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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Christine Holke, the clerk of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, and Lucie Lecomte, our analyst. I would also like to thank all of my committee colleagues, who are doing such excellent work. We work together so harmoniously. It is very special. I am grateful to my colleagues from Madawaska—Restigouche, Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Sudbury, Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, and Perth—Wellington.

As chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages entitled “The Enumeration of Rights-Holders Under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Toward a Census that Supports the Charter”.

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

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill S-211, An Act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day. This follows the lead of the United Nations in recognizing the most common genetic disease in the world. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with no amendment.

I would like to thank the member of Parliament for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour and Senator Jane Cordy for sponsoring this bill and bringing it forth in such good order. I want to thank all the members

of the Standing Committee on Health for their diligence and deliberation on this bill as we sought an answer.

* * *

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two petitions today.

The first petition is on behalf of constituents who recognize that a joint federal-provincial environmental impact assessment concluded that the Site C dam project would severely undermine the rights of indigenous peoples, rights that are protected by Treaty 8, subsection 35(1) of the Canadian Constitution, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The petitioners also recognize that the Site C dam will not pass the Sparrow test, a legal litmus test for determining if a government justifiably violates first nations rights, because there is no demonstrable need for Site C power. Therefore, the undersigned residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to suspend all federal Site C project approvals and issuance of any further ones.

The second petition, is on behalf of constituents who recognize that climate change is resulting in lower flow waters to the Cowichan River year after year and is posing a threat to fish and fish habitat, both of which fall under federal jurisdiction. It is necessary for sustaining its historical importance to the Cowichan peoples. Therefore, the people call upon the Government of Canada to immediately use federal funds for the raising of the Cowichan weir to a level necessary to ensure water flow sufficient to protect fish and fish habitat.

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am standing this morning to present a petition in regard to the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee, which was created to ensure that the views of Canadians be heard when changes are considered to firearms policies, laws, and regulations in Canada, and that the committee, including firearms experts and representatives of the gun industry in Canada, advise the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness of those views when considering these items.

Government Orders

The majority of the new members on the committee announced on March 3 have either publicly stated that they are in favour of stricter gun control or are in fact members of the Coalition for Gun Control. Only two members of this committee actually own a firearm or have a firearms background. Law-abiding target shooters, hunters, trappers, farmers, and collectors are calling on the government to increase their representation on the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee.

• (1005)

HOUSING

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

The first is from residents throughout my riding on an issue that is well supported in the House. The government has announced a national housing strategy, but this petition calls for a national affordable housing program to be put in place along the lines of the resolution passed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, looking to reform the tax system to increase benefits to developers in building purpose-built rental housing.

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on an issue that continues to concern Canadians about both domestic and global agricultural production, and that is the issue of allowing farmers to do what they have done for thousands of years, since the beginning of agriculture: the right to save their own seeds. The petitioners throughout my riding and a number of signatories from Thunder Bay call for international aid policies to support small family farmers and ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers to help protect the right of those in the developing world to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am seeking leave for adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing an important matter requiring urgent consideration pursuant to Standing Order 52. This is with regard to the dramatic increase in asylum seekers at our U.S.-Canada land border.

Over recent months, we have seen a dramatic rise in people crossing the border illegally, and this has placed a strain on the RCMP, the CBSA, as well as provincial resources with regard to

affordable housing, legal aid, and health care services. Recent reports have shown that, in 2017, we are on track to see a doubling of the number of asylum seekers in Canada. This would be an all-time record high.

Canada is a very open and welcoming country, but we also want to make sure we have a plan in place to make sure that our borders are secure and that, for people coming to Canada seeking asylum, there is a broader plan in place with regard to resourcing. To date, we have not had a response from the government on this, and given that we are heading into the summer months and we will see an increase in this situation, which is becoming more and more urgent, I feel it is incumbent upon the House to debate this matter so that we can move on with coming up with a plan.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the member for Calgary Nose Hill for raising this matter. However, I do not find that it meet the exigencies of the Standing Order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2017, NO. 1

BILL C-44—TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-44, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the second reading stage of the said bill; and

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

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here we go again with another important debate being shut down. Members of Parliament who should be speaking on behalf of their constituents are being silenced by the Liberals. It is extremely frustrating, but it is also wrong.

