders?

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, some members of the House believe the answer is the Leap Manifesto, and the only choice for the future is to leave it in the ground. Others believe that the NDP should stand with Canadians trying to get back to work. These projects will create thousands of well-paying, middle-class jobs.

There is not a country in the world that would find 200 billion barrels of oil and leave it in the ground while there are markets for it.

Our decisions on major projects reflect a balanced approach that will create prosperity while we seek to protect the environment we cherish.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**SCIENCE**

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Toronto and across Canada the organization Ladies Learning Code is working to promote digital literacy and technology skills, like writing computer codes, specifically for Canadian women and girls. Ladies Learning Code wants more women leaders in the tech industry.

Could the Minister of Science advise the House what steps her department is taking to promote science, technology, engineering, and math in Canada among girls and boys?

**Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Ladies Learning Code is a wonderful organization that teaches Canadians digital skills. I was privileged to sit in on a class on National Learn to Code Day.

We are working hard to create a culture where young people, particularly young girls, are excited about science and technology.

Each year, NSERC provides funding to organizations that get our youth excited about science.

**INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE**

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked if the Liberals would ensure Canadians could trade freely between provinces. It is unfathomable that Mr. Comeau was charged for buying beer. Unfortunately the Liberals said they would only support freer trade in Canada. I have to remind them that free trade in Canada is a constitutional right. An agreement between provinces with dozens of exclusions, including beer and wine, and government interference is not free trade.

Will the Liberals commit to protecting Canadians' constitutional rights and ensure we have full free trade across Canada?

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member that our government, me included, has been very clear in advocating to liberalize the trade of alcohol within Canada. This is an issue that I raised with my provincial and territorial counterparts when we were pursuing the Canada free trade agreement. I will make sure that we continue to advance this issue as well as reduce barriers and harmonize regulations.

We are very committed to the fact that we want to see an environment where we create good opportunities for businesses to grow and better choices for consumers.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**DEMOCRATIC REFORM**

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Democratic Institutions does not like the majority report tabled by the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, and she really does not like its recommendations, which are in favour of a referendum on the voting system and a more proportional voting system that does not weaken Quebec's political weight.

What are the chances that the minister will try to discredit the report today or that the Liberals will not support proportional representation precisely because they are only interested in an electoral reform that will keep them in power forever?

[English]

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. critic for his work on committee. The committee spent a lot of time and effort on this work. Having travelled the country, I know that this is a complex question. The challenge that we asked the committee to come back to us on was quite a big one. While the committee offered areas on which we do agree and understand, it did not offer a specific alternative to first past the post.

We thank the committee members for their hard work. We will continue to review the report and hear from Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what does Bill C-29 do?

Hidden bank fees are currently outlawed in Quebec. That will disappear. A consumer who has a contract can cancel it if he or she is being shafted. That will disappear. A bank cannot charge new fees without the client's consent. That will disappear. There are fines for misleading advertising. That will disappear. We have a neutral tribunal that examines all complaints. That too will disappear.

The minister of high finance is supposed to protect the people from banks. Why is he instead protecting the banks from the people?

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question, which gives me a chance to remind him of the history behind this.

The Marcotte decision called on the federal government to clarify its position on consumer protection with respect to financial institutions. That is exactly what we did. We modernized and simplified the rules in order to protect Canadian consumers. Provisions on access to basic services, provisions on business practices, and provisions for greater clarity, that is exactly what consumers in Quebec and across the country asked for, and that is exactly what we gave them.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

[English]

### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**The Speaker:** I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Labi Kousoulis, Minister of the Public Service Commission and Minister of Internal Services for the province of Nova Scotia.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

\* \* \*

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today during question

### Business of the House

period, the Minister of Democratic Institutions said about the electoral reform committee that it did not complete the hard work that we had expected it to. This committee met throughout the summer and since the House—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. If the member has a Standing Order he can point to or a rule that has been broken he can point to, I am certainly willing to hear it. I did not hear one. It sounded like debate to me.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has indicated to me already that she wants to correct something said by someone else, which is debate and not a point of order. Unless she can point to a rule that has been broken, a Standing Order, then she will not be up on a point of order for very long.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a point of order to point to the rules that say that no member shall speak disrespectfully of other members in this place. I believe the entire membership of the electoral reform committee was disrespected by the Minister of Democratic Institutions.

**The Speaker:** Now I believe the opposition House leader has the usual Thursday question.

\* \* \*

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we certainly do hope there will be a withdrawal of that comment.

Before I ask the usual question, I would like to ask the House leader if she would consider being more generous with allocating time for debate of Bill C-29, the budget implementation bill, than she was with Bill C-26, which she well knows was allocated the minimum amount of time possible. Worth noting is that the House leader's predecessor committed five sitting days to the same stages of the budget implementation bill on this watch. Since she was appointed—

**The Speaker:** I am going to remind the opposition House leader that this is not the time for debate; it is the time for the usual Thursday question. I have made this point before, and I will make it for both sides. I do not expect to hear debate from either side on the Thursday question. Let us get to the Thursday question.

**Mr. John Nater:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you review the Thursday questions in the past 20 years, which I have done, and I have done so academically, you will find that the hon. opposition House leader is perfectly within her right to have this preamble.

**The Speaker:** I am not changing my ruling, and I am going to the hon. opposition House leader to ask—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please. We do not want the usual Thursday question? Are we going to have order?

The hon. opposition House leader.

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Candice Bergen:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that she would commit to more consideration of the budget bill on her watch.

With that in mind, would the government House leader advise the House what the business will be for the remainder of this week and for the next week?

[Translation]

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today we are continuing with opposition day. Tomorrow the House will consider the report stage of Bill C-29, the second budget bill, and it will continue studying that bill Monday and Tuesday of next week.

[English]

For the remainder of the week, we plan to call the following bills: Bill S-4, the tax conventions legislation, and Bill S-3, the Indian tax amendment, provided we get these two bills from the Senate; Bill C-25, the business frameworks bill; and Bill C-30 concerning CETA. All these bills are at second reading.

It is my hope that parties will be able to negotiate on how to proceed in advancing these very important initiatives. Something I have committed to is working well with other parties, and I will continue to do that.

**The Speaker:** This sounds like debate also. I ask the members not to take part in debate during the Thursday question.

Does the opposition House leader have a problem with that? I am not going to hear from her now. We are going to go to orders of the day.

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

**The Speaker:** I understand she has a problem with that, but I have heard enough of this today. We are going to orders of the day.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1510)

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—CUBA

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka has seven minutes remaining in debate.

**Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back on my feet in a place where democracy can reign. We can hopefully have the debate that Cubans cannot have in their own country.

As I was saying before question period, the documentation is very real and very troubling.

On January 12, 1959, at the start of the so-called Castro revolution, the Castros had 71 men executed, without trial, in the city of Santiago de Cuba. Men were lined up in front of ditches at San Juan Hill and shot. When the massacre was over, a bulldozer covered

a mass grave. From that time until the present, the reign of terror and oppression has continued unabated for decades, and continues under the dictatorial leadership of brother Raúl.

Fidel Castro was a man who held no free or fair elections and imprisoned his political opponents after phony show trials. He completely controlled all media and installed his brother Raúl as his successor. Yet the Prime Minister celebrates him as being the longest-serving president of Cuba. Longest-serving president? I guess if someone shoots or jails the opponents or a million and a half people flee because of oppression, that person could be president for quite a long time. That is not an appropriate thing for the Prime Minister of Canada to say. It is as simple as that.

The Castro record is dynastic, diabolical, and unquestionably dictatorial, which makes the Prime Minister's sweetly toned *Kumbaya* farewell and reverent eulogy of Castro utterly without precedent and dumbfounding. It smacks of an arrogance and an imperiousness that has left many Canadians shocked, deeply embarrassed, in many cases angered, and in some cases traumatized.

Let us go through the list one more time about what the Prime Minister had to say about Castro.

I mentioned Cuba's longest-serving president. Apparently, he was a legendary revolutionary orator. "We join the people of Cuba today in mourning the loss of this remarkable leader". Really? The people who escaped Cuba were celebrating in the streets and those who were still under the oppression of brother Raúl, the obvious impression we have, were cowed into being quiet for fear of being arrested and shot if they displayed any kind of emotion of relief at the demise of Fidel. Therefore, these words from the Prime Minister come as a hard slap in the face to generations of oppressed Cubans, some of whom have found freedom in Canada and who regard the Castros with bitter and utter contempt.

Around the world, this eulogy from the Prime Minister was met with utter dismay and astonishment and, as we know, was widely mocked. One only has to go to #Trudeaeulogies to see how people took the Prime Minister's words and turned them on him to show him how disrespectful and hurtful they were. It was so ill-conceived that some, like U.S. Senator Marco Rubio of Cuban descent, thought the Prime Minister's Twitter account must have been a parody and surely could not have come from the Prime Minister of Canada.

There are many dark chapters in the history of the Castro legacy, but perhaps it is fitting to remind the House of the 13 days in October 1962 when the world was brought to the brink of nuclear destruction.

*Business of Supply*

•(1515)

Having embarrassed Soviet Russia, Castro gladly invited Russian intermediate-range nuclear missiles onto Cuban soil. He had no qualms about the Soviets mounting a first strike, which would have meant the death of untold millions. This utter madness cannot be scrubbed from the record of history that must show that Fidel Castro was a danger and menace not only to his own people, but to the world and the freedom lovers of the world. The complete disregard for liberty and democracy and the willingness to hold on to power at all costs is what we should really remember about Fidel Castro. That is the real memory we should hold in our hearts and our heads. His is a dark legacy that will live on in infamy, well beyond his death.

That is the message that Canada should be sending. That is the message that the world should be hearing from Canada, not the bromides of a Prime Minister who has a tin ear and does not reflect the values and the democratic principles of our country, Canada, that we love.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that Castro was a dictator. We all agree that Castro abused human rights. Castro was not a good man, period.

However, the same is true of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, for whom the previous prime minister, Prime Minister Harper, made very similar comments to those our current Prime Minister made with respect to Castro. That seems to be the way, whether we like it or not, that heads of state or leaders of government deal with the death of another head of government.

The hon. member was there in the previous government. Did he criticize his previous prime minister in exactly the same way for exactly the same type of statement that he is now advocating to criticize our current Prime Minister for the Castro statement?

**Hon. Tony Clement:** Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at this moral equivalency coming from the other side. They ran a whole campaign on being better than the previous government and now they want to equate themselves with it.

The statement to which the hon. member refers was clearly written by the Department of Foreign Affairs and was issued on behalf of the prime minister. I have no doubt in my mind that the eulogy that was issued on the demise of Fidel Castro, the pen that was held on that, was not by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, nor his department. It was the Prime Minister himself. It had all the markings, all the indicators that the Prime Minister wanted to talk about the family history and how good it was to have known this man for decades, and what a good papa he was, I am sure. All of these things did not come from the Department of Global Affairs. I have no doubt that it came from the hand of the Prime Minister.

“Though controversial”, really, that is the message the Prime Minister wanted to send? He should have said he was dictator in his first remarks.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, how silly of the member. If I get his answer correctly, he is saying it was not Stephen Harper who said it, it was the department that wrote the speech for him, and that is the reason it is okay.

The real tragedy of this whole debate today is that we should be advancing what is in the best interests of the Cuban people. This is not what is happening today because the Conservative Party has chosen to politicize something that need not be politicized.

I think the member across the way, who has some experience, owes an apology. I wonder if Mr. Harper, the former prime minister, would agree that he was made to say it because of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

•(1520)

**Hon. Tony Clement:** Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is struggling to change the subject, but referring to me as “silly” is insulting to the electors of Parry Sound—Muskoka, so I do hope he finds time to withdraw that statement.

If he wants a real lesson on how to issue a statement on the death of Fidel Castro, he should go to the statement issued by the interim leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. That statement talks about the people of Cuba, their trials, tribulations, sufferings, and hopes for a better time of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. That was the statement that the Prime Minister should have issued, but it had to be issued by the interim leader of the opposition.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, figures like Fidel Castro and Che Guevara are products of the times they lived in.

It is safe to say there were no saints on any side during the Cold War. In fact, the United States is responsible for atrocities in Iran, propping up the Shah, installing Pinochet in Chile. There were no saints in the Cold War.

Can the member tell us why we are dredging up a relic of the Cold War when we look at the issues Canada is facing today with immigration, the tough times Canadian families are going through, our current foreign affairs? Can he tell us why we are debating a history lesson, instead of looking at the problems Canada is facing here and now?

**Hon. Tony Clement:** Mr. Speaker, this is not just a history lesson, although I started with 1959 in my remarks.

This is what is happening today in Cuba, too. This change of authority which was not really a change, the authoritarianism still exists under Raúl. People are arrested. People have to try to escape in order to have dignity and human rights. There is no question in my mind that the perilous state of human rights in Cuba today is still an issue that Canadians do care about and should care about.

The hon. member can talk about history lessons, but I hope he understands that history is being repeated every day in Cuba, even as we speak.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak on this very important motion that the opposition has brought forward. Normally what one would expect when a motion is that it would have been a little more thought out.

*Business of Supply*

I have had the opportunity to listen to a number of the Conservatives speak on the motion, and I am somewhat disappointed. There are so many issues that the Conservatives could have chosen to present on what is in fact the last opposition day leading up to our constituency break.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The convention of this House during debates has been that when a member is finished his statement, we move to questions and answers.

Typically the first question does come from a member on the opposite side of the House, which you appropriately allowed, but then the following questions come from members of other parties so that every recognized party theoretically gets an opportunity to ask a question.

Mr. Speaker, you recognized two members of the government and only one member of the opposition, which was disproportionate and, in my experience, out of keeping with the convention for questioning speakers in the House.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Carleton for raising this point. I think if he checks with the Deputy Speaker, he will find that he has already indicated to the House that we have changed that now. We are going to not tend to hear from the same side as the member who spoke and who has given a speech in debate, but to hear from other members.

Actually, after the first member from this side raised a question, I believe it was the member for Mount Royal, I looked to the other side and I had the impression the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford might get up. He did not at that moment. He did later. He meant to, I guess, but he did not get up. So I went back to another member who was not on the same side as the speaker.

The Deputy Speaker has made it very clear already that this has been a change that has been discussed among the presiding officers and a conclusion was arrived at, and I think that has been communicated.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, as I was indicating, we have today what is the last day of supply where opposition parties are afforded a wonderful opportunity to be able to set the agenda for the day. I know that there are many issues that Canadians have taken quite an interest in and there is no shortage of ideas. In fact, there are a good number of major policy issues where there is a difference of opinion between the Conservatives and the government in particular. We could talk about everything from the price on carbon, to the CPP, to the tax breaks that we are providing that the Conservatives oppose. There is a litany of things, so I am somewhat surprised that they would have chosen this issue.

Let me say why I am disappointed that the Conservatives chose this issue. If they wanted to talk about foreign affairs as a subject matter, it would have been better if we had been talking about the people of Cuba and from our perspective how the people of Cuba could move forward. I hope to talk more about that as I go on because there are some opportunities that are very real and tangible. We talk a great deal about the importance of trade and I would like to be able to expand upon that. That is not really what the opposition day motion is all about. Rather they have chosen to be critical of the

Prime Minister because of comments he made after the passing of Mr. Castro.

The best way to illustrate this is to use a quote that I used earlier in questions and answers. It is important that we recognize that the person who said this was the former prime minister. Stephen Harper was the prime minister of Canada when we had the passing of King Abdullah. I would suggest that Conservative members of the House need to listen to this point because it is very important. We need to recognize that King Abdullah was a dictator, much like Castro was. Here is what the former prime minister said on January 22, 2015:

On behalf of all Canadians, Laureen and I offer our sincere condolences to the family of King Abdullah...and the people of Saudi Arabia. King Abdullah was recognized as a strong proponent of peace in the Middle East. He also undertook a range of important economic, social, education, health, and infrastructure initiatives in his country. I had the pleasure of meeting King Abdullah in Toronto when Canada hosted the G-20 and found him to be passionate about his country, development and the global economy. We join the people of Saudi Arabia in mourning his passing.

This was an individual of history. The prime minister at the time correctly stood in his place. I disagree with the previous speaker. I believe that Mr. Harper did not just read it because the Department of Foreign Affairs told him what to read. I believe that Prime Minister Harper actually read it because he truly believed that it was what he needed to say as the prime minister of the country.

When that statement was made on January 22, to the best of my recollection and I was around, I do not recall any Liberal member of Parliament saying he should not have said that because after all, he was a dictator.

• (1525)

I would challenge my Conservative colleagues to point out if I am wrong. Nor can I recall any Conservative members of Parliament at that time, including Conservative members who have chosen to speak today, saying that our then prime minister was wrong. I do not remember any challenge to that comment—not one.

It does not upset me that there was no objection to what the then prime minister said. Why will I not complain about Stephen Harper? Because I believe it was appropriate for him as the prime minister to say what he said. I believe that the members of the Conservative caucus today would agree with me that the comments I read were appropriate.

Let us contrast that with the comments made by the current Prime Minister. He stated:

It is with deep sorrow that I learned today of the death of Cuba's longest serving President.

Fidel Castro was a larger than life leader who served his people for almost half a century. A legendary revolutionary and orator, Mr. Castro made significant improvements to the education and healthcare of his island nation.

It might go on beyond that, but I believe, as do my caucus colleagues, that nothing inappropriate was said. I also believe that the NDP are of the same opinion. I am not 100% sure of that, but I anticipate that to be the case.

If we compare the two comments, I think both prime ministers did the most appropriate thing with respect to the passing of both dictators.

*Business of Supply*

I am confident and proud of the manner in which our current Prime Minister deals with human rights issues. It does not matter whether he is talking about human rights here in Canada or abroad; he has been consistent in what he has said with regard to human rights. Not only has he been consistent, but he has been persistent and very aggressive in ensuring that people understand where he stands on the issue of human rights. I know from the government policy positions that we have taken that he is a very strong feminist to the core. Therefore, Canadians will see through what the Conservatives are trying to portray here today. They are trying to take an issue and politicize it.

When I was in opposition, I would often see the government of the day using foreign affairs issues to try to make political points on many different policy files.

Today we have a government with a brilliant Minister of Foreign Affairs, who has consistently provided the same type of message, whether as the critic for Foreign Affairs in opposition or as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons.

I believe that the position we have taken as a government is what Canadians expect a government to do. We need to take our values to heart. We need to appreciate all those rights we have as Canadian citizens.

● (1530)

We have talked a great deal about listening to Canadians, understanding what Canadians truly believe. Indeed, I am convinced that what Canadians have today is a government that truly understands what their expectations of government are, and the types of actions we are seeing today are as a direct result of the society we represent. That is why when the Prime Minister is not here in Canada, or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, or, I would suggest to you, the other ministers, such as our Minister of International Trade, who is often negotiating with countries around the world, the issue of human rights is one of the issues that are not forgotten. We do not forget about those issues, because they are important to all Canadians.

If we listen to the Conservatives' style or approach to countries like Cuba, we question the degree to which they really have a global perspective. They often talk about trade. Brian Mulroney was mentioned earlier, and some of the significant work he did in protecting the people of Cuba. I suspect that today's Conservative Party might challenge Brian Mulroney and some of his actions. All we have to do is to reflect on history, and we will find that Brian Mulroney, as prime minister, did take progressive steps to ensure a solid relationship and more respect between Canada and Cuba.

