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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[English]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

QUEBEC DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our dairy industry is a vital economic driver for Quebec as a whole. It generates 85,000 direct and indirect jobs in every region of Quebec.

Quebec favours family farms, which are often passed down from one generation to the next, but the American system favours industrial farms.

Maintaining supply management is crucial to maintaining Quebec's dairy industry, and that goes for our egg and poultry producers too.

The Bloc Québécois invites everyone who is concerned about our agriculture sector to visit our website or our Facebook page to sign our petition.

It is time for anyone who cares about the future of our regions to stand up and tell the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec to make sure that supply management is not on the table when NAFTA is reopened.

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[English]

CANADA-MEXICO RELATIONS

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am blessed to be a Canadian with two distinct cultural backgrounds. My last name, Dzerowicz, betrays me as Ukrainian, but what is hidden is

my Mexican heritage. My mother is Mexican, and thus I am also a proud Mexican Canadian.

I mention all this as background to acknowledge the hard work of His Excellency Agustin Garcia Lopez. The Mexican ambassador to Canada is finishing his term in Canada at the end of this week. His hard work was instrumental in building closer ties and stronger relations between Canada and Mexico, paving the way for a successful visit of the Mexican president last June, for the Mexican visa requirement to be lifted, new education partnerships, stronger cultural and social ties, and greater economic opportunities between our two countries.

As the co-chair of the Canada-Mexico Friendship Group and the proud representative of a growing Hispanic community in my riding of Davenport, as well as a proud Mexican Canadian, I would like to extend my best wishes to Embajador Lopez, his wife Katya, and family.

[Member spoke in Spanish as follows:]

Senor Embajador, quisiera agradecerle por todo su trabajo y desearle muchísima suerte, sabiendo que siempre podemos contar con su apoyo.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning, parliamentarians of all stripes joined members of the military, veterans, families, and mental health advocates for the fourth annual Sam Sharpe breakfast. Each year, the Sharpe breakfast explores mental health issues related to service, and it helps us remember Sam Sharpe, one of two MPs who died in battle during World War I.

This year, RCMP Corporal Curtis Barrett shared his journey back to wellness following his experience during the shooting on Parliament Hill in 2014. Corporal Barrett showed tremendous bravery confronting danger on October 22, 2014, and he showed greater courage on the Hill again this morning sharing his struggles. His story is important to help confront the stigma surrounding mental injuries while in uniform.

I would like to thank Corporal Barrett along with General Roméo Dallaire and the MP for Durham for making this worthy event a part of mental health week each year.

*Statements by Members***CURLING CHAMPIONS**

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to share with the House a recent unprecedented sporting achievement in Canada.

On April 22, two teams representing northern Ontario, a boys' team and a girls' team, were crowned Canadian under-18 curling champions in Moncton, New Brunswick. It is very rare for men's and women's teams from the same province to win curling championships in the same year. What makes this achievement rarer is that both rinks are from my riding of Sudbury, from the Sudbury Curling Club.

The girls' team was made up of Jessica Leonard, Sydnie Stinson, Kate Sherry, skip Kira Brunton, and coach Steve Acorn. The boys' team was made up of Shane Robinson, Nicholas Bissonnette, Max Cull, skip Jacob Horgan, and coach Gerry Horgan.

Congratulations to Team Brunton and Team Horgan. Sudbury is very proud of our 2017 Canadian under-18 curling champions.

* * *

●(1410)

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an unfortunate fact that too many Canadians are affected by multiple sclerosis. I am consistently inspired by my sister, Julia diagnosed with relapsing remitting MS in 2004. Julia is here today in Ottawa along with other advocates to deliver a message.

In Julia's words: "When you're diagnosed with MS, it is forever. But our government support systems don't see it that way. Each time I relapse, I have to start from scratch to access government services. All of this is very stressful, and can amplify my symptoms. The federal government needs to officially recognize that disabilities can be episodic, so we no longer need extra documentation from our doctors or 'lawyer up' to access support."

I have seen first-hand the daunting challenges facing those living with MS. I wear a carnation today in honour of MS Awareness Month, and to express solidarity with my sister and others living with MS.

I urge the Prime Minister to recognize episodic disabilities and do everything he can to help the MS community.

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*[Translation]***COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION FOR SENIORS**

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to mark the anniversary of a community organization in my riding, La Popote à Roland, in Blainville. Founded in 1977 to help end the isolation of seniors, this organization has been making a real difference in the lives of many people for 40 years now.

By offering recreational activities, a sympathetic ear, a meal to share, a physical presence, as well as services and referrals, La Popote à Roland has become a meeting place and a unifying force in our community. I feel so privileged to be part of its 40th anniversary

celebrations, which will also be a time to recognize the hard work of the organization's founder, Roland Dagenais, and its current president, Josée Collard Beauregard, as well as all its wonderful volunteers, who won the 2010 Hommage bénévolat-Québec award.

Happy birthday, Popote à Roland.

* * *

*[English]***DRUGS AND PHARMACEUTICALS**

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of a brave and strong young girl from my riding.

This young woman's name is Haley Chisholm, an aspiring nurse. She is a high school student from High River whose extremely rare kidney condition requires the treatment of a costly drug, Soliris.

This young woman is fighting for her life. The drug she needs is currently unavailable to her because of its high cost and its off-label status.

Her physician has been clear. Soliris is the treatment that she has recommended for patients like Haley who are suffering from this painful, debilitating disease.

In collaboration with her caregivers and my counterpart, the MLA for Highwood, we have been working hard to obtain support from the federal and provincial governments to access funding through Alberta's specialized high-cost drug program. Unfortunately, thus far we have been unable to gather that support.

This girl and her family are suffering. Each day she does not receive that treatment, her condition worsens.

I am calling on the Minister of Health to please work with her provincial counterpart and secure access for funding for this drug, and to do the right thing for a young girl who is suffering so Haley's family can see their daughter grow up with a normal life.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May 1 to 7 is Mental Health Week. In honour of that, last week I held a mental health forum in my riding and heard from local service providers and speakers, including Jacob Hartley Rosser, a youth mental health advocate, and CAMH.

The statistics for youth are staggering. Symptoms for common mental health problems and illnesses can begin as early as four years of age, and a reported 1.2 million children and youth under the age of 19 live with mental health challenges. It is also worth pointing out that it is a proven fact that dealing with these issues early can save 25% in health care costs per person down the road.

*Statements by Members***CANADA POST**

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as our government and millions of Canadians prepare to celebrate our great country's 150th anniversary, Canada Post is no exception.

[*Translation*]

Canada Post is joining in the celebrations by issuing 10 stamps marking unforgettable moments in Canada's history.

Today, at 3:30 p.m., Canada Post will unveil its next stamp.

[*English*]

This stamp will celebrate one of Canada's most significant modern-day moments, one that occurred right here on Parliament Hill just over 35 years ago.

I invite, you, Mr. Speaker, and all members to “charter” some time today and join their colleagues on the front steps of Centre Block at 3:30 p.m. to participate in this historic unveiling.

* * *

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate World Press Freedom Day because journalists have a critically important role to play in Canada, and in any democracy. Their stories and investigations expose injustice, unfairness, and prejudice. Their work can hold the powerful to account, and can raise up those without a voice in our society. They celebrate the good and call out the bad, and can do this without an agenda of their own. Canadians and Canadian democracy itself benefit from strong, vibrant, local journalism.

We cannot take a free, vibrant press for granted. There are too many examples around the world of journalists punished and imprisoned simply for doing their job. Tragically, some have lost their lives.

Today, on World Press Freedom Day, I would like to thank Canada's journalists for the excellent work they do. I would like to call on all members of the House to speak out in defence of free speech, free journalism, and a free press in improving, strengthening, and protecting our cherished democracy.

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MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, in honour of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, I am wearing a carnation. It shows my solidarity with my late friend Ted Marianix and the entire MS community.

Canada has the highest rate of MS in the world. Sadly, MS is Canada's disease. We must join together across the nation to improve life with MS for Canadians.

The first step in dealing with this is for people to speak out. I had the honour to make a mental health awareness video with Jacob and the Hon. Michael Wilson, chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, to do just that, to encourage people to speak out and to #GetLoud. It was a moving experience and a touching video. It is now available online for everybody to see. I encourage people to do so.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ITALIAN-CANADIAN WORKERS

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Italian-Canadian workers who were killed or injured at work during the last century. As the House already knows, Italian-Canadian labourers played a key role in building our country.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, thousands of Italian immigrants lost their lives while labouring in the most difficult conditions. This year we added another column to the memorial in my riding, honouring the fallen workers whose names are already etched in.

This monument reminds us of the many sacrifices made by the Italian-Canadian community here in Canada. I know all members in this House will join me in acknowledging their memory, and those who lost their lives building this country.

Grazie per il loro sacrificio.

* * *

• (1415)

POLAND

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to draw the attention of the House to two important events for the over one million Canadians with Polish heritage.

Today marks the 226th anniversary of the May 3 Polish constitution. A symbol of freedom and democracy in a world when authoritarianism reigned supreme, it recognized the inherent dignity of all human beings, regardless of social class. It honoured long-held traditions and ensured religious tolerance was a central pillar of society.

Canada has played a major role in the preservation of Polish identity, culture, and history during World War II. The Polish national treasures were evacuated from Wawel Castle in Krakow to Canada in September 1939, including Jagiellonian tapestries; Szczerbiec, the sword used for the coronation of Polish kings; a Gutenberg Bible; and many other priceless artifacts. When these treasures arrived at the port of Halifax, they received the honour of an RCMP escort to Ottawa.

Today, I join with Polish people around the world who will mark the occasion of this constitution, and for those in Canada, the special relationship created when Canada preserved the national treasures of Poland.

Statements by Members

Let us take the case of Joshua Kelndorfer, a 13-year-old from Edmonton. His mother was diagnosed with MS when he was just one year old. Joshua said this:

I see the impact that MS has on my mom and I want to do something about it. I see the pain she feels and I pray every night that she will wake up without MS. I want MS to leave my family. I want a cure for MS, for my mom and for all the other families living with this terrible disease. I know the way to find a cure is by raising money for research.

Joshua is right. Let us keep raising money to find a cure.

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OVARIAN CANCER CANADA

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Ovarian Cancer Canada to Parliament Hill.

Ovarian cancer is the fifth most diagnosed cancer in Canada. Last year, it was estimated that 2,800 women would be diagnosed with it, and more than 1,700 would lose their lives to ovarian cancer. However, when diagnosed early, women can increase their chances of survival.

I know personally that ovarian cancer impacts many women across the country, including a very special person in my life. Watching her struggle with this disease has been heartbreaking. I encourage all women to see their doctors regularly, before it is too late.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Health and a former health care professional, I am eager to continue the work with organizations like Ovarian Cancer Canada to highlight ongoing innovative research.

I want to thank the group here today for all of the work it is doing in our communities across Canada. With its efforts, Ovarian Cancer Canada is saving lives.

* * *

● (1420)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, until this day, the Prime Minister excludes the most important voices from consultations to advance reconciliation: the voices of indigenous women.

For decades, indigenous women and girls have struggled to have their voices heard. They are silenced from critical decision-making processes. The Prime Minister states there is no relationship more important than the relationship with first nations, Métis, and Inuit, yet he is specifically excluding families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

Uncertainty and criticism around the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls continues to pile up. Across the country, including in my riding, local men, women, and families are doing the work. They go door to door, put up posters, and search, hoping to find their missing loved ones. The government said great things, but there is no action. When is the government going to do the right thing and help these families?

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, and many of us in the House and across the country have family members and friends stricken with this terrible disease. MS has no prejudice. It attacks victims of all ages.

My sister Mary Lou was 28 years old when she was diagnosed with MS. We suspect she suffered from MS for a number of years prior to that. Like all diseases, it is not easy to watch loved ones suffer. My sister does not complain. With the support of her husband Brian, she soldiers on.

We will find a cure for MS. I am very convinced of that, but we are not there yet. In the meantime, I will continue to speak out to raise awareness of this disease. I have pinned carnations on MPs as they have entered the House of Commons and I will continue to wear this carnation in support of finding a cure for MS.

Collectively, both in the House and in our home communities, we must not rest until we find a cure for MS.

* * *

FORT MCMURRAY WILDFIRE

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year ago today, with a growing wildfire threatening the city, Fort McMurray was placed under a mandatory evacuation order. In the days and weeks that followed, the fire chased some 90,000 people from their homes, destroyed whole neighbourhoods, and burned over half a million hectares of land.

While the story of Fort McMurray wildfire was obviously one of widespread destruction, it was also a story of courage and compassion.

Firefighters, first responders, and other support workers came from across Alberta, across Canada, and around the world. Over 3,200 of them worked tirelessly to limit the damage and keep people safe. Canadians gave generously, with \$104 million in donations to the Red Cross, matched by the federal government. We also should never forget the contributions of newly arrived Syrian refugees, who quickly went from being recipients of aid to becoming donors themselves.

A year later, we know that much recovery and rebuilding work remains to be done, but we also know that the courage and community spirit demonstrated by Canadians of all walks of life while the fire was blazing will ensure Fort McMurray comes back stronger than ever.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Acting Clerk of the House has received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Bob Benzen, member for the electoral district of Calgary Heritage.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Bob Benzen, member for the electoral district of Calgary Heritage, introduced by the Hon. Rona Ambrose and Mr. Blaine Calkins.

* * *

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Acting Clerk of the House has received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mrs. Mona Fortier, member for the electoral district of Ottawa—Vanier.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mrs. Mona Fortier, member for the electoral district of Ottawa—Vanier, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau and the Hon. Jane Philpott.

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[*English*]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Acting Clerk of the House has received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mrs. Stephanie Kusie, member for the electoral district of Calgary Midnapore.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie, member for the electoral district of Calgary Midnapore, introduced by the Hon. Rona Ambrose and Mr. Blaine Calkins.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Acting Clerk of the House has received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos, member for the electoral district of Saint-Laurent.

Oral Questions

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos, member for the electoral district of Saint-Laurent, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau and the Hon. Mélanie Joly.

* * *

• (1430)

[*English*]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Acting Clerk of the House has received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mary Ng, member for the electoral district of Markham—Thornhill.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mrs. Mary Ng, member for the electoral district of Markham—Thornhill, introduced by Right Hon. Justin Trudeau and the Hon. Carolyn Bennett.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by keeping his Minister of National Defence, the Prime Minister is again showing that he has no respect for the military. Yesterday the minister had an opportunity to personally apologize to Afghanistan veterans while fundraising for their families, but he cancelled.

If the defence minister's reputation with our troops is so damaged that he cannot even meet with them, why is he still the defence minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the minister of defence presented to the public our approach to defence, which highlights that, for 10 years, the Conservative government underfunded our military, depriving them of the equipment they need. On this side of the House, not only do we stand up for our military, but we are going to give them the equipment and support they need to serve Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I have already reminded members that they need to listen to the answers and the questions.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[*English*]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that the Liberal Party has a long history of disrespecting our troops. The fact that this defence minister is still in place is just further evidence of that. This is the party that sent our soldiers into the Afghanistan desert wearing green camouflage, the party that forced our military to hitch rides from our allies, and the party that oversaw the decade of darkness in our military. Now it is at it again.

Oral Questions

Why should Canadians believe anything Liberals say about our military?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are always willing to talk a good game when it comes to our military, but the reality is they did not deliver. For 10 years they underinvested in our military, depriving them of the equipment and the care necessary to do their job.

I am proud of the Minister of National Defence and the leadership he has shown in giving to our troops the support and the care they need to be able to serve their country, both at home and overseas.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, by keeping the defence minister where he is, the Prime Minister is proving yet again that he has no respect for our military. Last night the defence minister had the perfect opportunity to personally apologize to veterans of the Afghanistan campaign at a fundraiser for Afghan vets. He was supposed to be there, but clearly he felt so uncomfortable that he cancelled.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister, if the defence minister's reputation with our troops has become so damaged that he cannot even meet with them, why is he still the defence minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as they are showing today, the members opposite talk a good game when it comes to supporting our troops, but actions—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I had no trouble hearing the question. It is important we also be able to hear the answer. We do not want a shortened question period today. I am sure the member for St. Albert—Edmonton would not want question period to be shortened today.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, 10 years of actions speak louder than words. Unfortunately, the previous government underinvested in the kind of equipment and care for our military that the men and women in the Canadian Forces deserve. We are proud that under the leadership of the Minister of National Defence, we will be turning that around.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister promised the organizers of this event — it is called “To the ‘Stan and Back”—that he would be there to support the troops. This is an annual event that raises funds for our veterans and their families. He, of all people, knows why this is important. Sadly, but for no apparent reason, the defence minister cancelled. However, I think we all know why.

If our veterans cannot rely on the defence minister to do his job, why should the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister is leading the way on giving the equipment and the care to the troops that we need after 10 years of dismaying underinvestment by the members opposite when they were in government.

I can highlight that it was with tremendous pride that the Minister of Veterans Affairs was there at the fundraiser last night to highlight the extraordinary service in Afghanistan of so many Canadian

Forces members. I know all members in this House recognize and applaud their extraordinary service to our country.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, saying sorry for one day while offering no real explanation is not good enough, not when someone is the defence minister and he misled Canadians about his military service record. The Minister of National Defence's reputation among our Canadian Armed Forces will be forever tarnished by his actions and his failure to properly atone for them. The only thing that is going to fix this is someone new and a fresh start. Will the Prime Minister please do the right thing and move his defence minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite in that actions speak louder than words, and that is why 10 years of neglect of our forces, of underinvestment by the previous government, needs to be met with the kinds of investment and care that the members of the Canadian Armed Forces deserve. They want to show leadership and service to their country at the highest level at home and abroad. We will give them the tools to do just that at long last.

* * *

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada dropped 14 points in the World Press Freedom Index under the watch of the Prime Minister. Speaking of watching, journalists are under surveillance in Canada today, and reporters are forced to fight the RCMP in court to protect their freedom. Happy World Press Freedom Day.

This is not a proud record. This is also not a time for more empty phrases and talking points from the Prime Minister, so will the Prime Minister acknowledge here today that journalists have the right to protect their sources, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a strong and independent media, a free press, is essential in the protection of our democracy and of its institutions. It gives confidence to Canadians, and today, on World Press Freedom Day, it is important to highlight just that. Yes, of course, journalists should always be able to protect their sources. That is something we believe in strongly as a government, and that is something we will continue to defend and fight for, not just here in Canada but around the world.

• (1440)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, given that answer, is the Prime Minister willing to tell the RCMP to drop its court case against a Vice journalist that it is now pursuing? The Prime Minister should be protecting the privacy of reporters and all Canadians, but instead, he has refused to amend Bill C-51.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

The Prime Minister voted for Bill C-51 because he was afraid of Stephen Harper, but the Liberals have been in office for 18 months. What are they afraid of now?

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians when his government is going to make the promised changes to Bill C-51?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we often said during the election campaign and as we continue to say now, it is very important for any government to do two things right: protect Canadians and defend our rights and freedoms.

That is exactly what we are doing by creating a parliamentary committee that will be responsible for overseeing all of our security services and police forces, by defending our rights and freedoms and making the necessary corrections to former Bill C-51, as we promised. That is what we are going to do in the coming months.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when reports of gay men being violently persecuted in Chechnya first surfaced, there was barely a peep from the government. While the Prime Minister hides from criticizing Trump, yesterday we saw what leadership actually looks like when German Chancellor Angela Merkel called out Putin while standing right beside him.

Canadians deserve bold leadership from their Prime Minister. Will he stand up for the LGBT community and personally call on Putin to end these despicable atrocities?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed to a compassionate refugee system that extends protection and refuge to those who need it most, including members of the LGBTQ community. Canada works with the UN Refugee Agency as well as with private sponsors to identify the most vulnerable persons in need of resettlement. We will continue to work with the UN Refugee Agency and international non-profit organizations, like Rainbow Railroad, to stand up for human rights at home and abroad and protect those who need it.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister used to boast that he would tell Putin off, even to his face.

[Translation]

LGBT and human rights groups have asked the Liberals to issue emergency visas. We are not talking about refugees. We are talking about emergency visas for gay men who are trying to flee persecution in Chechnya. This crisis has been going on for a month now, and the government has not lifted a finger to help.

Will the Prime Minister give these men emergency visas, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know just how many vulnerable people there are around the world who need to leave their country and come here because they are victims of discrimination.

That is why we are working to find permanent rather than temporary solutions to welcoming refugees, including refugees from the LGBT community, and helping them find a country where rights are respected and everyone is equal. Here in Canada, we will always stand up alongside other world leaders to strongly advocate for the rights of the LGBT community.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of being a member of the House since 2007. I arrived here at a time when soldiers were talking about the decade of darkness under the previous Liberal government.

As my colleague said earlier, this government sent troops to the heat of the Afghanistan desert with winter clothing. It cut \$20 billion in investments that our government had made in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Today, the Prime Minister is spouting yet another delusional political speech filled with alternative facts, suggesting that we did not invest in the Canadian Armed Forces when we most certainly did.

When will the Prime Minister dismiss his Minister of National Defence?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the reality is that for 10 years, the Conservative government underinvested in the Canadian Armed Forces. It did not provide the necessary support to our troops to ensure that they could carry out their duties and serve our country at home and abroad.

That is why I am so proud of the work that the Minister of National Defence and the entire government are doing to ensure that our troops will have the equipment and support that they need.

● (1445)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber issue is proving hard to resolve on both sides of the border, and now, alternative facts have found their way into Canada.

Shipbuilding alone cost \$30 billion, but the government just cut \$20 billion over two years. Then it says that it is investing more. That is an alternative fact.

The minister of defence must have credibility with his troops. He must be seen by his brothers in arms as being capable of properly defending our country. He lost their respect by taking credit for the achievements of others.

Will he do the honourable thing and resign?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we see on a regular basis, the members opposite are always ready to talk about standing up for our soldiers and our troops, but, unfortunately, they do not follow through. For 10 years they were not there for the military and did not provide the equipment and services needed. They talked a lot, but they did nothing.

Oral Questions

Together with our minister of defence, who served our country and showed leadership, we are going to give the members of the Canadian Armed Forces the tools they need to serve the country.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is fine and well for the defence minister to stand in here or out in the foyer and read an apology prepared by the Prime Minister, but yesterday he turned his back on Afghan vets when the defence minister refused to attend a fundraiser to support these brave men and women. There is no one more deserving of an apology from the minister than those whose valour he has stolen.