Government Orders

We have a budget implementation bill before us that is chock full of things that are going to cause a lot of problems for Canadians, never mind the increased fees for Canadians. We see that this infrastructure bank, which we should really call a Liberal bank, is going to be giving favours to billionaire friends of the Liberals, with no accountability. The taxpayer is going to be on the hook for this infrastructure bank. We also have the issue around the parliamentary budget officer being silenced.

These are really important issues that our members of Parliament on this side would still like to speak to, and one day is not enough time. I ask the government if it would reconsider. We need more time to speak to this bill. The debate should not be shut down. This begs the question: Where is the openness? Where is the willingness to work together with opposition parties that the Liberals promised? We are not seeing it all.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we do know that this bill has already had 39 members speak up and give their point of view. We know that includes 13 members from the Conservative Party and five New Democrats.

We do know that members on the opposite side have brought up points that they would like us to continue to look at, points that require further study. In our view, that is something we should do. That is why we would like to get the bill to committee. We believe doing that affords us the opportunity to have those discussions in a way that will allow the bill to progress forward and make sure we can get on with the work of making sure our economy works for Canadians.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think I have the numbers straight. This is an omnibus bill, which consists of more than 300 pages. This is a bill for which we have had three days of debate, the government will say. However, it will not say that one of those days was a Wednesday, when of course we do not begin until later in the afternoon, and one was a Friday, when we had a grand total of one hour and 15 minutes of debate.

This is the budget implementation bill. My hon. friend from the Conservatives has already pointed out that issues like the parliamentary budget officer, the infrastructure bank, and others are at issue, but so are myriad other issues, many of which have nothing to do with the budget.

I wonder if the government could reconsider and allow us, as the opposition, to do our job for Canadians.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, again, for the member opposite, I appreciate and understand his comments. I would say that we have had 39 members in this House already speak about this bill. We do recognize that there is an important opportunity for us to continue discussions, if we can get this bill to committee.

As mentioned, we know that there are very important things that we are trying to achieve through this budget bill, which would make a real difference for our economy. Moving forward on this will be important for Canadians. We are already seeing the impact of budget 2016 on our economy, with positive impacts on employment, positive impacts on our economy broadly.

We want to continue to move forward with our plan to make a real difference. That is why we recognize that there has been debate

already. We believe moving this bill to committee is the right thing to do at this stage, so we can hear further discussions and make sure we get this done in a way that is positive for Canadians.

• (1015)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I too would like to raise my concerns about the limited time we have to discuss the bill. It is 300 pages. There are some significant issues about the parliamentary budget officer, the infrastructure bank, and myriad other issues that need to be brought up. Only 39 members have spoken to the bill. It is absolutely outrageous to think that this is enough.

There are 338 members in the House representing the ridings across this country, and it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to represent our constituents in a way that is relevant, that is transparent, and that holds the government to account. Shutting down debate on more than 300 pages of the bill is absolutely unbelievable. Canadians deserve better than that.

I would like to ask the minister to please reconsider shutting down debate, because there are many Canadians who would really like to understand the content of the bill and the implications, because there are implications for each and every Canadian across the country. It is going to affect Canadians and their families. A lot of the money is back-ended. Things are not flowing. Infrastructure is not flowing, and I would like the minister to address this.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I recognize that it is important that we hear from members in the House. We have had some discussion already. We have had some comments about things that require further study. We believe that sending the bill to committee is the way to get at those discussions. The measures in the bill are entirely related to our budget. They are focused on how we can make an important difference for Canadians.

We believe that moving forward to get the bill to committee will allow us to get to that work. We know that the things we have done already in our term of office have started to have a real impact. We know that Canadians are impatient to see that continued positive impact on them and their families, the kind of things we are already seeing in terms of the positive impacts on employment, which are critically important, and the positive outcome in terms of what we are seeing in our economic growth possibilities.

We know that 39 members have already spoken about this. We know that moving this to committee will allow us to consider the issues that have been brought up in a way that is constructive. We are anxious to get to that, because we want to work on behalf of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would hope that the Minister of Finance is good at math, but I will simply point out to him that 39 members is 10% of the number of MPs who sit in the House.

He was not here during the previous Parliament, but if he had been, I have to wonder how he would have reacted to the Harper government, which did exactly the same thing that he is doing, that is, limiting debate on a 300-page budget bill that amends about 30 pieces of legislation.