At the end of the day, we have a unique relationship with that country. I have posed the question to others inside the chamber to at the very least recognize that.

Under the previous government, when we would talk about, for example, the trade agreement with Panama, the Conservatives would jump up and down and say, "This is great agreement". Then we always heard the New Democrats say, "No, no. It's a bad agreement. We don't think it's a good agreement". Why would the NDP always say that? It was because it was a human rights issue. Then what would the Conservative response be? They would say, "It's better for

us to be engaged and we can have more of an impact on an issue of human rights if in fact we're engaged with Panama", or with Jordan, for example, or other countries of concern where there was a human rights issue.

I would argue, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs argued earlier, that establishing those strong links gives Canada more ability to share our values and, hopefully, have the type of influence that will have a real impact on the people of those countries. That is one of the things we take into consideration when we look at trade with other countries.

Earlier today, there were comments on issues related to China. We, as a government, and in particular the Prime Minister, have been able to accomplish a great deal with China in a very short period of time. I can speak from a prairie perspective in regard to canola and the hundreds of millions of dollars for our farmers as a direct result of the Prime Minister and the Minister of International Trade being able to communicate with China and ultimately address an issue. Our farmers on the Prairies are benefiting as a result. It does not mean that we have given up on human rights concerns in China. No, not at all. In fact, I have stood in the House on many occasions and talked about the importance of human rights in China.

● (1535)

There are all sorts of issues before us. What the opposition is attempting to do today is not doing a service to the people of Cuba, and indirectly neither is it doing a service for Canadians. What they are hoping to do is to stir up emotions and agitate a situation. That is what they are really trying to do today.

The government has never shied away from raising the issue of human rights, both at home and abroad, as I indicated earlier, but the main priority for all of us should be the future of the Cuban people. To antagonize or ratchet up rhetoric now in an effort to score points will not advance the Cuban society today, or the Cuban society we are working to achieve for the Cuban people of tomorrow.

There is so much more that we could and should be doing. Instead of doing that, we have the official opposition trying to do something that neither helpful nor consistent.

I know how I will be voting on the resolution today, and I can tell the member and Canadians that I will be consistent in my approach. My challenge to my Conservative friends is this. Will they be consistent? I like to think I am an optimist and would love them to be consistent, but when I challenge them to be consistent, I want them to remember what former Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in regard to King Abdullah. If the Conservatives want to be consistent with what Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party said when they were in government, then they should not vote in favour of this resolution, because King Abdullah was a dictator too.

Many Canadians have the same sort of concerns in regard to that area of the world, as they have with the area of the world Mr. Castro represented.

I see that my time has expired. I always appreciate the privilege of sharing a few thoughts and words.

*Business of Supply*

● (1540)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Of course, Mr. Speaker, that member is no stranger to ratcheting up rhetoric in the House. I just wonder if he has actually read the opposition motion and his Prime Minister's statement.

Our motion says that the House should do the following:

...express its hope and full support for the people of Cuba, that they may now begin to see freedom and a commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, in order to ensure a brighter and better future for the Cuban people now and for generations to come.

Our motion speaks to the Cuban people and to their aspirations, now that one of the Castros is gone.

We see none of that in the Prime Minister's statement. We see effusive comments like, "He served his people for almost half a century; a legendary revolutionary orator; a tremendous dedication and love for the Cuban people."

I do not really have a question, but more of a comment to the member. What kind of damage is he doing to our nation's status in the world when such statements are heard publicly and spread around. Talk about ratcheting up the rhetoric, there is a time and a place for commemorating someone's life and a time and a place for saying it like it is, calling a spade a spade. In this case, I just do not believe that has been done.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I have read the Conservative resolution, and it is the problem. How does the member support that resolution while at the same time the following is what Prime Minister Stephen Harper said:

On behalf of all Canadians, Laureen and I offer our sincere condolences to the family of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and the people of Saudi Arabia.

King Abdullah was recognized as a strong proponent of peace in the Middle East. He also undertook a range of important economic, social, education, health, and infrastructure initiatives in his country.

I had the pleasure of meeting King Abdullah in Toronto when Canada hosted the G-20 and found him to be passionate about his country, development and the global economy.

We join the people of Saudi Arabia in mourning his passing.

He cannot have it both ways. If he does not like what our current Prime Minister says, he cannot say he likes what the former prime minister said.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are employing a smart strategy today by reading into the record the comments made by the former prime minister on King Abdullah. It exposes and makes a mockery of the Conservative motion today. Where was the Conservative moral outrage when the comments were made by the former prime minister? Today they are levelling it at a prime minister from a different party. It is quite obvious that this is to score political points.

The other odd thing is the fact that the Liberals are using the King Abdullah defence. As we know, Canada just settled a \$15-billion arms sale to the very regime they are now calling out for its human rights record.

I want to get to a more substantive question. Canada only sends about \$2.42 million in aid to Cuba. I want to know if the government is planning to do more to give real help to the Cuban people as they manage their transition on the road ahead.

● (1545)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, we have a government that is looking at ways we can help the people of Cuba and also contribute in the world in a tangible way that reflects the values Canadians have.

When we compare today's Prime Minister to former Prime Minister Harper and evaluate the necessity of this opposition motion, I would suggest that at the end of the day, maybe there is something else we could have been debating.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things the member mentioned today was that when ministers are travelling abroad promoting Canada, they always have those issues of human rights in their dialogue. Lord knows, the government is good at sending its ministers and the Prime Minister on these trips, spending hard-earned taxpayers' dollars all across the world instead of here in Canada.

When those ministers, especially the Prime Minister, as he just did, are making public statements, such as the one made regarding the death of Fidel Castro, do they take those human rights issues equally to heart? In this case, I clearly do not think they did.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party, at its core, is a party of Canada's charter of rights.

I had the good fortune of travelling to Israel a number of years ago. One of the things that came up was the recognition of how important Canada's charter of rights was. I cannot remember exactly where it was. It was on the outskirts of Old Jerusalem. I saw a plaque that made reference to the charter of rights.

I believe that our party reflects the wide spectrum of our nation. It is a party that truly believes in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Whether we are here in Canada or travelling abroad, I believe we consistently send a message about human rights. That is something that is not going to stop. We are very much aware of the expectations Canadians have of us on this issue. We will not let Canadians down.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about the importance of not politicizing foreign policy. I wonder if he could continue that thought. I think it is tremendously important. Canadians expect us as a government, and any government, not to politicize foreign policy. I wonder if the member could continue those comments.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things it is important to recognize is that members on the government benches, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Trade, have an obligation to represent Canadians as a whole. When members are abroad, they are doing things based on what is in the best interests of all Canadians and are hopefully making the world a better place to live.

When I was sitting in opposition, quite often we would have situations arise when the hard lines might come out. Sometimes it is justified, and sometimes it is not. That is why many felt that at times the former government used foreign affairs as a way to get domestic votes. That is what I was referring to. Maybe at another time—

● (1550)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments.



*Business of Supply*

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, and I am very proud to do that. I notice we have members who want to speak. I see the members opposite can hardly fill in their list. They have members speaking for 20 minutes and do not have anyone to share with.

This is an interesting debate today. I am fascinated by the fact that the NDP is neutral on this one, and I suspect that it is probably because they have never seen a socialist or communist dictator they did not love, so they are having a hard time getting involved in this debate.

I just heard the NDP member talk about how the Cuban people are going to manage the transition. That is how far removed they are from this discussion. I could talk for hours about the damage socialists and communists do wherever they are found, but we do not have that time here today.

It would have been better if the Liberals had been neutral on this issue as well. If they had been, the eulogy that was presented probably would have gone unnoticed, but that is not what happened. The comparison they are making today is a bit ridiculous, but they will go ahead and continue to make it.

It is probably the language of such strong personal support that Canadians and people around the world have noticed. When our Prime Minister referred to “Cuba’s longest serving President”, I think that caught people’s minds, because they knew how it was that he served. He served at the point of a gun.

The Prime Minister said that Fidel Castro was larger than life. I know that he was larger than life to the people who were on the ground in front of him. He talked about how Castro served his people for half a century. Well, he oppressed them for half a century, ruled over them, and dominated them. He did not serve them for half a century. Our Prime Minister talked about how he is a legend, supposedly. It was more of a nightmare for the Cuban people. He talked about his tremendous dedication and love for his people, and I say especially for those folks who had to go before the firing squad.

We get to the nub of the issue later in the eulogy when he talked about what an important person Fidel Castro was to his family. He called him his father’s friend and offered condolences to the family, friends, and many supporters of Mr. Castro. Certainly he was not talking about the Cuban people at large in that eulogy. He concluded with another adjective of admiration, talking about him being a “remarkable leader”.

It is not surprising that we had eulogies around the world, #Trudeauulogies they were called, for people like Mussolini, Pol Pot, John Wilkes Booth, Kim Jong-il, Genghis Khan, and Darth Vader because of the Prime Minister’s foolish choice of words.

Perhaps the Cuban hardships should have been recognized by the Prime Minister rather than his private loss.

I do not think the debate is actually about the eulogy. It is about leadership. It is about a failure of leadership and about much more than just a few words on a piece of paper that came out of the PMO,

because there are so many issues the government faces on which it is failing to lead Canadians in a proper way.

At question period just two hours ago, we had to listen to the electoral reform minister stumbling all over the place after she put a committee of all parties in the House together that worked hard for six months. I could not believe the amount of time people dedicated to that committee through this summer and fall. They went into the evenings. She stood and basically mocked the work they have done. That is an example of the failure of leadership we see in the government.

We saw failure two days ago when the Liberals made an announcement on the pipeline. They were trying to tell Canadians that they based one pipeline on science and will approve the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline and then said that they will not approve the northern gateway pipeline. They set science aside. Science has said that there is nothing wrong with approving the northern gateway pipeline, but the Liberals took it off because of politics. That is just another example of a failure of leadership. Canadians have to put up with from the government.

Certainly the whole carbon taxation discussion is turning out to be a huge disaster for the government. Liberals knew nothing about carbon taxation, carbon pricing, or cap and trade issues when they started, and they are finding out that it is not working out the way they planned. It is going to be a disaster. We are going to find ourselves in the same situation as Ontario in the last few years, where the leadership has now had to apologize for its own carbon taxation schemes that have just about driven the Province of Ontario into bankruptcy.

There are all kinds of things. Can I mention fundraising? Can I mention how inappropriate it is? All of us do fundraising. It is inappropriate to have cabinet ministers, who are the ones making the decisions, charging \$1,500 a ticket for people to get access to them.

●(1555)

The finance minister is selling access to people involved in the financial industry. The justice minister is selling access to lawyers when she has the power to appoint them as judges. We watched the innovation minister hosting fundraisers for people who want to come to him for funding. Is that appropriate?

Canadians are getting sick and tired of this. It was good to see on the weekend that this foolish statement that came out of the PMO highlighted to Canadians once again the failure of leadership we see in this country.

I want to talk about the people of Cuba. Across the way today, members kept talking about the people of Cuba.

A friend of mine sent me an email. He said that he was holidaying in Cuba and decided to spend some extra time wandering around to see what it was like away from the resort. He said that he talked to people, and all he saw was basically the economic devastation that has been caused by Fidel Castro’s communist regime.

*Business of Supply*

I have heard all week from the Liberals celebrating the free health care in Cuba. The reality, he said, was that there was nothing on the shelves. He could not even find an aspirin on the shelves. That is what the Cuban medical system was like when Fidel Castro and his brother were done with it.

My friend said that when he went to the government grocery stores, there were only three things on the shelves, and they are subsidized: rice, beans, and rum. That was on the shelves he found in the government grocery stores.

He said that it was obvious the government provides labour to the resorts, and the people who are working there get paid about \$20 a month to do this work, while the government takes the rest of those wages.

People keep talking about the Cuban medical system, but medical doctors in Cuba are earning \$25 a month. My friend said that as he toured the country, he saw abandoned farmland growing nothing but weeds. Where is the help? Where is the assistance? Where is the aid that is supposed to come in to help people learn how to farm? That regime has taken all of it. He talked about farming still being done with animal power, and we all know that it is pretty easy to find a 1957 Chevrolet in Cuba, but we will not find a car much newer than that.

There has been a history of political repression and a history of internment. The firing squads were hopefully from years ago, but that is part of the history, the legacy, of Fidel Castro.

We know that there is continuing political repression. It has one-party rule. My friend talked to me about walking around Havana and seeing how many pimps there were pimping out teenage girls for tourists to come to take advantage of them. Cuba has become known as one of the leading places for child sexual exploitation in the world.

Are those the kinds of things we are talking about to celebrate the regime of Fidel Castro? There is ongoing religious pressure and persecution in Cuba. That is what the Prime Minister is celebrating, and it is wrong.

The member opposite wanted to talk a little bit about foreign affairs and global affairs. We can talk about that as well. There is a failure of leadership, and not just on this Cuban issue.

Last spring, the foreign affairs minister, on one of his junkets, went to Myanmar. He walked in there and said that we will give it some money, \$44 million, and then he flew out again. Since then, the situation in Myanmar has completely disintegrated.

There is a democratically elected government there, but it is dominated by the military. In the last month, in the Rakhine state, there has been a conflict that has gone on, and it is escalating. We hear nothing from the Liberal government. It started with a border clash, where nine Myanmar police were killed by militants. The army has moved in there and has been controlling the area. It has shut down access to the area.

We have heard nothing from the Liberal government. Canadians are getting tired of this failure of leadership in every area.

In terms of what is going on in Myanmar, the head of the United Nations Refugee Agency said that as far as it can tell, the troops are “killing men, shooting them, slaughtering children, raping women, burning and looting houses, forcing these people to cross the river” into Bangladesh. There are 30,000 people who have left the country and fled to Bangladesh. What do we hear from our government? Nothing.

Another issue, of course, is the persecution of the Baha'i in Iran. It is a good example of a place where the current government is silent one more time. The government has decided it wants to normalize relationships with the regime in Iran. There is cradle-to-grave persecution going on there. The Baha'i are the largest non-Muslim minority in Iran. They are being persecuted. Their businesses are being stripped from them. They are being shut down. We just had someone shot in the street strictly because he was Baha'i. What do we hear from our government? Nothing. We want normal relationships with Iran, and we are not speaking out.

Therefore, when the member opposite talks about the government defending human rights, that is not happening. It is one more indication of the failure of leadership that was just indicated by the example we saw last weekend.

• (1600)

**Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to that long speech and I could not help but smile. The hon. member was part of a government that really could not help any of these problems he is talking about. Not only that, he is misleading Canadians. He is saying that this current government has been silent. He knows that is not the case. We have been very vocal about human rights issues around the world and here at home.

Let me ask the member this question. When his own party's foreign affairs critic, the member for Thornhill, was invited to a round table with NGOs and the president of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, and while all the NGOs raised important issues with the president of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, why did his foreign affairs critic not say a word? Instead, after leaving, he issued a press release with respect to all of these issues. He missed an opportunity. He should have raised these issues.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, the member said there was a press release, which means that he did raise the issues, and, on the other hand, he is trying to say there was no press release.

When our government was in power, we were respected around the world because of the capacity we had to lead. It was not because we would go around taking pictures of ourselves and sharing them with people around the world.

We are disappearing from the international scene. It is time we got some of the courage and leadership back that we had in the past. All we have now is a lot of talk and rhetoric but no action. We saw last weekend where the heart of the current government actually is.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my great-grandfather was the CCF candidate against John Diefenbaker in 1957. However, I will acknowledge that Prime Minister Diefenbaker made a very wise decision not long after that to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba after the revolution rather than participating in the American embargo that contributed to a siege mentality in Cuba and that worsened repression.

I would like to ask my fellow Saskatchewan MP whether he thinks the Diefenbaker government made the right decision in maintaining diplomatic relations with Fidel Castro's government.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, one of the problems with dealing with socialist governments is what they do to us. As my colleague from Saskatchewan knows only too well, we have suffered the consequences of that for 50 years and find ourselves almost in a situation similar to Cuba because we were never able to reach our potential. Cuba never came close to being what it could be. In Saskatchewan 10 years ago we finally found ourselves with a change in government, but with an economy that was one-third the size of our neighbour. We were equal to Alberta at one time. Choosing to follow the NDP for far too long meant that we fell far behind. Finally, the people of Saskatchewan came to their senses and elected a government, and we have moved ahead ever since then.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about history, and I will touch on that in a moment. It is well-known that in his recent visit the Prime Minister raised human rights concerns. The member opposite has a great deal of concern about human rights problems that exist in Cuba. We are quite fortunate that on this side of the House we take human rights seriously, and that when we engage with countries, human rights issues can be put on the table.

I also would point out, and this is where history comes in and is very important, that it was the Mulroney government in 1985 that took the unprecedented step of enacting the Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act. This law made it illegal for firms operating in Canada to comply with any U.S. attempts to destabilize the Castro regime. This was an indication on the part of the Mulroney government, and the then minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Joe Clark, to engage in warm, friendly relations with Cuba. They were Conservatives, but they were Progressive Conservatives, so I guess there is a bit of a difference there.

I would love to hear the member's comment on that.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, the member wants to talk about the photo affair that the Prime Minister had in Cuba when he was there. What Canadians heard coming out of that was not about his human rights stance. That is not what was emphasized. If we look at the news reports, that is not what it was about. Rather, it was about him meeting and celebrating with Raúl Castro and his sons, and then lamenting the fact that he did not get to meet with Fidel. That was what the general public heard about that visit. They did not hear anything about him standing up for Cuban human rights. I would suspect that is because he did not.

•(1605)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with mixed emotions that I rise today. I am always very pleased to

rise in the House, but I would have preferred not to today because of the profound malaise the Prime Minister created on Sunday. To be quite honest, I have never felt more embarrassed to be Canadian than I did on Sunday, when the Prime Minister issued his statement that was so very unfortunate for democracy, human rights, and for the rights of gays and lesbians. I will come back to that later.

The Prime Minister spoke for himself and not on behalf of all Canadians. The Prime Minister spoke for himself and not as a head of state. That is the shame of it. We can all have a personal opinion on any given situation, an opinion that reflects our family or our emotions. However, when we assume our responsibilities as head of state, we must do so in accordance with the state and not in accordance with our personal feelings. Unfortunately, that is where the Prime Minister failed in his duties.

What Fidel Castro did 60 years ago is one thing, but what he did in the past 60 years is another. That is why the Prime Minister never should have issued Sunday's press release on the news of Fidel Castro's death.

Let us come back to this infamous and unfortunate comment. This is what the Prime Minister of Canada wrote:

...Cuba's longest-serving president.

Does the Prime Minister realize that Castro killed his opponents, assassinated them, tortured them, and put them in prison? Killing one's adversaries certainly helps keep a man in power. How could the Prime Minister keep a straight face when he wrote that Castro was "Cuba's longest-serving president?" The Prime Minister lost all credibility at that point, but he went on:

...his tremendous dedication and love for the Cuban people who had a deep and lasting affection for "el Comandante".