Allowing the minister to sit at the cabinet table sets a very poor example of leadership for our military and for all Canadians. Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and ask the defence minister for his resignation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of nickel-and-diming our veterans, it is important that this government keep standing up for our veterans. That is why I was so proud that the Minister of Veterans Affairs was there last night to represent this government to the Afghan veterans who were at this ceremony and this fundraiser.

The fact is, not only did the Conservatives nickel-and-dime our veterans but they underfunded for 10 years the Canadian Armed Forces, which is why they are so upset that for once, we are turning that around and giving them the tools they need.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is an idea. The Prime Minister can actually be an architect and rebuild his cabinet and fire the defence minister.

The Prime Minister's lack of judgment in failing to remove the defence minister is appalling. The defence minister misled Canadians on multiple occasions over the past two years regarding his service record in Afghanistan. His deceit and deception have lost him the respect of our brave men and women in uniform, Canadians, and our allies.

The Prime Minister says he supports the defence minister, so he must know why the defence minister has told this concocted story. Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians why the defence minister fabricated history?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the members opposite continue to try to mislead Canadians and say that they have supported our military for 10 years. Whether it was underfunding services for our veterans or simply not delivering on the equipment, service, and care that our Canadian Armed Forces members require and deserve, the members opposite did not deliver for our armed forces. It is a real shame.

That is why we are so proud that after 10 long years, we are turning it around and giving the tools and support to our veterans and armed forces that they deserve.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister must not have been in this House or in Parliament when the Conservatives were in

power, because he seems to have completely missed what actually happened.

General Mike Rouleau made a mistake in Iraq when he accidentally fired his weapon. As a soldier, he insisted on being tried for his mistake. General Rouleau is an example of the righteousness and excellence of our men and women in uniform.

Unfortunately, honour and righteousness vanish as soon as one becomes a Liberal. Not only did the Minister of National Defence take credit for the success of those who fought the Taliban, but he also sullied the memory of those who gave their lives. If he has any self-respect at all, he will step down.

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the Conservatives are spewing empty rhetoric. They did not measure up for our soldiers and military personnel, and they did nothing for our veterans.

Whether in Latvia or Ukraine, in the fight against Daesh, or through the investments that we plan to make, the reality is that we continue to give our soldiers the respect, the tools, and the support they need, not by spewing empty rhetoric, but by meeting our commitments to our soldiers in a meaningful way.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We must be able to hear the answers, not only the questions.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to be told that our words are meaningless is an insult to everyone here. Who cut \$12 million in defence spending in the past two years? The Liberal government.

Yesterday, there was a fundraiser for people who fought in Afghanistan. The minister was the guest of honour. Since he might have run in to people who know exactly what he did and especially what he did not do in Afghanistan, the minister chose to avoid them. Is hiding out how Liberals own up to their mistakes?

This is yet another example of why, given the many—

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

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I am very proud of our Minister of Veterans Affairs, who was there to support and represent Afghanistan veterans.

The Minister of National Defence has consistently shown leadership. He recognizes that this government and previous Canadian governments have invested too little in our armed forces for too long and that we need to make adequate investments to strengthen our armed forces so they can better serve Canadians.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to apologize, but it is another to change one's behaviour.

Oral Questions

When the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner asked the minister of defence about his role in relation to Afghan detainees, he said he was just a reservist. We know that is simply not the case.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and instruct the minister of defence to reconsider what he told the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner?

If indeed the Liberals have nothing to hide, that is the least they can do.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has said that the file is closed and that she is not interested in reopening it.

The fact is that there have been six different investigations into the Afghan detainee issue, one of which is still under way. A former colleague, Stéphane Dion, spent the summer reviewing 40,000 documents. It is interesting that the NDP chose not to participate in that exercise.

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the defence minister once said, “I discovered that there was a goldmine of information flowing into [Governor Khalid's] palace.” Diplomat Richard Colvin revealed that in the basement of that palace, the governor of Kandahar was “known to personally torture people in [a] dungeon.”

Can the Prime Minister deny that information like this from the minister who was a liaison with that governor would be relevant to an inquiry, and can he tell Canadians why he is trying to hide this kind of information by blocking an inquiry which he used to favour when he was in opposition?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Armed Forces and, indeed, all Canadians stand firmly against torture.

We agree that transparency on this file was a serious concern under the previous government. As the member knows, all opposition parties were given the opportunity to review 40,000 documents pertaining to this matter. The NDP chose not to participate. We continue to hold that the investigation that is ongoing is going to deliver more information.

We know that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has decided that particular file is closed.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence made a choice to mislead Canadians on multiple occasions about his role in Afghanistan. He was forced to come clean, but only after he got caught misleading. The military has lost all confidence in the minister, but the Prime Minister says he still has confidence in the minister.

Canadians deserve to know how many more times the minister has to mislead Canadians before the Prime Minister will force him to resign.

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to misleading Canadians, the member should know that over 10 years, her government underinvested in Canada's

military, did not give the care and support necessary to our Canadian Forces to actually deliver on the extraordinary service and leadership they want to offer Canada, both at home and overseas.

That is why I am proud that under the leadership of this Minister of National Defence, we are turning that around. We are going to be giving to the men and women in the Canadian Forces the tools and the care and support they need to deliver on their extraordinary service to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one cannot put a price on respect. All Canadians and all military personnel know that when the honour of the Canadian Armed Forces is sullied by a members' actions, that member has committed a serious mistake that deserves to be punished.

The Minister of National Defence voluntarily committed perjury at least twice and would still have us believe that he just made a mistake that can be forgiven with an insincere apology.

If this minister really wants to show the minimum amount of respect that he owes to his former brothers in arms, then what is he waiting for? When will he step down?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to our troops, the members opposite are all talk and no action.

For 10 years, they did nothing to support our veterans or to give our troops the tools they need to do their job, demonstrate leadership, and serve both here in Canada and abroad.

That is why I am so proud of the work that we are doing to invest in our troops.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*English*]

The Speaker: Order. I have to hear the answers. Most members in all parties are able to sit through question period without reacting when it is not their turn to speak. Let us all listen now.

The hon. member for Abbotsford.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence says his claim to be the architect of Operation Medusa was a “mistake”. Nothing could be further from the truth. The minister was deliberately untruthful and repeated his claims on more than one occasion. His falsehood was designed to promote his political fortunes. His actions have brought disgrace upon himself and angered the very people he serves. Will he now do the right thing and resign?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have been consistent in always talking a good game when it comes to our military but not delivering. For 10 years, the Conservatives underinvested in our military, not giving our troops the care, the tools, the equipment necessary.

Oral Questions

That is why under this Minister of National Defence, I am so proud we are turning that around. We are finally looking at the investments our troops need in order to serve our country as well as we know they can and will.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was no answer as usual.

The minister falsely and deliberately took credit for a major military offensive when the credit belonged to others. His apologies ring hollow, especially when he keeps insisting that the whole tawdry affair was just a mistake. This was no mistake. The minister made the choice to be dishonest with Canadians and he made a choice to repeat his false claim.

Will he now make the choice to do the honourable thing and resign?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the kind of outrage and volume generated by the members opposite when it comes to the military. Unfortunately, that level of passion did not translate into actions: supporting our troops, caring for our veterans. We had, for 10 years, a government that thought that talk was all it needed to do in terms of delivering for our military.

We are demonstrating that we understand the needs, the concerns, and the importance of investing properly in our military. That is exactly what we are doing under the tremendous leadership of our Minister of National Defence.

* * *

[Translation]

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we all remember that it was about this time last year when the Liberals tried to control the House with their infamous Motion No. 6. Now history is repeating itself.

The Liberals are justifying their actions on the grounds that they have to keep their election promises, but as we saw with electoral reform, those promises matter only when they benefit the Liberals.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what would prevent a future prime minister from taking advantage of the precedent he is setting to do the same thing and unilaterally change the rules of the game to his or her advantage?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope that future prime ministers will answer questions from all members, not just from party leaders. I hope that future prime ministers will not make excessive use of omnibus bills and will not resort to prorogation to avoid problematic situations.

That is why we made those promises to Canadians, and that is why we are keeping our promises. We want to improve how the House works, and we will always be open to other members' suggestions for improving the services we offer in Ottawa and in our ridings.

● (1500)

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous. There is a difference between pretending that one believes in accountability and actually practising it. The Prime Minister is great at pretending. He gets an A plus. There was a question from my colleague. The Prime Minister takes all the questions he wants, but he does not answer any of them.

He is in the process of unilaterally changing the rules of Parliament to suit his own purpose so he can duck out whenever he wants. What is to stop any other future prime minister from doing the same thing now that he has broken with parliamentary tradition and set that sad precedent?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that I have tremendous confidence in the intelligence and perspective of Canadians, who will always know how to hold people to account, always know to expect a greater level of openness and transparency.

Quite frankly, I think it is good that a prime minister would take questions from all members in the House, not just party leaders. I am pleased to be here more often than my predecessors to take more questions throughout the week. These are the kinds of things that I think make a huge difference. When one takes more questions every week than the predecessors ever have, that is good for democracy.

* * *

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, women's participation in our society is crucial if we are to have a strong economy and strengthen the middle class. However, we know that there is still a gender wage gap. This is due to several factors, such as violence against women, poverty, and the under-representation of women in the labour force, public life, and even in the House.

Could the Prime Minister inform the House of the progress made on gender equality?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Saint-Laurent and congratulate her for being here, in the House, to effectively represent her constituents.

Gender equality and opportunities for women are issues that are very important to us. For that reason, we have invested heavily in support for the middle class, and especially for women, by introducing the Canada child benefit, which helps nine out of 10 families and reduces child poverty. We have moved forward with a child care program and we are fighting gender-based violence. We have taken some steps, but we know that there is much more to be done.

Oral Questions

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, speaking of misleading Canadians, the Prime Minister has stood in the House and claimed to be giving more money to our military. I can tell the Prime Minister that he has cut \$12 billion from the budget over the last two years. In our last year in government, we gave over twice what the Liberals spent during their time in office during the 1990s.

Will the Prime Minister commit, will he stand right now and say he will give back the \$12 billion he has taken in the last two years?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 long years of underinvestment by the Conservative government, we are pleased that we are finally going to be able to give to—

The Speaker: Order. I cannot hear the answer. I need to hear the answer. Members know that it is important to have tough questions and sometimes answers they do not like, or vice versa, but the rules are we do not interrupt when someone else is speaking. That is common decency and adult behaviour, so let us behave as adults.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of underinvestment by the Conservative government, we are pleased that, following the defence policy review, we will be investing in the tools, the equipment, and the care for the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces that they so justly deserve.

It is time to give our soldiers, our troops, the tools they need to be able to serve their country with all the valour and strength they have.

* * *

•(1505)

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since his office refuses to say anything, will the Prime Minister stand up in this House and be honest with Canadians?

Will he finally tell us how many times he has been called to appear before the commissioner to explain his lack of judgment regarding his trip to the Aga Khan's private island?

Canadians expect their Prime Minister to reply honestly to this question, without fudging, unlike his Minister of National Defence, who distorts some facts and fabricates others.

How many times did the Prime Minister meet with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to discuss this issue?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this was a personal vacation with a long-time family friend. As I have said, I am very happy to work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to answer any questions she may have.

[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner is currently investigating the Prime Minister for breaking the law. She has expressed concern that she might not be able to conclude her investigation by the time her term ends in July, meaning that her successor will start with a conflict of interest, because the next commissioner will be appointed by the very same Prime Minister he or she will be investigating.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and completely recuse himself from this appointment, or will he appoint a good Liberal who might just let him off the hook?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is particularly important that Canadians have confidence in the appointments made by any government, particularly after 10 years of patronage and partisanship from the previous Harper government.

The fact is, we put in place an independent appointments process that understands that the diversity and the qualities of Canadians coming to those appointments is the most important thing.

We are proud that over 60% of our 122 appointments so far have been women, that there has been a tremendous amount of diversity, of minorities, of indigenous people.

We will continue to make appointments of the highest calibre, because that is what Canadians expect.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is under active investigation for breaking the law by the Ethics Commissioner. He insults Canadians by refusing to answer any questions, even the simplest of questions, with regard to that investigation.

His staff tell him that he should only say that he is happy to meet with the Ethics Commissioner and answer any questions she might have, but Canadians deserve answers.

I have a simple question. How many times has the Prime Minister been questioned by investigators? The question is simple: how many times?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, I am happy to work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to answer any questions that she might have.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has identified the relationship with indigenous people as Canada's most important one.

Oral Questions

This year the government will be spending half a billion dollars on Canada 150. However, we must remember that our history is much older than 150 years, and for many, this is an anniversary of colonial accomplishment.

Can the Prime Minister tell us specifically how reconciliation efforts with indigenous people will be part of Canada 150?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for our celebration of 150 years since Confederation, Canada has identified four themes to celebrate: youth, environment, diversity, and reconciliation with indigenous peoples, because as has been said many, many times, reconciliation is not just about governments and indigenous peoples, it is about all Canadians, non-indigenous as well.

That is what we are putting forward as celebrations of this year, of the first peoples of this land, of the learning, of the partnership, and mostly of the way we will move forward together in respect and in partnership, overturning decades and even centuries of colonialism.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Development refuses to step in to save Service alimentaire communautaire, or SAC, the only organization in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield that provides food assistance services.

I would remind the minister that the use of food banks increased by 300% in December. In 2015-16, SAC helped over 5,000 people. Without federal assistance, the organization might be forced to shut down within a month's time.

What does the Prime Minister plan to do to help thousands of my constituents continue to put food on the table?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand how serious the problem of food insecurity is for millions of Canadians every week.

That is why I strongly support the work done by community organizations, and that is why our government has taken so much concrete action to help families facing insecurity, whether it be the Canada child benefit, the \$11.2-million investment in affordable housing in our most recent budget, or the \$7.2 billion allocated for child care. We know that we need to do more to help families.

* * *

● (1510)

[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): As I was about to say yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the EU's rejection of Stéphane Dion as ambassador gives rise to questions about his downsized special adviser role. What are Mr. Dion's reporting lines? Will he be backseat driving our sitting Canadian ambassador to the EU and those to individual countries?

Mr. Dion said yesterday his bungled appointment was the Prime Minister's decision and the Prime Minister's alone. Does the Prime Minister recognize that his clumsy handling of compensating a removed minister has bruised Canada's reputation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the extraordinary opportunity for Canada's leadership in the world. Whether in Beijing, in Europe, in Washington, or at the UN in New York, we have put in top people who will be able to engage in a broad way.

Mr. Dion's expertise, both political and diplomatic, means that he will be able to do more than just simple bilateral ambassadors and care for Canada's relationship with Europe as a whole. It is an important role, but one for which I know Mr. Dion is extraordinarily well suited.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a responsibility to stand up against human rights violations, even if they are committed by our military allies or our trading partners. Saudi Arabia has one of the world's worst records on supporting women's rights, including supporting a state-run system of gender segregation.

Will our self-professed feminist Prime Minister stand up today and express his and Canada's disapproval of the decision to elect Saudi Arabia to the United Nations' commission on women's rights?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we strongly disagree with the decision to have Saudi Arabia on the UNESCO human rights body. Unfortunately, it was the only candidate from that region. Canada does not have a voice on that particular body. We are happy to defend human rights anywhere in the world repeatedly, directly with the leaders and in public.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is another issue that the Prime Minister has done nothing to address, and that is the issue of illegal border crossers at the U.S. land border. These people are flooding across the border. Our border services agents are feeling the pinch, and community members are actually starting to feel frightened about the level of people who are coming across.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to giving people the tools that they need by closing the loophole on the safe third country agreement and preventing this problem from occurring?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the rest of the world closes off its borders against newcomers, we are proud that Canadians continue to be welcoming and open to them. Unfortunately, the Conservative Party is showing its roots of being fearful and closed in.

Oral Questions

We know it is important to defend our immigration system to ensure the integrity of our borders. That is why we are ensuring that police officers and border service agencies have the resources they need to do their work. We will continue to defend Canadians' rights and security and the openness that we know is a tremendous advantage and value for our country.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for your warm welcome.

This week is the 66th National Mental Health Week. We know that far too often lengthy waiting times and limited services can prevent Canadians from getting the mental health care that they need.

[*English*]

That is why this year's campaign, led by the Canadian Mental Health Association, calls upon all of us to speak up and get loud on mental health.

Will the Prime Minister inform this House how our government is ensuring that Canadians get the mental health care they need when they need it?

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier and warmly welcome her to the House of Commons.

Every Canadian has a friend or a family member affected by a mental health problem. We all know the challenges that our communities, families, and economy are facing.

• (1515)

[*English*]

That is why budget 2017 proposes \$5 billion to ensure mental health support for as many as 500,000 young Canadians who cannot receive even basic mental health services right now.

These investments will make a real difference in the lives of young Canadians and our communities.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his campaign stops in Calgary, where there is no doubt he increased my support.

During my by-election I heard deep concerns and heartbreaking stories about the jobs crisis from Albertans. Students and hard-working families from all walks of life are worried about how they will get by in these uncertain times.

When will the Liberals start taking the jobs crisis in Alberta seriously, stop punishing job creators, and work with us to get people back to work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member for Calgary Midnapore to the House and I congratulate her on her election.

When I was out in Alberta, I talked repeatedly about all of the things that we are doing for the Alberta economy, whether it is approving the Line 3 replacement project, which will create 7,000 middle-class jobs, or approving the Trans-Mountain expansion project, which will create 15,000 new jobs. We are also investing over \$240 million in the post-secondary institutions strategic investment fund in Alberta alone.

We continue to understand that building a strong future for Alberta, indeed for all Canadians, means building—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia and across Canada are participating in the yellow stripe campaign to demonstrate how concerned they are with the future of the force. They are understaffed, work with outdated equipment, and are losing members to provincial and municipal police forces that pay better and provide better benefits.

Bill C-7, which would give Mounties a national voice through collective bargaining, has been stalled for almost a year. Could the Prime Minister confirm that the bill will soon return to this place? What will he do to reverse the poor state of labour-management relations in the RCMP?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will be moving shortly on Bill C-7 because it is important to respect and give the tools to members of the RCMP to be able to pursue their interests and stand up for themselves.

I can speak as someone who was raised surrounded by RCMP members and I have nothing but the deepest respect for the force. I am deeply and personally connected in the value and the extraordinary service the RCMP offers to this country.

I look forward to working with all members of the force to respond to concerns and improvements that are necessary.

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PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Mary Ng (Markham—Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my constituents of Markham—Thornhill know that public transit is critically important to reducing congestion, getting to work on time, and getting home to their families after a long day.

Could the Prime Minister please update the House on the investments the government is making in public transit across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to take a moment to congratulate the member for Markham—Thornhill and wish her a warm welcome to the House of Commons.

Oral Questions

Our government is making unprecedented investments in public transit across Canada, including in the GTHA. On March 31, I announced more than \$1.8 billion for the GO Transit regional express rail project and over \$200 million for more than 300 transit projects across the province. These investments will help cut commute times, foster economic growth, and allow Canadians more time to spend with their families and friends.

* * *

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Bob Benzen (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the recent by-election I knocked on thousands of doors in Calgary Heritage and I heard many concerns from voters about the Liberals. The majority of the people I spoke with were seriously concerned about the Prime Minister's reckless spending with no plans to pay it back.

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge these concerns and finally explain to Calgarians how he is going to balance the budget and pay down the debt?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the member for Calgary Heritage to the House and I wish him all the best in serving his constituents.

I want to highlight that his predecessor had actually the worst record on growth of any prime minister since R.B. Bennett, and that is what we are working on turning around. We are going to ensure that through delivering more money to the pockets of middle-class families through investing in things like transit, waste water treatment plants, and flood protection for cities like Calgary.

We are going to ensure better economic opportunities for citizens and better growth for our entire country. That is our approach.

* * *

● (1520)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, next week in Fairbanks, Alaska is an all-important meeting of the Arctic Council where eight nations of the Arctic will be holding a meeting, represented by foreign ministers.

It is clear, based on the most recent science, that the Arctic is the fastest-warming region in the world and that thawing permafrost and melting ice represent a threat not just to the future of the Arctic but to global climate systems.

Will Canada stand firmly with the Nordic nations in reaffirming the urgency of reductions of greenhouse gases and meeting the Paris agreement, no matter what the Trump administration might say?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is proud of its commitments under the Paris agreement. We continue to lead the way, not only in having ambitious targets but in ensuring we have a plan to meet those targets.

That is what is important, particularly important among Arctic nations. As the hon. member pointed out, Arctic populations and ecosystems are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than just about anywhere else in the world.

That is why we are working very strongly with all our friends and allies to ensure leadership on the environment that goes beyond our nation's borders and that demonstrates our true commitment to protecting both the economy and the environment for generations to come.

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[Translation]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-229, an act respecting underground infrastructure safety, to which the concurrence of the House is desired.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, you are the guardian of our rights. Again today, the government claimed that every member could contribute to parliamentary reform. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The parliamentary reform introduced by the government and the government's handling of this file tramples the rights and privileges of members who do not belong to recognized parties. Hundreds of thousands of voters are being muzzled. I have checked, and I want to—

The Speaker: This is not a point of order pertaining to question period. I did not receive notice on the matter. I thank the hon. member for his comments.

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix on a point of order.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, when we ask questions about the honour of our men in uniform, it is not a matter of money. I am asking the Prime Minister to answer our questions honourably. Even if he has no respect for the House, he should at least have some for our men in uniform.

The Speaker: As the member is well aware, that is a point of debate.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Convention concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively”, done at Geneva on July 1, 1949; “Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Articles of Agreement”, done at Beijing on June 29, 2015; “Framework Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Italian Republic on the Reciprocal Recognition of Drivers’ Licences for Exchange Purposes”, done at Rome on March 22, 2017; and “Audiovisual Coproduction Treaty between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg”, done at Ottawa on April 19, 2017.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

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[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 responses to 11 petitions.

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● (1525)

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to Bill C-243, an act respecting the development of a national maternity assistance program strategy and amending the Employment Insurance Act (maternity benefits).

I would like to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands and his staff, especially Steven Patterson, for all their hard work on this bill. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House, with amendments.

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CONVEYANCE PRESENTATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-233, An Act to amend the Customs Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (presentation and reporting requirements).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this bill, seconded by the member for Sarnia—Lambton, into the House of Commons.

Bill S-233 proposes to enact amendments to the Customs Act that will exempt certain persons from presenting themselves to a customs officer if they are merely transiting through Canadian waters with no intention to stop. It has been passed by the Senate, and I hope members of the House will agree to pass the bill through this House to remove a major irritant along the border between Canada and the United States.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time)

* * *

[Translation]

JOURNALISTIC SOURCES PROTECTION ACT

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code (protection of journalistic sources).

He said: Mr. Speaker, with the support of the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, I am very pleased and proud to introduce this bill today, which happens to be World Press Freedom Day.

Our Senate colleagues passed this bill unanimously. It is a remarkable piece of legislation introduced by Senator Claude Carignan. When he found out about unacceptable situations happening in Quebec and elsewhere, he decided to take the bull by the horns and introduce a bill. Our Senate colleagues did some very thorough parliamentary work, and every member of the upper house voted in favour of the bill.

As a former journalist, like the members for Thornhill, Foothills, and Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I can say that today is a historic day. Let us hope that this House will pass the bill unanimously, as the upper house did.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time)

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has been discussion among the parties and I believe you will find consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House proceeds to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions scheduled to take place immediately before the time provided for private members’ business today, the first vote to be taken up be the motion on the question of privilege (denial of access of members to the parliamentary precinct raised on March 22, 2017).

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today from residents in and around Calgary.

The petitioners ask that the government direct funding toward the protection of animals during disasters. They note that in many impoverished parts of the world animals are a source of milk, food, and asset wealth. Their survival increases the chances of a successful and speedy recovery.

• (1530)

ALGOMA PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise one more time on petitions to the Minister of Transport regarding the Algoma passenger train.

The petitioners remind the government that for over 100 years the Algoma passenger train offered safe, affordable, all-season access to the Algoma wilderness, while supporting a strong tourism economy along its route.

The \$2.2 million subsidy that they were getting was netting them over \$48 million a year in economic return. It is an extremely difficult time for these communities. They ask that the Minister of Transport to put the Algoma passenger train back in service to ensure its mission to serve the public interest through promotion of a safe and secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible transportation system in Canada.

TAXATION

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling this petition with 29 signatures.

The petitioners wish to draw the attention of the House to the recent changes by the CRA to categorize private campgrounds and independent storage facilities as specified investment businesses instead of active businesses. This change means these businesses are facing a crippling tax hike.

The petitioners also remind the government that running these businesses is not passive. It means earning money similar to investments, and suggesting this is an insult to the owners and employees who put in many hours of hard work. They also draw to the attention of the government that many of these businesses are family owned, that it requires dedication every day to operate them, and that it is an active business.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in support of my colleague from Calgary Confederation's private member's bill, Bill C-316, which was submitted by Tara Winthers-Norris of Calgary.

Petitioners from Calgary and Airdrie are calling on the House to improve the organ donation system in Canada. This would be

achieved by making the process to register as an organ donor easier by adding a simple question to our tax returns.

Becoming an organ donor is the easiest way to save the life of a fellow human being. These are signatures of Canadians who want to see our organ donor system work better so we can save more lives every day.

SPECIES AT RISK

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from the residents of British Columbia, who point out that mountain caribou are designated as an endangered species under the Species at Risk Act, that the provincial crown lands adjacent to Wells Gray Provincial Park in the Clearwater Valley have been designated as critical habitat for that species, and that British Columbia is continuing to allow this critical habitat to be logged. The citizens are asking Parliament for a protection order under the Species at Risk Act to halt the destruction of this habitat.

JUSTICE

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition today on behalf of the family of the late Thomas Running Rabbit, members of the Siksika Nation, and communities surrounding Siksika, Alberta. The petition has to do with the Canadian family members of Thomas Running Rabbit, who was viciously murdered by Ronald Allen Smith, who is on death row in the State of Montana. They wish him to stay in Montana and serve his sentence.

TAXATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by campers who stayed at the Sid Turcotte Park in Mattawa, Ontario, located on the scenic Mattawa River in the riding of Nipissing—Timiskaming. The petitioners call on Parliament to ensure that campgrounds with fewer than five full-time, year-round employees be recognized and taxed as small businesses.

LABELLING OF FOOD

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today.

The first petition has over 200 signatures from residents of Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta asking for Parliament to take action to ensure the labelling of those products that contain genetically modified organisms. They ask Parliament to adopt legislation, so that citizens and consumers will be able to make an informed choice about the products they buy.

Routine Proceedings

• (1535)

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with the ongoing concerns before Parliament of issues of animal cruelty. Petitioners call on Parliament to recognize animals as being more than property, capable of feeling pain, and moving animal cruelty crimes from the property section of the Criminal Code to sections that actually recognize that this is a threat that can escalate to be a threat to human life as well.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring the voice of coastal communities, Nanaimo, Ladysmith, and Nanoose Bay, calling again on the government to act on the long-standing problem of abandoned vessels.

The petitioners urge this Parliament to end the runaround to make the Coast Guard responsible for directing the removal of abandoned vessels, to fix vessel registration, to build a coast-wide strategy in co-operation with local communities, to act before vessels become an oil spill risk, and to create good, green jobs by working with local marine salvage companies.

This is based on decades of resolutions from the Union of BC Municipalities, and, based on Sunday's announcement, is consistent with the platform of the British Columbia New Democratic Party which is ready to work in co-operation with this Parliament if this issue is addressed.

* * *

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. 919 to 921.

[Text]

Question No. 919—**Mr. Robert Aubin:**

With regard to the Canada Development Investment Corporation: (a) how many competitors participated in the procurement process that resulted in the selection of Morgan Stanley Canada to provide financial advice to the government related to the recommendations from the report of the Honourable David Emerson concerning ports; (b) who were the competitors that participated in the competitive procurement process; (c) based on what criteria was Morgan Stanley Canada selected; (d) what is the specific mandate of Morgan Stanley Canada, including the exact instructions and exact tasks given to Morgan Stanley Canada; (e) has the study commissioned from Morgan Stanley Canada been completed; (f) if the answer in (e) is in the affirmative, when was the study commissioned from Morgan Stanley Canada completed; (g) is the Morgan Stanley Canada study available; (h) what are the findings of the study commissioned from Morgan Stanley Canada; (i) what is the Department of Finance's response to each of the recommendations mentioned in (g); and (j) what is the cost of the study commissioned from Morgan Stanley Canada?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), five firms submitted proposals.

With regard to (b), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and as a result, the competitors that participated in the procurement process have been withheld on the

following grounds: competitive position of a government institution and material financial loss or gain to, and prejudice of the competitive position of, a third party.

With regard to (c), Morgan Stanley Canada was selected by the Canada Development Investment Corporation, CDEV, on the basis of the following considerations: firm experience and resources committed, methodology and deliverables, work plan and scheduling, and fee schedule and financial proposal.

With regard to (d), Morgan Stanley Canada's scope of work from CDEV included analysis on the following areas: review and assessment of port models in Canada and worldwide, applicability of models to Canada, market analysis, valuation, and structuring considerations.

With regard to (e), the answer is yes.

With regard to (f), Morgan Stanley Canada delivered a draft report on December 12, 2016. Revisions to the report were delivered on February 28, 2017, and March 20, 2017. Supplementary analysis was delivered on March 29, 2017.

With regard to (g), the report is not available publicly.

With regard to (h) and (i), In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and information pertaining to the findings of the Morgan Stanley Canada study has been withheld on the following grounds: competitive position of a government institution; economic interests; financial, commercial, or technical information of a third party; material financial loss or gain to, and prejudice of the competitive position of, a third party; and potential interference with contracts or other negotiations of a third party.

With regard to (j), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and information pertaining to the cost of the Morgan Stanley Canada engagement has been withheld on the following grounds: competitive position of a government institution; and material financial loss or gain to, and prejudice of the competitive position of, a third party.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 920—Mr. Robert Aubin:**

With regard to the Canada Development Investment Corporation: (a) how many bidders participated in the competitive procurement process leading to the selection of Credit Suisse Canada to provide financial advice to the government on the recommendations concerning airports in the report by the Honourable David Emerson; (b) who were the other bidders in the competitive procurement process; (c) on the basis of which criteria was Credit Suisse Canada selected; (d) what specific mandate, directives and tasks have been given to Credit Suisse Canada; (e) has Credit Suisse Canada completed its study; (f) when did Credit Suisse Canada complete its study; (g) is the study by Credit Suisse Canada available; (h) what are the recommendations of Credit Suisse Canada; (i) what was the response of the Department of Finance to each of the recommendations stated in (h); and (j) what is the cost of the study carried out by Credit Suisse Canada?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), eight firms participated and six proposals were received, including two joint proposals.

With regard to (b), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and, as a result, the bidders that participated in the procurement process have been withheld on the following grounds: competitive position of a government institution; and material financial loss or gain to, and prejudice to the competitive position of, a third party.

With regard to (c), Credit Suisse Canada was selected by CDEV on the basis of the following considerations: firm experience and resources committed, methodology and deliverables, work plan and scheduling, and fee schedule and financial proposal.

With regard to (d), Credit Suisse Canada's scope of work from CDEV included analysis on the following areas: review and assessment of airport models in Canada and worldwide, applicability of models to Canada, market analysis, valuation, and structuring considerations.

With regard to (e), the answer is yes.

With regard to (f), the Credit Suisse Canada study had no official completion date; however, the Credit Suisse Canada contract ended on January 31, 2017.

With regard to (g), the report is not available publicly.

With regard to (h), Credit Suisse Canada did not provide recommendations to the Government of Canada.

With regard to (i), as no recommendations were provided by Credit Suisse Canada, this question is not applicable.

With regard to (j), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and, as a result, information pertaining to the cost of the Credit Suisse Canada engagement has been withheld on the following grounds: competitive position of a government institution; and material financial loss or gain to, and prejudice to the competitive position of, a third party.

Question No. 921—Ms. Kelly Block:

Regarding the potential sale of Canadian airports: (a) what is the estimated financial value of each of Canada's major airports; (b) since November 4, 2015, have any studies been completed, or are ongoing, regarding the value of Canadian airports; (c) if the answer in (b) is affirmative, what are the details of each study including (i)

title, (ii) date of completion, (iii) file numbers, (iv) costs associated with each study; (d) has any action been taken by any Minister, Department, Crown Corporation or Agency, related to the sale, or potential sale, of Canadian airports; (e) has the government met with potential buyers of Canadian airports; (f) if the answer in (e) is affirmative, what are the details including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) attendees; and (g) what are the details of any correspondence or briefing materials related to the sale or value of Canadian airports including (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) title, (v) file number?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), there are publicly available reports that include estimates of the value of each of Canada's major airports. In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and, as a result, information pertaining to the estimated financial value of each of Canada's major airports in the possession of the government has been withheld on the following grounds: competitive position of a government institution; economic interests; financial, commercial or technical information of a third party; material financial loss or gain to, and prejudice to the competitive position of, a third party; and possible interference with contractual or other negotiations of a third party.

With regard to (b), Credit Suisse Canada was engaged by the Canada Development Investment Corporation, CDEV, to provide financial advice related to airports in fall/winter 2016.

With regard to (c)(i), the title of the Credit Suisse Canada study is "Project Eagle—Scoping Study".

With regard to (c)(ii), the Credit Suisse Canada study had no official completion date; however, the Credit Suisse Canada contract ended on January 31, 2017.

With regard to (c)(iii), the Credit Suisse Canada study was not identified by a file number.

With regard to (c)(iv), In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and, as a result, information pertaining to the cost of the Credit Suisse Canada engagement has been withheld on the following grounds: competitive position of a government institution; and material financial loss or gain to, and prejudice to the competitive position of, a third party.

With regard to (d), the government has taken no decision related to the sale, or potential sale, of Canadian airports.

With regard to (e), given that no decision has been made, the government has not met with potential buyers of Canadian airports.

As a result, (f) is not applicable.

Government Orders

With regard to (g), in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and, as a result, briefing materials related to the sale or value of Canadian airports have been withheld on the following grounds: economic interests, advice or recommendations, an account of consultations or deliberations, and confidences of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada.

* * *

[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 responds to Questions Nos. 922 and 923 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 922—**Mr. James Bezan:**

With regard to the Canadian Surface Combatant (CSC) project: (a) how many employees and contractors of the government have signed non-disclosure agreements or special security accountability forms, broken down by department; (b) for how many employees in (a) was signing a non-disclosure agreement or special security accountability form a condition of employment; (c) when was each non-disclosure agreement or special security accountability form signed; (d) what is the length of each non-disclosure agreement or special security accountability form signed; (e) what are the details of the prime contract awarded by the government that authorized Irving Shipbuilding to identify, select, and qualify suppliers, and to solicit, evaluate, assess, adjudicate, and request proposals from shipbuilders and contractors for the CSC project; (f) was a competition held to award the prime contract for the CSC project; (g) what evaluation process, methodology, and metrics were used in awarding the CSC prime contract; (h) what measures were used to ensure compliance with any and all legal and ethical requirements; (i) what mechanisms, procedures, rules and personnel were put in place to avoid a conflict of interest between Irving Shipbuilding, the government, and contractors; (j) have the predicted acquisition or life-cycle costs been adjusted since the June 13, 2016, announcement regarding a refined procurement process for the CSC project; (k) if the cost projections were revised, what are the new cost projections; and (l) do the cost projections in (k) account for weapons systems, munitions, and other consumables?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 923—**Mr. James Bezan:**

With regard to Canada's current fleet of CF-18 Hornets: (a) how many Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) members are currently fully trained and operationally qualified to fly a single seat CF-18 Hornet; (b) how many RCAF members are fully trained to fly a two-seat CF-18 Hornet; (c) how many total flying hours does each CF-18 pilot have; (d) how many RCAF members are currently being trained to fly the CF-18 Hornet; (e) how many CF-18 training simulators are currently operated by the RCAF; (f) how many RCAF members are CF-18 Hornet trainers; (g) what is the attrition rate for CF-18 Hornet pilots for each year from 2014 until 2017, inclusively; (h) what is the retirement rate for CF-18 Hornet pilots for each year from 2014 until 2017, inclusively; (i) what is the pilot production rate for CF-18 Hornet pilots for each year from 2014 until 2017, inclusively; (j) how many RCAF members are part of the CF-18 maintenance crew, and for each one, what is their trades; (k) how many additional pilots are estimated to be required to operate an additional fleet of 18 F-18 Super Hornets; (l) will additional training simulators be required (i) to accommodate for the mechanical and technical differences between the CF-18 Hornet and F-18 Super Hornet, (ii) to accommodate for the need for additional pilots; and (m) how many additional maintenance crew members does the government anticipate would be required support 18 additional Super Hornet aircraft?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved that Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak today about the budget implementation act, Bill C-44.

By supporting this legislation, hon. members are supporting the next steps of our government's plan to strengthen Canada's middle class. Those steps were presented to this House on our second budget, titled "Building a Strong Middle Class".

Over the past 18 months, the government has put in place a plan to grow the economy in a way that works for the middle class, and those working hard to join it.

As a starting point, the government raised taxes on the wealthiest 1%, so we could cut taxes for the middle class; introduced a new Canada child benefit that gives more money to 9 out of 10 Canadian families, and lifts hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty; and strengthened the Canada pension plan to help Canadians have the secure and dignified retirement they deserve.

I want to assure Canadians that we are not done. There is still work to do.

[Translation]

This year, we are celebrating the 150th anniversary of Confederation. If we look beyond 2017, there are many challenges to be met. I would like to draw your attention to what we are doing to support Canada's greatest strength: its skilled, hard-working, creative, and diverse labour force.

Government Orders

Both young people in school and people whose career has spanned several decades are wondering what kind of education and training they need in order to get a good, well-paid job and to be properly equipped to succeed in this evolving economy.

Today, the changing nature of the workplace means that people are changing jobs several times over the course of their working lives. The emergence of artificial intelligence and automation, coupled with the transformation of entire industries, are realities that we cannot ignore.

In budget 2017, our government laid the groundwork for preparing Canadians to be ready for the economy of tomorrow, and to have more employment opportunities today.

Some of these measures are included in the bill we are considering today. Budget 2017 invests, first and foremost, in skills and training, so that middle-class Canadians, and all Canadians, in fact, can take advantage of the opportunities they need in order to succeed, now and in the future.

By supporting Bill C-44, we will help to ensure that Canadians are able to benefit from the opportunities for success afforded by the economy of tomorrow.

I would like to give the House an overview of the measures that this bill contains.

The Government is firmly committed to helping Canadians of all ages receive the training and skills they need to succeed in the economy of today and tomorrow.

The tuition tax credit plays an important role in this effort, and recognizes the cost of enrolling in post-secondary and occupational skills courses.

Currently, students who take occupational skills courses, such as learning a second language or basic literacy or numeracy training, at a college or university, are not entitled to the tuition tax credit, but those who take similar courses at a non-post-secondary institution are entitled to it.

To improve fairness, Bill C-44 will expand the range of courses eligible for this credit to include occupational skills courses that are undertaken at a post-secondary institution in Canada, and to allow the full amount of bursaries received for such courses to qualify for the scholarship exemption.

The government is also committed to helping working parents who need more flexibility to navigate the challenges that come with a growing family.

Bill C-44 would allow parents to choose to receive EI parental benefits over an extended period of up to 18 months at a lower benefit rate of 33% of average weekly earnings.

For people who want to keep the 12 months of parental leave, employment insurance parental benefits will continue to be available at the existing rate of 55% of earnings.

● (1540)

Bill C-44 proposes to allow pregnant working women greater flexibility. It proposes to allow working mothers to claim EI

maternity benefits up to 12 weeks before their due date if they so choose, expanded from the current standard of eight weeks.

[*English*]

People are at the heart of our plan. We want to provide the middle class, and those working hard to join it the opportunities they need to succeed. In order to ensure our continued prosperity well into the future, we must help Canadians prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow, while ensuring Canadian employers have access to the kind of talent that can help companies innovate and grow, leading to more well-paying jobs for Canadians.

This means that we need a fair, secure, and targeted immigration policy. Long processing times for work permits is making it difficult for businesses to recruit top talent. Enter the government's global skills strategy, which sets an ambitious two-week standard for processing visas and work permits for global talent. The strategy would support high growth Canadian companies that need to access global talent in order to facilitate and accelerate investments that create jobs and growth, and global companies that are making large investments relocating to Canada, establishing new production or expanding production, and creating new Canadian jobs.

Canada is also planning to implement a targeted employment strategy for newcomers. This strategy would have three components: improved pre-arrival supports, so that newcomers can begin the formal credential recognition process before arriving in Canada; a loan program that would assist newcomers for the cost of having their foreign credentials recognized; and targeted measures to test innovative approaches to help skilled newcomers gain Canadian work experience in their profession.

The strategy would help reduce barriers, and support newcomers as they put their skills to work in the Canadian economy.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston has called upon all Canadians to join in the building of a nation that is both smart and caring. He said that a smart nation learns from the past, embraces the future, and looks to the world with confidence and respect, while a caring nation recognizes that the measure of any society's success lies in its ability to help others, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized among us.

We are a better nation if we continue to care about one another so that we continue to be a Canada where we look after our own.

Three measures in Bill C-44 offer greater support for Canadians who need it.

Government Orders

[English]

The first measure is offering support to our veterans. Canada's women and men in uniform have served their country with bravery, honour, and dignity, putting their lives at risk to protect the values we cherish most. Our veterans deserve our greatest recognition and respect for their service. Bill C-44 would help veterans transition from military service to civilian life, and better support the families of ill and injured veterans, including caregivers.

In addition to providing more money for veterans to go back to school, Bill C-44 proposes to enhance the career transition services program. This measure would equip veterans, Canadian Armed Force members, survivors, and veterans' spouses and common-law partners with the tools they need to successfully navigate and transition to the civilian workforce.

Bill C-44 also proposes to provide a more generous benefit directly to caregivers to better recognize, and honour the vital role they play in supporting our ill and injured veterans.

The second proposed measure is the new Canada caregiver credit. The government is taking steps to help improve the current caregiver credit system that applies to Canadians who are caring for their loved ones. Bill C-44 would simplify the existing system by replacing the caregiver credit, infirm dependent credit, and family caregiver tax credit with a single new credit, the Canada caregiver credit. This new, non-refundable credit would provide better support to those who need it the most. The new credit would apply to caregivers whether or not they live with their family member and will help families with caregiving responsibilities.

The new Canada caregiver credit would provide tax relief on an amount of \$6,883 in 2017, in respect of care of dependent relatives with infirmities, including persons with disabilities, parents, brothers, and sisters, adult children, and other specific relatives; \$2,150 in 2017 in respect of care of a dependent spouse or common-law partner, or minor child with an infirmity, including those with a disability.

Families will be able to take advantage of the new Canada caregiver credit as soon as the 2017 tax year.

[Translation]

The third measure is improving health care services to meet the needs of Canadians. The demand for home care services is growing. Today, approximately 15% of hospital beds are still occupied by patients who could and would prefer to receive their care at home, or would be better off in a community-based setting.

In addition, a majority of those Canadians who have taken on the responsibility of caring for their loved ones are still in the workforce, and most are women. Scientific research has made great strides to improve our understanding of mental illness and its prevalence. Today, we know that an overwhelming number of Canadians will be affected, directly or indirectly, by mental illness at some point in their lives.

Science has also shown that it is essential for those struggling with mental illness to have access to timely and appropriate mental health services, and yet, in certain regions, wait times to see a mental health specialist are up to 18 months.

With the passage of Bill C-44, the government will provide funding for home care and mental health services in 2017-18 as an immediate down payment to provinces and territories that have accepted the federal offer of \$11 billion over 10 years.

[English]

The bill before us has concrete measures that would deliver on the promises we made to Canadians to strengthen our middle class. I urge the members of this House to vote for this bill for the benefit of all Canadians.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the Minister of Finance, as always, for the quality of his French, but also for his speech.

The minister addressed certain things but forgot some others. We will have occasion to get back to the financial basis of things, but he forgot one of the most fundamental things, namely the very nature of this bill. It extends to over 300 pages and has some 20 divisions. It is clearly therefore an omnibus bill.

However, the Minister of Finance and his 180 colleagues sitting here in the House made the following commitment on page 32 of their electoral platform: "We will not resort to legislative tricks to avoid scrutiny." The reference made there was to omnibus bills.

Why is the Minister of Finance tabling a budget implementation act containing measures that have nothing to do with the budget?

Why table an omnibus bill when he made a commitment not to do so in the election campaign?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, it is very important for us to have a budget that is going to help our economy and Canadian families. It is important to take steps to improve our situation.