I am not sure that all the Cuban people held him in deep admiration. When a fifth of your population leaves your country, it may be that not everyone is happy. However the Prime Minister writes that Mr. Castro had "tremendous dedication and love for the Cuban people who had a deep and lasting affection for 'el Comandante'." With a gun to the head, anyone is liable to say, "Yes, I love you." It does not mean a thing, however. The Prime Minister is in his Care Bear world, never once considering the consequences of his actions. To top it off, he ended his sad news release by referring to this dictator as a "remarkable leader".

I just want to put things in context. If the Prime Minister were to be informed of the death of Mr. Castro while at a press conference or some public event, he might react with emotion, because he is personally affected. He is entitled to do this in his personal life. But when you are a head of state, you are a head of state. To say such foolish things as this, one might think he is being moved by emotion, he is not prepared, he is acting on the spur of the moment. But these comments were considered, studied, written, approved and released.

*Business of Supply*

We know this, we are politicians: we can sometimes be driven by emotion to say things—that is one thing. But when we take the time to write, that is different. Writing such foolishness makes no sense, especially coming from the Prime Minister's Office. Is there anyone at the PMO who rereads what the boss is saying? Is there anyone there who might bother to say that it may not be a good thing to talk about a remarkable leader when the man had thousands of people killed? That it may not be a good idea to say that he was the country's longest-serving president, since he had his opponents murdered? How did no one catch on? It wasn't because he was overseas. We now have modern means of communication. Texts can be sent and checked. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has far more respectable self-control. The Prime Minister has dishonoured Canada with his unfortunate remarks, last Sunday.

What is so appalling about that “remarkable leader” comment is the cruelty with which Fidel Castro ruled his people for nearly 60 years.

• (1610)

When someone has 5,600 people executed by firing squad, when he murders 1,200 people without leaving a trace, when he put tens of thousands of people in forced labour camps, and when a fifth of the population leaves the country, I am sorry, but he is anything but a responsible and admirable leader. He is a pitiful leader and a dictator. That is the word the Prime Minister should have used on Sunday morning, not on Monday when a journalist prompted him with it and he used it. We know that word did not come from the bottom of his heart. What came from the bottom of his heart was the boundless admiration he has for the dictator. However since he is a head of state and the head of a free country, there is no place for that, especially here in Canada. Canada is a country that deeply cherishes the principles of freedom and democracy. Those principles are dear to us, because 70 or 80 years ago, people took part in World War II and sacrificed their lives so that we can live in a democratic world that is able to eliminate dictators.

The Prime Minister says one thing but does the opposite. He got himself elected saying that his government would run a \$10-billion deficit, but it is now running at \$30-billion deficit. That is not nice, not smart, and not good.

From a human standpoint, however, there are certain things that worry me even more. The Prime Minister presents himself as a great and ardent defender of the LGBT community. He is proud to say that he is the first Canadian prime minister to have ever participated in gay pride parades. In Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, there he is with the flags. He believes in and defends gay rights.

Seven months ago, however, on March 21, in the House, I personally delivered a letter to the Prime Minister from a woman I know from the Quebec City area. The letter was addressed to the Prime Minister. In it the woman said that she was a victim of homophobia in the army. I put this letter in the Prime Minister's hands myself. I looked the Prime Minister in the eye and presented him with the case of this woman in the army who was a victim of homophobia and who wanted the Prime Minister to take action on her letter. The Prime Minister thanked me and said he would look into it.

Seven months and two calls to the Prime Minister's Office later and still nothing has been done. This woman's situation was also the subject of a feature story on the television show *J.E.*, which was broadcast on TVA and watched by a million Canadians. Our party has asked the Prime Minister about this case on four separate occasions, but he has not done anything. The last we heard, the Prime Minister has still not been in touch with the victim.

When the Prime Minister says he has the rights of gays and lesbians at heart, when he participates in fine demonstrations and raises the pride flag in front of Parliament, people believe that is coming from the bottom of his heart. However, when the time comes to defend real-life cases, he is not there.

Here we have the same prime minister speaking about a remarkable leader who locked up tens of thousands of gay and lesbian Cubans. He sent them away to re-education camps, as they were called. That is the true face of Fidel Castro, the true face of this “remarkable leader” admired by the prime minister.

The prime minister's attitude on Sunday, in paying such a fawning tribute that embarrassed Canadians and those who love democracy, made absolutely no sense.

Cubans are becoming increasingly aware of the problems caused by this dictator and his family. Cubans established the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, which reported that there were 8,616 cases of arbitrary arrests last year.

It is this prime minister paying tribute to this head of state? No, it is against human decency to pay tribute to a dictator. The way the prime minister behaved was unacceptable. To the world, Canada looked ridiculous. People around the world came up with “trudeauisms,” jokes made up using the words of the prime minister. There are situations more alarming and more disappointing than that.

Marco Rubio, an American senator, asked whether it was actually a joke.

• (1615)

[*English*]

He said, “Is this a real statement or a parody? Because if this is a real statement from the PM of Canada it is shameful...”

Unfortunately, it was shameful. However, it was on behalf of the Prime Minister, not on behalf of all Canadians.

This is why I strongly disagree with the comments made by my prime minister. The prime minister is the prime minister of all Canadians, even for those who did not vote for him. This is how strong a statement is when we are faced with this kind of difficulty. However, when faced with this kind of difficulty, what did the Prime Minister do? He did it all wrong. What he did was pay no respect to Canadians and no respect to democracy. He has paid no respect to the real fight for human rights, because Fidel Castro was the enemy of human rights, and that is not Canadian.

**Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since the member loves quoting people, let me quote the former prime minister, Stephen Harper, on the death of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia:

*Business of Supply*

On behalf of all Canadians, Laureen and I offer our sincere condolences to the family of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz and the people of Saudi Arabia.

King Abdullah was recognized as a strong proponent of peace in the Middle East. He also undertook a range of important economic, social, education, health, and infrastructure initiatives in his country.

I had the pleasure of meeting King Abdullah in Toronto when Canada hosted the G-20 and found him to be passionate about his country, development and the global economy.

My question for the member is this. Can the member please tell me how this statement was any different from the statement made by our Prime Minister on the death of Fidel Castro?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, that is most unfortunate. This government got elected by saying that we were the worst in Canadian history, that we were wrongheaded and that we were an embarrassment to Canada. I even remember the Prime Minister one time saying on a Radio-Canada program, in all seriousness, that Prime Minister Harper made him feel like becoming a separatist. He campaigned by saying that we were the worst in the world, and now today they are bringing up something written by the Prime Minister of Canada a few years ago. I would like to remind the parliamentary secretary of the reality.

The reality is that tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of Cubans were murdered and have suffered under the dictatorship of a man who, until very recently, laid waste to his country. Canada did not deserve to have the Prime Minister issue such a eulogy.

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear to the Bloc Québécois that the Prime Minister was wearing some very rose-coloured glasses on Sunday in his statement. However, it is just as clear to us that, this time, the glasses the Conservatives are wearing are very black. In fact, in their motion they contradict highly respected figures who spoke favourably of Mr. Castro.

In 1991, Nelson Mandela personally travelled to Cuba to thank the Cuban people and Fidel Castro for their help in bringing down the apartheid regime. Before that, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a Nobel laureate in literature, also had good reasons with respect to Mr. Castro's policies. As well, Mr. Castro was awarded the Health-For-All gold medal by the World Health Organization. Mr. Castro also got rid of another dictator named Batista.

Does my colleague really not know that for some, Castro was a liberator of the people, while for others he was an oppressor?

The Bloc Québécois wishes to offer its condolences to the Cuban people.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, what happened 60 years ago is one thing, and what he did for 60 years is quite another.

While the member is bringing up Nelson Mandela, I wish to remind her that if there is ever a country in the world that stood out for its leadership in fighting apartheid in South Africa, it is Canada, and it was under Brian Mulroney's leadership that Canada managed to persuade the entire world that apartheid was unacceptable. I am sorry, but in the hierarchy of influential figures in the fight against apartheid, Fidel Castro is far behind the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is a spirited orator. There is no question about that. However, he would do well to pay more attention to historical fact.

There was a prime minister named John Diefenbaker. I take it my colleagues have heard of him. He was a Conservative. He refused U.S. demands to break relations with Cuba after the Castro regime came to power in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Batista regime.

He also refused to put Canadian troops on combat-ready alert, despite the fact that the Kennedy administration asked for this during the Cuban missile crisis.

More recently, Brian Mulroney engaged in warm and friendly relations with Cuba, as did Stephen Harper toward the end of his tenure.

I wonder if my hon. colleague would comment on this record of Conservative leadership?

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question and I salute the NDP member from Saskatchewan that he spoke of, his grandfather, who was a victim of the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker's popularity. However, as we say back home, we see that the apple has not fallen far from the tree.

With regard to Mr. Diefenbaker, we have to consider the context of the times. The decisions in 1958, 1959, 1960, and 1962 were made in a particular context.

However, the context of last Sunday, when it was the month of November 2016 and we were well aware of all the crimes against humanity committed by Mr. Castro, would allow many things, but not the description of "remarkable leader".

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great honour to rise in this august institution and speak. For the folks back home who are wondering just what the heck is going on in Parliament today, it is Thursday afternoon and it is the time of the month when the Conservatives have to release the pressure valve, let all of the backbenchers off the chain, let them run around, howl at the moon, pound their chests, light the big bonfire, and throw red meat to their base.

Today, for people watching, we are now back in the cold war. The cold war is a place the Conservatives love to be. Those were glory days for the Conservatives. The fact that the world has moved on means they are a little lost. They need something. This is their day to bring an issue of great importance to Canadians. For folks back home, all Parliament stops today so the Conservatives can bring forward a motion. It is the right of the opposition—New Democrats do it—to have a debate on an issue of substance.

*Business of Supply*

The folks back home whom I represent would probably want us to talk about the pension crisis. That would be a good debate here. There is the fact that many families that I represent do not have doctors. A lot of that is provincial, but with the health accord and the transfers, that is a debate we could have here. People are deeply concerned about the brutal bombing in Aleppo and the role Canada could play. That would be a matter for debate in the House. However, the Conservatives figure they have a gotcha moment on the Prime Minister, so they will have a special debate to re-fight the cold war in order to try to embarrass the Prime Minister of this country.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, by the way.

It is not my job to defend the Prime Minister on any given day, although people on the other side probably know I am always more than fair, more than reasonable, and more than willing to bend myself into a pretzel to understand some of the inane comments I have heard. However, I am not going to lose any sleep over his comments on Mr. Castro.

I listened to the Conservatives invoking Marco Rubio, of all people, saying we should be outraged. I do not know; I may classify myself as one of the few Canadians who has actually never visited Cuba. Everybody else I know goes to Cuba all the time. They tell me about the Havana nightlife and the great people, but the Conservatives make it seem as though they are flying into some kind of death camp. The only reason I have not visited Cuba is that I do not deal with a warm climate very well, being a northern boy.

I was listening to the Conservatives invoking Marco Rubio, of all people: if Marco Rubio is upset, Canadian people should be upset. One of the statements that was made on the day of Castro's death was, "Upon receiving the sad news of the death,...I express my sentiments of sorrow to...family members of [Mr. Castro]". The Pope said that. Pope Francis did not mind saying something nice about the guy, so if Pope Francis said something nice about the guy, let him rest in peace.

We have more important things to talk about here than the legacy of Castro and the Bay of Pigs and the legacy of the cold war. We have issues that have to be dealt with. If we are going to get to whether the Prime Minister should have said a little more this way or a little more that way, I am not the kind of guy who loses too much sleep over prime ministers or politicians speaking off the top of their head. If they are in front of a microphone 24 hours a day, they are going to say some stuff and get called out. That is fair play.

I am more interested when people make statements that are supposed to mean something and they do not actually live up to them. That is when I think debate should happen. For example, I remember the Prime Minister, when he was in the third party, saying 2015 will be the last election using the first-past-the-post system. He was not equivocating; he was as clear as could be.

Now Liberals are saying that all of the work of the all-party committee, which was told by the Prime Minister to go across the country, was too rushed, too radical, unnecessarily hasty. Then we had the disgrace in the House this afternoon when the Minister of Democratic Institutions insulted the work of politicians and

Canadians who participated in those hearings, saying they did not work hard enough. That is what I would hold the Prime Minister to account on.

We have a tradition in the House. It is this old gentlemen's club and, now that there are women in the House, there are gentlewomen. It is very unparliamentary to ever accuse someone of lying. We can never do that, but it seems perfectly parliamentary to lie, because someone could say that maybe the member misunderstood.

• (1625)

We need to call the Prime Minister out on promises that he made, that he told people he would keep, and that he had no intention of keeping; for example, on democratic reform, and on cash for access.

The Prime Minister's mandate letters to his ministers said not just to follow the law but to go above it, and they were under the Conflict of Interest Act. Now they are saying that every other party has done it.

For all the years I have been in Parliament, no one on the Conservative side ever once said that I took their side. However, when Bev Oda tried a cash for access scheme, she gave the money back. The Conservatives knew it was wrong and they gave the money back.

It might be the finance minister. Maybe he believes that actually being in a billionaire's living room and getting paid \$1,500 might be democratic consulting. Maybe it is just the way he thinks.

God forbid I should say great things about Jim Flaherty. Jim Flaherty and I went at it like brass knuckles, but he was a democrat. He knew what meeting people was about. We disagreed on a lot of stuff, but Jim Flaherty did not need to raise his money sitting in a corporate boardroom with six or 12 friends paying \$1,500. There is something wrong with that. That makes people cynical. When the Prime Minister promises to do better, he has to do better.

I am thinking mostly about what he said to the residential school survivors. I was there when he said:

Moving forward, one of our goals is to help lift this burden from your shoulders, from those of your families, and from your communities. It is to accept fully our responsibilities...as government....

Yet, this week, the justice minister was in court trying to overthrow a ruling of compensation to a child survivor of sexual abuse. The government, the feminist government, said that a residential school survivor had to prove intent of an adult. There is no legal standard in the world that accepts that, except when it is applied against Indian people.

Last month, the Minister of Justice tried to throw out a case. The Ontario Superior Court called it a perverse misapplication of justice on a child who was raped in a residential school but could not remember the date, and the justice department believes it can have that case thrown out.

*Business of Supply*

We had the Department of Justice knowingly suppressing thousands of pages of police testimony. When it was forced to hand over the documents, it took out the names of the perpetrators, including a serial pedophile at St. Anne's Residential School who abused children for 40 years. The person who came forward for compensation had the case thrown out because the Department of Justice had that thrown out.

I go back to this again and again, because either we have one set of laws in our country or we do not. That the justice minister believes they can undermine and establish a second set of rights for Indian people in this country is absolutely appalling and is a breach of all legal duty.

I was there when the Prime Minister made that promise. I teared up. I believed him, Canadians believed him, and the residential school survivors believed him. There are many promises the Prime Minister made, and he made them with full heart, and people trusted him

I could talk about Bill C-51. The Liberals did not like it, then they were afraid not to vote for it, and then they said "Don't worry, elect us and we'll change it". Nothing happened.

They talked about a nation-to-nation relationship, and the justice minister said Site C did not meet the standards and ran roughshod over aboriginal title, and they approved it anyway. A politician's word has to mean something.

We are having a lot of fun today debating something that I do not think most Canadians are going to care much about tomorrow, or the day after, or probably even after the debate is over, but we have issues that we need to debate in the House. The debate has to be about how we start talking in a way that Canadians can start to trust us.

With all due respect to my Conservative colleagues, they are having a lot of fun. They are taking the pressure off. They are feeding red meat to their backbenchers. They are howling at the moon, jumping up and down, beating their chests, and denouncing the reds and the commies. In fact, I have not been called a Bolshevik yet, but I am sure that is coming too. That is all right. Meanwhile, we will get back to work.

Yes, I will be taking numbers on that one.

• (1630)

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the motion is not about the cold war nostalgia. The motion is very much about current events, the events of this past week.

The member spent quite a bit of time in his speech talking about the importance of credibility, and the credibility of the Prime Minister. My hon. friend called out the Prime Minister, rightly, for his lack of credibility on a variety of issues. I thank him for doing so.

Does the member not agree that the eulogy the Prime Minister delivered on behalf of the Canadian people upon the death of Fidel Castro compromises his own credibility when he is on the world stage on a variety of issues, including as an advocate for democracy, human rights, and values that Canadians hold dear?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, if we are looking at the Prime Minister damaging his credibility on human rights, then we could talk about his deal with the Saudi Arabians.

The Saudi Arabia human rights commission rubber stamped the mass killings last January of a series of dissidents and said that it was perfectly legal. It met on Parliament Hill and we flew its flag. To me, that damages our credibility on the international stage. If we cannot deal with terror regimes like that, which are killing people now, then all of these other issues that we talk about mean nothing.

I understand that the Minister of Status of Women met as well with members of the commission. She wanted to talk with them about how women and girls would be agents of change in Saudi Arabia. Is that not ridiculous? This is like making pusillanimous a party policy when it comes to dealing with international dictators.

With all due respect, we can debate back and forth what happened in Cuba, but deals are being made with the Liberal government and a pusillanimous attitude toward killers and state repression needs to be called out for the benefit of all Canadians.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was obviously amused and perhaps even supportive of some of the earlier comments made by a member opposite with regard to the rhetoric coming from the other side and the absolute lack of focus on issues facing Canadians.

However, I heard two things from the member opposite and I would like some clarification on them.

The first point is the deal with Saudi Arabia. If we look at the campaign platform of the New Democrats in the last campaign and at the comments made by the member for London—Fanshawe, the NDP promised to fulfill that contract as a commitment to voters in London—Fanshawe and across the country in exactly the same words that the Liberal Party did. Are those members now flip-flopping on that promise?

Second, the New Democrats seem to have listed a number of our other campaign promises around truth and reconciliation or in advancing social agendas related to housing and CPP. Which of those would they like us to achieve faster and how would they help us?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, on truth and reconciliation, the Prime Minister made a promise to enact it. It does not need speed. It needs moral courage, which is lacking.

The House voted just two weeks ago, forcing the government to agree to move the \$155 million in child welfare. It has not moved it and it will not move it because that motion also told them to stop fighting children in court, which the Liberals are doing.

*Business of Supply*

The fact that the Liberal government spent \$500,000 so far fighting Cindy Blackstock shows a lack of moral courage. The fact that the justice minister goes to court and says that a child who was raped should have the case thrown out by the Ontario Superior Court because the child cannot remember the date shows a lack of moral courage. This is not something we need years to plan or prioritize over urban transit or rural strategy. It is about moral courage. It is lacking on the issue of truth and reconciliation and it is breach and it has to be addressed.

● (1635)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, International Trade; the hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend, Employment; the hon. member for Essex, International Trade.

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this motion today. It is part of a regrettable tendency I see of both the Liberals and the Conservatives in the House to try to make partisan hay out of foreign affairs questions.

If we are going to discuss foreign policy on a Thursday afternoon in the House, there are many important issues we could be discussing. We could be discussing the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo. We could be discussing the aggressive foreign policy of Russia in eastern Europe or even in the Arctic. On World AIDS Day, we could be discussing the very encouraging prospect of the eradication of HIV and AIDS in the next 30 years due to the efforts of the global fund to fight HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. On a similar topic, we could be discussing how homophobia in Tanzania has caused that government to end the crucial community HIV/AIDS programs, which are crucial to achieving the goal of eradication. Instead, we are debating something that to me sounds a bit like the old Cold War, apart from having a mention of people like me in it, which would not have happened at that time.

No matter how valid the concerns it raises, I am also not supporting this specific motion because it suggests no action on the human rights situation in Cuba. Having called out Cuba, rightfully, for being a serious human rights violator, there is nothing in this motion that talks about how Canada could work to improve the situation in Cuba, to use our influence to help Cubans who are also concerned about human rights make progress in their own country. There is nothing of that. This is tit for tat, hit for hit, partisan political posturing in the motion.

In my remarks about Castro, I will strike what I would call a middle path between the statement of the Prime Minister, who forgot to include reference to a lack of democracy and human rights, which of course he has done before in his reference to Chinese leaders when he has forgotten that they may be efficient but not democratic, and somewhere in between when it comes to the Conservatives, who only see a great villain in Fidel Castro.

Without forgetting that lack of democracy and severe repression of human rights are a fact in Cuba, let us acknowledge the significant accomplishments of Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution. They overthrew a corrupt and brutal regime led by Batista and brought about significant social development in the face of constant threats,

including invasion by the United States and a decades-long blockade.

There is no doubt about Cuba's domestic accomplishments. Cuba has what is perhaps the highest literacy rate in the entire world at 99.8%. It has probably the highest immunization rate for children. Ninety-eight per cent of children by the age of two have been vaccinated against 13 illnesses, a far better record than Canada. Ninety-five per cent of the women in Cuba receive prenatal care, a far better record than either Canada or the United States. Cuba has among the lowest rates of maternal and infant mortality in the entire world. It also now has achieved one of the lowest rates of HIV infection through its very extensive and active community education programs. It has built impressive medical, research, and teaching facilities.

This medical revolution took place not just for Cubans domestically when it came to health, but through significant, what Cubans like to call, medical internationalism. Cuba offers free medical education to students from poor countries. Much more significant right now in a Canada where we have very high pharmaceutical prices and we talk about the impact of trade deals, Cuba produces quality pharmaceuticals and HIV/AIDS antiretrovirals and sells them to Africa at the lowest prices possible.

Indeed, internationalism was an important part of Castro's world view. Under his guidance, Cuba sent doctors, scientists, teachers, and construction workers to Africa, especially to Ethiopia and Angola in the 1970s and 1980s.

All of these accomplishments, domestic and international, are among the reasons many people in Cuba and many around the world hold Castro in high regard.

Unfortunately, I cannot join them. Cuba has historically and currently a terrible human rights record. On any scale, Cuba ranks as the least democratic country in the Americas. This too is part of Castro's legacy. This human rights record was established in the 1960s, a record of arbitrary arrests and detentions, surveillance and beatings, and loss of employment for anyone who disagreed with the government. Unfortunately, these very same practices continue today. This too is part of Castro's legacy.

When it comes to the LGBTQ community, Cuba's record has been among the most appalling in the world.

● (1640)

Yes, 1960s Cuba was part of the Americas, where people like me were nowhere treated with dignity or respect. However, to understand the circumstances is not to forgive or forget the record of Cuba.

The public ostentation law, which allowed for the arrest of people who publicly exhibited, as the phrase went, their homosexuality, pre-existed Castro, but it was enforced throughout the 1960s. In fact, for three years, anyone who was publicly known to be gay was sent to a group that was called military units to aid production. These were re-education and forced labour camps.



*Business of Supply*

In the exodus from Cuba that occurred from April to September 1980 from the Port of Mariel near Havana, organized by Jimmy Carter, more than 125,000 Cubans fled. A very large proportion of those were from the LGBTQ community, many released from prison by Castro so they could be expelled as part of that exodus.

Probably second only to that is the record from 1980 to 1993. Cuba had what it called a quarantine for anyone who was HIV positive. This was not only a problem for gay Cubans, but anyone who contracted the virus, whether sex workers or drug addicts. They were placed in what were called sanitariums. International observers at the time said that this was simply a euphemism, that these were simply pretty prisons.

There was a break in 1986 when most of the legal prohibitions on homosexuality were removed, apart from the HIV quarantine, which carried on until 1993. Again, that was not exclusively a problem for the gay community.

Since then, we have seen Castro's niece, Raúl Castro's daughter Mariela, leading reform on LGBT rights in Cuba, but we should not be deceived. Cuba still does not allow any independent HIV organizations, any independent gay and lesbian organizations in Cuba. There is only the official organizations to which individuals must belong if they wish to be active in the community on these issues. Yes, things have improved, but that basic democracy, that basic human right is not present in Cuba.

I am one of those people who visited Cuba. It was not possible for me to do much as a tourist, but I did encounter LGBT community members. They expressed their great fear of even talking to me at the time because they still risked being imprisoned, arbitrarily arrested and detained. There is still a ways to go and people should not be fooled by the official adoption of LGBTQ rights because it is in the context where there are no democratic rights.

When we look at Fidel Castro, I do see great accomplishments of the revolution, but I will also never forget the human rights records and, in particular, the treatment of my own community.

Back to how we spend our time in the House. Perhaps there is some usefulness in this kind of debate, but as I said at the beginning, in any motion like this I would like to see some indication of how we as the Canadian House of Commons can promote human rights in Cuba. What can we do in terms of our aid programs? What can we do in terms of the inter-American human rights organizations in providing support to them? What can we do as parliamentarians to ensure progress is made toward a democratic Cuba? The social progress has been great, but the democratic process is yet to take place. I would prefer, as I said several times now, that we were debating how to do that and not what the Prime Minister said versus what the Conservative backbenchers say today about Fidel Castro. Not a perfect man, not a perfect villain is what I have to say today.

I hope in the future days like this will be used in more constructive ways to talk about how Canadians can help us solve the most perplexing conflicts in international human rights and how we can move forward in concert with others who care very deeply about human rights.

• (1645)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I well know my colleague's concern about human rights, because we had the opportunity to work together on the Parliamentary Friends of Tibet.

The member talked about the importance of having a solutions-oriented approach, and I completely agree with that. Would he also agree that part of the solution is for leaders to speak with a degree of moral clarity in regard to other countries and to be willing to call out in a very clear way human rights abuses?

This is an important part of, let us say, punching through the leader myth that a lot of these types of totalitarian states rely on. They rely on this sort of mythology of the leader being in some sense superhuman.

Is it not part of the solution for us to use the opportunities we have to speak clearly about the realities of the human rights abuses that take place? Would that not contribute constructively to encouraging and supporting the reform movement in Cuba?

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to work with the member on the Canada-Tibet committee. As an aside, for many years I was not involved in Tibet solidarity work, until the Dalai Lama changed his position on homosexuality. Once he did, then I felt I could help work toward democracy in Tibet. However, Cuba still has a way to go to win my full support.

If the member is really talking about how to make progress in Canada's international relations, then, yes, these dialogues have to include an honest assessment of the situation. However, do I believe that is what the member's party has put forward today? No, I do not.

The member's party is calling out the Prime Minister for what I believe is a faulty statement. I say that his statement was incomplete. It was a mistake to state only the positives without any qualification in his original statement. However, spending an afternoon debating a statement is not the best use of our time in the House.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments by the member across the way and would add that it would have been nice to have a debate about the people of Cuba and how we might be able to move forward on a number of different fronts.

Canada has foreign investment promotion and protection agreements and often has trade agreements. Does the member have any thoughts on whether or not Canada's moving in that direction with Cuba would be in both countries' best interests, believing that if we strengthen that relationship, we will have more influence with respect to human rights?

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused by the question. Is it the Conservatives or the Liberals over there, because the Conservatives' answer to everything was free trade agreements, and now it seems as if the Liberals' answer to everything is free trade agreements too.

What I would say about free trade agreements, looking at the record of Cuba, which provides pharmaceuticals at cost to Africa, is that if we were to enter any kind of trade agreement with Cuba, I am sure that Cuba would demand that we do something about the high pharmaceutical prices in Canada and not sign other trade agreements that would only make pharmaceuticals more and more out of reach for many seniors in our society.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for a balanced, thoughtful, and well-researched presentation. I was particularly taken with his description of the LGBTQ issues that have arisen in that country.

I would like the member's comments on the potentially negative impact of a politicized approach to foreign affairs debates of this kind resulting from the Conservatives' motion. What better way could the House proceed in promoting human rights in Cuba?

• (1650)

**Mr. Randall Garrison:** Mr. Speaker, I think that is the point I tried to make in my speech today. It is a solutions-oriented approach to foreign affairs, in which we look at the things we can do to make things better. No, we cannot solve all of the problems in the world as Canada alone, but we have always punched above our weight on the international scene, and that is because we focused on solutions.

We did not focus on calling people out, name-calling, and debate just for the sake of scoring points against each other. What we focused on in the international scene, and what I hope we focus on here, is finding those ways we can move forward.

We may disagree, but are there points of agreement that we can work toward that will make things better for ordinary people both here in Canada and abroad?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Leonardo Notario Gongora, age 27; Marta Tacoronte Vega, age 36; Caridad Leyva Tacoronte, age 36; Yausel Eugenio Perez Tacoronte, age 11; Mayulis Mendez Tacoronte, age 17; Odalys Munoz Garda, age 21; Pilar Almanza Romero, age 30; Yaser Perodin Almanza, age 11; Manuel Sanchez Callol, age 58; Juliana Enriquez Carrasana, age 23; and Helen Martinez Enriquez, age six months.

The event that provoked this motion was the Prime Minister's glowing tribute to Fidel Castro and his shameful and yet shameless parroting of the Castro propaganda about education and health care.

Reynaldo Marrero, age 45; Joel Garcia Suarez, age 24; Juan Mario Gutierrez Garda, age 10; Ernesto Alfonso Joureiro, age 25; Amado Gonzales Raices; Lazaro Borges Priel, age 34; Liset Alvarez Guerra, age 24; Yisel Borges Alvarez, age four; Guillermo Cruz Martinez, age 46; Fidelia Ramel Prieta-Hernandez, age 51; Rosa Maria Alcalde Preig, age 47; Yaltamira Anaya Carrasco, age 22; Jose Carlos Nicole Anaya, age three; Maria Carrasco Anaya, age 44; Julia

Caridad Ruiz Blanco, age 35; and Angel Rene Abreu Ruiz, age three.

The Prime Minister called Castro a “legendary revolutionary and orator” who made significant improvements to education and health care. He said “both Mr. Castro's supporters and detractors recognized his tremendous dedication and love for the Cuban people”.

Jorge Arquimides; Lebrijio Flores, age 8; Eduardo Suarez Esquivel, age 39; Elicer Suarez Plascencia; Omar Rodriguez Suarez, age 33; Mira Iis Fernandez Rodriguez, age 28; Cindy Rodriguez Fernandez, age two; Jose Gregorio Balmaceda Castillo, age 24; Rigoberto Feut Gonzales, age 31; Midalis Sanabria Cabrera, age 19; and four others who could not be identified.

It is a matter of public record that the Cuban dictatorship has driven a full one-fifth of the population to flee or die trying. Medicines are scarce and reading materials must be pre-approved. If people would like education to involve a complete lack of ideological flexibility, and health care without proper medicines or facilities, then they might like Cuba's situation, but not otherwise. It is a further matter of public record that any claims about education and health care rely entirely on data provided by the Cuban government. People cannot exactly file an ATIP.

By the way, I will be splitting my time with the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

The Prime Minister called Castro “legendary”, which is perhaps an apt adjective, if by “legendary” he means that the stories told about him do not at all resemble the realities.

The many crimes of Fidel Castro and the Cuban state are too numerous to describe in one speech, but I want to tell about one in particular. The names that I have read thus far are men, women, and children who lost their lives aboard the *13 de Marzo* on July 13, 1994.

Let me read verbatim from the report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Reports, Report No. 47/96:

On July 13, 1994, at approximately 3:00 a.m., 72 Cuban nationals who were attempting to leave the island for the United States put out to sea from the port of Havana in an old tugboat named “13 de Marzo”. The boat used for the escape belonged to the Maritime Services Enterprise of the Ministry of Transportation.

According to eyewitnesses who survived the disaster, no sooner had the tug “13 de Marzo” set off from the Cuban port than two boats from the same state enterprise began pursuing it. About 45 minutes into the trip, when the tug was seven miles away from the Cuban coast—in a place known as “La Poceta”—two other boats belonging to said enterprise appeared, equipped with tanks and water hoses, proceeded to attack the old tug. “Polargo 2/1 one of the boats belonging to the Cuban state enterprise, blocked the old tug “13 de Marzo” in the front, while the other, “Polargo 5/1 attacked from behind, splitting the stern. The two other government boats positioned themselves on either side and sprayed everyone on deck with pressurized water, using their hoses.

The pleas of the women and children on the deck of the tug “13 de Marzo” did nothing to stop the attack. The boat sank, with a toll of 41 dead. Many people perished because the jets of water directed at everyone on deck forced them to seek refuge in the engine room. The survivors also affirmed that the crews of the four Cuban government boats were dressed in civilian clothes and that they did not help them when they were sinking.

*Business of Supply*

● (1655)

Later, Cuban Coast Guard cutters arrived and rescued 31 survivors. After being rescued, the survivors were taken to the Cuban Coast guard post of Jaimanitas, which is located west of Havana. From there, they were taken to the Villa Marista Detention Center, which also serves as State Security Headquarters. The women and children were released and the men were held.

In the days following the tragedy, relatives of the victims who had drowned asked the Cuban authorities to recover the bodies from the bottom of the sea. The official response was that there were no special divers available to recover the bodies.

The nonprofit organization “Hermanos al Rescate” (Brothers to the Rescue)—which is dedicated to rescuing Cuban boat people trying to escape from the island—asked the Cuban Government for permission to fly over the spot where the events took place, to help recover the bodies, but the request was immediately denied. To date, none of the drowning victims' bodies has been recovered by the Cuban authorities, despite the fact that the sinking of the tug “13 de Marzo” occurred in Cuban territorial waters.

I raised the issue of the Prime Minister's comments in the House for the first time on Monday. The foreign affairs minister told me that he wants to help the people of Cuba to be united instead of agonizing over the past. I am quite sure that the minister would not be so dismissive of those agonizing over the past if it had been one of his children on board the *13 de Marzo*, a boatful of unarmed men, women, and children intentionally sunk by the Cuban state authorities in Cuban territorial waters, who made no effort to rescue the drowning civilians, who imprisoned the male survivors, and who did not allow the recovery of the bodies.

It is right and necessary to agonize over the past. Indeed, immediately beside the Prime Minister's statement regarding Castro on his website is a statement regarding Holodomor Memorial Day. We remember the Holodomor and we must learn its lessons in the present and the future. We must similarly remember not just the past but the ongoing crimes of the Castro family and the Cuban state, a state the very nature of which stands in stark opposition to the foundational covenants of international law, and of international decency.

The Prime Minister has three beautiful children, and I do not think he would say the things he has said about Fidel Castro if one of them had been on the *13 de Marzo* on July 13, 1994. In praising Castro, he spoke about family ties, but love for one's family is only a decent thing when it flows into a broader love of humanity that emanates from empathy. The essence of a minimally moral foreign policy is that every time he stands up to speak about issues that impact the lives and well-being of children in other countries, that he then imagine those children to be his own.

However, across the board this government's foreign policy fails that moral test. There is the failure to defend Yazidis and Christians in Syria and Iraq. That is well known, but there are a litany of other cases where the government has also ignored basic human rights. For instance, as we speak, China is cracking down on religious minorities: Uighur Muslims in East Turkestan, and Tibetans Buddhists in Tibet, as well as Christians, and Falun Gong practitioners. That is what we call “China's basic dictatorship”, and shame on the PMO for refusing to call out China's so-called justice system.

For these Liberals, as they cozy up to dictators around the world, it is very clear that human rights is just a slogan. They speak of engagement, but there has been no meaningful engagement on

human rights issues with these dictatorships with whom they are so eager to curry favour.

On every major international human rights file, the government is completely missing in action. It is because this foreign policy of the government is not rooted in morality or empathy, but very clearly rooted in self-interest. It wants to cozy up to dictators who will give them votes in the UN Security Council election. The Liberals call this sophisticated diplomacy.

However, there are some things in life and there are some things in politics that are more important than a Security Council election. Very clearly, on this side of the House, we will not become the useful idiots of foreign tyrants, not for this price, and not for any price. Canada is so much better than this.

● (1700)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would call former Prime Minister Stephen Harper a “useful idiot”, based on the comments that that Prime Minister made not that long ago, in January 2015.

Maybe the question should be related to that. We hear a lot of rhetoric coming from the Conservatives today. Unfortunately, I believe the debate would have been far better if we had been talking about Cuba and the people of Cuba, and ways in which we as a nation could be helping Cuba and its people.

Could the member explain to us why, when Stephen Harper made comments on the passing of a dictator, it was okay? I have read those comments into the record. I know the member is aware of it. However, when it is this Prime Minister, somehow it is different. A lot of things come to my mind, but it is unparliamentary for me to say it. Would the member not apply the same thought pattern to former Prime Minister Stephen Harper as he is applying to this particular Prime Minister?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak specifically about the member's comments with respect to Stephen Harper's comments on the passing of the king of Saudi Arabia. I have been very critical in various fora about the human rights issues in Saudi Arabia, as have many people on my side of the House.

A number of things are distinct about the situation. First, Prime Minister Harper's comments were not in any way nearly as glowing as the Prime Minister's comments were about Fidel Castro. There is no comparison. Further to that, the Saudi state has many different elements to it and centres of power within it. It is not the monolith, in terms of levels of control, that exists in the Cuban state. It is right to call out the problems of human rights with respect to Saudi Arabia, but that is not to say that there is the same centralization of those abuses in Saudi Arabia as there clearly exists in Cuba.

The member wants to know what it takes to help the people of Cuba. There are many things that we can do to help the people of Cuba and I think there is agreement that there needs to be some level of engagement—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member is taking a little too much time. We have five minutes and will try to fit in at least one more question.

*Business of Supply*

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan's effort to defend the Saudi regime, but I want to bring this discussion back to Cuba. I would ask if he acknowledges that one of the reasons for the lack of medical technology and economic opportunity in Cuba is the crippling American economic embargo and whether he sees a role for Canada in trying to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member, I do, but I think he embarrassed himself by misstating my comments so grossly. To suggest that I, at any point, defended the Saudis is utter nonsense. My comments are clear on the record and I would appreciate it if the member explored opportunities for withdrawing that comment, because it is particularly absurd given that he knows where I stand and what I have said repeatedly about the Saudi regime. That does not mean we cannot have a nuanced conversation about the differences in terms of state structure while still being very clear about that.

With respect to the embargo, nobody in my party has defended the embargo. I do not think the embargo has been effective, but that is not a comment about the Cuban regime, of course. That is merely a comment about the effective mechanisms for responding.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the truly appalling comments made by the Prime Minister on the death of the brutal dictator Fidel Castro. These comments must be rejected by the House of Commons today to at least save face with the international community and to avoid continued mockery of our country.