What I can say is that every measure in our budget is going to provide real assistance to our economy and Canadian families. Every measure in our bill stems from a measure in our budget. That was the spirit of our promise, and we still maintain the same position. It is very important for every budget implementation bill to in fact contain measures from the current budget.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to quote the Liberal Party's election platform:

Stephen Harper has also used omnibus bills to prevent Parliament from properly reviewing and debating his proposals. We will change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice.

Now we are seeing the opposite. My question for the Minister of Finance has to do with the creation of the infrastructure bank. Throughout the election campaign, the Liberal Party kept saying, and rightly so, that it was a good time to borrow money, because interest rates were low.

Government Orders

What the Liberals never told us, however, was that two-thirds of the money used to pay for our infrastructure would come from private investors, who would ask for rates of return from around 7% to 9%, even for public infrastructure.

Why did the minister change the Liberal Party's strategy? Why was it talking about borrowing money at the low interest rate of 2% if it now intends to fill its friends' pockets, on the backs of taxpayers, with rates of return from 7% to 9%?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, from time to time, it is important to know the real facts. I will begin with our investments in infrastructure. We have explained that we would be investing \$180 billion over the next 10 years. That is very important.

We have explained that we would be investing \$15 billion of the \$180 billion in the infrastructure bank. That is far less than 10%. The math is simple.

In addition, we believe that it is very important to do more with our investments. If interest rates are very low, then it is a good idea to include pension funds and institutional funds in our investments. We are sure to find an interest rate that is much lower than those cited by the hon. members. That will be our plan. We will use the \$180 billion to make investments. With the \$15 billion we will try to find even more money for more investments, so as to help Canadians all across the country.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, with respect to the parental leave adjustment, the same amount of benefit would be taken and spread over 18 months, which means that people would have to live on a third of their salaries. That really is not going to be very helpful.

I am the chair of the status of women committee. We have been hearing about what needs to happen to get more women into the workforce. We have seen models from places like Iceland, where parental leave actually encourages men and women to participate in taking leave and encourages more women into the workforce.

Would the minister consider amending the parental benefit to do something to actually get women into the workforce?

• (1555)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, that is in fact exactly what we are doing. We are recognizing that families come in all different shapes and sizes. In some situations, families will want to have the mother or father take 12 months of parental leave, and that is entirely appropriate for that family. That is the situation that is possible within our current system.

We also recognize that some people might prefer to stretch that out for 18 months, because it might make it easier for them to manage the challenge of their particular family situation.

By creating that flexibility, we are allowing people to manage their situations so that they can actually stay attached to the workforce, even if they want to take more time off work. We believe that we are doing exactly what the member opposite is asking us to do. We know that this will help families better accommodate their individual situations and allow us to have a more effective workforce, because people will stay attached to it for the long term.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would just point out that in the last two election campaigns, in 2011 and 2015, the Liberals clearly promised to set a cap on how much can be claimed through the stock option deduction, but they backtracked on that promise once they were in power.

Why did the government decide to renege on its promise to eliminate the tax loophole associated with stock options for CEOs in budget 2017?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, we believe that it is quite important that we have a tax system that is fair, efficient, and less complex than it is at present. That is why we looked at the system and made some important observations in this budget and also some plans for what we can continue to do.

We are working on dealing with tax expenditures that benefit a small proportion of Canadians at the expense of all others. The area where we believe there is the biggest opportunity is in some of the planning mechanisms that go on within private corporations. We saw that some people are actually turning regular income into capital gains income. We saw that some people are putting in passive income and are gaining advantage through that approach within a corporation. We saw that some people are sprinkling dividends among family members, which was not originally intended.

These private corporations have increased dramatically in number in our country, and we know that this is important to look at. We will be releasing a consultation paper in the near future to talk about how we might be able to address this, which will help us ensure that our tax system is fair for all Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just want to pay a compliment to the Minister of Finance on behalf of thousands of constituents of mine, whether recipients of the Canada child benefit program or the increase in our guaranteed income supplement. They have really improved the quality of life for many of my constituents. I wonder if the minister could provide some sort of assessment in terms of what impact that has had on our country.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I could talk about this for a very long time, because the impacts are pretty huge. I want to take just two approaches. First is the impact on people. This year we will have 300,000 fewer children living in poverty. I think it is worth stopping on that. What we have also seen is that our economy is doing better. We have seen a reduction in unemployment, and we have seen forecasts from organizations like the Bank of Canada that our growth is going to be more than we thought it was going to be even just a few months ago.

The things we are doing are having an impact on the economy, and they are helping Canadians lead better lives.

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[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to participate in the debate on Bill C-44, implementing the principal measures of the budget that was tabled a few weeks ago by the Minister of Finance. Unfortunately, we must stand proud and state in no uncertain terms that it is a bad budget. We will have occasion to return to this in greater detail, but I also want to point out that Bill C-44 is an omnibus bill.

This means that, among the measures to implement the budget's financial program, the government has decided to insert, in not so subtle a fashion, measures which have literally nothing to do with the speech made by the finance minister here in the House at 4:15 p. m. on March 22. There was no mention in that speech of the infrastructure bank, Investment Canada or judges' salaries, along with many other measures to be found in Bill C-44. We will have occasion to get back to this a little later.

To begin, I want to follow up on certain statements made by the minister in the speech he just made. He raised certain points, but forgot the most important ones.

First of all, let us address the much-talked-about tax changes. The government is always passing itself off as a Robin Hood that will take money away from the wealthiest 1% and give it back to the middle class, and so on and so forth.

Thanks to the initiative of Senator Larry Smith, we have managed to get to the facts with the help of the parliamentary budget officer. It appears that 65% of Canadians will see absolutely no change to their income tax, including those who earn \$45,000 or less per year, who are the real middle class. Those earning \$60,000 a year will get barely two dollars more per week, just enough to buy a weekly coffee at Tim Hortons.

However, those who will really benefit from these changes which will supposedly make Canada a fairer country and help the middle class will be those who earn between \$140,000 and \$200,000 a year. Are they the middle class? No, they are among the most well off in Canada, and this government, with its budget, prefers to give more to the wealthy rather than help those who earn \$45,000 or less, that is, the least fortunate among us. That is what the minister forgot to say.

It is the same thing for the changes to family assistance. Earlier, in response to the question from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, who is always eager to say lots of things in the House and whom I salute and like very much, we were talking about the changes to family assistance. Let us remember that when those changes were introduced, over a year ago now, the Minister of Families forgot one little detail, which was to index those changes. If the government had not run the numbers again, once we pointed out this omission, taxpayers in 2020 would have had less money in their pockets. That was totally unacceptable.

Was that a minor error? Yes, of course. Any accountant in any business who forgets to index prices or the budgets he draws up would be fired on the spot, and yet this government is keeping on the very people responsible for this gross miscalculation. Certain

estimates suggest that this could have cost the consolidated revenue fund \$20 billion over the years ahead.

The minister began by saying how generous his government was with respect to pension funds. In truth, it was a mistake for the government to bring the age of retirement back to 65. That mistake is highlighted once again in the report on Canadian demographics tabled a little earlier today. According to this report, for the first time, there are going to be more seniors than people in the labour force. The courageous and urgent thing to do was to push the retirement age back to 67. In setting it at 65, the government is playing petty politics.

At another time, when the current finance minister was an accomplished businessman, one held in respect and esteem, he himself authored a book on the subject of retirement management.

● (1600)

What did the current finance minister say when he was free to speak before becoming a Liberal minister? He said that 67 as the retirement age was a good idea. What did he do once he got elected? He brought it back to 65. That was not the thing to do. The demographic data tabled this morning tells us that pushing back the age of retirement to 67 was the necessary and urgent thing to do; perhaps not the most politically expedient move, but ever so helpful for the future of the country.

How is the Canada pension plan going to be funded, then? It will be funded by increases in premiums. Every worker will have to pay \$1,000 more, and every business will have to pay \$1,000 more for each of its workers. That makes \$1,000 on each side. The government will look for \$2,000 more to balance the pension plan. Wonderful, terrific, because that will cost Canadians even more. It will mean that much less money in the pockets of taxpayers to keep the economy rolling.

These were the first points I wanted to raise following the speech by the finance minister, for whom, as I said earlier, I have much respect and esteem.

● (1605)

[*English*]

Now let us talk about the budget, which was tabled by the government on March 22 in the House of Commons.

This is a bad budget and the worst-case scenario for our young generation, the youth of Canada. We are talking about debt and deficit. Just this year, the government tabled a budget with a deficit of \$28.5 billion. Let me remind members that based on the platform of the Liberal Party in the last election, page 64 talked about a "modest" deficit, a "small" deficit of around \$10 billion a year, getting back to a zero deficit in 2019. It is like *Alice in Wonderland*.

What is the reality? The reality is that last year we had a deficit of \$23 billion, to which we shall add the \$6 billion cushion that the government had in the budget, which it used to reduce the deficit. Therefore, we are talking about a real deficit of \$29 billion, and this year of \$28.5 billion. This is what the government is giving the young generation, which is all wrong for the so-called millennials.

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Worse than that, where is the plan to get back to a zero deficit? The Liberal Party platform talked about a zero deficit in 2019. Where is the zero deficit plan?

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I remind the hon. member that he is not to use documents. There is a difference between giving a quote and taking the document in hand.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I have trouble seeing what goes on without my glasses. That is why I rely on documents for a bit of help and bring them closer so I can read. It is my fault, Madam Speaker. Actually, I am just kidding; we have to be able to laugh a little.

[*English*]

Let us get back to the reality of the facts. The government was elected on a platform to get back to a zero deficit in 2019. There is no plan for a zero deficit, except the civil servants of the finance ministry in a document tabled on October 10, many months before. When did the government publish this document? On December 23, just before Christmas. The government was so proud of the document it tabled, and then published it just before Christmas. What does this document say? That the government will achieve a zero deficit by not 2019, not 2020, not 2030, not 2040, and not 2050, but by 2055. This is the reality of the government.

This is the gift that it will give to millennials, to the young generation: pay, pay, pay; deficit, deficit, deficit; debt, debt, debt. That is all wrong for Canada, that is all wrong for Canadians, and that is all wrong for young Canadians. That is why this is sincerely a bad budget. However, do we find something about that in Bill C-44? Not at all.

Worse than that, the government will create new taxes. We know what we are talking about. We talked about a pension plan a few months ago. Now it has created new taxes. I would call them the Friday and Saturday night taxes. They taxed alcohol, beer, and wine. That is great for hard-working Canadians, who see half of their salary going in taxes to the government. If they want to enjoy some Friday and Saturday evenings with good friends, they will now have to pay more in new taxes.

The current government proposes to abolish the tax credits our government tabled over the nine years we were in office. Thank God we were in office for nine years, because we gave Canadians, especially Canadian families, the help and tools they needed to help themselves.

•(1610)

[*Translation*]

We offered tax credits to help families and tax credits for help at school, for textbooks. They have been eliminated by the Liberal government. We created tax credits to help families who enrolled their children in sports activities. They have been eliminated by the Liberal government. We created tax credits for children's arts activities. They have been eliminated by the Liberal government. Now, as hard as it is to believe, the government has eliminated a tax credit for public transit users. I did not see that one coming at all. Of the 250 or so tax credits that Canadian families may be eligible for, the Liberal government, that constantly boasts about its exploits and

constantly preens itself for its lovely great ecological principles, has eliminated the tax credit for people who use public transit. Honestly, if someone had told me this two weeks before the budget was tabled, I would have laughed.

[*English*]

The Liberals decided to cancel and to abolish a tax credit for transit. This government is talking about bringing in policies. It is quite important to protect the heart of our world, and the government shall protect it.

I will remember all my life when the Prime Minister said two months ago that he was here for three great reasons, and then he named his children. He was here to protect and to give his children a better heart.

Look at the result. He cancelled the transit tax credit. It is all wrong, but so typical of the Liberals. They say something, then they reverse it.

[*Translation*]

What eliminating these tax credits and creating new taxes means, in our view, is that the government is not creating winning conditions for taxpayers to keep more money in their pockets, particularly with the money they have.

What I have shown is that, at the end of the day, the Liberals did a terrible job of administering the support system for families by forgetting to index the numbers, but they are very proud of giving \$2 billion more than what we gave when we were in government. Need I point out that this money does not exist? We do not have it. If we had it, we would happily hand it out. The big difference between this government and ours, when it comes to helping families, is that during our last year, we did it with a zero deficit, with a balanced budget, and with a plan for tackling the debt. That was our plan. We were living within our means.

This government is borrowing and running up deficits, and it is no big deal. The deficit will be zero in 2055, life is beautiful, and they are handing out money they do not have. No head of household could manage their budget by using a credit card all the time and always asking the bank to lend them money. At some point, reality catches up. Reality is going to catch up with this government in October 2019; of that we can be sure.

Now I would like to talk about the omnibus nature of this bill. I said earlier that this 308-page-long bill includes not only budgetary measures, but also things that have absolutely nothing to do with the speech delivered by the Minister of Finance on March 22. Among other things, the bill sets out the new mandate of the parliamentary budget officer.

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When I was at the National Assembly, I wanted Quebec to have a parliamentary budget officer. To my delight, we have one here in the House of Commons, in Ottawa, in the federal government. How wonderful. For 11 years, that person has been diligently keeping watch over the public purse independently from the House of Commons, from the government and parliamentarians. In this omnibus bill, the parliamentary budget officer is being given a new mandate that makes no sense. Henceforth, the Liberal government would have the parliamentary budget officer submit his game plan for the year. To whom? To you, Madam Speaker. Please do not feel singled out, as he will submit his plan to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Speaker of the Senate as well. It is unheard of.

There are 17 countries that have a parliamentary budget officer and only one of them, Korea, works this way. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but if 16 countries believe one thing and only one believes another, perhaps the 16 are right. The government is following Korea's example and requiring the parliamentary budget officer to present its game plan to the House of Commons and the Senate. In our opinion, this does not make sense.

We are not the only ones to think so. In an interview with *Le Devoir*, among others, the parliamentary budget officer said that he fears that his job will be politicized:

I am more concerned about the Speaker of the Senate than the Speaker of the House of Commons, because the Speaker of the Senate is appointed by the Prime Minister's Office whereas the Speaker of the House is elected by his peers. Without wanting to seem too naive, he is technically neutral. One of them is more closely connected to the Prime Minister's Office than the other.

That was Jean-Denis Fréchette, the current parliamentary budget officer, who said that this is not the right move.

Therefore, let us be prudent, because he is not the only one saying so.

• (1615)

[*English*]

Kevin Page, the former parliamentary budget officer, said in an interview with Bill Curry of *The Globe and Mail* that the bill appears to take away the power of individual MPs to ask the PBO to provide cost estimates of various government initiatives. He said, "I would worry, under this legislation, based on all the interference we saw from various political actors and bureaucrats. This legislation creates the facade of independence...but on the other hand it completely takes it away."

[*Translation*]

It is not a Conservative that said that. It is the former parliamentary budget officer. He said that this measure was just a facade and that it could politicize the work of the parliamentary budget officer or, at worst, make it so that the parliamentary budget officer is no longer able to undertake projects on his own initiative to undertake the analyses of his choice. He would have to set out his game plan and it would have to be approved by the Speaker of the House and the Speaker of the Senate. That is inappropriate. People all across the country are speaking out against the new approach proposed by the Liberals, which is completely unacceptable.

I would like to quote Manon Cornellier from *Le Devoir*, who is not known for being any more Conservative than the next person.

She also used the words "facade of independence". She said that the parliamentary budget officer "will no longer be able to undertake studies on his own initiative" and that "this marks the end of initiatives to address unforeseen circumstances".

She went on to say, and I quote, that "the Liberals will only allow committees the right to make these requests, which is very convenient since a majority government controls those committees".

She ended on a rather scathing note by saying:

Unfortunately, adopting these changes, which will diminish parliamentarians' ability to hold the government to account, is more or less a sure thing, since all budget bills are subject to party discipline.

Unless...[and I will look my colleagues opposite in the eye as I read this part] the Liberal members stand up and pressure their government to remove this reform from the bill and hand it over to parliamentarians. It would be in the Liberals' interest to do so. Otherwise, as soon as they return to the opposition benches [in 2019], it will not only be the PBO whose hands are tied, but theirs will be too.

This Liberal government proposal, within an omnibus bill, which aims to change how the parliamentary budget officer operates, is completely unacceptable. That is why we strongly oppose Bill C-44, a bill that is bad for Canada's economy and one that flies in the face of the Liberals' promise not to introduce omnibus bills, especially when some fundamental things are still missing from its 308 pages. That is why I am seeking the consent of the House to move the following motion, seconded by the member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017, and other measures, since the Bill, in addition to increasing taxes and making it more difficult for struggling families to make ends meet, is an omnibus bill that fails to address the government's promise not to use them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The amendment is in order.

We will now go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

• (1620)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent's speech, but maybe he needs better glasses. He said that the former government lived within its means. We know the Conservatives managed to balance the budget one time because they sold so many government assets that they were able to hide their deficit. The last time the Conservative government balanced a budget was over a century ago. I do not know where people get the idea that the Conservatives are good money managers. That is a total fantasy.

There are deficits in our communities and in society. Personally, I would rather have deficits in the budget than in our communities.

I have a question for my colleague. Why does he think communities are not important? Why should we care only about dollars, not about communities, cities, regions, and the Canadian people?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I will not talk about my glasses; I will talk about the facts.

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Need I remind the member and everyone in the House that in 2008, 2009, and 2010, the entire planet was facing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of 1929?

[*English*]

Thank God we had a Conservative government under the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, who was very strong, very proud, and very straight in its administration. Thank God we had Jim Flaherty as minister of finance, and Joe Oliver, as well.

[*Translation*]

While the entire planet was in the whirlwind of the financial economic crisis, Canada, under the Conservatives, was the first G7 country to make it out of the crisis, with the best debt-to-GDP ratio, which is what allows the present government to go on this spending spree. That is unfortunate, because it is directly attacking our government's legacy.

Need I remind the member that we are not opposed to infrastructure investments? Need I point out that under the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, who was the Minister of Infrastructure, we introduced the most ambitious budget ever, a budget of \$80 billion over 10 years?

Right away, people on the other side are saying that theirs is \$180 billion. You, however, are creating a deficit, while we had a balanced budget—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would remind the member that he must address the chair and not the government members. The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has the floor.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent speech. We do not agree on everything, but we do share certain views. I would like to hear his comments on the long list of the Liberal government's broken promises. It is a very long one, but I would like to focus on two of those promises that are not in the last budget, because I find their absence somewhat surprising.

First, the Liberals had promised to restore lifelong pensions for veterans wounded in combat. We do not see that anywhere. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the Liberal government's respect for veterans.

Second, we agree that the biggest job creators are small and medium-sized businesses, whether outside the major urban areas or in metropolitan centres like Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver. The Liberals had promised tax relief to lend a hand to small businesses, who remain the lifeblood of our communities despite the hard times they are going through. There are no tax cuts for small businesses.

What does my colleague from Saint-Laurent think about this?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I like to hear from my colleague from Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie, not only because he is a former journalist, but also, most importantly, because he hits the nail on the head. I know what I am talking about, since I went up against him in ten debates on RDI during the last election campaign.

Let us recall the facts. The Liberal Party made a commitment to reducing the tax rate from 10.5% to 9% for small and medium-sized

businesses. The rate is still the same. The government has not got the job done.

What is even worse is that while this government brought tears to a lot of people's eyes when it said it wanted to increase our veterans' pensions, unfortunately, the minister of defence has disgraced his office, his title, and his position. This is a deplorable situation. Yesterday, he did not even have the courage to go and see his brothers in arms to apologise. He prefers to apologise here, in the lobby of the House of Commons, by reading a statement prepared by the Prime Minister's Office, rather than meeting his counterparts, his friends, and his brothers in arms and looking them in the eye, as any honourable man would do, to apologize for his mistake.

That is what the Liberal government does. It does not honour its promises or veterans.

• (1625)

[*English*]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us do a reality check. The Conservatives were in very good shape to withstand what happened in 2008-09, and members know where I am going on this, because they were left a pretty healthy balance sheet by successive surpluses. That is okay. In addition, the problem is that Mr. Harper had us in deficit before the crash. Not only did he plunge us into deficit, but he added \$156 billion to the national debt. How did he do this? I will ask the member for reflections on this, but first, he defunded the government. Everybody loved those cuts in the GST, but that was \$14 billion. It was difficult for him, then, to have the means to react, and instead, he put us back into a deeper deficit.

Does the member not agree that the whole issue of running up deficits represents where we are today because of some very poor strategy, not necessarily mismanagement, but very poor strategy? Does the member not agree that it would have been better to not defund the government when Mr. Harper chose to do so?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, did the member announce today that in the next budget the GST will get back to 7%? Is that what the member wishes? I hope not.

Let us talk about the good old days. For sure, I am very proud as a Canadian of what the Right Hon. Paul Martin did when he was minister of finance. He was a great minister of finance; I recognize that. I am thankful that we had this man to challenge the economy with reality and to address the big challenges we had with a huge deficit. However, that is not the reality of today. Unfortunately, the successor to the Right Hon. Paul Martin tabled a deficit more than expected, three times what was expected. That is the reality, but are we surprised? Not really. Let me remind members of what the current Prime Minister actually said in Ontario a few months before the election.

[*Translation*]

He said that the budget balances itself.

[English]

Is that true? Do budgets balance themselves? What about the deficit? That is not the way to run personal finances, but the Prime Minister is doing that because he has no respect for the millions who will pay for the bad administration and the bad judgment of the current government.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would just add that the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent is one of the greatest orators in this House. I think we are all stimulated and actually shocked by his projections, and not only his projections but those of the parliamentary budget officer, who said that we would be possibly out of a deficit position in 2055.

There is a question that begs for an answer. With the trajectory on which our government was going, having handed the Liberals a balanced budget with a slight surplus, where would we be in 2030 let alone 2055? I wonder if the member could answer that question.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, speaking of Louis St. Laurent, let me remind members that he was the one who killed the deficit after World War II, so I am very proud to be the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

In response to the member's question, the civil servants at the finance department concluded that if the government does not change the target, we will reach a zero deficit in 2055. However, believe it or not, if nothing had changed under a Conservative government, thanks to the civil servants at the finance department who gave this answer, we would get back to a zero deficit in 2030. That is the main reality. That is a fact. It is not us who are saying that; it is the civil servants at the Department of Finance.

• (1630)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Child Care; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, Foreign Affairs.

* * *

[English]

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS OF MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to provide an addendum to the question of privilege I originally raised on April 4. As the House will recall, and as the record will show, the question of privilege concerned contradicting statements made by the Minister of National Defence in the House and through an Order Paper question tabled in the House.

To summarize, in the minister's written response of January 30 to Order Paper Question No. 600, he confirmed that the Canadian Armed Forces members in question, those who were fighting ISIS in Operation Impact and were stationed in Kuwait at Camp Arifjan, had

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received danger pay and hardship tax relief provided by the former Conservative government.

However, in response to questions during question period on March 8 and on March 21, the minister contradicted himself saying:

I would also like to correct the member in terms of the previous government's actions on this. It actually sent troops into Kuwait without the tax-free allowance...

He also said:

...the previous government was the one that actually sent our troops to Iraq without the tax-free benefit.

Both those claims are false based on the facts that were tabled in the House under the minister's signature.

Madam Speaker, the additional evidence I put before the House today comes from a press release issued by the Minister of National Defence. The release concerned changes to the tax relief status of the Canadian Armed Forces personnel stationed in Kuwait. In the release, the minister said:

...I am happy to see that those who were deployed on Operation Impact when the decision was made to reduce the hardship and risk levels will now enjoy the benefits they had when they started their deployment.

These deployments began before September 1, 2016, when those benefits were taken away by the government.

Furthermore, the minister's apologies in the House regarding his record of military service are evidence that he provided false statements on two separate occasions, once in July 2015, and then again after being sworn in as Minister of National Defence on April 18, 2017 in New Delhi, India.

The Minister of National Defence misled Canadians on other issues as well. On December 21, 2016, he told *The Globe and Mail* while in Iraq, "I haven't had one discussion about the CF-18s". That was in reference to his meetings with government officials of Iraq.

However, an email on December 20, 2016, from Global Affairs, which we received through an Access to Information request, stated:

...the Iraqi minister of defence was clearly focused on Canada's decision to withdraw its CF-18 fighter jets from the coalition air strikes, asking the [Defence Minister] to reconsider this decision on numerous occasions

Further, in justifying the government's plan to breaking its campaign promises, and undertaking a sole-source purchase of 18 Super Hornet fighter jets, the defence minister has repeatedly insisted that the Royal Canadian Air Force faces a capability gap. However, Lieutenant-General Michael Hood, Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, provided a statement to the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence stating:

...there is sufficient capacity to support a transition to a replacement fighter capability based on the ongoing projects and planned life extension to 2025 for the CF-18.

That was in the *Ottawa Citizen*, November 25, 2016.

In an open letter, 13 former Royal Canadian Air Force commanders have also called the minister's plan to purchase 18 Super Hornets, ill-advised, costly, and unnecessary. That was in the *National Post* on February 22.

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Madam Speaker, my arguments to my original question of privilege from April 4, remain the same. I hope you will consider this additional evidence in making a ruling which clearly indicates that the Minister of National Defence has misled, fabricated, and embellished other issues on numerous occasions in addition to my original question of privilege.

• (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I wish to thank the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman for the additional information. It is going to be taken under advisement as the question of privilege is being reviewed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will look into more detail after I have had the opportunity to peruse exactly what the member has put on the record. My experience in participating in the House of Commons debates was related specifically to the Department of National Defence and Canada's military. I have seen nothing but an outstanding performance from our Minister of National Defence.

With respect to the allegations, I would suggest that this is more a dispute over the facts. As we had that one day of debate in the House, I recall both opposition and government members ultimately agreeing to disagree, because we did not agree with what the Conservatives were proposing. The Minister of National Defence has been very straightforward, transparent, and accountable on all matters. As such, we will take it under advisement. If we have something new after we peruse what the member has said, we will come back to the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I greatly appreciate the comments from the parliamentary secretary.

A question of privilege was raised. The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman provided additional information, so that the Speaker can take the information under advisement as the matter is reviewed, and a decision will be forthcoming.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about the budget implementation bill even though on closer inspection there is very little to be pleased about. I will use my speaking time to talk about some of the issues that have progressives in this country, New Democrats in particular, concerned.

I will talk about the form and the substance. Unfortunately, there is bad news on both counts. I will start with the form by quoting some passages and statements made by people, near or far, often near, in the House. This will provide a bit of context for the form. The first quote is taken from the electoral platform of the Liberal Party of Canada:

Stephen Harper has also used omnibus bills to prevent Parliament from properly reviewing and debating his proposals. We will change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice.

On June 9, 2015, the current President of the Treasury Board stated this in the House: For years, the Conservatives have crossed the line in what is acceptable in a functioning democracy as a government in the of respect for Parliament. It is not only how they have now normalized the use of massive omnibus bills, they regularly shut down debate in the House...

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage said this:

For example, the government's use of omnibus legislation has degraded the committee review process and hidden important legal changes from public scrutiny.

For his part, the Liberal member for Bourassa said this:

I must tell my colleague that we are against omnibus bills. A few years ago the current government claimed that it was against these bills, which at the time might have had 20 or 30 pages. Now we have a bill with more than 175 pages.

Surprise. The government has come up with a bill that is not 175 pages, but 300 pages long. It amends 30 legislative measures, creates two new ones, and introduces, through the back door, a bill that has already been introduced in the House, namely, Bill C-43, An Act respecting a payment to be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund to support a pan-Canadian artificial intelligence strategy.

Can anyone tell me what that has to do with the budget? Why is this shell game being used to ram a bill that has already been introduced in the House through more quickly?

Bill C-44 has all of the characteristics of an omnibus bill, even though the Liberals promised that they would never, ever resort to the use of such legislation if they took office. It is rather mind-boggling. If no changes are made, the Standing Committee on Finance will be called upon to study not only the budgetary measures but also the creation of the infrastructure bank, the amendments to the rules governing the parliamentary budget officer, the amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the amendments to labour laws, the amendments regarding the appointment of judges, and the amendments regarding food safety. That does not make any sense.

This is just another promise that the Liberals have broken and another example of the Liberals' attitude of "Do as I say, not as I do." The Liberals are using the same old undemocratic tactics to make a complete mockery of the rules of the House and the ability of parliamentarians to do their job properly, to properly represent and inform their constituents.

I will come back to the ability of parliamentarians to do their job properly when I get into the substance of Bill C-44. Right now, I am going to repeat what I just said. Those quote are so good that I cannot help but read them twice.

• (1640)

[*English*]

The quote reads:

Stephen Harper has also used omnibus bills to prevent Parliament from properly reviewing and debating his proposals. We will change the House of Commons Standing Orders to bring an end to this undemocratic practice.

Government Orders

Where was that written? It was on page 30 in the election platform of the Liberal Party of Canada.

For years, the Conservatives have crossed the line in what is acceptable in a functioning democracy as a government and the lack of respect for Parliament. It is not only how they have now normalized the use of massive omnibus bills, they regularly shut down debate in the House...

Who said that? It was the President of the Treasury Board on June 9, 2015.

The government's use of omnibus legislation has degraded the committee review process and hidden important legal changes from public scrutiny.

Who said that? It was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of Canadian heritage in June 2015.

Last but not least:

I must tell my colleague that we are against omnibus bills. A few years ago the current government claimed that it was against these bills, which at the time might have had 20 or 30 pages. Now we have a bill with more than 175 pages.

Who said that? It was the Liberal member for Bourassa.

Now, the Liberal government has presented a 300-page budget implementation bill. This Liberal MP was outraged when it was 175 pages from the Conservative government. This is exactly, "Don't listen to me because I'll do the opposite", which is the trademark of the Liberal Party anyway.

The government has exactly what we call an omnibus bill, changing more than 30 different pieces of legislation; creating two new laws, one of them being the infrastructure bank; changing the rules of the parliamentary budget officer, which is quite incredible; and changing so many laws. There are 30 laws that will be studied by only one committee, the finance committee.

The changes to immigration and the Citizenship Act will be studied by the finance committee. The labour code changes will be studied by the finance committee. The nomination of judges will be studied by the finance committee, and food protection in the country will be studied by the finance committee. I really hope that the men and women who sit on the finance committee have a huge knowledge of a lot of things that are happening in the country, because it really makes no sense.

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

Now let us move on to the content. I would like to address a few topics, and I hope I will have the time to do so. First I would like to talk about certain changes concerning the parliamentary budget officer. Over the years, the PBO has become an essential and unavoidable component of the capacity to require accountability from the government. The Liberals promised to make the office more independent. However, on closer examination, they are doing the exact opposite.

Three or four changes deserve to be highlighted here. First of all, the parliamentary budget officer will have to submit an annual work plan. To whom must it be submitted? To the speaker of the House of Commons and the speaker of the Senate, both of whom are politicians, I will add. During the year, will the parliamentary budget officer have the latitude to initiate studies or reports prompted by current events, a new revelation or a scandal? That is still uncertain. Will the PBO be placed in a straitjacket by this annual work plan?

We wonder and worry about that. Most of the countries that have a parliamentary budget officer do not have this annual work plan.

Second, the PBO's reports will have to be sent to the speaker of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Commons one business day before their public release. Therefore, the speakers will have the information in hand and will be able to prepare a response before all parliamentarians and citizens have access to the PBO's study. We find it hard to understand this measure.

What is very important is that all parliamentarians used to be free and able to request a study from the PBO, to raise a question and ask him or her to consider it. The Liberals want to get rid of that. They want to deprive parliamentarians of this right, so that in future any request to the parliamentary budget officer would have to be associated with a proposal, a bill, or a motion that a member has already tabled or that has already been debated here in the House. Under these rules, we would not have been able to ask the PBO to verify, as was done in the past, the costs of purchasing the F-35s, for example, or of the Liberals' income tax reduction which, in the end, has benefited only the very wealthy. The freedom of action of the parliamentary budget officer is being restricted. The ability of members to request studies is being restricted. On the pretext of making the office independent, the PBO is at risk of being made inoperative and ineffective. We in the NDP are immensely concerned about this.

Basically, after speaking with the parliamentary budget officer, this Liberal bill, I would like to point out again, has nothing to do with budget implementation outside of studying the budget, and focuses on the wrong priorities. It contains some measures that will be detrimental for Canadians, for the more disadvantaged, and will not help our communities. Above all, certain decisions or certain choices are not included.

I would like to point out that by abolishing the public transit tax credit, the Liberal government will recover \$225 million a year. The government has also chosen to retain the stock option loophole, which costs us \$800 million a year. This loophole only benefits the wealthy in our society, or the richest 1% or 2%. It costs us \$800 million. The Liberals promised to abolish it, but they are keeping it. We do not understand how they can claim to be progressive, go in that direction, and do the exact opposite of what they promised during the election campaign.

They are abolishing the public transit tax credit, which could really help people. Every month, some people buy bus tickets or a transit pass to go to work, their activities, university or school. The public transit tax credit does not help the rich, but those who do not have a car and who try to use the public services available to them.

Government Orders

Every year, my office hosts a tax clinic. People with low incomes sign up, and I work with volunteers filling out their tax returns. Most of the people who come to us are people on social assistance, people with disabilities, and seniors with low incomes. For people with disabilities and seniors who might pay a little tax, the public transit tax credit saved them between \$150 and \$200 per year. That made a huge difference to them. I do not see why a government that claims to be working for the middle class and those who want to join it would attack these people in its budget but do absolutely nothing about getting money from people who do not need it, such as those who use tax loopholes to avoid paying tax on their stock options. This is despicable, and the NDP will continue to speak out against it.

• (1650)

[*English*]

The NDP does not understand the logic of cutting the tax credit for public transit. Who has benefited from that? Seniors, students, poor workers, single moms who, at the end of the year, could save maybe \$150, \$200 in taxes.

At the same time, the Liberal government has chosen to keep the loophole for CEOs of big companies who can avoid some taxes, which represents \$800 million a year. That is money we are losing. This is who the Liberal government is helping and it is hurting people who are trying to make ends meet, those who take the subway and the bus every day. The Liberals are attacking those people.

I do not understand the logic of the government. It repeats all day long that it is there for the middle class and those who are trying to get there, but it is not taking any action in the budget to help them for real.

Mr. Gord Johns: It's shameful.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: The member is right, Madam Speaker. It is shameful. It is going to hurt poor people. I really do not get it. I will be quite glad to get back to my riding to tell that story to my constituents.

The Liberal government is also have in the BIA new legislation that will create the infrastructure investment bank. We are really worried about that move. Why?

During the election campaign, the Liberals were saying that we were experiencing a deficit in infrastructure in our country, and we agreed. They said that the interest rates were so low that this was time for the government to get some money from the market at 2% interest, which is a really low rate, and to take the opportunity to invest in our communities and build new infrastructure. It looks good and seems logical.

However, the big player in this bank will be the private sector, which is there to make profits, to make money, not to serve the public. Instead of borrowing at 2%, we will have private investors asking for profits of 7%, 8%, 9% per year. It will be the taxpayers who will pay for that. Infrastructure will cost more at the end. Also, during that time, we can expect a lot of new fees in order to drive on a highway, or to go to the airport, or to cross a bridge, if the airports are still public, which we are not quite sure of right now. The government will probably sell the airports to start its bank.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

One aspect of this budget implementation bill that worries us is the creation of the infrastructure investment bank. During the election campaign, the Liberals talked about an infrastructure deficit and said that investments were needed. We agreed. Interest rates were low, so it was a good time to borrow and it would not be too costly for the government. It seemed logical, but surprise, the Liberals never told us that most of the investments in this bank would come from private investments, investment funds whose purpose would be to earn a return, to make a profit. Based on models we have seen in the provinces and other areas, the Liberals already knew that their investors would be asking for a rate of return of 7%, 8%, or 9% on their investment.

Why did they tell us that they were going to borrow at 2%, that it would be cheap, and now suddenly they have decided to take money from the private sector and they are going put between 7% and 9% back into their investors' pockets in profits? Our infrastructure is going to be more expensive, it will be privatized, and we will have to pay many new user fees for our highways, airports, and bridges.

For all these reasons, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion: That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-44, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures, be amended by removing the following clauses : (a) clauses 128 to 191, related to the parliamentary budget officer; (b) clauses 403 to 406, related to the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act; that the clauses mentioned in section (a) of this motion do compose Bill C-48; that Bill C-48 be deemed read a first time and printed; that the order for second reading of the said bill provide for the referral to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates; that the clauses mentioned in section (b) of this motion do compose Bill C-49; that Bill C-49 be deemed read a first time and printed; that the order for second reading of the said bill provide for the referral to the Standing Committee on Finance; that Bill C-44 retain the status on the Order Paper that it had prior to the adoption of this order; that Bill C-44 be reprinted as amended; and that the law clerk and parliamentary counsel be authorized to make any technical changes or corrections as may be necessary to give effect to this motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

[English]

PRIVILEGE

COMMENTS OF MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman respecting the government's response to Order Paper Question No. 600.

I submit that the matter raised by my hon. colleague is a dispute as to the facts, and therefore does not meet the criteria for finding a *prima facie* question of privilege.

According to page 86 of O'Brien and Bosc, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition:

....the following elements have to be established when it is alleged that a Member is in contempt for deliberately misleading the House: one, it must be proven that the statement was misleading; two, it must be established that the Member making the statement knew at the time that the statement was incorrect; and three, that in making the statement, the Member intended to mislead the House.

These criteria have not been met in the question of privilege raised on April 4, 2017.

On January 30, 2017, the government tabled its response to Question No. 600, which states the following:

All Canadian Armed Forces personnel serving at Operation IMPACT Kuwait locations received Tax Relief effective 5 Oct 2014 (date at Which the original risk scores became effective) to 1 Sep 2016.

and:

Operation IMPACT (Iraq) has had Tax Relief since 22 Aug 2014, date at which the original risk score for this location became effective. Operation IMPACT (Baghdad) has had Tax Relief since 17 Apr 2015, date at which the original risk score for this location became effective.

Let me explain the risk scores and the process for tax relief.

The risk allowance is to compensate for the risk and is based on the probability of a hazard occurring and the severity of its impact. The Departmental Hardship and Risk Committee sits quarterly to review eligible operations and to assist each submission of risk scores.

Tax relief is applied based on three risk levels. Low risk levels below 2.00 are not eligible to be designated for tax relief. For medium risk levels from 2.00 to 2.49, the Minister of National Defence can request that the Minister of Finance designate the mission for tax relief. For high risk levels of 2.5 and above, tax relief is automatic.

The member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman stated on April 4, 2017, in reference to Question No. 600:

The answers to this question means that the troops that were deployed by the Conservative government had all their danger pay and tax relief benefits.

I would like to draw to the attention of members that the tax relief benefits were implemented retroactively during our government's mandate, in February 2016, which is why, during question period on March 8, 2017, the Minister of National Defence stated:

I would also like to correct the member in terms of the previous government's actions on this. It actually sent troops into Kuwait without the tax-free allowance, something we had taken up.

Privilege

When asked about this topic again in question period on March 21, 2017, the minister responded:

I just wish he had the same passion when he sent the troops to Iraq without the tax-free benefits.

and:

...the previous government was the one that actually sent our troops to Iraq without the tax-free benefit.

The minister's statements are in fact consistent with the response to Question No. 600. The reason the minister said in the House that the previous government sent out troops without the tax-free benefit is that our troops did not receive this compensation immediately upon their arrival in Kuwait.

The current minister had to first request that the Minister of Finance designate the mission for tax relief, which he did in February 2016. Tax relief was then applied retroactively to the beginning of the mission in October 2014.

● (1700)

As such, Canadian Armed Forces personnel serving in Kuwait received retroactive tax relief effective October 5, 2014, the date at which the original risk scores became effective, to September 1, 2016.

To reiterate the facts, the risk scores for Operation Impact were first assessed by the Departmental Hardship and Risk Committee on June 11, 2015. At that time, Kuwait locations Ali Al Salem, Al Jaber, and Arifjan were all assigned a risk score of 2.13. Because their risk scores were greater than 2.00 but less than 2.50, on January 26, 2016, the Minister of National Defence requested the Minister of Finance to designate Operation Impact Kuwait locations for tax relief. The Minister of Finance concurred with the request on February 16, 2016, and the tax relief was applied retroactively starting October 5, 2014, as well.

Allegations of breach of privilege are often dismissed as disputes as to the facts. For example, on May 7, 2012, the Speaker ruled on the question of privilege regarding statements respecting the proposed acquisition of F-35 fighter jets. He referenced page 510 in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, which states:

The Speaker, however, is not responsible for the quality or content of replies to questions. In most instances, when a point of order or a question of privilege has been raised in regard to a response to an oral question, the Speaker has ruled that the matter is a disagreement among Members over the facts surrounding the issue. As such, these matters are more a question of debate and do not constitute a breach of the rules or of privilege.

Therefore, on May 7, 2012, the Speaker ruled as follows:

Accordingly, bound as I am by the very narrow parameters that apply in these situations, and without any evidence that the House was deliberately misled, I cannot arrive at a finding of *prima facie* privilege in this case.

In this decision, the Speaker referenced two rulings of Speaker Milliken. The first, from January 31, 2008, is found at pages 2434 and 2435 of *Debates*. In it, he stated:

Government Orders

...any dispute regarding the accuracy or appropriateness of a minister's response to an oral question is a matter of debate; it is not a matter for the Speaker to judge. The same holds true with respect to the breadth of a minister's answer to a question in the House: this is not for the Speaker to determine.

Second, on February 26, 2004, at page 1076 of *Debates*, Speaker Milliken confirmed as follows:

As hon. members know, it is not the Speaker's role to adjudicate on matters of fact. This is something on which the House itself can form an opinion during debate.

I submit that this is the situation with the matter currently before the House. I believe that the member is drawing a false parallel to the Speaker's ruling of February 1, 2002, concerning the statements made in the House by the then minister of national defence regarding Afghan detainees. In that ruling, the Speaker stated:

...in deciding on alleged questions of privilege, it is relatively infrequent for the Chair to find prima facie privilege; it is much more likely that the Speaker will characterize the situation as "a dispute as to facts". But in the case before us, there appears to be in my opinion no dispute as to the facts. I believe that both the minister and other hon. members recognize that two versions of events have been presented to the House.

This case is different from the one before the House. First, there are not two versions of events. What the Minister of National Defence stated in the House on March 8 and 21 of 2017 is consistent with the response to Order Paper Question No. 600. Second, there is no confusion as to whether the minister deliberately misled the House, since the minister's responses in question period and the response to Order Paper Question No. 600 provide the very same information.

Accordingly, I submit that the matter raised by my hon. colleague is a dispute as to the facts and therefore does not meet the conditions for a prima facie question of privilege.

• (1705)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to thank the parliamentary secretary for the additional information. It will be taken under advisement, and the Speaker will certainly come back on this matter.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-44, Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in response to my NDP colleague's comments, I would simply like to say that everyone knows that we could have spent billions and billions of dollars more in the budget to help Canadians. However, no amount would ever be enough.

Can my colleague tell me how we would pay back the cost of those measures?

I would also like to ask him a question about the measures pertaining to the safety of seniors and the Canada child benefit that have been implemented to date. Those measures are very good for thousands of people in my riding, the people in his riding, and all Canadians.

Does he agree that the Minister of Finance announced good measures for the people in his riding, the people in my riding, and all Canadians?

• (1710)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Obviously, some measures and some decisions have helped some people, particularly the guaranteed income supplement—even though the government could have done more—and the Canada child benefit.

However, the problem I have with the assistance offered to families with children is that the Liberal Party has been promising a national child care program since Jean Chrétien was in office in 1993, but we still do not have one. That would be the most effective way of helping families with children to reduce their child care costs. In some cities, like Toronto and Vancouver, child care can cost up to \$70 or \$80 a day per child.

Quebec's approach to child care clearly demonstrates that a national child care program is the best way to fight poverty, help families, and help women get back into the workforce.

If they want access to more revenue to pay for social programs and help our constituents, then the Liberals should have kept their promise to close the tax loophole for stock options worth \$800 million. They could put an end to the bilateral agreements with tax havens, which cost us \$5 billion to \$8 billion annually. They could stop subsidizing the oil companies and giving tax credits and tax cuts to the big Canadian banks. These are things that could truly help Canada's middle class.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very fine speech.

Every day in the House the government says one thing but does another. The Liberals have broken many of their promises and this bill is just another example of that.

What changes would the hon. member like to see made to the bill?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. Many things in this bill could be changed.