To quote from an article in the most recent issue of *Maclean's* magazine it said, regarding our illustrious Prime Minister, he turned “from cool to laughing stock”.

In this day and age of serious international diplomacy, how can we expect Canada to be taken seriously, given the Prime Minister's shallow and callous statements about the brutal dictator Fidel Castro?

Instead of paying homage to Castro, we should be supporting the people of Cuba, defending human rights and the rule of law, and assisting them however we can.

I want to point out that although the statement was ostensibly made on behalf of all Canadians, to quote the statement directly, the Prime Minister's words lauding the despotic dictator Fidel Castro certainly did not reflect my views, or the views of millions of others. The Prime Minister could have consulted anyone and realized that his fondness for Castro was certainly ill-advised. This lack of judgment is deeply concerning to many Canadians and, now, thanks to the notoriety of his statement, much of the world.

However, as they say, “the apple does not fall far from the tree”. It is well known that the Prime Minister's father, whom he referenced in his statement, revered Castro, and even considered himself a close friend of the Cuban dictator; but that does not sufficiently whitewash Castro's brutal history of control.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau had a fondness for dictators which belied his reputation, unearned in my view, as a supporter of democracy. He was certainly not.

In a March 2011 *National Post* article, entitled “The Disastrous Legacy of Pierre Trudeau”, David Frum writes:

Pierre Trudeau opted not to serve in World War II, although of age and in good health. He travelled to Josef Stalin's Soviet Union to participate in regime-sponsored propaganda activities. He wrote in praise of Mao's murderous regime in China. Trudeau lavishly admired Fidel Castro, Julius Nyerere, and other Third World dictators. The Soviet dissident Andrei Amalrik scathingly recalled Trudeau's 1971 prime ministerial visit: Trudeau visited the Siberian city of Norilsk and lamented that Canada had never succeeded in building so large a city so far north—unaware, or unconcerned, that Norilsk had been built by slave labor.

In that same article, Frum describes Pierre Trudeau's support for the brutal military crackdown in Poland that crushed the Solidarity movement.

Frum writes:

It's telling I think that Trudeau came to the edge of endorsing the communist coup against Solidarity in Poland in December 1981. Hours after the coup, Pierre Trudeau said: “If martial law is a way to avoid civil war and Soviet intervention, then I cannot say it is all bad.” He added “Hopefully the military regime will be able to keep Solidarity from excessive demands.”

Can members imagine that? Solidarity was asking for freedom and the former prime minister saw that as something that was not right.

The violent suppression of true freedom fighters was something that Pierre Trudeau shared with Fidel Castro.

I am of Czech extraction and I was part of the Czech community in Winnipeg, in 1968. My grey hair and grey beard prove that I have been around a fair bit. I remember, in 1968, Czechoslovak refugees coming to Winnipeg and what that meant to us. I was a fairly young person then and I did not quite appreciate the significance of that event.

We had the kind and gentle Alexander Dubcek trying to peacefully wrest Czechoslovakia from the iron grip of the Soviet Union, and that was brutally suppressed.

In Czechoslovakia, my father's birthplace, they were so fortunate to have Václav Havel and the velvet revolution, again, peacefully tearing Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic and Slovakia, away from the iron grip of the Soviet Union.

What did Castro say in 1968, in a speech in Havana, regarding the Soviet Union invasion of Czechoslovakia?

He said, “I wish to quickly make the first important statement that we considered Czechoslovakia to be heading toward a counter-revolutionary situation, toward capitalism and into the arms of imperialism. This is the operative concept in our first position toward the specific fact of the action taken by a group of socialist countries. That is, we consider that it was unavoidable to prevent this from happening—at any cost, in one way or another... As long as the Soviet Union was capable of permitting the breeze of freedom that blew in Czechoslovakia, the world had the impression that finally the large nations, the captains of the blocs, were playing in a more tolerant manner than with the automatism of military interventions. But the panorama brutally and unexpectedly changed. The brunt of Soviet violence was brought to bear against the Czechoslovak attempt to practise freedom.”

● (1705)

Fidel Castro had a long history of supporting dictatorships, and our Prime Minister lauds him as one of his family's best friends.

What of our current Prime Minister's views on repressive regimes? In 2013, the current prime minister participated in a question and answer session. The Liberal leader was asked which nation he admired most. He responded, “There's a level of admiration I actually have for China. Their basic dictatorship is actually allowing them to turn their economy around on a dime”. Of course now with inflation and dealing with Chinese billionaires, that dime has turned to a \$1-million gift to the family foundation.

Lenin and Stalin had a word for the western apologists of communism. They called them the useful idiots. The phrase “useful idiot”, supposedly Lenin's, refers to westerners duped into saying good things about bad regimes. Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin used the term “*polyezniy idiot*” or “useful idiot” to describe sympathizers in the west who blindly supported communist leaders. Well, if the shoe fits, wear it.

Fidel Castro, destroyed or affected, through mass execution, mass incarcerations, mass larceny, and exile, virtually every family on the island of Cuba. Simply put, he was a brutal dictator who, over the course of 60 years, callously affected the lives of thousands of innocent people. His treatment of the gay community was particularly egregious.

Castro was not able to execute or jail all Cubans of course. One-fifth of all Cubans left the country during Castro's time in power, including entrepreneurs and intellectuals, many of whom risked their lives as my colleague so eloquently described. Those of course are likely the ones we saw parading in the streets of Little Havana in Miami once they heard of Castro's death.

One has to wonder how our Prime Minister could be so out of touch not to realize the reasons those Cubans who escaped the iron grip of Castro were celebrating in the streets. Instead, he was dreaming up ways to conceal and whitewash Castro's despicable history.

The statement from the Prime Minister completely disregarded that Fidel Castro was a brutal dictator with an atrocious record of human rights abuses and in 2008, he supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine. None of this is secret, yet the Prime Minister thought he would get away with glossing over 60 years of murderous reign by

### *Business of Supply*

stating that Castro was a “controversial figure”. It is shocking, disturbing, and embarrassing for Canada. Instead of offering support to the Cuban people, an olive branch of assistance, he chose to recognize the fact that Castro was the “longest serving President”, although I do not recall there being an election during that time, and that he was “a legendary revolutionary and orator”. I quoted from some of his famous oratory. The more I talk about it, the more I cannot believe that anybody, never mind our Prime Minister, had the lack of judgment to release such a statement.

Aside from the Prime Minister's comments' making us look foolish on the world stage, I am concerned about the larger ramifications for our foreign and trade policy. Global relations are delicate, and international trade partnerships are interconnected with multiple issues. The president-elect Trump has made it clear he wants to tackle international trade issues. We can all recognize he and his administration are going to be tough customers to deal with. We do not need to make it any harder on ourselves heading into negotiations. There are responses from many American senators, Marco Rubio being one of them. He is of Cuban descent and he took to Twitter to question whether our Prime Minister's statement was real or a parody; and said that if it was real it was shameful and embarrassing.

Why would we care what a Florida senator thinks? He is one of the group of 25 influential senators fighting for the United States to take action against Canada as part of the softwood lumber negotiations. I have a feeling that statements from the Prime Minister that anger Senator Rubio and thousands of his constituents will not build goodwill toward a fair softwood lumber deal.

In closing, the statement from the Prime Minister was inexcusable. It was inappropriate, and embarrassed Canada on the world stage. Not only did it not do anything to give hope to the people of Cuba, it attempted to gloss over 50 dreadful years of communist dictatorship. I would urge the House to adopt this motion before us today and help bring some dignity back to Canada. Further, I hope that, moving forward, the Prime Minister can think more about ensuring Canada's best interests, and less about honouring his family's past affairs with dictators when making statements on our behalf.

● (1710)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:15 p.m. and this being the final supply day in the period ending December 10, 2016, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is the following one. Shall I dispense?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

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

*Business of Supply*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Call in the members.

• (1755)

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

*(Division No. 161)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Arnold	Barlow
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher	Brassard
Brown	Calkins
Clarke	Clement
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Egliniski	Falk
Fast	Gallant
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lebel
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwiski	MacKenzie
Maguire	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Paul-Hus
Poillievre	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shiple
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Trost	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 82

## NAYS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Aubin

Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bennett
Benson	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Choquette
Christopherson	Cornier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeCourcey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Donnelly
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Foote
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Garrison	Gerretsen
Gill	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Johns	Jolibois
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Kwan	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malcolmson
Maloney	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCallum
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Moore	Morrissey
Mulcair	Nantel
Nassif	Nault
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Pauzé	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Rankin
Ratansy	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Rota

*Business of Supply*

Rudd  
Rusnak  
Sahota  
Sajjan  
Sangha  
Sarai  
Schiefke  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)  
Sikand  
Sorbara  
Ste-Marie  
Tabbara  
Tassi  
Tootoo  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Weir  
Wilkinson  
Young

Ruimy  
Saganash  
Saini  
Samson  
Sansoucy  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Spengemann  
Stetski  
Tan  
Thériault  
Trudel  
Vandenbeld  
Virani  
Whalen  
Wilson-Raybould  
Zahid — 218

Bennett  
Bibeau  
Blaikie  
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)  
Bossio  
Boutin-Sweet  
Breton  
Brosseau  
Cannings  
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)  
Chagger  
Chen  
Christopherson  
Cuzner  
Damoff  
DeCoursey  
Dhillon  
Dion  
Drouin  
Dubourg  
Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
Dusseau  
Dzerowicz  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Eyking  
Fergus  
Finnigan  
Fonseca  
Fragiskatos  
Fraser (Central Nova)  
Fry  
Gameau  
Gerretsen  
Goodale  
Graham  
Hardie  
Holland  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Johns  
Joly  
Jowhari  
Khalid  
Kwan  
Lamoureux  
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)  
Lebouthillier  
Lemieux  
Levitt  
Lockhart  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Maloney  
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)  
Mathysen  
May (Cambridge)  
McCallum  
McDonald  
McKay  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
Mendès  
Mihychuk  
Soeurs)  
Monsef  
Morrissey  
Nantel  
Nault  
Oliphant  
O'Regan  
Paradis  
Petitpas Taylor  
Picard  
Quach  
Ramsey  
Ratansi  
Robillard  
Romanado  
Rudd  
Rusnak  
Sahota  
Sajjan  
Sangha

Benson  
Bittle  
Blair  
Boissonnault  
Boulerice  
Bratina  
Brisson  
Caesar-Chavannes  
Caron  
Casey (Charlottetown)  
Champagne  
Choquette  
Cormier  
Dabrusin  
Davies  
Dhaliwal  
Di Iorio  
Donnelly  
Dubé  
Duguid  
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)  
Duvall  
Easter  
El-Khoury  
Erskine-Smith  
Eyolfson  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Foote  
Fraser (West Nova)  
Freeland  
Fuhr  
Garrison  
Goldsmith-Jones  
Gould  
Grewal  
Hehr  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jolibois  
Jordan  
Kang  
Khera  
Lametti  
Lapointe  
LeBlanc  
Lefebvre  
Leslie  
Lightbound  
Long  
Ludwig  
MacGregor  
Malcolmson  
Masse (Windsor West)  
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKenna  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendicino  
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-  
Moore  
Mulcair  
Nassif  
O'Connell  
Oliver  
Ouellette  
Peterson  
Philpott  
Poissant  
Qualtrough  
Rankin  
Rioux  
Rodriguez  
Rota  
Ruimy  
Saganash  
Saini  
Samson  
Sansoucy

## PAIRED

Nil

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

\* \* \*

## SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2016-17

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1B—FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AND REPORTS  
ANALYSIS CENTRE OF CANADA

**Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)**  
moved:

That Vote 1b, in the amount of \$473,938, under Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada — Program expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, be concurred in.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1805)

(The House divided on the Motion No. 1, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 162)

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag  
Alleslev  
Anandasangaree  
Arseneault  
Ashton  
Ayoub  
Bagnell  
Baylis

Alghabra  
Amos  
Angus  
Arya  
Aubin  
Badawey  
Bains  
Beech

*Business of Supply*

Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sorbara	Spengemann
Stetski	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tootoo	Trudel
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Weir	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 211	

## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Arnold	Barlow
Beaulieu	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boudrias	Brassard
Brown	Calkins
Clarke	Clement
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Eglinski	Falk
Fast	Fortin
Gallant	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmicic	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lebel
Liepert	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Maguire	Marcil
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Poilievre
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Trost	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 90

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the Motion No. 1 carried.

[Translation]

CONCURRENCE IN VOTE 1B—PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

**Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved:

That Vote 1b, in the amount of \$10,825,154, under Privy Council Office — Program expenditures, in the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** The next question is on opposed vote No. 2.

[English]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinions the yeas have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1810)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 163)

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Gameau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound



Lockhart  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
Maloney  
May (Cambridge)  
McCrimmon  
McGuinty  
McKenna  
McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
Mendicino  
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)  
Monsef  
Morrissey  
Nault  
Oliphant  
O'Regan  
Paradis  
Petitpas Taylor  
Picard  
Qualtrough  
Rioux  
Rodriguez  
Rota  
Ruimy  
Sahota  
Sajjan  
Sangha  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Spengemann  
Tan  
Tootoo  
Vandenbeld  
Virani  
Wilkinson  
Wrzesnewskyj  
Zahid — 171

Long  
Ludwig  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)  
McCallum  
McDonald  
McKay  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
Mendès  
Mihychuk  
Nassif  
O'Connell  
Oliver  
Ouellette  
Peterson  
Philpott  
Poissant  
Ratansi  
Robillard  
Romanado  
Rudd  
Rusnak  
Saini  
Samson  
Sarai  
Schiefke  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)  
Sikand  
Sorbara  
Tabbara  
Tassi  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Whalen  
Wilson-Raybould  
Young

## NAYS

### Members

Aboultaif  
Albrecht  
Ambrose  
Angus  
Ashton  
Barlow  
Benson  
Berthold  
Blaikie  
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
Boudrias  
Boutin-Sweet  
Brosseau  
Calkins  
Caron  
Christopherson  
Clement  
Deltell  
Doherty  
Dreeshen  
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)  
Duvall  
Fast  
Gallant  
Genuis  
Gladu  
Gourde  
Hoback  
Jeneroux  
Jolibois  
Kent  
Kmiec  
Lake  
Lebel  
Lobb  
MacGregor  
Maguire  
Marcil

Albas  
Allison  
Anderson  
Arnold  
Aubin  
Beaulieu  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)  
Boucher  
Boulerice  
Brassard  
Brown  
Cannings  
Choquette  
Clarke  
Davies  
Diotte  
Donnelly  
Dubé  
Dusseault  
Eglinski  
Fortin  
Garrison  
Gill  
Godin  
Harder  
Hughes  
Johns  
Kelly  
Kitchen  
Kwan  
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Liepert  
Lukiwski  
MacKenzie  
Malcolmson  
Masse (Windsor West)

## Business of Supply

Mathysen  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
Moore  
Mulcair  
Nater  
Nuttall  
Paul-Hus  
Poilievre  
Ramsey  
Rayes  
Rempel  
Ritz  
Sansoucy  
Schmale  
Shipley  
Sorenson  
Ste-Marie  
Stubbs  
Thériault  
Trudel  
Van Loan  
Rudd  
Wagantall  
Watts  
Webber  
Wong  
Zimmer — 129

May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)  
McColeman  
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)  
Motz  
Nantel  
Nicholson  
O'Toole  
Pauzé  
Quach  
Rankin  
Reid  
Richards  
Saganash  
Saroya  
Shields  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Stetski  
Sweet  
Trost  
Van Kesteren  
Viersen  
Warkentin  
Waugh  
Weir  
Yurdiga

## PAIRED

Nil

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

[English]

**Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.)** moved:

That the Supplementary Estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, except any Vote disposed of earlier today, be concurred in.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1820)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 164)

## YEAS

### Members

Aldag  
Alleslev  
Anandasangaree  
Arya  
Badawey

Alghabra  
Amos  
Arseneault  
Ayoub  
Bagnell

*Business of Supply*

Bains	Baylis		
Beech	Bennett		
Bibeau	Bittle		
Blair	Boissonnault		
Bossio	Bratina	Aboultatif	Albas
Breton	Brison	Albrecht	Allison
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Ambrose	Anderson
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger	Angus	Arnold
Champagne	Chen	Ashton	Aubin
Cormier	Cuzner	Barlow	Beaulieu
Dabrusin	Damoff	Benson	Bergen
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal	Berthold	Bezan
Dhillon	Di Iorio	Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Dion	Drouin	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Dubourg	Duguid	Boudrias	Boulerice
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Easter	Ehsassi	Brousseau	Brown
El-Khoury	Ellis	Calkins	Cannings
Erskine-Smith	Eyking	Caron	Choquette
Eyolfson	Fergus	Christopherson	Clarke
Fillmore	Finnigan	Clement	Davies
Fisher	Fonseca	Deltell	Diotte
Footé	Fragiskatos	Doherty	Donnelly
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)	Dreeschen	Dubé
Freeland	Fry	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Fuhr	Garneau	Duvall	Eglinski
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones	Fast	Fortin
Goodale	Gould	Gallant	Garrison
Graham	Grewal	Genius	Gill
Hardie	Hehr	Gladu	Godin
Holland	Housefather	Gourde	Harder
Hussen	Hutchings	Hoback	Hughes
Iacono	Joly	Jeneroux	Johns
Jordan	Jowhari	Jolibois	Kelly
Kang	Khalid	Kent	Kitchen
Khera	Lametti	Kniec	Kwan
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc	Lebel	Liepert
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre	Lobb	Lukiwski
Lemieux	Leslie	MacGregor	MacKenzie
Levitt	Lightbound	Maguire	Malcolmson
Lockhart	Long	Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
Longfield	Ludwig	Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
May (Cambridge)	McCallum	Moore	Motz
McCrimmon	McDonald	Mulcair	Nantel
McGuinty	McKay	Nater	Nicholson
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Nuttall	O'Toole
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Mendicino	Mihychuk	Poilievre	Quach
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)		Ramsey	Rankin
Monsef		Rayes	Reid
Morrissey	Nassif	Rempel	Richards
Nault	O'Connell	Ritz	Saganash
Oliphant	Oliver	Sansoucy	Saroya
O'Regan	Ouellette	Schmale	Shields
Paradis	Peterson	Shiple	Sopuck
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott	Sorenson	Stanton
Picard	Poissant	Ste-Marie	Stetski
Qualtrough	Ratansi	Stubbs	Sweet
Rioux	Robillard	Thériault	Trost
Rodriguez	Romanado	Trudel	Van Kesteren
Rota	Rudd	Van Loan	Viersen
Ruimy	Rusnak	Wagantall	Warkentin
Sahota	Saini	Watts	Waugh
Sajjan	Samson	Webber	Weir
Sangha	Sarai	Wong	Zimmer— 128
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke		
Schulte	Serré		
Sgro	Shanahan		
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)		
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand		
Simms	Sorbara		
Spengemann	Tabbara		
Tan	Tassi		
Tootoo	Vandal		
Vandenbeld	Vaughan		
Virani	Whalen		
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould		
Wrzesnewskyj	Young		
Zahid— 171			

## NAYS

## Members

## PAIRED

Nil

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

**Hon. Scott Brison** moved that Bill C-35, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017 be now read the first time and printed.