I do not understand why the Investment Canada Act is being changed to provide for a study, a net benefit test when foreign interests take control of a Canadian company. The magic acquisition number used to be \$600 million, but that number has increased to \$1 billion. Now many Canadian companies could be bought by foreign investors and companies without the acquisition triggering a net benefit test for Canada.

Government Orders

The bill makes parental leave more flexible. This may seem like a good idea. Parents can now choose to take parental leave for 18 months instead of 12 months. However, the caveat is that instead of receiving 55% of their salary for 12 months, they will receive 33% of their salary for 18 months. Flexibility is nice, but who can afford to live on one-third of their salary? Only the wealthiest can. This type of measure does not help the middle class. It is smoke and mirrors. I would really like to know which constituents of Liberal ridings are able to live on one-third of their income. There is a lot that could be done. The Liberals could keep their promise of giving a pension for life to veterans wounded in combat. There are all kinds of things we could change in the bill.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his comments and speech.

I have a question for him about the public transit tax credit.

[English]

What was mentioned in my colleague's comments was that there are people who are in need. That is accepted. What was mentioned in my colleague's comments was that he is serving those people who are in need with tax clinics in his riding. That is accepted. It is a great initiative. I do the same thing in Parkdale—High Park. What I think is missing, and I would like a response from my colleague, is that the tax credit for monthly transit passes was not a refundable credit. It was a claim that could only be made by those persons who were paying taxes. For the very low-income people he is trying to serve, I am trying to serve, and we are all trying to serve, that tax credit was actually inapplicable.

Does the member not think it is more important to actually invest \$21 billion, as our government is doing, in transit around this country to increase the number of subways, streetcars, and buses, in places like Montreal, to serve those very low-income people who actually had no access whatsoever, particularly if they could not even afford a monthly pass but could only pay on a daily basis for transit?

• (1715)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very pertinent and legitimate question.

We should not believe everything the government says about the \$11 billion for affordable housing or the \$23 billion for public transit, because the majority of these investments will only be made after the 2019 and 2023 elections. It is very unlikely that people will see any investments in the short term. There will be many governments and many budgets before then.

I am well aware of the difference between refundable tax credits and non-refundable tax credits. I always prefer refundable tax credits, which are more progressive and help the disadvantaged most in terms of taxes.

In my experience, low-income seniors and workers who pay a little bit of tax could benefit from this tax credit even if it were non-refundable. Sometimes it is the only means they have to try to reduce their taxes every year. It was not perfect, but it really helped people

in our communities. I do not understand why the Liberals are eliminating it.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for talking about affordable housing. We saw in this budget, and the government takes pride in saying it, that it has announced \$11 billion for affordable housing. However, when we look at it closely, it would be \$20 million in the first year and \$300 million before the next election. The bulk of it would be after the next election. This is while we have a housing crisis in southwestern British Columbia, in the GTA, and across Canada. People cannot find a place to live. In my riding of Courtenay—Alberni, for example, the vacancy rate is less than 0.5%.

There is an organization called Dawn to Dusk. Its members are dealing with people on the street, homeless people, and they are saying that we are in a crisis situation. At the same time, the current government is protecting shareholder stock option loopholes that are costing us \$800 million a year. The government is choosing CEO stock option loopholes over people who need a place to live. Maybe the member could talk a bit about what \$800 million could do this year for people who need a roof over their heads.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

Indeed, being a politician is about making choices. Unfortunately, this Liberal budget contains bad choices, unrealistic choices. The Liberals claim to be doing things, but they will have no impact in the end.

The issue of social and affordable housing is an excellent example. The member put it very well. The Liberals can brag about investing \$11 billion, but when you realize that this investment will be spread out over 11 years and that, this year, they will spend only 1% of the money promised in the budget, we soon realize that this will not make much difference in our communities. We could maybe build four or five small low-cost housing units in Canada, and then we would have to wait for next year, because the money will be gone.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg South.

[English]

It is a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to budget 2017. I want to address key parts of the budget that I know would have an important and lasting impact on my riding of Parkdale—High Park in Toronto.

Government Orders

Since October 2015, I have heard loud and clear from my constituents about the issues that matter to them most. I know that budget 2017 would help to address their concerns and the concerns of all Canadians.

One of the most important issues to residents in my riding is access to housing. Since being elected, I have met with the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. I have also heard about this issue knocking on doors and in meetings with constituents and key stakeholders in my riding.

In Parkdale—High Park alone there are five co-op housing units that provide much-needed accommodation for low-income residents. The members of Dufferin Grove Housing Co-operative, Swansea Village Co-operative, 55 Howard Park Co-operative Homes, 91 Spencer Avenue Housing Co-operative, and John Bruce Village Co-operative have spoken to me and my staff about the critical need to ensure affordable housing stock in our cities. I am acutely aware of how urgent the housing crisis is, not only in Parkdale—High Park but right around the country.

I also know that housing is foundational. What I mean by that is that if we address people's housing needs, they will have better health outcomes, better educational outcomes, and better economic outcomes.

On March 29th I held a standing-room-only town hall in my riding on housing. I heard first-hand from the residents of Parkdale—High Park about just how important it is for our government to resolve the affordable housing issue and to work with local partners to make that happen. I am proud that budget 2017 would start to do just that.

Budget 2017 would make a historic \$11-billion commitment to housing in this country. Combined with \$4 billion in base funding, it would bring the total to \$15 billion our government has committed in the first two years of our mandate to launch a much-needed national housing strategy. That would mean access to more affordable housing for residents in Parkdale—High Park.

The \$15 billion in the aggregate would include the following investments. There would be \$5 billion for a national housing fund to address critical housing issues and to prioritize support for vulnerable citizens. Who are they? They are seniors, indigenous people, survivors fleeing situations of domestic violence, people with disabilities, those dealing with mental health and addiction issues, and veterans.

There would be \$3.2 billion for a renewed federal and provincial partnership on affordable housing. There would be \$2.1 billion to expand and extend the homelessness partnering strategy beyond 2018-19.

As my second component, I would like to underscore families and child care. I am the husband and father of two young children. My boys are three and six. My riding of Parkdale—High Park is home to countless families just like mine. These families have reached out to me to talk about our government's first act, which was to cut taxes for the middle class. They have also welcomed the Canada child benefit, which targets tax-free benefits to those who need it most.

For those raising children in Parkdale—High Park and around the country, our first budget last year provided an initial \$500 million for early learning and child care. Building on this, this budget would invest an additional \$7 billion to support the creation of high-quality child care spaces across the country. This would mean up to 40,000 new subsidized child care spaces.

What this would mean for Parkdale—High Park and ridings around the country would be more options for parents who are literally fed up. It is from personal experience and from others in my riding that I know about people who sign on to countless child care waiting lists, literally the moment they conceive a child. Those people need a greater supply of much-needed day care spots, and they need options that will make it possible for them to return to work, including for women to return to work. That is something our government firmly believes in. This unprecedented investment would both address the supply of child care spaces and help drive down costs by boosting the number of subsidized spots.

Budget 2017 would do even more for families. We fulfilled our campaign commitment to introduce more flexibility and choice for parents on parental leave. These changes would allow parents to choose to receive their current benefits over an extended period of up to 18 months, rather than 12, and spend more time with their young children in those key early months.

On women and gender parity, the third subject I would like to discuss, this budget was a historic first. For the first time in Canadian history, in 150 years, a federal budget included a gender statement. The statement reflects the impact of programs, across government, on women and reflects our commitment as a government to ensuring that the goal of gender equality permeates every single thing we do as a federal government.

● (1720)

As an example, we believe that women deserve to feel safe, supported, and protected in communities, so on top of our historic child care investment, I was heartened to see \$100.9 million allocated in the budget over the first five years, and \$20 million thereafter, to establish a national strategy to address gender-based violence.

In the past, I have supported work on this issue in my riding of Parkdale—Hyde Park, particularly at The Redwood shelter, a shelter for women and children fleeing violence. I have seen the amazing work being done in my community at places like The Redwood, but I have also seen first-hand the critical need for investment and resources to end gender-based violence.

Budget 2017 would do more. It would address the critical need for funding for women abroad. I am proud that our government has endorsed what is known as the Dutch initiative and would be dedicating \$650 million in international aid to the education of women and girls and to empower women to maintain control over their reproductive rights.

I am proud to serve in a government with Canada's first ever gender-equal cabinet and in a government that has introduced Bill C-25, which would improve gender diversity on corporate boards in the private sector.

We know that more needs to be done, but budget 2017 is an important step in the right direction toward achieving true gender equality across all government programs.

The fourth area is indigenous persons. In my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, I am committed to our goal of rebuilding and repairing our relationship with indigenous peoples and to supporting the preservation of indigenous languages and culture. The mandate letter of the Minister of Canadian Heritage has an express commitment to provide funding and to enact legislation to promote, preserve, and enhance indigenous languages. I am honoured that the hon. minister has asked me to assist her with this project.

Building on the significant investments in budget 2016, budget 2017 would continue the important work of true reconciliation with indigenous persons. We would establish a new fiscal relationship that would lift the 2% cap on annual funding increases and move towards sufficient and predictable funding for first nations communities.

• (1725)

[Translation]

Budget 2017 allocates \$225 million to provide access to affordable and culturally appropriate housing for Indigenous peoples living off-reserve. It also provides \$300 million for the construction of housing in Canada's north, and support for territorial governments to improve housing conditions. These investments will help approximately 3,000 families find adequate, suitable, and affordable housing. Budget 2017 also provides \$225 million for housing providers who serve Indigenous peoples not living on reserves

[English]

We would also dedicate \$828 million to improving health for first nations and Inuit, including \$305 million for the non-insured health benefits program.

We would target mental health for first nations and Inuit, with \$204.2 million going toward improving mental health services. We would build on our commitment to home care by investing \$184 million for palliative and home care for first nations and Inuit communities.

The fifth area is transit and infrastructure. In my riding of Parkdale-High Park, I have heard time and again about the need for infrastructure investments in Canada, particularly to get people moving to work and school. Budget 2017 would deliver on this important commitment.

In budget 2017 we have committed \$20 billion over the next decade, in partnership with the provinces and territories, for public transit projects that will shorten commutes, decrease air pollution, and allow Canadians to spend more time at home with their families. What would that mean in Parkdale—High Park? It would mean more subways, more streetcars, and more buses. It would mean access to

Privilege

more transit and greener transit, because our budget commitment would also include \$21.9 billion in greener infrastructure.

The last subject I want to talk about as I conclude is vulnerable Canadians. What would the budget do for vulnerable Canadians? There is a new health agreement. There is \$5 billion for mental health around the country and \$6 billion for long-term care.

For low-income families, a dedicated fund of \$13 million would be established to provide affordable access to the Internet for low-income families.

What would it do for asylum seekers? There would be legal aid for refugee applicants. I hear time and time again in Parkdale—High Park that we want to establish an open and compassionate program, accessible to all. The money dedicated, \$60 million over five years, to enhance people's access to the refugee system would do just that.

There would be money dedicated to those who are victimized by hatred. We would double the security infrastructure program.

There would be money dedicated to newcomers who have problems integrating because their foreign credentials are not being recognized. There would be \$27 million dedicated to foreign credential recognition.

For the LGBTQ community, there would be \$3.6 million to protect and promote equality for people of different sexual orientations.

This government reflects a commitment to progressive values, housing, indigenous persons, women, families, and our most vulnerable. I will be supporting this budget. I urge everyone in this House to do the same.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage will have five minutes for questions and comments the next time this issue is before the House.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from May 2 consideration of the motion, as amended.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:30 p.m., pursuant to orders made on Tuesday, May 2, and earlier today, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the privilege motion, as amended, in the name of the member for Perth—Wellington.

Call in the members.

• (1805)

[Translation]

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

*Privilege**(Division No. 259)*

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albrecht
 Alleslev
 Ambrose
 Anandasangaree
 Arnold
 Arya
 Aubin
 Badawey
 Bains
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beaulieu
 Bennett
 Benzen
 Bernier
 Bezan
 Bittle
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Bossio
 Boudrias
 Brassard
 Breton
 Brosseau
 Calkins
 Carr
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chan
 Choquette
 Clarke
 Cormier
 Cuzner
 Davies
 Deltell
 Dhillon
 Diotte
 Donnelly
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Dusseault
 Dzerowicz
 Eglinski
 Ellis
 Eyking
 Falk
 Fergus
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Freeland
 Fuhr
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gill
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Graham
 Hajdu
 Hardie
 Hehr
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Johns
 Jones
 Kang
 Kent
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary)
 Laverdière
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Leslie

Albas
 Alghabra
 Allison
 Amos
 Anderson
 Arseneault
 Ashton
 Ayoub
 Bagnell
 Barlow
 Baylis
 Beech
 Benson
 Bergen
 Berthold
 Bibeau
 Blair
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Boucher
 Boulerice
 Bratina
 Brison
 Brown
 Cannings
 Carrie
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Champagne
 Chen
 Christopherson
 Cooper
 Cullen
 Dabrusin
 DeCoursey
 Dhaliwal
 Di Iorio
 Doherty
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Easter
 Ehsassi
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Fast
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fry
 Gallant
 Généreux
 Gerretsen
 Gladu
 Goodale
 Gourde
 Grewal
 Harder
 Harvey
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Jeneroux
 Jolibois
 Jordan
 Kelly
 Khalid
 Kitchen
 Kusie
 Lake
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lebel
 LeBouthillier
 Lemieux
 Levitt

Liepert
 Lobb
 Long
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Malcolmsen
 Marcil
 May (Cambridge)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKenna
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Monsef
 Morrissey
 Mulcair
 Nater
 Ng
 Nuttall
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Paul-Hus
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Plamondon
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Rankin
 Rayes
 Rempel
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Rudd
 Saganash
 Saini
 Sangha
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schmale
 Shanahan
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Stanton
 Stetski
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tan
 Thériault
 Trost
 Trudel
 Van Loan
 Vandenbeld
 Viersen
 Warawa
 Waugh
 Weir
 Wilkinson
 Wong
 Young
 Zimmer — 283

Lightbound
 Lockhart
 Ludwig
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Maloney
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
 McColeman
 McDonald
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Morneau
 Motz
 Nassif
 Nault
 Nicholson
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Pauzé
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poilievre
 Quach
 Ramsey
 Ratansi
 Reid
 Richards
 Robillard
 Rota
 Rusnak
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sansoucy
 Saroya
 Schiefke
 Schulte
 Shields
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sopuck
 Sorenson
 Ste-Marie
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Tilson
 Trudeau
 Van Kesteren
 Vandal
 Vecchio
 Virani
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Zahid

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

Moore — 2

Nil

Foote

The Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

Routine Proceedings

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1810)
[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The House resumed from April 5 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, April 3, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security concerning the recommendation not to proceed further with Bill C-226.

● (1815)

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

(Division No. 260)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra	Alleslev
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Aubin
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Bossio	Boudrias
Boulerice	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Brosseau	Cannings
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Chen	Choquette
Christopherson	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Davies
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Donnelly	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseauult	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garrison	Gerretsen
Gill	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Johns	Jolibois
Jones	Jordan
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Kwan
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe

Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Laverdière
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson	Maloney
Marcil	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Monsef	Morneau
Morrissey	Mulcair
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Paupé	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Plamondon
Poissant	Quach
Qualtrough	Ramsey
Rankin	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Rudd	Rusnak
Saganash	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Sangha	Sansoucy
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Shanahan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sorbara
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Thériault	Trudeau
Trudel	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Weir	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 201	

NAYS

Members

Albas
Allison
Anderson
Barlow
Bergen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Brassard
Calkins
Clarke
Deltell
Doherty
Falk
Gallant
Genuis
Gourde
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmieć
Lake
Lebel
Lobb
Maguire
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Nuttall
Poillievre
Reid
Richards
Schmale

Private Members' Business

Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Warawa
Waugh
Wong

Shiple
Sorenson
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Zimmer — 82

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(2)(d), the proceedings on the bill shall come to an end.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

OTTAWA RIVER WATERSHED

The House resumed from April 6 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, April 3, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Pontiac to Motion No. 104 under private members' business. The question is on the amendment.

• (1825)

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

*(Division No. 261)***YEAS**

Members

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ashton
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Bratina
Brisson
Cannings
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Choquette
Cormier
Cuzner
Davies
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus

Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Benson
Bittle
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boulerice
Breton
Brosseau
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chen
Christopherson
Cullen
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Donnelly
Dubourg
Duguid
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore

Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Garrison
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Hehr
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jolibois
Jordan
Khalid
Kwan
Lametti
Lapointe
Laverdière
Lebouthillier
Lemieux
Levitt
Lockhart
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinly
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mencicino
Monsef
Morrissey
Nassif
Ng
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petipas Taylor
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rudd
Saganash
Saini
Sangha
Sara
Schiefke
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Stetski
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Weir
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid — 191

Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Jones
Kang
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Malcolmson
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Saaneich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morneau
Mulcair
Nault
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Rota
Rusnak
Sahota
Sajjan
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Stewart
Tan
Trudeau
Vandal
Virani
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

NAYS

Members

Albas
Allison
Anderson
Barlow
Beaulieu
Bergen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias
Brown
Carrie
Cooper
Diotte
Eglinski

Private Members' Business

Falk
Fortin
Généreux
Gill
Gourde
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Lebel
Lobb
Maguire
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nicholson
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Rayes
Rempel
Saroya
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Warawa
Waugh
Wong

Fast
Gallant
Genius
Gladu
Harder
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Liepert
MacKenzie
Marcil
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nater
Nuttall
Pauzé
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Schmale
Shiple
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Loan
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Zimmer — 92

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

[*English*]

The next question is on the main motion, as amended. 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, as amended, 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.

● (1835)

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

(*Division No. 262*)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
Amos
Arseneault
Ashton
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bennett
Bibeau

Alleslev
Anandasangaree
Arya
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Beech
Benson
Bittle

Blair
Bossio
Bratina
Brison
Cannings
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chan
Choquette
Cormier
Cuzner
Davies
Dhaliwal
Di Iorio
Drouin
Duclos
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Garrison
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Hardie
Hehr
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jolibois
Jordan
Khalid
Kwan
Lametti
Lapointe
Laverdière
Lebouhiller
Lemieux
Levitt
Lockhart
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Monsef
Morrissey
Nassif
Ng
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rudd
Saganash
Saimi
Sangha
Sarai
Schieffe
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Stetski
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Weir

Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boulerice
Breton
Brosseau
Carr
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chen
Christopherson
Cullen
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Donnelly
Dubourg
Duguid
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harvey
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Jones
Kang
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Malcolmson
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Morneau
Mulcair
Nault
O'Connell
O'Regan
Paradis
Peterson
Philpott
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Rota
Rusnak
Sahota
Sajjan
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sorbara
Stewart
Tan
Trudeau
Vandal
Virani
Whalen

Private Members' Business

Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid — 191

Wilson-Raybould
Young

*(Division No. 263)***NAYS**

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Ambrose	Anderson
Arnold	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher	Boudrias
Brassard	Brown
Calkins	Carrie
Clarke	Cooper
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Eglinski
Falk	Fast
Fortin	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Gourde	Harder
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kniec	Kusie
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lebel	Liepert
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Marcil
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Ste-Marie
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Tilson	Trost
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vecchio	Viersen
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Wong	Zimmer — 92

PAIRED

Members

Foote
Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FORMALDEHYDE EMISSIONS

The House resumed from April 7 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, April 3, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 102, under private members' business, in the name of the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

● (1840)

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

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alghabra
Alleslev	Allison
Ambrose	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bossio	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Brassard	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Brosseau	Brown
Calkins	Cannings
Carr	Casey (Charlottetown)
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Champagne
Chagger	Chen
Chan	Choquette
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cooper
Cormier	Cullen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Davies	DeCourcey
Deltell	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Diotte	Doherty
Donnelly	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseau	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Eglinski	Ehsassi
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk	Fast
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gerretsen
Gill	Gladu
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Gourde
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Harder
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jeneroux
Johns	Jolibois
Jones	Jordan
Kang	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kniec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	Lebel
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt

Private Members' Business

Liepert	Lightbound
Lobb	Lockhart
Long	Ludwig
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Malcolmson
Maloney	Marcel
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Monsef
Morneau	Morrissey
Motz	Mulcair
Nassif	Nater
Nault	Ng
Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Connell	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Plamondon
Poilievre	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Rankin
Ratansi	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rota	Rudd
Rusnak	Saganash
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Sangha
Sansoucy	Sarai
Saroya	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schmale
Schulte	Shanahan
Shields	Shiple
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sopuck	Sorbara
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Thériault
Tilson	Trost
Trudeau	Trudel
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Viersen
Virani	Warawa
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wong
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid	Zimmer — 282

● (1845)
[English]

**CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION
PRIVATIZATION ACT**

The House resumed from April 10 consideration of the motion that Bill C-308, An Act to provide for the incorporation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Monday, April 3, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of the bill.

● (1850)
[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney: I would like to be recorded as voting against the motion.

[English]

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

(Division No. 264)

YEAS

Members

Albrecht	Anderson
Richards	Sorenson
Trost	Viersen — 6

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Albas
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Ambrose
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bennett
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Bossio
Boucher	Boudrias
Boulerice	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Brosseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Carr
Carrie	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Chen	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Cooper	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Davies
DeCoursey	Deltell
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Diotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Moore — 2

Footnote

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Eglinski
Ehsassi	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Falk
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garrison
Généreux	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Gourde	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jeneroux
Johns	Jolibois
Jones	Jordan
Kang	Kent
Khalid	Khera
Kitchen	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	Lebel
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Liepert	Lightbound
Lobb	Lockhart
Long	Ludwig
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Malcolmson
Maloney	Marcl
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinity
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Monsef
Morneau	Morrissey
Mulcair	Nassif
Nater	Nault
Ng	Nicholson
Nuttall	O'Connell
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Plamondon	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Rankin
Ratansi	Rayes
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rota
Rudd	Rusnak
Saganash	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Sangha	Sansoucy
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schmale
Schulte	Shanahan
Shiple	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sopuck
Sorbara	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Stewart	Sweet
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Thériault
Trudeau	Trudel

Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vecchio	Virani
Warawa	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wong
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid	Zimmer— 260

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:53 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-305, an act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage.