*Business of Supply*

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

[*English*]

**Hon. Scott Brison** moved that the bill be read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Andrew Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the results of the previous vote to the current vote.

[*English*]

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

*(Division No. 165)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCourcey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau

Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCallum
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Nassif
Nault	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tootoo	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 171	

## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Beaulieu
Benson	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brosseau	Brown
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Davies
Deltell	Dotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Eglski
Fast	Fortin

*Business of Supply*

Gallant	Garrison
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel	Liepert
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Malcolmson
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Motz
Mulcair	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	O'Toole
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Poillievre	Quach
Ramsey	Rankin
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Saganash
Sansoucy	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Wong	Zimmer— 128

## PAIRED

Nil

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

Accordingly, this bill stands referred to a committee of the whole. I do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of the whole.

(Bill read the second time and the House went into committee of the whole thereon, Mr. Bruce Stanton in the chair)

(On clause 2)

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Chair, I wonder if the President of the Treasury Board can confirm that the supply bill is in its usual form.

**Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Chair, the form of this bill is the same as that passed in the previous supply period.

**The Chair:** Shall clause 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Clause 2 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall clause 3 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Clause 3 agreed to)

• (1825)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Shall clause 4 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 4 agreed to)

[English]

**The Chair:** Shall clause 5 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 5 agreed to)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Shall clause 6 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 6 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall clause 7 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 7 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall schedule 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 1 agreed to)

[English]

**The Chair:** Shall schedule 2 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Schedule 2 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall clause 1 carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Clause 1 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the preamble carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Preamble agreed to)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Shall the title carry?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Title agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall the bill carry?

*Business of Supply*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Bill agreed to)

(Bill reported)

**Hon. Scott Brison** moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

[*English*]

**Hon. Andrew Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, I believe if you were to seek it, you would find agreement to apply the results from the previous vote to this vote.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed

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

*(Division No. 166)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCourcey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau

Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCallum
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendes
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	Monsef
Monsef	Morrissey
Morrissey	Nassif
Nault	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratans
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tootoo	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 171	

## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Aubin
Barlow	Beaulieu
Benson	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brosseau	Brown
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Dreeschen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Eglinski
Fast	Fortin

*Business of Supply*

Gallant	Garrison
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Label	Liepert
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Malcolmson
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Moore	Motz
Mulcair	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	O'Toole
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Poilievre	Quach
Ramsey	Rankin
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Saganash
Sansoucy	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Watts	Wauugh
Webber	Weir
Wong	Zimmer — 128

## PAIRED

Nil

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

When shall the bill be read a third time. By leave, now?

**Some hon. member:** Agreed

**Hon. Scott Brison** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

[Translation]

**Hon. Andrew Leslie:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you would find agreement to apply the results of the previous vote to the current vote.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

(Division No. 167)

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alhabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Drouin
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Foote	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Gameau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Lemieux	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCallum
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Nassif
Nault	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson

Sangha  
Scarpaleggia  
Schulte  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Simms  
Spengemann  
Tan  
Tootoo  
Vandenbeld  
Virani  
Wilkinson  
Wrzesniewski  
Zahid — 171

Sarai  
Schieffe  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)  
Sikand  
Sorbara  
Tabbara  
Tassi  
Vandal  
Vaughan  
Whalen  
Wilson-Raybould  
Young

## NAYS

### Members

Aboultarif  
Albrecht  
Ambrose  
Angus  
Ashton  
Barlow  
Benson  
Berthold  
Blaikie  
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
Boudrias  
Boutin-Sweet  
Brosseau  
Calkins  
Caron  
Christopherson  
Clement  
Deltell  
Doherty  
Dreeschen  
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)  
Duvall  
Fast  
Gallant  
Genuis  
Gladu  
Gourde  
Hoback  
Jeneroux  
Jolibois  
Kent  
Kmiec  
Lake  
Lebel  
Lobb  
MacGregor  
Maguire  
Marcil  
Mathysen  
McCauley (Edmonton West)  
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
Moore  
Mulcair  
Nater  
Nuttall  
Paul-Hus  
Poilievre  
Ramsey  
Rayes  
Rempel  
Ritz  
Sansoucy  
Schmale  
Shipley  
Sorenson  
Ste-Marie  
Stubbs  
Thériault  
Trudel  
Van Loan  
Wagantall  
Watts  
Webber  
Wong

Albas  
Allison  
Anderson  
Arnold  
Aubin  
Beaulieu  
Bergen  
Bezan  
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)  
Boucher  
Boulerice  
Brassard  
Brown  
Cannings  
Choquette  
Clarke  
Davies  
Diotte  
Donnelly  
Dubé  
Dusseau  
Eglinski  
Fortin  
Garrison  
Gill  
Godin  
Harder  
Hughes  
Johns  
Kelly  
Kitchen  
Kwan  
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Liepert  
Lukiwski  
MacKenzie  
Malcolmson  
Masse (Windsor West)  
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)  
McColeman  
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)  
Motz  
Nantel  
Nicholson  
O'Toole  
Pauzé  
Quach  
Rankin  
Reid  
Richards  
Sagamash  
Saroya  
Shields  
Sopuck  
Stanton  
Stetski  
Sweet  
Trost  
Van Kesteren  
Viersen  
Warkentin  
Waugh  
Weir  
Zimmer — 128

## Private Members' Business

### PAIRED

Nil

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

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

[English]

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1830)

[English]

### NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY ACT

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.)** moved that Bill S-211, An Act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to speak to Bill S-211, an act respecting national sickle cell awareness day. Bill S-211 seeks to establish June 19 as national sickle cell awareness day, aligning Canada with international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, both of which already recognize this date as World Sickle Cell Day.

I would like to commend, if I could, Senator Jane Cordy, who is from my home riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, for introducing this important bill, and I would like to thank her for allowing me the honour to sponsor the bill in this House.

Coming here to Ottawa as a member of Parliament not only means that I get to meet fascinating people with fascinating stories to tell, but it also means that every day is a constant learning experience. I am hopeful that neither of these experiences will change during my time here.

Many people have not heard of sickle cell disease, and if they have, they do not understand what it means to have it. Allow me to briefly describe what sickle cell disease, also known as sickle cell anemia, is. Sickle cell disease is a hereditary genetic disease and refers to the presence of abnormal hemoglobin, resulting in crescent-shaped red blood cells. Normal red blood cells are doughnut-shaped, and move easily throughout the body's circulatory system, delivering oxygen to the organs. Healthy red blood cells carry out this important life function for up to 120 days, whereas sickle cell diseased cells have a lifespan of only about 20 days.

Sickle-shaped red blood cells unfortunately do not float easily in blood vessels and regularly become stiff and eventually break apart. The diseased red blood cells clog in the vessels and starve the body's ability to deliver oxygen to the organs. Because the organs are continually not receiving adequate oxygen, the result is severe pain, especially in the bones. Most sufferers feel that pain in their shoulder and hip joints as well as in their chests. I am told that the pain is truly debilitating.

*Private Members' Business*

Canadians affected by sickle cell disorders are those with diverse ethnic backgrounds: African, Caribbean, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, South American, and South Asian. I was amazed to find out that it is the most common genetic condition in Canada.

The disease currently affects approximately 5,000 Canadians, and the number of Canadians diagnosed with this disease continues to increase. Here is a statistic that really stuck out for me. The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada estimates that one out of every 2,500 children will be born with this disease.

People affected by sickle cell anemia are living in chronic pain. Some are confined to their homes, requiring constant care, while others can live mostly normal lives. However, even those living close to normal lives, live with the realization that life with constant pain is most likely on the way. That pain will limit mobility and affect their quality of life. I am sad to say that people with sickle cell disease have a reduced life expectancy, 30 years lower than the national average. There is currently no cure for sickle cell disease. Research is desperately needed.

In late September, I met with Ms. Rugi Jalloh, president of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Nova Scotia, along with her delegation, Mr. William Njoku, Mr. Ricardo Peguiro, and Dr. Jacob Pendergrast. Each of them had compelling and personal stories of how this disease has affected their health or the health of their family members.

Rugi herself has the sickle cell trait, meaning that she is a hereditary carrier of the disease. Though she does not suffer from any symptoms of the disease, a child of hers would have a 50% chance of inheriting the sickle cell trait, or a 25% chance of inheriting the disease itself. Imagine having to live with that frightening statistic.

William told us of how he lost a friend to the disease recently, and his grief was compounded by the fact that his sister is one of many sickle cell disease sufferers who live in chronic pain. She is mostly bedridden and receives home care. His sister has a diminishing quality of life.

• (1835)

As Dr. Pendergrast emphatically explained in our meeting, sickle cell disease does not have a cure. Researchers are working on therapeutic options for sickle cell disease sufferers. Dr. Pendergrast explained that sickle cell disease patients can receive regular blood transfusions and can take a powerful drug called hydroxyurea to manage their chronic pain. This may sound like an easy, solid solution for sufferers of sickle cell disease, but these folks are routinely having 10 to 20 blood transfusions a month. This is yet another reason why we must encourage Canadians to donate blood when possible.

It is important to note that sickle cell anemia is an inherited disease. We cannot catch it from someone. It cannot be communicated from one person to another. Due to a lack of awareness in Canada, I learned that many people who carry the sickle cell trait had no idea they did until they had a child diagnosed with the disease. I firmly believe that raising awareness could change this. Due to the lack of awareness, there are Canadians out there who are living with this disease and remain undiagnosed. These people are living with

chronic pain and sometimes have their symptoms dismissed as just those of another would-be patient asking for pain killers. When left untreated, sickle cell disease can be fatal. Canadians in high-risk ethnicities for sickle cell who feel they have symptoms or feel that they have been misdiagnosed should be encouraged to take a simple and pain-free blood test. A diagnosis is that simple.

Earlier I mentioned that there is a high risk of babies born to sickle cell carriers inheriting the disease. Luckily, some Canadian provinces are moving in the right direction. I am pleased that newborn screening for sickle cell disease is available in the Yukon, British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and now my home province of Nova Scotia.

I understand that the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada is advocating for a national newborn screening program, which would also help identify carriers with traits.

Since 2008, June 19 has been recognized internationally as World Sickle Cell Awareness Day. The awareness day was created to increase public knowledge and bring awareness to the struggle sickle cell disease sufferers endure on a daily basis. This date was chosen to commemorate the day on which a resolution was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, recognizing sickle cell disease as a public health concern.

Sickle cell disease affects almost 100 million people worldwide, and according to the World Health Organization, it is one of the main causes of death for children under five years of age.

I am sure many folks out there would ask why we need to make another day of awareness for a cause. Why should Bill S-211 matter to Canadians? When it comes to health issues, especially when it comes to health issues that generally affect very specific demographics, we must raise awareness. There are Canadians out there who do not even know that they carry the sickle cell trait. Awareness will ensure that more folks are tested, that we have a better understanding of what it means when our friends or family are diagnosed with sickle cell, and what it means if we ourselves are diagnosed. By raising awareness, we bring attention to this serious hereditary genetic disease. We keep it top of mind among our best researchers, our fundraisers, and our communities.

I want to thank all of my colleagues from throughout the House for listening to me speak on Bill S-211. After sitting in my office and listening to the stories of those affected and suffering from sickle cell disease, I jumped at the opportunity to sponsor and support this bill.



*Private Members' Business*

Canada is a world leader when it comes to championing human rights and maternal and newborn health. We are known throughout the world for our optimism, compassion, and empathy. We have the ability here to shine a light on this disease and to change the lives of those who are suffering. If we, as parliamentarians and Canadians, were to adopt June 19 as national sickle cell awareness day, we would be lending a powerful united voice to the world stage in recognizing the devastating effects of this disease. Together, we can honour those who suffer in silence, those who spend 10 to 20 days per month sitting in hospitals getting blood transfusions, and those babies who are born every day with this debilitating disease.

I ask hon. members to join me in supporting Bill S-211 to establish June 19 as national sickle cell awareness day.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, private members' bills cannot propose the expenditure of public funds by the government. That is why we introduced a bill that focuses on raising awareness.

I would like to know what, specifically, the member is going to ask for from his government colleagues. Obviously, we need to raise awareness, but we also need to give more help to family caregivers, namely mothers and parents who are looking after sick children and children who need to be hospitalized frequently. They need more help.

What is more, what is my colleague going to ask for in terms of international aid so that we can do more? What, specifically, is he going to ask for from the government? What is he going to fight for?

[*English*]

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, I am merely asking for us to join other international organizations to recognize June 19 as international sickle cell awareness day. Other groups, other international organizations have already started the process. I would like to add the voice of our country and unite with those other organizations.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing the bill forward. It is certainly one that we are going to be supporting in the official opposition and one that I expect will get support from all parties and all members in the House.

I want to pick up on the issue of screening and its benefits. My understanding is that screening happens throughout the United States and in certain jurisdictions in Canada but not others. I wonder if he could comment as part of the awareness-raising exercise we are doing here, the importance of advance screening and maybe what steps could be taken throughout Canada to ensure the availability of that screening across the board.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, four or five provinces in Canada are already doing the screening. Others will follow suit—

• (1845)

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, six.

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, six provinces have already started with the screening process. I expect others to follow suit. I expect also the pressure on the other provinces coming from the six

provinces that have already passed the advanced screening. This will provide that ability for people to know through a simple blood test and through newborn screening. The trait is out there. We want more people to know when they carry the trait. There are misdiagnoses going on all the time. People are going to hospital with pain in their bones and they are being sent home to take Tylenol. This is how important newborn screening is. We need that awareness. We need parents to know when this is an issue with their newborns.

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for introducing the bill. As someone who lives with the sickle cell trait, I am really happy that this is coming forward. I have heard stories as well of individuals who proceed to emergency rooms only to be sent away because the health care professionals believe that they are looking for morphine for addiction purposes.

Could my hon. colleague explain why this awareness is so important not just for the individuals, but for their families, for communities, and for health care professionals?

**Mr. Darren Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that health care providers understand the number of people out there who could be carrying this trait or could have this disease. Just think of one person showing up with that problem being sent away, with the suggestion that they just go home and take Tylenol or that their child must have fallen somewhere and maybe hurt themselves. Think about how important being able to correctly diagnose this disease would be. It is not a perfect world. We are not able to cure this at this point, but correctly diagnosing this disease gives people the ability to be treated in the proper manner and have the understanding of what their options are. The options may not be perfect, but the options are much better when we are able to diagnose this properly.

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to contribute to the debate on Bill S-211. The proposed legislation before us today will recognize June 19, on an annual basis, as national sickle cell awareness day.

Approximately 2,000 people living in Canada today have sickle cell disease. Increased awareness of their disease would be beneficial, given the low level of public knowledge at this time. It is a hereditary disease. It is not contagious. Carriers are usually not sufferers of the disease, but in combination with a carrier spouse, the disease usually becomes apparent in their offspring. This disease is most common among those with ancestors from India, Saudi Arabia, the Mediterranean, the Indian subcontinent, and the Sub-Saharan countries in Africa. However, it is still found in other cultures as well. Just to give people an idea, there are an estimated 43 million carriers, with 3.2 million people having the disease because both parents were carriers.

*Private Members' Business*

What is sickle cell disease? It is a group of red blood cell disorders. Those with the disease have abnormal hemoglobin. As many know, hemoglobin is the part of the red blood cells that carries vital oxygen throughout the human body. We know how important it is that tissues in the body receive a steady and life-sustaining supply of oxygen to work well. Hemoglobin takes the oxygen from the lungs to the parts of the body that need it. Normal cells are a disc shape, sort of like a donut. This shape allows the cells to be flexible. This flexibility and shape allow the cells to travel easily through blood vessels throughout the body.

Sickle hemoglobin is different. It forms stiff rods within the red cell, and this changes the cell's shape to something more like a crescent or sickle shape. As members can imagine, this creates enormous problems. The sickle-shaped cells result in blockages because the cells are stiff and unable to pass through the vessels easily. These resulting blockages mean that vital oxygen stops reaching the parts of the body that need it.

What impact does this have on the person with the disease? A lack of oxygen results in attacks of sudden and severe pain throughout the body. It is a horrible condition. These pains occur without warning, and often result in hospitalization. The pains usually last five to seven days. While not always the cause, it has been noted that pain crisis can be triggered by temperature changes, stress, dehydration, and even living in high altitudes. Of course, any infection that normally causes a rise the number of red blood cells triggers the disease as well.

Fortunately for most children with the disease, pain usually subsides between pain episodes. Nonetheless, many children known to have the disease take penicillin daily to help the immune system, and face a lifelong regimen of daily folic acid. For teens and adults, the pain is usually chronic. The effects of chronic pain are well known. They have a huge impact on the education, the employment, and the human mind of the sufferers.

Due to the lack of oxygen to vital organs on a regular basis, sickle cell disease often begins to cause long-term damage to vital organs. It is common for those with the disease to develop serious issues with their skin, their brain, their bones, their spleen, their heart, their kidneys, their liver, their lungs, and even their eyes. The spleen is particularly susceptible because of its narrow blood vessels and its basic job of clearing old red blood cells.

If this was not enough, there is another layer of cruelty to this disease. Normal red blood cells have a typical 90- to 100-day existence. Sickle cells last only about 10 to 20 days. Imagine what a toll this takes on the human body when it has to replenish red blood cells at 10 times the normal rate. When the body cannot keep up, which is often, there is a shortage of red blood cells and this results in the sickle-cell anemia. The most visible side effect is fatigue. As I mentioned before, this also adds to the pain, the long-term organ and tissue damage, and the toll the disease takes.

● (1850)

Sadly, this disease is a lifelong illness, and when I say "lifelong", we must not kid ourselves. Lifelong is not a happy story either. Sickle cell disease shortens lives, but it depends greatly on where one lives and one's access to help.

In first world countries like the United States, life expectancy can range greatly, from 40 to 60 years. This is about four times longer than it was 40 years ago. Now, about 90% of those with the disease can expect to see their 20th birthday, and 40% of those will die by age 50.

Is there a cure? There is a treatment and it is called hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, or HSCT. HSCT is the best-known option at this time. Unfortunately, most people with the disease are either too old for a successful transplant or do not have a genetically matched person able to make the donation. The success of this type of treatment is heavily dependent on having a great match.

For HSCT to be successful we need an early diagnosis and good medical treatment. Those who are willing to donate bone marrow should consider the positive effects that their donation could have. Given the need for the best match possible, I specifically suggest that those in affected cultural communities help promote donation of organs and tissue, bone marrow, and blood.

In the meantime, the disease takes its toll. There are increased chances of stroke, infection, gall stones, joint pain, low immunity, erectile issues, bone infection, leg ulcers, vision problems, pre-eclampsia in pregnant women, and heart and kidney failure.

The pain of the disease often means that patients are prescribed opioids to deal with the pain. The good news is that addiction among sickle cell patients to opioids is not any higher than among the general population. However, that said, opioid addiction is a reality for many with sickle cell disease. We have heard a lot in the House recently about the effects of opioid addictions, and it is alarming. This type of addiction is often deadly, and even when it is not, it results in many other significant problems for patients and their families.

There are an estimated 5,000 Canadians living with the disease and the rate is increasing. There is prenatal screening, but with the knowledge comes the difficult decisions that parents must consider, which I cannot imagine.

The Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada does a lot of advocacy and awareness work. I applaud it for its efforts, which have gone a long way toward bringing this disease into the fore and making it better known in our society. The association faces an uphill battle in finding a cure. Research dollars are not easy to come by, especially for a disease that is most prevalent in parts of the world that are not able to attract the attention of major pharmaceutical companies. It is still a disease that is very much not discussed, even within the communities most affected.

However, things are improving. There is an increase in research funding and awareness is slowly building.

*Private Members' Business*

Passing this legislation would go a long way to normalizing discussion about the disease. It would show those with the disease that we care and would help to educate those around them about their disease.

I will be honest that I knew nothing about this disease until I prepared for this speech. As I learned more about sickle cell disease and the thousands of Canadians who suffer from it, I wanted to share my comments with others. I applaud the hon. member for presenting this bill and the work that he has done on this. I give him my thanks. I am happy that I was able to talk a bit about it here today to help share awareness.

Let us support this legislation and keep spreading awareness and education.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak about awareness of sickle cell disease. One of the reasons I think it is important to talk about is that I had to treat people when I worked as a nurse intern in a small, remote village in Senegal. This disease is particularly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, so it was a big concern for us. I also studied this disease when I did additional training in the field of international health. I therefore think it is important to talk about it. This is the most prevalent genetic disease in the world. It affects approximately 100 million people worldwide and 5,000 to 7,000 people in Canada.

Although people from all ethnic backgrounds can have this disease, it tends to be more prevalent among those with ancestors from India, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, particularly Greece and Italy, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Caribbean. There is a connection between this disease and places where malaria is prevalent; however, since it is a bit complicated to explain, I will not elaborate any further right now. If anyone would like more information, I would be happy to explain it to them.

It is an autosomal recessive disease. That is kind of a complicated genetic term. Basically, it means that people have to inherit the defective gene from both parents to get the disease. A child who gets the gene from just one parent is a carrier but will not have symptoms. People who might seem perfectly healthy, who have no health problems, no pain, nothing, can have a sick child because they do not know they carry the gene. That is important, and I will come back to it later.

I will try to explain the disease in simple terms so that most people can understand. Red blood cells are usually round, kind of like a donut that has been squashed in the middle. They flow freely through blood vessels. When they enter capillaries, donut-shaped red blood cells fit together well and flow unimpeded. Normal red blood cells usually live for about 120 days.

Diseased red blood cells are sickle shaped. They do not flow through blood vessels properly. Although it may seem obvious, I still want to point out that a sickle shape has two points. When these blood cells flow through capillaries, they can cause tears and create problems. Also, these red blood cells live for only 20 days, so anyone with this disease becomes anemic. Anemia is a condition that

happens when an individual does not have enough red blood cells. Oxygen does not circulate properly in the blood, because oxygen is usually carried by red blood cells.

As it has already been said, a lack of oxygen can cause all kinds of health problems and a lot of pain. It can also cause localized problems, such as a higher risk of infection wherever the problems are. Depending on the seriousness of the problem, people with this disease often have to receive blood transfusion and take medication for pain and other medication for infection, if any infection occurs. This can also cause dehydration, in which case an IV can be administered to rehydrate the patient. That about covers all the treatments.

While some patients might actually manage to live normal lives with very few hospitalizations, others will be hospitalized frequently. As this is a genetic disease that patients are born with, some very young children, and even infants, will have to be hospitalized.

● (1900)

This can be especially worrisome when a baby is suffering and crying endlessly and the parents cannot figure out why, especially if the parents did not even know they were carrying the gene and that they may have transmitted the disease to their children. That is why I think it is important to raise awareness about the disease, especially among health professionals.

One of the problems we have concerns people in remote regions in particular. Since the disease is more prevalent among certain cultural groups, most doctors and nurses in remote regions will have never seen a patient suffering from sickle cell disease. It is therefore not the first disease that will spring to mind.

They have studied and read about every disease in the book, but after a while, they often rely on their experience and on what they have already seen. It can be hard to have a patient who is suffering so much. A doctor might be quick to diagnose such individuals with fibromyalgia or any health problem other than sickle cell disease, especially when it comes to adults. Health professionals assume that if the adult had sickle cell disease he or she would have been diagnosed long ago. It is not something that health professionals will think of, especially in regions where there are very few people from the different cultural groups that I already mentioned.

One of the most important things to do is to raise awareness among health professionals, ensure that they know about the disease, and that they think about it in order to make a diagnosis more quickly and avoid misdiagnosis problems that delay treatments. That was the first important point I wanted to raise.

Another very important point concerns raising the public's awareness. Prenatal screening is now offered in six provinces and two territories. Three provinces are considering it. Thus, we can hope that, in two or three years' time, most or all provinces and territories in Canada will have their own prenatal screening program.

*Private Members' Business*

The problem is that older individuals have no idea whether or not they are carriers because the screening was not done when they were born. It would be advisable to offer the test to couples thinking of having children, especially those from the cultural groups most susceptible to this disease. This would let them know whether or not they risk giving this disease to their child and allow them to make an informed decision.

Generally speaking, if both parents carry the gene, there is a 25% chance that the child will have the disease. If both parents know that they are carriers, they might choose to have only one child. If that child does not have the disease, the couple might not take another chance and instead limit the size of their family thereby avoiding having children with the disease. In order to make these decisions, couples must have that knowledge.

In addition to prenatal screening, health professionals need to be able to talk to couples who are thinking about having a baby. These couples need to be told that the test exists and that there is information available. In order for that to happen, health professionals need to know about the disease and must be able to give people that option.

The last point that I wanted to raise is that people with sickle cell disease, particularly children, who live in remote areas may find it difficult to receive care. These young patients are often referred to specialized centres for children, which can cause a lot of problems for parents. It is therefore important to provide more support for family caregivers, particularly parents. It is often women who make the sacrifice to take care of the health of their children, who stay with them, and who do all the travelling. Often, these women are not compensated as they should be for all the help they give to society by making that choice.

We need to realize that there is an extremely high rate of divorce among couples who have a child with sickle cell disease because of the onerous care such children often require. We need to do more for family caregivers.

It is important to raise awareness, but we also need to go further and figure out who should be targeted for education and how this would actually apply in a health practice.

● (1905)

I was pleased to speak to Canadians to help them to learn more about sickle cell disease.

[*English*]

**Ms. Kamal Khara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity today to voice my strong support for this very worthy and necessary legislation. I am proud to promote and support Bill S-211, an act that would make June 19 a national day to raise awareness for sickle cell disease, or SCD for short.

I want to thank Senator Jane Cordy and the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for bringing this extremely important bill to the House.

By supporting the bill, we can join the African Union, the United Nations, and the World Health Organization in observing world sickle cell awareness day on the June 19 every year. Setting aside

this dedicated day is not about joining an international club. It is about supporting people living with sickle cell disease, a devastating genetic disorder that affects millions of people around the world, including an estimated 5,000 Canadians.

People with sickle cell disease experience frequent bouts of debilitating pain that damages their quality of life and which, very often, shortens their lives. This is a very complex disease that still baffles the medical community.

To try to explain it simply, people who have SCD inherit two abnormal hemoglobin genes, one from each parent. At least one of the two abnormal genes causes a person's body to produce an abnormal type of hemoglobin called "hemoglobin S". When the person has two hemoglobin S genes, the disease is called sickle cell anemia. This is the most common and generally most severe kind of sickle cell disease.

Without getting too technical, sickle hemoglobin is not like normal hemoglobin. It can form stiff rods within the red blood cell, changing it into a crescent or sickle shape. These cells are not flexible and stick to vessel walls. This can cause a blockage that slows or stops the flow of blood. When this happens, oxygen cannot reach nearby tissues, leading to a long list of complications that can compromise the person's life.

Sickle cell disease provokes attacks of sudden, severe pain that can occur without warning. The person usually needs to go to the hospital for treatment. Blood transfusions and drug therapies are used to treat and manage the disease. Stem cell transplants are the only potential cure.

It is hard to watch a child suffering from a pain attack, but it is heartbreaking to know that this is something they will rarely escape as they grow older. Adolescents and adults with SCD often suffer from chronic pain that limits their ability to attend school or go to work. Needless to say, this has negative ripple effects on their families' incomes and housing.

However, even that does not capture the long-term consequences of SCD. Over a lifetime, the disease can cause major organ damage that eventually results in premature death. Tragically, most will endure excruciating pain for most of the years they have.

As much as this takes a terrible toll on the individuals involved and their loved ones, it also comes at a high price for the health care system. The lifetime cost for a patient with sickle cell disease has been estimated at \$9 million. In Canada, the total cost to treat patients with sickle cell disease for their lifetime may be approximately \$4.5 billion.

More than dollars and cents, common sense dictates that we must do whatever we can to improve the lives of these individuals. I have seen patients who suffer from this serious blood disorder. In every case, I can attest to the serious health challenges they face. Therefore, I know how crucial it is that we raise awareness of sickle cell disease.

*Private Members' Business*

I also know from experience the importance of genetic testing for prospective parents and the necessity of screening newborns for the disorder. Early diagnosis and regular medical care can prevent complications and improve the well-being of affected individuals and their families.

●(1910)

Sickle cell disease is most common among individuals whose ancestors come from India, Saudi Arabia, and Mediterranean and sub-Saharan African countries, but in rare cases, it also affects Caucasians.

One of the best ways Canadians can help is by donating blood to provide sickle cell disease patients with the blood transfusions they require, not just on June 19 but every day of the year. Donors are especially needed from ethnic communities whose heritage traces back to the Mediterranean, Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

We also need to find ways to better educate Canadians about this disease and explore ways to work more productively with our partners all across the country to provide better support for sickle cell disease patients and their families.

Especially important is to continue research programs that spawn new sickle cell disease treatments that will someday lead to a cure.

Advancing these goals is precisely what Bill S-211 sets out to do. Once passed, this bill would dedicate June 19 as national sickle cell awareness day in Canada. This would send a clear signal to everyone, as a nation, that we need to improve the diagnosis and treatment of sickle cell disease and demonstrate our unwavering support for Canadians living with this terrible disease.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of meeting with members of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Canada. I am proud of the work already under way in this country to alleviate the chronic pain of sickle cell disease sufferers.

Through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Government of Canada has invested resources in rare disease research, including \$1.3 million for sickle cell disease research, since 2010. Top researchers across Canada are actively working to identify long-term solutions to the health problems facing people with sickle cell disease.

CIHR is also a founding member of the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium. It was established to explain the causes of rare disorders and to develop diagnostic tools and treatments. There are currently four sickle cell disease clinical trials under way as part of this major international research initiative.

These studies will contribute to increasing our knowledge about the disorder and hopefully lead to the discovery of new treatments while ultimately pinpointing the cure that people with SCD seek. Until that day comes, the Government of Canada will continue to work with our provincial and territorial partners. Together we will address the health challenges confronting Canadians as we transform Canada's health system to ensure that it meets the needs of each and every one of us.

It is now up to all parliamentarians to do their part by designating June 19 national sickle cell awareness day in Canada. I encourage all members to lend their support to Bill S-211, which would provide people living with sickle cell disease the national recognition they deserve.

Once again, I want to thank Senator Jane Cordy and the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for bringing this extremely relevant piece of legislation to the House. Canadians with sickle cell disease are counting on us to improve their lives and livelihoods as we improve their health and quality of life. Let us make sure we do not let them down.

●(1915)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise to debate this very important bill before the House today. I suspect I will breathe a little less fire in this speech than I did in the one I gave earlier this afternoon.

Oftentimes, we deal with issues that are relatively uncontroversial, on which we agree. All of us in the House are generally united, if not on means, certainly on where we want to go, which is to make life better for Canadians within our constituencies and across the country. It is nice when we can unite around certain common objectives that are important and that are transparently in the best interests of the country.

To say that this bill is not controversial does not mean it is not important. Even before we pass the bill, the fact of debating of it and putting some of the conversation around the issues of sickle disease onto the record is going to have a positive impact in awareness. I want to congratulate the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour on bringing it forward. This bill was originally brought forward in the Senate. I want to recognize the good work done by the senators. I had a chance to review some of the debate that took place there as well.

Why is this important? Awareness in general is good, but awareness of sickle cell disorders is particularly important because we know there is often a lack of awareness out there, that someone may be suffering from a sickle cell disorder and not be aware it. They may seek help in responding to it, and not receive appropriate care because of that lack of awareness.

Identifying June 19 as awareness day helps to move us in the direction of more people being aware when they experience what may be symptoms and to ask their physicians if they are related to the sickle cell issue. It helps to ensure that health providers are more aware of this issue as well. It gives us the opportunity in the House to have the debate and raise awareness of this issue. It also creates a focal point on efforts throughout the country to raise awareness around this.

Some of my colleagues have mentioned that June 19 was not picked at random. This is an awareness recognized in different parts of the world, and it aligns us with those broader international efforts around sickle cell disease.

Various colleagues have talked about some of the medical background on this, but it is worth revisiting and underlining it.

*Private Members' Business*

Over 5,000 Canadians live with sickle cell disease in some form. Estimates are that about one out of every 2,500 children born in our country has some sort of this condition. I am told that in the United States sickle cell disease is the most common genetic disease, as far as that country goes.

There are three predominant forms of it in this part of the world: sickle cell anemia, which is the one people may have heard the most about; hemoglobin SC disease; and then hemoglobin sickle beta plus thalassemia.

Essentially what sickle cell disease involves is a deformity of a part of the red blood cells, which makes those red blood cells not last as long. Therefore, people with sickle cell disease often suffer from reduced red blood cell count and other things that are associated with that.

These different kinds of diseases can be associated with a lot of pain. The associated misdiagnosis of that pain can be an exacerbating problem for people who are experiencing this. In some cases, we know of instances where people have been seeking treatment for their pain and have been dismissed because the assumption is made that they are just seeking painkillers not related to pain but for inappropriate purposes. That is one thing that can happen to people legitimately seeking help for this. Another issue may be that people are simply being given painkillers that do not actually deal with the underlying problem they are facing.

These are some of the things we know have happened to Canadians who are experiencing this underlying problem, but there is not a sufficient awareness about where this is coming from.

• (1920)

It is really important that people who have one of these disorders know about it so that they can get the proper support. Although there currently is not a treatment, and I appreciate the comments made by various colleagues about the need for more research to be gathered, there are mechanisms for managing symptoms that exist, things like blood transfusions and various drugs.

These are challenges that are genetic. We know that some people are carriers and others have the disease. It is passed on genetically; it is not something that is contagious.

However, emerging research suggests that there is a positive impact associated with things like lifestyle and diet. Those things can have a positive impact on a patient's quality of life. While we are dealing with a problem that is genetic in its origin, it does not mean that lifestyle cannot have a positive impact for that person. A person's health status, generally, is the result of the interaction between their genetics and the environment that they are in, in the broad sense of it.

The other important aspect of awareness is that in children especially, but also adults, who are dealing with sickle cell disorders, it can influence their level of fatigue and their ability to concentrate. There can be a relationship between these challenges and memory lapses. Having that awareness helps a person navigate school or work environments. It helps with the awareness of those they are working with, perhaps a teacher, in the case of a student, in terms of helping accommodate the specific issues that a person has.

Having that awareness significantly helps with the accommodation and the ability to succeed and thrive in light of a challenge that a person faces.

This is why I think it is particularly important that, as we talk about awareness, we also move the discussion toward screening and how having newborns go through a screening process and being aware of a sickle cell disorder they may have and be able to plan and respond to it makes a very significant difference.

We know that in every state in the United States sickle cell screening occurs. In Canada, it is available in some places, but not everywhere. There is a good opportunity, I think, to discuss what the benefits of expanding screening would be.

We know, of course, as with any health service, there is a cost to it. However, when we look at the availability of specific health services, one of the metrics we can look at, although it is not the only one or the be-all end-all, is what are the dollars per life saved? In other words, with an investment in a particular kind of screening or treatment, what is the positive impact going to be, in terms of lives saved?

I have looked at some of the research on this, with respect to sickle cell screening. I think the evidence pretty clearly points to the fact that, on efficiency grounds, investments in this area really do pay quite substantial dividends, in terms of lives saved. There is a pretty direct relationship there and, in terms of a dollars-per-life-saved metric, the impact is pretty good. The benefits there are clear, from advanced screening.

Sometimes when we talk about health care, we are more likely to put the dollars into the sort of end-stage treatments as opposed to the things in advance, the preventative, the screening things, but often investments in preventative-type of health care can pay, actually, the most dividends. This is one of those examples.

Just to add to the context, in terms of awareness, many of my colleagues have already pointed out that there is a disproportionate impact of this within certain cultural communities. I know others have listed them and I am running out of time, so I will just say that there is a disproportionate impact. It is important, especially as our country becomes more diverse, that we not ignore those diseases that particularly impact certain communities that may include more newer Canadians.

Also, it is important to be aware that it is not just those communities that are affected, but that all different kinds of cultural communities can theoretically have sickle cell disorder.

• (1925)

That basically covers it. June 19 would be an important day for us to mark this, as we continue the efforts in this House and beyond to raise awareness about sickle cell disorder and to look for solutions to it.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Central Nova. I want to remind the hon. member that he will have approximately five minutes, and when the bill comes before the House again, he can start off and take up the rest of his time.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, instead of cutting my speech in half, I will try to trim it down and focus on some submissions that I think add something new to the debate.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Senator Jane Cordy for her tremendous work in bringing the bill forward in the Senate, and of course my colleague, the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for ensuring that the bill had a sponsor and got to the floor of the House of Commons. He is a tremendous guy, I swear.

Very quickly, the prevalence of this disease has been covered to some extent. We know that somewhere in the range of 5,000 people are aware of their diagnosis in Canada, although I would submit that it could be far more significant, given the poor diagnostic record that we have around the world, and 100 million people may be affected worldwide.

The symptoms of this terrible disorder have been covered at some length and very eloquently. We heard about how the unique shape of the blood cells can cause blockages to the blood vessels and prevent oxygen from getting to tissues, leading to severe chronic pain, tissue death, and indeed, a reduced life expectancy of up to 30 years.

We have also heard about the disproportionate impact on ethnic minorities, particularly those who have ancestors from sub-Saharan Africa, the Mediterranean, India, parts of the Caribbean, and other parts of the world.

We have also heard some great submissions on the incredible cost to society of this disorder, coming in somewhere in the range of \$9 million over the course of the life of a person who may suffer from this disease.

One of the things to which we could draw a little extra attention is the importance of early diagnosis as it relates to infant mortality. Newborn screening is extraordinarily important when it comes to sickle cell disorder, because without these diagnostic tools, without recognizing it early on, we may not be able to put newborns on the life support they so desperately need, so they can avoid the immediate symptoms and threats to their lives as they begin.

I would like to just hit on two points, if I could, in the little time that I have. The first is that, of course, this awareness day came to pass initially through a UN General Assembly resolution that urged all of the UN's member states to raise awareness for sickle cell disorder. We have an obligation, even though a General Assembly resolution is soft law, so to speak, according to the International Court of Justice, to consider it as a recommendation of the international community in good faith. I would suggest that, by hosting this debate, we are considering it in good faith, and I would submit to this House that we go one step further and actually adopt the bill into law, so that we can have an awareness day in Canada and do our part to raise awareness.