● (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Chandra Arya moved that Bill C-305, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief), be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking all members of this House. They unanimously supported this bill at second reading. Bill C-305 seeks to amend a subsection of the Criminal Code which deals with damages to property due to crime motivated by hate based on religion, race, colour, and national or ethnic origin. The bill proposes to expand this to include motivation by hate based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

Private Members' Business

In its present form, subsection 430(4.1) of the Criminal Code creates an offence for hate-motivated mischief relating to religious property. Bill C-305 proposes to amend this section by expanding the scope of buildings to which this subsection applies. The proposed amendments add hate-motivated mischief directed at a building primarily used as an educational institution or for administrative, social, cultural, or sports events, or as a residence for seniors. These are in addition to the places of worship, such as temples, mosques, synagogues, and churches. The unanimous support for this bill, as received today, sends a strong message to all Canadians that we stand united against hate crimes.

Bill C-305 would expand the scope of motivating grounds on which the offence may be based. The current law only provides protection for crimes motivated by hate based on religion, race, colour, and national or ethnic origin. The proposed amendments would add the grounds of hate, sex, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has proposed amendments—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. I would like to remind members of the House that debate is taking place, and it is nice to hear everyone speaking.

[*Translation*]

It is nice to hear people talking to each other, but if members want to have conversations, it would be great if they did so outside the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has proposed amendments which I humbly accept. It is my understanding that the government will support the amendments to Bill C-305 that were passed as the proposed changes are consistent with our government's stated commitment to diversity and inclusion. The amendments would protect additional groups and ensure consistency with other provisions of the Criminal Code, and address overbreadth.

I am honoured to have received support from many religious and community organizations all across the country. Organizations representing the Jewish faith, the Islam faith, Sikhs, Hindus, and Christians have overwhelmingly supported Bill C-305. LGBTQ2 groups have also been strong supporters of this bill. It is my hope that this bill and, optimistically, soon a law can bring some peace of mind by acting as a strong deterrent against these acts of hatred.

Hate crimes happen in small towns and large cities. They involve everything from simple graffiti to brutal murders. They may be called hate crimes, bias crimes, civil rights crimes, or ethnic intimidation. All these crimes are committed because of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or against other recognized groups.

Canada is an inclusive nation. We welcome people from all over the world, irrespective of race, religion, colour, or creed. Regardless of where people are from, what nationality they are, or what they believe, they will be treated with respect in Canada.

Although bigotry may be as old as humanity itself, the term “hate crime” is a new one, as is the idea of special treatment of these offences. The term “hate crime” came into common use during the 1980s, but the term is often used retrospectively in order to describe events which occurred prior to that era. From the Roman persecution of Christians to the Nazi slaughter of Jews, hate crimes were committed by both individuals and governments long before the term was commonly used.

We had certain dark episodes in our country: the Chinese head tax; the internment of Ukrainian, Japanese, and Italian Canadians during the First and the Second World Wars; our turning away boats of Jewish and Punjabi refugees; our own history of slavery; “No Irish need apply”; “We don't speak French here, so speak white”; the discrimination faced by Greek and Portuguese Canadians in Toronto and other places.

The same rhetoric that led to a “none is too many” immigration policy toward Jews in the 1930s and 1940s is being used to raise fears against Muslims today. There has been discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity for a very long time. The Criminal Code once described gay men as “criminal sexual psychopaths” and “dangerous sexual offenders”.

In the 1960s, we deployed the RCMP to investigate suspected homosexuals. This discrimination still exists in Canadian society today.

While Bill C-305 would not solve every issue related to racism and discrimination, it would take important small steps in protecting those most vulnerable, strengthening the Criminal Code, and acting as a strong deterrent.

In my speech today, I will refer to an excerpt from the book *Hate Crimes: Causes, Controls, and Controversies*, by Phyllis Gerstenfeld. She writes that the birth of hate crimes in the United States was in 1977 when a neo-Nazi group called the National Socialist Party of America wished to hold a demonstration in front of the village hall in Skokie, Illinois, which had a huge, large Jewish population, many of whom were Holocaust survivors. One organization that paid special attention to this was the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a group that combats anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry. Alarmed by increasing anti-Semitism and frustrated with existing federal and state laws, it drafted a model ethnic intimidation statute in 1981.

● (1905)

Together with allies, such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, and the Southern Poverty Law Center, it began lobbying states to pass the statute. When it was passed, the model statute contained four provisions. The first of these is institutional vandalism, aimed primarily at people who targeted cemeteries, community centres, and places of worship. Bill C-305 would also deal with this provision, with proposed amendments to the Criminal Code.

Private Members' Business

Hate-based mischief can have a long lasting impact on the community. A recent study by the Department of Justice stated that the commission of a hate crime is against not only the individual but the entire community. It quoted David Matas who said that people live in community, their Rights are exercised in community. The study further stated:

With victims of hate crime, it is important to consider that the impact on the community is particularly devastating, as hate crimes are "message crimes in that the perpetrator is sending a message to the members of a certain group that they are despised, devalued, or unwelcome in a particular neighbourhood, community, school, or workplace".

As well, it is important to consider that the impact on the individual victim may result in the victim rejecting the aspect of themselves that was the target of the attack or associating a core part of their identity with fear, loss, and vulnerability.

Since introducing this bill eight months ago, there have been a considerable number of high profile hate-related incidents. Right here in Ottawa, hate-based motivated acts were committed against synagogues, a Jewish community centre, a rabbi's private home, mosques, and a church. Then there was the horrific shooting at a mosque in Quebec. Whenever these things happen, it is important for each and every one of us to stand up united to condemn these acts.

The intent of the bill is consistent with our commitment to ensure equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, in keeping with the charter. It is also consistent with a clear message that hate crimes will not be tolerated in Canada. Bill C-305 would take a strong step in making our neighbourhoods and communities a safer place to live. Think of the strong message we would be sending to all Canadians that not only select people but all people in Canada can feel safer knowing that Parliament has taken concrete and strong measures to protect them.

Once again, I would like to thank all members for their continued support of Bill C-305.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have one question. In other discussions in the House, the member for St. Catharines read into *Hansard* the definition of hate crime. The definition that he read said that hate crimes were actions that would incite violence against persons.

Would the member's bill change the definition of what a hate crime is to incorporate damage to property?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-305 proposes to amend a subsection of the Criminal Code which deals with hate crimes against religious property. With the proposed amendments passed by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, that subsection would include hate crimes against religious properties and other buildings as well. The existing motivations have been expanded to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

• (1910)

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from my neighbouring riding for introducing this incredibly important piece of legislation that takes a very strong stand against hate crimes. I noticed in his speech that he referenced some of the deplorable acts of vandalism that have happened here in Ottawa.

Could the hon. member elaborate on how this bill would help prevent those kinds of acts in the future?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Speaker, under the current subsection of the Criminal Code, vandalism against the Jewish Community Centre is not covered.

Under Bill C-305, with the amendments that have been passed by the Standing Committee on Justice, vandalism against the Jewish Community Centre would be covered.

That was a major focus of this bill, to expand the definition of property to beyond places of worship. The current subsection in the Criminal Code is limited to places of worship only, but with this new bill it would be expanded to include schools, community centres, cultural centres, and those used mainly by these identifiable groups.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague for his commendable work on this very important file.

I had the privilege of sitting on the justice committee and looking very closely at this bill. A piece of evidence that we heard as testimony was of an older woman whose home had been vandalized. We heard about the effects this has on an individual and on a community.

Could the member please advise us how this bill would benefit and protect communities that are identified in this bill?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Speaker, this bill, as I mentioned earlier, expands the definition of property, and goes beyond places of worship, such as churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques, and cemeteries. The bill includes schools, community centres, cultural centres, and seniors residences which are predominantly used by identifiable groups. Through that, it would provide protection to the community at large.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in support of Bill C-305. I want to again take the opportunity to acknowledge my friend from Nepean for his hard work and his leadership in moving this legislation.

Bill C-305 seeks to amend section 430(4.1) of the Criminal Code, which relates to mischief against religious property. Section 430(4.1) of the Criminal Code makes it an offence for an individual to commit an act of mischief motivated by hate targeted at a place of worship such as a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple.

In addition to section 430(4.1), there is also a section of the Criminal Code that deals with mischief targeted toward general property. The reason section 430(4.1) was added to the Criminal Code to deal specifically with acts of mischief motivated by hate targeted at religious property was in recognition of the fact that such acts of mischief were different than acts of mischief to general property.

Take, for example, someone who sprays graffiti on the back wall of a restaurant. In such a case, the victim is the owner of the restaurant. Take the example of someone who sprays hateful graffiti on the back wall of a mosque or synagogue. That is an act that targets an entire community. It affects an entire community and it victimizes an entire community.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-305 would amend section 430(4.1) of the Criminal Code by expanding the categories of properties to not only include places of worship, but to include the likes of schools, community centres, and seniors residences. The expansion of these categories recognizes that mischief motivated by hate and targeted to people of a religious faith or a religious group often do not just take place at places of worship, but take place at religious schools, or religious community centres or religious seniors facilities. We have seen many examples of hate crimes that have been perpetrated against schools and community centres.

We saw a few years back the horrific fire bombing of the United Talmud Torah School in Montreal. More recent in Ottawa a string of mischief incidents were motivated by hate, which targeted a mosque and two synagogues, but also targeted a Jewish learning centre as well as the Ottawa Muslim Association.

Bill C-305 is good legislation. Its objective is laudable. It was why I was proud to speak in strong support of the bill at second reading. It is why I am proud to speak in strong support of Bill C-305 at this stage of the legislative process.

Bill C-305, upon passing the House at second reading, was referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, of which I am a member. As a member of that committee, I had an opportunity to study the bill in some detail.

● (1915)

Upon studying the bill, listening to the witnesses, and reviewing the evidence that was presented to the committee, I, along with the majority of the members of the justice committee, believed that in some respects Bill C-305, as originally drafted, was overly broad, inasmuch as it would apply not only to religious schools, religious community centres, and religious seniors residences but to all schools, all community centres, and all seniors residences. In my view, that would not be consistent with the purpose of section 430 (4.1) of the Criminal Code, which was added to the Criminal Code in recognition of the fact that mischief motivated by hate targeted at religious property was a crime that was different, that was unique from mischief that targeted general property.

At the same time as finding that perhaps it was overly broad in some respects, I, along with the majority of the members of the justice committee, could not really see any logic as to why the section applied in cases of mischief targeted toward religious property but did not encompass similar acts of hate targeted at property associated with other identifiable groups. After all, when one commits mischief motivated by hate on a religious community centre, an ethnic community centre, or an LGBTQ youth centre, such acts of mischief are acts that target entire communities, affect entire communities, and victimize entire communities.

On that basis, the justice committee brought forward a few amendments to Bill C-305. As a result, Bill C-305, as amended, is, in some respects, narrowed inasmuch as it no longer applies to any school, senior centre, or community centre. However, at the same time, section 430(4.1) is expanded to encompass not just acts of mischief targeted at religious property but mischief targeted at property associated with any identifiable group, "identifiable group" being already defined in the Criminal Code.

I believe Bill C-305 would help send a strong message that hate crimes against any identifiable group would not be tolerated and that the perpetrators of such egregious crimes would be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.

Once again, I thank the member for Nepean for his hard work and leadership, and I urge the passage of Bill C-305.

● (1920)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise once again to speak in favour of Bill C-305. I would like to echo that thanks to the member for Nepean for bringing this forward.

In the current climate in North America and around the world, where there has been a promotion of hatred against all kinds of groups, a promotion of hatred that has often led to violence, this is a very important expansion of protections in Canada. I do not normally support amending the Criminal Code piece by piece, but the urgency of the situation we are in right now means that we should do this as quickly as we can, so I am very pleased to see this moving forward.

As people know, there are only two very basic things here. The bill says that places that are included in the law against hate-motivated damage should be expanded to include things we would all agree on. Very few Canadians would say we should not protect day cares, schools, and universities. Why would we not protect all those groups that are listed as protected groups under the hate crimes legislation? I think, in many ways, it was an oversight, over time, that this mischief provision was not updated as other laws changed.

Of particular concern to me, as an advocate for the inclusion of transgender rights, is that the original version of the bill actually was not consistent with Bill C-16, so I am very pleased to see that it has come back with a coordinating amendment. I am confident that Bill C-16 will pass through the Senate, even though it has taken an inordinate amount of time for that to happen. The legislation to add gender identity and gender expression to the human rights code and the hate crimes section of the Criminal Code first passed this House in 2011. Here we are, six years later, still waiting for the Senate to add those important protections. Therefore, I am very pleased to see that the bill has that coordinating amendment.

When the bill finally moves in the Senate, and my understanding is that hearings are going to commence tomorrow at the Senate committee, we will look forward to this coming back, I hope, before the House rises and therefore in time for what is known colloquially as the Pride season. It will give some additional thing to celebrate at that time.

I hope this bill will also be expedited in the Senate, if we can get it there, and that it will deal with this one quickly as well.

Private Members' Business

There are some people, mostly younger than me, who would be surprised to know that the original version of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms did not include protection for sexual orientation, let alone gender identity and gender expression. As I have said before, I was not a supporter of the charter at that time, because there was a debate about the inclusion of my own rights in that charter. A decision was made by Parliament at that time, unfortunately, to exclude sexual orientation. At that time, there was not even a debate about gender identity and gender expression. We have come a long way, and I am here today to salute that progress and to salute the committee for making sure that this progress is reflected in this bill.

It is an unfortunate fact in Canada that hate crimes that result in violence are most often directed at first nations people and transgender people. These are the two groups with the very highest rates of hate-motivated violence, so the bill would be of assistance in helping protect the community places where we would expect to find first nations people and transgender people in a safe place. It would help enhance that safety, which is so important.

I wish it were not true, but I know from the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, which is in my riding, that hate crimes, hate-motivated violence, and even hate graffiti often appear at their community centre. That is a great surprise to me. I do not think of my riding as one where hatred is that strong and where people are that disrespectful of other members of the community, especially the Native Friendship Centre, which is a centre where people who are trying to better their lives go. It focuses on adult education and employment programs. It is a very positive place in all those ways, so it is particularly upsetting when I see those attacks on a place like that.

• (1925)

While we originally started with churches that often do that positive work in our community, it is very appropriate that we expand it to these other places that often make such a positive contribution in all of our communities.

I thought a bit about what I was going to say tonight, and I was not going to go to the obvious place when we talk about the promotion of hatred, which is south of the border. I have to say, however, that in this connection there is an unfortunate spillover into this country. People talk to me about their fears and concerns. They talk to me about things which are not problems in the community which I represent. There are things that they see and hear coming from the United States, and this often has motivated people to be fearful, for instance, currently of refugees.

I had the privilege of meeting earlier today with a coalition of groups that support gay and lesbian transgender refugees from around the world. We talked about the group that has crossed irregularly into Canada. Anecdotal evidence tells us that around 40% of those who have crossed irregularly between the borders are from the LGBT community. Why are they doing that? The Conservative Party has taken a strong stance against the illegality of those crossings, but I argue strongly, as many others do, that under international law those are not illegal crossings. These people are fleeing violence and hatred in the United States. Talking to them about their experiences, especially those who are people of colour,

they tell us they have become fearful of living there, and they see Canada as a place where they can find safe refuge.

This legislation illustrates the best of what is Canadian, and why people are attracted to come to this country. They want to find a safe haven. They want to be able to integrate into Canadian society, and make a contribution which will allow them to support themselves and their families. I was pleased to sit down at this meeting today and talk about those kinds of successes.

The Liberals quite rightly raised the goal of having 25,000 Syrians come to this country. In my riding, what was most impressive was how people with no particular connection to Syria stepped forward. They were not Muslims necessarily, and they were not from the Middle East. They did not have any particular reason to step forward, but as Canadians they felt that they should do their part. Many were from families that had immigrated to Canada, some of them from refugee families in previous generations, Hungarians and other people who had fled their homeland. It was so encouraging to see those people step forward and sponsor refugees. When the deadline elapsed saying they were no longer sponsors, there were no examples in my community where those ties that had been built under that refugee sponsorship program were broken.

There is some disappointment among those sponsors and with those in the community who see refugees as threats, and as bringing terrorism into the country. These refugees are fleeing terrorism and extremism, and they have come to Canada because, as the bill says, we are a tolerant country. Canada is a country which will not tolerate hatred and violence focused on religious, racial, sexual orientation, or gender identity grounds.

This is one of those cases where Canada has made progress, but we are not done. We have more to do. If the impact of this legislation is to expand those safe spaces for doing that positive work in our communities, then it has done a great thing. Without the member for Nepean bringing this legislation forward, we would have missed an opportunity to build a better and more inclusive Canada.

I look forward to this legislation making its way to a final vote here in the House and going to the Senate. I was asked, in relation to Bill C-16, to explain to a reporter how things get through the Senate. I said that, unfortunately, I cannot do that, and I am not sure there is anyone who can do that right now because there is a bit of chaos in the Senate over rules and how things proceed.

However, I am going to launch that plea again tonight, that when this legislation gets to the Senate that it be treated in a fashion that expedites its passage, so that we can have this in place as soon as possible, and give yet another symbol of what an inclusive country this is, and how we will stand up for people's rights and make them safe everywhere in our communities.

• (1930)

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise to speak to Bill C-305, an act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief) as reported back to the House of Commons with amendments.

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I want to begin by commending the sponsor of the bill, my colleague, the hon. member for Nepean. I also want to take a moment to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for their dedicated work. I also want to commend the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for all of his passionate advocacy over the years for the LGBTQQ community, and in particular for the transgender community, without which I do not believe we would be at this historical moment.

Allow me first to set the bill in the context of recent past events. As has been mentioned recently in the House, in January of this year, six people were murdered in a Quebec City mosque, an event that shocked and appalled the nation. In Ottawa there has been a troubling spike in the incidents of hate graffiti on synagogues over the past several months. Such incidents should cause us as legislators to consider how we wish to confront and prevent the commission of hate crimes in our society.

Bill C-305 is an important response to strengthen the ability of the criminal law to adequately denounce and deter hate crimes. It proposes to expand the scope of the current hate-motivated mischief offence now found in subsection 430(4.1) of the Criminal Code. That provision, entitled “Mischief relating to religious property”, currently prohibits mischief committed against buildings or structures primarily used for a religious purpose, such as a church, mosque, synagogue, or cemetery. The offence must be committed out of hatred, prejudice, or bias based on religion, race, colour, or national or ethnic origin.

The current provision carries a maximum punishment of 10 years of imprisonment when prosecuted by indictment and a maximum penalty of 18 months in jail when prosecuted by way of a summary conviction.

The Criminal Code presently has a sentencing provision to address hate crimes. Subparagraph 718.2(a)(i) of the code requires a judge to take into consideration as an aggravating factor for any crime whether the crime was motivated by bias, prejudice, or hatred. This is based on a non-exhaustive list of criteria, including religion, race, colour, national or ethnic origin, mental or physical disability, sex, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor.

Some may argue that given these existing provisions, there is no need to expand the offence of hate-motivated mischief any further, since what is not caught by current subsection 430(4.1) would be addressed at the sentencing stage when the judge must take into consideration whether the offence was motivated by hatred. However, I believe this is an overly narrow interpretation of the law as it stands, and we have an opportunity as legislators to address this.

I acknowledge that judges may rely on the existing sentencing provisions to account for hateful motivation, but I believe that by expanding the actual offence of hate-motivated mischief, we have an opportunity to send a strong message of condemnation to those who would commit such crimes.

Denunciation of this type of offence is not merely symbolic. Hate-motivated mischief carries a heavier maximum penalty on summary conviction than the general offence. In addition, by showing

leadership on this troubling issue, we stand to raise public awareness in a real and impactful way.

As a result, while some may perceive a redundancy, others will recognize the benefit of providing a broader range of tools to our police, prosecutors, and other criminal justice professionals and, I would add, justice for victims of this particular type of crime.

I will now address the specific changes proposed in Bill C-305 as well as the amendments passed by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

As I noted earlier, the existing offence under subsection 430(4.1) of the code applies only to mischief committed against religious property. While this is one category of property that deserves special recognition, I believe that a broader diversity of Canadians stand to benefit from an expanded application of this section.

Bill C-305 addresses this issue head-on by amending the current hate-motivated mischief offence in two ways. First, the bill proposes to include new buildings or parts of buildings primarily used as educational institutions, including a school, day care centre, or college or university; used for administrative, social, cultural, or sports events or activities, including a town hall, community centre, playground, or arena; or used as a seniors residence.

• (1935)

Upon passage of this bill, therefore, vandalism committed against a Jewish or Muslim community centre would be caught by the expanded hate crime mischief offence and not just vandalism committed against a synagogue or a mosque.

I should note that a major concern for our government was expressed during the debate at second reading. The concern was that the definition of property that it proposed to add to the current offence was overly broad. The list of new properties caught by the bill appeared to be much broader than we believe was intended. For instance, the bill would have likely covered privately owned sports stadiums, as well as any buildings used for social purposes. In other words, it would have covered buildings that have no real connection to groups that are historically targeted by hate-based mischief. As a result, the government felt this aspect of the bill reached too far.

I am pleased to say that this issue was addressed by the standing committee during its study of the bill. Specifically, amendments passed by the committee require a building or space to be “primarily used” by one of the groups protected by the bill. This helps maintain a rational connection between the hateful motivation and the building that is subject to the mischief.

The amendment will help to ensure that subsection 430(4.1) does not accidentally capture instances of mischief committed against property that is not actually connected with one of the protected groups.

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[Translation]

● (1940)

The bill proposes to expand the list of “identifiable groups” that are covered by the mischief provision of the Criminal Code to make it more consistent with the groups set out in the section on hate propaganda offences.

The definition of “identifiable groups” for hate propaganda offences covers not only groups that are identifiable by colour, race, religion, and national or ethnic origin—the motivations currently set out for hate-based mischief—but also those identifiable by age, sex, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability.

Bill C-305 seeks to eliminate that inconsistency by establishing a list of motivations for hate-based mischief that is similar to that set out in the definition of “identifiable groups” under the hate propaganda section of the Criminal Code. In other words, the motivations of age, sex, sexual orientation, and mental and physical disability would be added as motivations for hate-based mischief as soon as the bill is passed.

It is important to note that Bill C-305 proposes adding another item to the list of motivations for hate-based mischief that depends on the passage of Bill C-16 by both the House and the other place.

My colleagues may recall that Bill C-16, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code, an act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code, proposes adding gender identity and gender expression to the definition of “identifiable groups” for hate propaganda offences.

My colleagues will also recall that, although Bill C-305, as introduced at first reading, proposed adding gender identity to the list of motivations for hate-based mischief, gender identity was not addressed in the bill. The sponsor of the bill recognized that this was an oversight. The amendments proposed by the standing committee corrected that omission.

[English]

As a result, once Bill C-16 comes into force, an act of mischief committed against property primarily used by a group identifiable on the basis of its gender identity where the mischief was motivated by hatred based on gender identity would be caught by this expanded offence.

To summarize, Bill C-305 would expand the current hate crime of mischief to clearly denounce additional types of mischief motivated by hatred against certain historically marginalized groups. It would therefore provide additional tools to our criminal justice system to protect Canadians from hate-motivated crime.

I would once again like to thank the sponsor for his outstanding advocacy on this issue, as well as the standing committee for its excellent work on Bill C-305. I sincerely hope that the hon. members of this House continue to support Bill C-305 in order to more fully protect the diversity of communities in our Canadian society.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is a privilege to stand in the House and to have the opportunity to speak in support of Bill C-305, an act to amend the Criminal Code (mischief).

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the discussion that is already taking place in the House today because I believe this is a very timely issue and it is one that impacts Canadians as a whole.

The bill addresses a current injustice when it comes to sentencing for crimes that are motivated by hate in Canada. Currently, if an individual is convicted of mischief, which is a fancy word for vandalism, against a place of worship, the maximum penalty for that is 10 years. However, if the same individual were to vandalize a religious school, or a religious recreational centre or a religious day care, the punishment for that same crime would only be two years in prison.

This is the exact same crime and it is motivated by hatred for an identifiable group, but the penalty is dramatically different.

Canada is a religiously plural and multicultural society. It allows its citizens to live out their lives according to their conscience, their beliefs, their values, yet throughout its history, Canada has experienced a regrettable number of anti-Semitic and racist acts of vandalism.

The recent and tragic events that took place in Quebec City not too long ago with the Muslim community and then in Toronto with the Jewish community remind us of the severe impact the manifestation of hate can have on the lives of Canadians.

Fundamental human rights and freedoms are infringed upon when hateful acts interfere with the ability of those of diverse faiths, origins and political affiliations to live out their convictions according to need. While race, ethnicity, and religion remain the most common motivators for hate-based crimes, Statistics Canada indicates that such acts of mischief are not limited to these groups. Hate crimes have also been directed toward those of different sexual orientation, those of a different political belief, or those perhaps with a mental or physical disability.

In a country that values both tolerance and respect, the fact that only those crimes which are carried out on religious property are indictable under section 430 of our Criminal Code is unacceptable.

Hate crimes affect a broad range of Canadian citizens, not just those within these religious organizations. A church community may meet in an old movie theatre, or it might even choose a recreational centre or a school. Therefore, it is possible then that hate crimes or vandalism, mischief, could then be committed against these properties.

Parents may also choose to send their children to a day care that is religious in nature because of their beliefs and values. At present, these properties do not benefit from the same protections under the Criminal Code. This is why I support the amendment brought forward today.

To fight to protect religious freedoms is a fight that we in our capacity as parliamentarians have the duty to address and to promote. While the damage of vandalism is generally minimal, the impact hate motivated crimes have on the targeted population is often absolutely devastating.

In 2014, over half of the hate crimes committed in Canada fell into what was known as the mischief category. This was 523 of the 1,170 crimes that were committed. That is a huge number. It is clear this legislation applies to the majority of hate crimes that take place within our country. Who are the targets of these attacks?

In Toronto, incidents of hate motivated crimes increased by 8% in 2016 alone. That is a significant change. Within that, Jews are the single most targeted group for the 12th year in a row. The Toronto Police Service 2016 Annual Hate Bias Crime Statistical Report also revealed that Muslims were the target of hate crimes at about half the rate that Jews were, so making up a significant portion of that population being discriminated against.

I find this very concerning. It is again the reason why I am standing in support of this legislation going forward.

Jews make up only 3.8% and Muslims only 8.2% of Toronto's entire population, but these two communities were the victims of more than half of all the hate crimes committed within the city. Across the country, the statistics generally fall into a similar pattern. We see the same thing when we look from one city to the next.

● (1945)

In addition, with members of the Jewish community being the target of most attacks, we also see significant attacks that are brought against Muslims, those who are black, the LGBTQ community, and those with disabilities. These numbers are horrifying. I would argue as well that they are not just horrifying but, together, they are an attack on our identity as Canadians.

Our Canadian identity is based on the idea of many peoples joining together toward a common purpose. Hate crimes against an identifiable group, often minority groups, attack this central principle of unity on which so much of Canada is built.

These crimes are intended to make a community of people feel excluded from being Canadian. Therefore, in order to protect the many diverse communities spread across our vast and beautiful country, we must take action. We must increase the protection that is available to those who find themselves victim to these hate crimes. To do any less would betray Canada's history, the history that we have fought for with respect to having a common and shared identity.

Given the recent history in the House and the political games the government has played with the Islamophobia motion as of late, I would like to speak to the difference between protecting freedom of speech and supporting the bill before us today.

One of the fundamental freedoms we enjoy in Canada is freedom of speech. Our constitution, the Bill of Rights, and our Criminal Code give the maximum latitude when it comes to freedom of speech. The only limits that can be placed on free speech, according to the Criminal Code, is if the speech wilfully promotes hatred against an identifiable group, or where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the public peace. In other words, unless people are focusing their hate on one group, to the point of encouraging violence against it, they have not actually broken the law.

However, even within this provision there is an exemption for criticism of religion. The Criminal Code states that a person is not

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guilty of hate speech if "in good faith, the person expressed or attempted to establish by an argument an opinion on a religious subject or an opinion based on a belief in a religious text..."

Our law is very clear. Debating the merits of one's religion is not in fact hate speech. However, focusing hate on an ethnic group and encouraging people to attack it clearly is. This is the distinction: words versus actions.

I fully support the bill going forward, because whether someone has a difference of opinion on religious grounds, there is no justification whatsoever for physically attacking a person or a property that belongs to a person who holds differing beliefs. Canada was founded on the idea that we are rational human beings and that our differences of opinion actually strengthen democracy rather than hinder it. We believe the testing of our beliefs and our values by the diverse traditions of the people who make up Canada ensures the preservation of our democracy. This is why it is so alarming to see the limits being placed on free speech on university campuses across our country right now.

Furthermore, it is why the Liberals' poorly-defined Islamophobia motion was so incredibly misguided. Their motion could take away the freedom of Canadians to debate the merits of religious ideas, about which I am very concerned.

As an alternative to Motion No. 103, the Conservatives put forward a well-balanced and inclusive motion that focused on condemning acts of systemic racism against all religious communities and not just one. Given the Liberals' love for the charter, one would expect them to understand the difference between religious ideas and religious communities.

The bill before the House right now, Bill C-305, closes a gap that currently exists within our Criminal Code. I believe it is absolutely necessary for the Canadian public going forward. Hate crimes are absolutely disgusting. They go against our shared identity as Canadians. Increasing the possible sentences for those who commit such crimes is entirely worthy of the House. These provisions will continue to protect the freedom of speech that Canadians currently enjoy, and they will enhance religious freedoms by providing a stronger disincentive to commit hate crimes.

● (1950)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate my colleague from Nepean for introducing this bill, which was examined by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[*English*]

With the goal of ensuring that we can complete debate within this hour, I will be very brief in my remarks.

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As chair of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, I want to say how important this bill is. The member for Nepean took incidents in his own community of vandalism against community centres—a Jewish community centre, a Muslim community centre—and saw that there was an opening in the law, a hole in subsection 430(4.1) of the Criminal Code creating offences for hate-motivated mischief. He saw that the law currently covered only churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious institutions. He said that it had to cover more. It had to cover community centres, schools, and seniors centres.

One of the reasons I wanted to speak was to highlight the cooperation of the member, all the witnesses, all the members of the standing committee, and the government. We have had in the House a lot of times when we have not worked together well, but in this case, we did. We on the committee felt that the member's draft bill went too far in the number of buildings that were included. It would have included city halls, public schools, and arenas. We thought the government's position was too narrow. It only wanted to include religious buildings: Jewish community centres, Muslim community centres. We heard from witnesses and understood the reason we needed this law to apply to communities beyond religious-based communities. The black community centre needed to be protected. The LGBTQ community centre needed to be protected. We needed to ensure that if a black community centre was attacked, it would be covered, or if a LGBTQ community centre was attacked, it would be covered.

In the end, the committee said it would include any building primarily used by one of the identifiable groups. We ended up with consensus. The Liberals, Conservatives, and NDP members on the committee all supported the way the law was redrafted. In the end, to me, this was an example of how the House should work, harmoniously and with us listening to each other.

I am proud to have chaired the committee that brought this back to the House. I am proud that the member and the government support our amendments. This is a great example of how Canada can work together.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my hon. colleague from Brampton South for her support throughout the process. I would also like to thank the hon. member for Mount Royal, the chair of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, and all committee members who worked hard and delivered a bill that is more robust.

I am honoured to have received support from many religious and community organizations all across the country, organizations representing the Jewish faith, the Muslim faith, Sikhs, Hindus, and Christian faiths. They were all supportive. LGBTQ groups have also been a strong supporter, and it is my hope that this bill will soon become law and bring some peace of mind. In particular, I would like to recognize the support I received from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, which worked hard to generate support from various stakeholders.

The consequences of hate crimes are considerable. A manual issued by the Attorney General of Ontario lists the impact of hate crimes on individuals, target groups, vulnerable minority groups, and

the community as a whole. It says, on the impact on the community as a whole:

This, perhaps, is the greatest evil of hate crime. Hate crime can end up dividing people in society. In a multicultural society like Canada, where all groups are to live together in harmony and equality, hate crime is an anathema. Any occurrence of hate crime is a negation of the fundamental values of Canada.

Bill C-305 would codify the intent of this House into law. It would send a strong message to all Canadians that we stand united against hate crimes.

Once again, I would like to thank every member of the House who has, so far, unanimously supported this bill.

● (1955)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 10, 2017, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there should be no question about what we need to do to advance child care in Canada.

We need a universal child care system that is national, so all families have equal access; affordable; and with quality care. It is the smart and responsible thing to do. The cost of child care in large cities rose almost 10% in the last two years, sometimes as high as \$1,700. My sister paid more for child care than for rent.

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Canadian families need action now. There is no doubt child care is essential to getting women into the workforce. Dr. Pierre Fortin, professor of economics at the Université du Québec in Montreal, told the status of women committee last month the Quebec child care system increased the number of women in the workforce by 70,000 in 2008.

In my riding, women's groups, student unions, and community child care centres all agree, accessible and affordable child care is absolutely necessary, so that women can go to work, attend school, and live in safety. As Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella said, "Child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers."

If that were not reason enough, universal child care is good for the economy. Professor Fortin studied the Quebec child care model, and concluded there is no net cost to taxpayers. In fact, he calculated that in 2008, the provincial and federal governments got a surplus of \$900 million from the universal child care program in Quebec. The economic benefits of universal child care could also be felt in other provinces.

Economist Robert Fairholm predicts that the \$10-a-day child care plan proposed by the B.C. NDP in this current election would create 69,000 jobs, and will make enough revenue for the government to build and operate the child care system.

Investing in child care will also create good jobs for those who work in the child care sector. Last week, I heard from day care operators in my riding that they cannot pay the early child care educators what they need to make a good wage. That is unjust to the women educating our children, and means they often have to leave the field, which is disruptive to children in their care.

Parents cannot afford to pay child care fees that are any higher, so the government must act to invest in a system with fair wages for early childhood educators.

If the federal government is unsure about what action on child care should look like, the Liberals can look to models that already exist in Canada. In Quebec, the universal system of low fee child care is a real success, providing quality care for children, and helping women get back to work.

My province of B.C. used to have a universal provincial child care system. It was cancelled by the B.C. Liberals when they first took office in 2001. The B.C. NDP has pledged of \$10-a-day child care which would have real economic benefits.

This week, the Alberta NDP government launched its \$25-a-day child care, which parents and working mothers say is just what they need to balance child care costs and work.

Access to affordable child care is what is needed to lift people out of poverty, and to make sure that women can get to work. It is time for the government to take leadership on child care. Why is the government not keeping its child care promise to Canadian children, women, and families?

● (2000)

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the hon. member for Nanaimo—

Ladysmith for raising, in the House, the important question of child care in Canada, particularly the high costs in certain regions.

[*Translation*]

Studies show that the affordability and quality of day care available for young children has an impact on the participation of parents in the labour force and on the development of children. I am sure that my colleague is perfectly aware of the efforts our government is making and will continue to make to help the middle class and those working hard to join it. I would like to remind her of some of those measures.

First of all, let us settle the issue of the Canada child benefit. On December 12, 2016, in her question for the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, my colleague claimed that the Canada child benefit will lose its value by 2021. She also said that the government was breaking its promises and letting our children fall through the cracks. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In response to her question, the minister pointed out that the new Canada child benefit would help lift half a million Canadians out of poverty. He also reminded her of our recent announcement that the benefit would be indexed starting in 2020-21. The purpose of that is to guarantee that the real value of benefits paid to Canadians will not be eroded over the long term by the rate of inflation.

As far as early learning and child care is concerned, the minister also said that over the next few months we will be launching a new framework for early learning and child care to answer questions on the affordability and quality of child care services. In budget 2017, we are proposing to invest \$7 billion over 10 years, starting in 2018-19, to support and create better quality, flexible, fully inclusive, and affordable child care spaces across the country.

Part of that investment will be used to improve access to early learning and child care spaces that are culturally appropriate for indigenous children, whether they live on or off reserve. Over the next three years, these investments could increase the number of affordable child care spaces for low- and modest-income families by supporting the creation of as many as 40,000 subsidized spaces. They could also make the return to work more affordable for parents by allowing thousands of parents to rejoin the workforce once the cost of child care is reduced.

Part of this \$95-million investment will be used to address data gaps in order to better understand what is involved in early childhood education in Canada and monitor progress. What is more, \$100 million will be allocated to innovation in early learning and child care.

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These investments build on the initial investment of \$500 million announced in budget 2016 for early learning and child care to deliver on this framework. That includes \$100 million to enhance indigenous early learning and child care. We have already entered into discussions with the provinces and territories regarding the development of the framework.

We will also consult with our indigenous partners in order to develop a separate framework for indigenous early learning and child care that will reflect the unique cultures and needs of the children and families of first nations, Inuit, and Métis communities across Canada.

• (2005)

[English]

The government will work in co-operation with provinces, territories, and indigenous partners to provide help to families most in need. It is important to note that once they are in place, the framework will offer all the necessary flexibility to support Canadian families to have access to affordable, high-quality and truly inclusive child care, regardless of where they live in Canada.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite articulates a good vision. The intentions of the government are good, but as with so many things, we are not seeing the action associated with them.

Increasing the child benefit does not help parents unless more child care spaces are created in which to spend that money. This is our big disappointment. No action has been taken to tackle the out-of-control child care costs. No action has been taken to create new child care spaces. The budgets of this year and last year had zero money allocated to create new child care spaces.

The 2017 budget of last month also fell far short of the international standard of 1% of GDP spent on child care. Oxfam Canada and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives are just two of the groups that called the alarm on this.

As Morna Ballantyne from the Child Care—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that this is an important issue for the member opposite, as it is for me. I have two young children and I know how much families need these new services.

Our Canada child benefit will help lift more than 300,000 children out of poverty by 2017, which represents a 40% reduction in child poverty in Canada. Nine out of ten families will receive more benefits than they did under the former system.

[English]

We are working to develop an early learning and child care framework that I am sure will fully address my colleague's concerns.

Again I thank her for her work on this file, and I can assure her that the Government of Canada is taking this important subject very seriously for all Canadians.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to be here at this time of night to talk about a question that I originally raised on December 12, 2016.

Surprisingly, here it is five months later, and we still do not have any answers to a question about peacekeeping. The questions were these: Where will our troops be stationed? What are their objectives? What are the rules of engagement? Will the UN be in command of our Canadian troops? What is the exit strategy?

Finally, I asked if the Liberals would be transparent and provide us with the facts, or was this just another political move to get a seat at the UN Security Council? Ultimately, I asked on numerous occasions if we will we have an opportunity for a full debate and a vote before we deploy our troops.

We know for a fact that the Minister of National Defence got ahead of himself back, at all times, on Remembrance Day last year when he suggested that we were going to deploy up to 600 members of the Canadian Armed Forces as peacekeepers to be in North Africa. More than likely, I keep hearing Mali. We know this situation is incredibly dangerous. To be committed to an area like that for three years is something that is troubling to Canadians and indeed to the members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

What we are seeing again is that there is no plan. We had the minister get ahead of himself on Remembrance Day when he announced we were going to be peacekeeping instead of honouring those who have fallen in service to this country. Ultimately, a day later, his press secretary had to backtrack and say the minister got a little ahead of where we are as a government.

No doubt he was ahead of himself in November 11. That is why I raised the question a month later, on December 12, and here we are on May 3, with still no answers and no direction. Ultimately, we see that the government has gone mute on whether or not we are going to send any of our forces over to Africa as part of a UN peacekeeping mission.

Hopefully, they have had a chance for sober second thought and have looked at the risk factors that are out there. We have already seen over 100 peacekeepers killed in Mali. This is a very unstable country with many different factions, as well as terrorism running rampant across the countryside. Other opportunities for peacekeeping are even more risky throughout the region.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs knows this file better than anyone. He understands the danger that we are facing when we deploy our troops into those types of peacekeeping missions. I urge him, as well as the government, to make sure that, first, we do not use our troops as pawns for political games to try to win seats at the UN Security Council, and second, that we do not place our troops under the command of a UN bureaucracy that was so ineffective in Somalia and Rwanda. What we are seeing now is that peacekeepers who are currently deployed in Africa from other countries are tied up in accusations of sexual assault, torture, and other things that would be considered war crimes in most situations. The UN is completely paralyzed on how to deal with it.

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Finally, let us not get caught up in the Prime Minister's nostalgic view of trying to paint a romantic situation of what peacekeeping means. We know that peacekeeping no longer exists and that this has to be peacemaking. We have to go in under proper rules of engagement and under a Canadian commander.

● (2010)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to speak today about this important topic.

The government is committed to revitalizing Canadian diplomacy and leadership on key international issues and in multinational institutions. This includes increasing Canada's support to the United Nations peace operations and its mediation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding efforts, much in the tradition of what we have done over the last 20 to 30 years.

We have advanced our preparations to deliver on this commitment, and Canada's efforts will focus in four main areas: providing personnel and training for UN operations; strengthening Canadian support for conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding; advancing the roles of women and youth in peace and security; and making UN peace operations more effective.

Canada's engagement will build upon our character as a modern, bilingual, and federal nation that is diverse, empowers women, and respects human rights—something we are all extraordinarily proud of—while tapping the skill of our high-quality personnel who, as my hon. colleague and I both know, are the very best in the world at what they do.

[*Translation*]

We will adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach. Today's conflicts come in many guises and call for political and humanitarian intervention as well as action on security and development fronts.

We will ensure that our foreign policy, international aid, military action, and security instruments are used to strengthen each other's capacity.

This is good timing for Canada's revitalized engagement in United Nations peace operations. Threats to international peace have become more complex, and in our increasingly interconnected world, the consequences are that much greater for us all.

[*English*]

Increasing Canada's support for UN-led interventions is an effective means by which we can reach out and help those who need it most.

Contributing to peace operations helps promote the values Canadians hold so dear. We live in an interconnected world. What happens over there can and will have an impact at home. Peacekeeping missions advance human rights, promote democracy and the rule of law, as I and many thousands of others have seen first-hand. They seek to build and sustain peace and to protect individuals against violence, affirm human dignity, secure liberty, and create an environment conducive to long-term development. Participation in peace operations extends our influence in multi-lateral institutions and with our allies.

As part of Canada's leadership, the Minister of National Defence has committed up to 600 Canadian Armed Forces personnel and related capabilities to be made available to the UN for peace missions, a standing force, so to speak. Canada will also provide scaled-up contributions of police and civilian personnel and support new training initiatives. These contributions will be complemented as appropriate by targeted stabilization, security and developmental programming, a whole of government approach building on the lessons we have learned in the former Yugoslavia and Africa and times before, and of course Afghanistan.

Any decision to deploy the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces is not taken lightly. Strict assessment criteria will be applied and a rigorous analysis will be conducted. We will make sure that we network with our friends and allies around the world to ensure we understand the constraints and the environment to which we are about to deploy.

The choice of where and how to engage is one that deserves careful reflection, one that will be made by cabinet in due course. As a matter of fact, a variety of studies are under way. We must ensure that we do it for the right reasons such that we have a meaningful impact on international peace and stability.

We will also seize the opportunity to ensure that women are empowered to make important decisions, to be a part of this force, and will do all due diligence in attacking gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse by local or indigenous or other UN personnel.

The United Nations needs our help.

It is my honour and pleasure to try and answer my distinguished colleague's questions.

● (2015)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's comments. The parliamentary secretary laid out some interesting information that we have not heard here for a while. Although those objectives may be laudable, and we have full faith that the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces can do any task that they are put up to, including peacekeeping in Mali, we would prefer as the opposition and I think Canadians would prefer to see our troops deployed to fight terrorism in a coalition that is not under UN command.

The crux of the problem is that we have an organization that has proven itself many times over to be ineffective in long-term peace and stability in regions around the world. Bosnia is a case in point and Kosova is another where the UN failed and NATO succeeded.

We need to make sure that when we move our troops, it is in Canada's national interests, that it brings the peace and security that the government wants to see, that all Canadians want to see, but we do it with minimizing the risk to our troops. That is what I am asking for today.

Adjournment Proceedings

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I have had the honour and pleasure to deploy in a variety of UN missions and to study more. I understand my hon. colleague's concerns. As he knows, the right of national command is always retained by the chief of the defence staff. Although we may deploy forces to UN commands, national command authority is never abrogated. The chief of the defence staff, himself an experienced and capable soldier surrounded by the wonderful staff that monitors operations, is responsible for the oversight. He has the right of veto in any orders that may be issued by UN commanders.

As well, in theatre there will be a national Canadian commander, an experienced capable officer depending on where we go, who will decide the actual service, be it army, navy, air force, or special. That individual is entrusted by the chief of the defence staff to relay back

to him information of which he may have concerns. I am absolutely confident in the outcome of the command and control architecture.

I hope that addresses my colleague's questions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill not being present to raise the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:19 p.m.)

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