This disease is not well understood, and what I find somewhat offensive about it is that it may be a result of latent systemic racism that runs through our society. Many social problems do not have a light shone on them because they disproportionately impact ethnic minorities, and the world's western communities that are dominated by wealthy Caucasian culture do not often draw awareness. That simply is not fair.

I cannot help but think of an analogy today, on World AIDS Day. This was a disease, HIV and AIDS, that disproportionately impacted the LGBT community and minorities or other cultures from all around the world. It was not until Magic Johnson came forward in North America and announced that he was HIV positive that it drew the western-centric view to this disease and we started promoting research and searching for a solution to help those who suffered from it.

This is something I think is very important, and creating an awareness day can help raise awareness among our entire community. Even though it may not impact me or people of my ethnicity, it is nevertheless important that we raise awareness so others can benefit from the awareness day.

An awareness day can be used by advocates for this cause to organize blood drives, and they have done so. They can use it to help raise money for research. They can lobby those provinces that do not yet have newborn screening, to ensure that we bring down the rate of infant mortality, not just in Canada but around the world.

I am thankful for this opportunity, and I urge all members of this House to support the bill so we can have sickle cell awareness day in Canada.

● (1930)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order has dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise this evening in adjournment proceedings to pursue a question I asked in question period almost a month ago, on November 2. It relates to the comprehensive economic trade agreement between Europe and Canada and specifically to the thorniest part of that agreement, which has drawn attention around the world, and particularly objections at the last minute from the Walloons, and spreading objections throughout the European Union. It is the investor-state provision.

In my question in question period, I drew a link with a proposal for an open-pit mine, within the legal boundaries of the community of Kamloops, called the Ajax mine. I picked that as a particular example because it is very controversial, being within the town limits and right near the school. This is a community that likes mining and has other mines, but it is very concerned about this one.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The reason it ties into CETA is that if CETA did not have investor-state provisions, there would be no particular risk with respect to the fact that the Ajax mine's proponent is a Polish state-owned enterprise. If CETA goes through and is ratified by Poland and Canada, and should the British Columbia government do the right thing and say no to permitting the Ajax mine to go ahead, that company, being Polish, would have rights that a Canadian mining company would not have. It could sue Canada for damages in an arbitration court for a decision made with no trade motivation whatsoever.

Investor-state provisions are poorly understood in Canada, which is particularly ironic, given that we have been at the losing end of more cases than most countries, because the first investor-state agreement was invented as part of NAFTA. It is chapter 11 of NAFTA.

Canada has been brought for investor disputes and tried at arbitrations that are held in secret. Chapter 11 arbitrations are held entirely in secret, such as the dreadful decision that occurred on a split decision of two arbitrators out of three. Both the federal Conservatives and the provincial Nova Scotia Progressive Conservatives refused the most appalling project I have ever seen in my 17 years working at the Sierra Club, the open pit quarry that was proposed for Digby Neck, Nova Scotia, which threatened the survival of the most endangered whale species on the planet. It was a strong decision based on good environmental assessments. To have that challenged by a proponent from the United States, who was claiming \$300 million in damages because it was turned down by John Baird, at the federal level, and by the provincial government in Nova Scotia, was truly outrageous.

That is just one example of chapter 11 of NAFTA. Canada has lost many of these cases and has had our laws overturned in Parliament.

The more we look at this, the more we wonder why we do not better understand the threats of allowing investor arbitrators to make these kinds of decisions.

I quote Juan Fernández-Armeesto, a Spanish arbitrator, who was quoted in a report called "Profiting from Injustice", which states:

...it never ceases to amaze me that sovereign states have agreed to investor arbitration at all... Three private individuals are entrusted with the power to review, without any restriction or appeal procedure, all actions of the government, all decisions of the courts, and all laws and regulations emanating from parliament.

I have very little time left. This is what I would like the parliamentary secretary to pursue with me. Let us get investor-state provisions out of CETA. They are better procedurally than the ones under chapter 11 of NAFTA, but they are not acceptable.

• (1935)

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for bringing her unique voice to the House. CETA is clearly in Canada's national interest and we feel it is time for all of us to rally around it. On top of delivering tangible growth for our economy and opportunities for the middle class, CETA will provide a strong foundation for Canada and the EU to demonstrate leadership on what

is truly a progressive accord, a green accord, a health accord, and a labour accord.

It also enshrines the right to regulate. The ICS provisions are something that the trade committee has looked at over the last few sessions. We will continue to work with the committee, and with our European partners as well.

International investment flows are a key driver of economic growth. European investments in Canada create jobs for Canadians and vice versa. These investments also create new trade opportunities where none have existed before. A comprehensive agreement such as CETA cannot ignore this crucial aspect of the economic relationship between Canada and Europe.

CETA establishes a framework for Canada and the EU to build on our already substantial investment ties. CETA's investment chapter is designed to give investors greater security, stability, certainty, and protection for their investments, and to secure access to each other's respective markets.

There is no opt-out provision held by any party for any element of CETA, but CETA has been deemed a mixed agreement and, therefore, requires ratification, as a whole, by each individual EU member state for things falling within their jurisdiction. Only after all parties have ratified CETA will the ICS mechanism for the resolution of investment disputes become operational.

While we know that ratification by all 28 EU member states may require some time, we are confident that this will happen. Once ratified by Canada, the EU and all of its member states, CETA will provide Canadian and European investors with a predictable framework based on principles of non-discrimination, fairness, and transparency.

[*Translation*]

Under CETA, we created a permanent tribunal that is responsible for resolving investment disputes. It is made up of 15 members who are appointed by the European Union and Canada for fixed terms. The creation of this tribunal will make it possible to move away from the existing mechanism, which involves special arbitration tribunals. Hearings and any related documents will be completely accessible to the public. These improvements seek to assure citizens that the decisions rendered by the dispute settlement mechanism are fair and objective.

Nothing in CETA prevents governments from regulating in the public interest to protect or promote public health, social services, public education, or the environment. This principle, which is well recognized in international law, is clearly set out in the CETA text.

These improvements to CETA show our commitment to ensuring that this is a progressive agreement. All Canadians can consult the full, final version of the agreement, which has been available since July 2016, in order to better understand that this is a tremendous achievement in progressive trade policy.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

[English]

To answer specifically the member's question relating to the circumstances around the ISDS provisions and application, I would like to quote CETA chief negotiator, Steve Verheul, during his testimony to the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade, when he stated, "Given the investment dispute resolution process will not be in place until all member states approve, we will not be able to use that mechanism, and neither will the EU."

Therefore, in the case of the Polish mine scenario, we need not worry.

• (1940)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary to return to first principles. The whole idea of an investor-state dispute mechanism is to deal with countries that are relatively lawless, the idea that there might be a day when someone seizes power—indeed, we were debating Cuba all day today—and nationalizes the properties and the businesses placed there by other countries over the years.

This is a large agreement involving all industrialized countries, all bound by the rule of law, with no reasonable prospect of such a thing happening. In the European Union, the reason that so many individual states and regions continue to vociferously oppose this, and why it is being challenged in the European Court of Justice, is that the Europeans have never agreed to such a thing before in the European Parliament.

The question is why on earth do we think we need investor protection when dealing with Germany, France, and other countries that are industrialized and responsible, and not likely to seize our assets? This is ambulance chasing at its worst by a clique of global lawyers, done out of greed.

**Mr. David Lametti:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the European Union has a number of different bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, and ISDS provisions are a standard feature in all of them.

International investment is a key driver of economic growth. It creates more trade and more jobs. The government negotiated a progressive agreement that enhances economic opportunities while ensuring our ability to regulate in the public interest. CETA will deliver benefits for consumers through lower prices and more choice, for workers through more jobs and better jobs, and for businesses through reduced costs. Our government is committed to ensuring that these important benefits for Canadians are realized as soon as possible.

This is a landmark initiative, ensuring our country's continued prosperity.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Alberta is in the grip of a devastating jobs crisis that is disrupting lives and careers, breaking up families, and forcing people to leave. Seeing Alberta's EI numbers, and seeing the job numbers each month, is heart-wrenching.

Since the beginning of 2015, the number of unemployed Albertans has nearly doubled. There are now over 200,000 people looking for work. However, what is really sad is that there are real people behind these numbers.

Thousands of families cannot make ends meet. Kids are seeing their parents go to food banks for the first time. Skilled workers across Alberta are struggling to provide for their families and are being forced to seek opportunities for employment in other provinces and countries, taking their skills with them. Imagine what they are thinking when the Alberta minister says, let us hold hands and get through this together.

Losing these skilled workers is another hit that will further weaken our province. More than 24,000 Albertans have already left.

Since the financial crisis, Alberta has been the economic engine of Canada. Albertans have worked hard for generations, and all of Canada has benefited from our province's economic strength. The Canadian economy and the growth in prosperity we have come to expect will lag behind until Alberta is strong again. A strong Alberta means a strong Canada, and a strong Canada must include Alberta.

Without a clear and targeted plan in place by the Liberal government that specifically addresses the challenges being faced in Alberta, companies will continue to move their business elsewhere, families will continue to struggle, and skilled workers will be forced to line up for EI. Albertans deserve better.

As proud Albertans, we want to see the restoration of the province as an economic leader in Canada and a hub for job creation and ingenuity. It is with the Alberta Jobs Taskforce that we on this side of the House will work with everyday Albertans, struggling families, investors, small businesses, and companies to hear their thoughts to develop a plan that will allow the Alberta economy to grow and to restore the province as an economic leader in the country.

In the past months, our Alberta colleagues have been hosting town halls and round tables to develop a report that will outline a plan to stimulate and grow the Alberta economy and get hard-working Albertans back to work.

In our round tables and town halls, we have listened to the enterprising solutions Albertans have come up with to get our province back on its feet. In these round tables and town halls, we have heard the stories of those who have been affected by the economic crisis.

We will be sharing the stories of hard-working and resilient Albertans who have been affected by the economic downturn and reminding the Liberal government, and those outside of Alberta, that behind these numbers are real families having to make tough decisions on whether to put food on the table or pay the mortgage to keep a roof over their family's head.

Our work will report with real policy solutions. We are ready to roll up our sleeves and help out Alberta.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

Why is the Liberal government continuing with things like a carbon tax, continuing with the CPP increases on small business, and continuing to turn a blind eye to Alberta?

• (1945)

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada recognizes the challenges that Alberta is facing. Our hearts go out to Albertans. They have our full support. The government and Alberta are in this together.

We pledged to double infrastructure investments over the next decade. That is exactly what we are doing. These investments will help create good jobs and encourage sustained economic growth across the country, which is particularly important for Alberta.

On September 1, the governments of Canada and Alberta announced the signing of a bilateral agreement that will make more than \$1 billion in combined funding available to the province under two new federal programs, the public transit infrastructure fund and the clean water and wastewater fund.

I would like to remind members that the federal government is providing up to 50% of the funding, or just over \$543 million. To date, the government has approved an initial list of projects under these two funds. For example, we announced funding for 49 public transit projects in Edmonton and Calgary. We also announced funding for 17 water and wastewater projects throughout Alberta, which will give residents access to clean and reliable drinking water. Ten of these projects are already under way.

We have also been working to accelerate the funding available under the new building Canada fund. So far, 63 projects totalling close to \$900 million in federal funding have been approved, from flood mitigation works in Bragg Creek and Cougar Creek to sanitary upgrades in the town of Peace River.

From 2014 to 2019, Alberta is expected to receive over \$1 billion in funding under the renewed federal gas tax fund. In 2016-17 alone, over \$219 million will be provided to Alberta municipalities through the federal gas tax fund to support local infrastructure projects, to fund their priorities.

We are working closely with Alberta to commit all the remaining funding as quickly as possible, helping to kick-start jobs in Alberta.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the government's announcement the day before yesterday about pipeline approvals. Those projects will protect the environment while stimulating the economy and creating jobs.

The Trans Mountain expansion project and Enbridge's Line 3 will create over 22,000 jobs. Other major investments will be made in many sectors of our economy. This will be good for the entire Canadian economy, especially Alberta's, and will improve access to markets that are very important to the province.

It is also important to note that these decisions were the result of an open and inclusive process that involved unprecedented consultations with indigenous peoples.

The projects announced on Tuesday will create jobs and economic opportunities for the middle class while protecting the environment.

The minister is working for Alberta, and the Government of Canada is too.

[English]

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss to ignore the last part of the member's speech, where he talked about pipelines. It is important to note that those jobs are down the line. Those are not jobs that Albertans need and want right now. Although those are important, and I applaud the government for doing that, they are not the jobs that we need.

The member spoke of doubling the infrastructure investments. He brought up the fact that September was when they did it. The Prime Minister met with the premier of the province back in February. So why did it take from February to September to announce that funding? That was an entire construction season that we lost, and the minister on the other side of the House should know that, being from Alberta.

• (1950)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pablo Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to say that the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities is taking his responsibilities seriously and working hard for his province, Alberta, as is the Government of Canada.

I will repeat that a bilateral agreement will provide more than \$1 billion to the province for public transit, water, and waste water systems. Furthermore we are working on expediting the funding through the building Canada fund. More than \$1 billion will be used to renew the federal gas tax fund for pipeline project approvals.

We are not going to stop there. In fact, we will continue to work for Alberta. The minister knows better than anyone that these are difficult times for Alberta.

We stand with Alberta and Albertans today, and we will also be there for them in the future.

[English]

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on October 5, we had a special visitor in Ottawa, Jada Malott, a young 12-year-old girl who travelled from Windsor to bring her message to the Prime Minister that the trans-Pacific partnership was a bad deal for Canadians.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

This young activist represents a generation that is standing up against unfair trade deals that have hurt its communities. Jada brought a passionate message of warning from her generation to ours, that this deal would leave 60,000 Canadians out of work, increase the cost of drugs, and empower foreign investors to sue Canadian governments in secret tribunals.

Many young Canadians visited our trade committee as we travelled across Canada, consulting on this dangerous trade deal. Young people asked us to stop the deal. They spoke of the difficulties they faced trying to find decent work and how they had seen their parents lose good paying jobs over the years, sometimes as a result of other bad trade deals.

Youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow; they are the leaders of today. In southwestern Ontario and across Canada, they speak strongly about the need to stand up for strong, healthy, and resilient communities. They speak against trade deals like the TPP, a massive trade and investment deal that would put corporate interests ahead of the interests of Canadians.

Of the 6,000 pages in this deal and the 30 chapters, only six have to do with traditional trade.

It is not difficult to see how damaging the TPP would be to Windsor—Essex. Our region stands to lose 20,000 auto jobs. We will all suffer under the increased drug costs, jobs will be lost due to the labour mobility chapter, and the ISDS clause will allow us to be sued by foreign investors.

When the trade committee visited Windsor, it was surprised to hear our local chamber president Matt Marchand, Unifor Local 444 president Dino Chiodo, president of Windsor and District Labour Council Brian Hogan, and the Windsor Economic Development Corporation, all bringing the same message of opposition to the TPP.

This is the labour rich region that Jada Malott has lived and grown up in. She knows well what will face southwestern Ontario under the TPP. She brought that passionate message to stop the TPP to this very House, in fact, to the minister of youth, the Prime Minister. She asked the Prime Minister if he would visit Windsor to listen to them about the TPP and he responded, yes.

Will the Prime Minister honour this commitment and come visit Windsor to talk about what a truly progressive trade agenda looks like?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes that it is essential to consult Canadians on the trans-Pacific partnership, the TPP. We promised Canadians that we would consult them in an open and transparent manner on the results of this agreement. We are now honouring this campaign promise by holding hundreds of meetings and discussions all across Canada.

I want to congratulate Jada Malott and other young people who have taken the time to share their opinion of the TPP. I met with her myself that day after question period and I asked her for her opinion on the TPP.

We want to hear from everyone. For instance, on September 9, Minister Freeland and Minister Bennett initiated a dialogue with

some indigenous groups on international trade and investment initiatives, including the TPP.

This recent dialogue with the aboriginal peoples of Canada highlights the government's continued commitment to including all Canadians in its consultations. This dialogue is still ongoing and includes a recent trip I took to Yellowknife. I travelled there to consult stakeholders in the Northwest Territories and hear from representatives from indigenous groups, businesses, and civil society organizations.

Other than the 250-plus events involving over 500 stakeholders from across the country, we also held 10 town hall meetings that drew more than 1,000 members of the public. Many other interested Canadians shared their thoughts directly with us, including through submissions to the government website on the TPP consultations.

A wide range of Canadians have participated in these consultations, including representatives from the provinces, businesswomen, innovation company reps, farmers, representatives from the forestry and wood product sectors, representatives from the seafood products sector, indigenous groups, environmental groups, small and medium-sized businesses, unions, auto workers, auto parts manufacturers, port authorities, civil society organizations, academics, students, business leaders, and citizens.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade is also studying the TPP and its representatives have travelled the country as part of its strategy to raise awareness among Canadians. The House committee is accepting submissions until the end of January 2017 from all interested parties and those who want to share their views are invited to take part.

The government records every position and point of view, and it is quite clear that industrial associations and export-oriented businesses in Canada support the TPP. They generally perceive it as an important opportunity to diversify Canada's trade and increase market access for Canadian exports.

However, it is also clear that concerns are being raised by other representatives, such as those from civil society and unions, about specific aspects of the agreement, including the impact of the TPP on the economy and jobs in Canada; the potential financial impact of certain requirements regarding pharmaceuticals; and the scope and enforcement of the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism, or ISDS.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

•(1955)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** I would remind the member that even in the adjournment debate, naming members by name is not allowed. Members are to be referred to by title.

The hon. member for Essex.

[*English*]

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey:** Mr. Speaker, instead of congratulating Jada, he could answer her concerns. The Liberal government could listen to the concerns that are echoed across the country by thousands of Canadians, show leadership, and stand up against the trans-Pacific partnership.

After the news today, I am very curious. We travelled on the trade committee. Over 400 people have come before us. We travelled across the country and widely consulted Canadians from the trade committee level on the trans-Pacific partnership. It is interesting to note we have not done so on CETA. No such consultation process has taken place.

However, getting back to TPP, after the news today that came in the House, we heard the minister for democratic reform essentially flopping right over her message and the Liberals' promise to Canadians on what they would do with the consultations and with the work of the committee. I sincerely hope I will not soon find myself, with other members of the committee in the House, with the same treatment of our TPP study. What will the Liberals' response be if this widespread report—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

•(2000)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. David Lametti:** Mr. Speaker, Canada being a trading nation, its economic growth is directly tied to international trade. Our government strongly supports free trade, since it opens new markets to Canadian goods and services, grows Canadian businesses, and creates well-paying jobs for the middle class.

We also want to ensure that Canada is positioned to take advantage of new opportunities in foreign markets and that this is done in a way that meets the needs of all Canadians.

Over the past year, the Government of Canada has held discussions with Canadians and interested groups across the country on our approach to trade. We recognize that trade policy needs to be crafted in a way that addresses and contributes in a meaningful way to the government's strategic, economic, social and environmental priorities. This is how the government is working to...

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:01 p.m.)





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