Government Orders

How would he have reacted to the Conservative government doing exactly what he is doing right now?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for her question.

I know that having the opportunity to study our budget measures is very important. I also know that we have already heard from 39 members, as my colleague pointed out. I know that what matters now is having an opportunity to examine the points that have been identified. That is why we believe it is time to study these important matters at committee. That way, we can achieve our objective of improving the lives of Canadians as soon as possible.

That is our goal. We think that enough time has been taken and it is now time for the committee to take over the study we have begun.

• (1020)

[English]

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this budget clearly expands on our government's ambitious plan. It continues help for the middle class, it has great support for veterans, and it strengthens our health care system. What I find particularly important is the increased family leave and the flexible benefits for parents. Being a father of two young children myself, the importance of this measure speaks volumes about where this government is heading and the compassion this government has for families and the middle class.

I wonder if the Minister of Finance can comment on why it is important to get these measures, and the other key features in the implementation act, before a committee so we can make this the law of the land and families can benefit from the measures in Bill C-44 that will actually help Canadians.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his question and speak to the comments he made. In the first instance, of course, there is an important role for the government to be empathetic to families and to recognize different family situations. However, I would like to also take this from an economic perspective.

We see that one of the greatest challenges in our country is demographic change. We know that demographic change means that we will have challenges in terms of the percentage of the workforce that is actually working and creating the opportunity for our economy to be successful. As a result of that, we need to think about how we can get a higher level of workforce participation for segments of the population that may not be as engaged in the workforce. Therefore, we have taken measures in this budget to make sure that we have a high level of workforce participation in places where it is not as high as it could be. In fact, it has been a continuing theme of our government.

A good example, and the one identified by the member, is women, in particular women between the ages of 25 and 54. We have seen a flattening of workforce participation in that group. We know that by creating the kind of flexibility families need, we can help women to be more engaged in the workforce. That is an important effort in this budget. It will make a difference for families. It will make a difference for the long-term economy of our country. We need to

move forward on this, because we know it is the right thing to do, and we know it will help our economy in the long run.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, just 39 members, or 12% of members, have had the chance to speak in the House to this important bill. That means that 88% of members will be muzzled by the current government and will not be able to speak to such an important bill. It makes no sense.

Let us not forget that this is the party that promised to do away with omnibus bills. This bill is nearly 300 pages. It implements certain measures in the budget, but it also affects 30 statutes and creates two brand spanking new entities, two completely unacceptable things that have nothing to do with the budget.

Judging by the answers we got yesterday, the Canada infrastructure bank is going to be just one more thing to please Liberal Party cronies. What is more, the government now wants to control the parliamentary budget officer. That is the worst thing that could happen. The Speaker of the Senate, who is appointed by the Prime Minister of Canada, will now have veto power over the annual work plan of the parliamentary budget officer. It is not right.

I want to take advantage of the Minister of Finance's presence to ask him directly the questions I twice asked the government House leader, who answered on his behalf, unfortunately.

How can such a dignified, honourable, and upstanding man stoop to doing such despicable things? This makes me think of the very popular song, *Say it isn't so*.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, I believe that the member asked at least three questions. I will try to answer them all.

First, as I said, we believe that it is now time to debate our budget measures in committee. Thirty-nine people have had the opportunity to speak and I believe that we have heard some important comments. However, it is now time to study the measures in committee.

Second, the infrastructure bank is very important to us. It will allow us to do more for Canadians and build more infrastructure across the country. As the government, it is important to be able to make very significant investments. Accordingly, we have decided to invest \$180 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years.

Of this amount, \$15 billion will be used as seed money for our infrastructure bank, which will allow us to attract investors and make more and bigger investments. That is very important. With more investment, we will create more job opportunities and a more efficient economy in the future.

Lastly, the issue of the parliamentary budget officer is also very important. We want this office to be more effective and more independent, and that is the goal of our proposal.

Government Orders

•(1025)

[English]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the finance minister says he wishes the parliamentary budget officer to become more independent. I would say that the only continuing theme of the government is breaking election promises. I would remind the Liberals of what they said during the campaign. They said, “We will not interfere with the work of government watchdogs.... We will ensure that all the officers are properly funded and accountable only to Parliament, not the government of the day.” They also said they would ensure that the PBO “is truly independent, properly funded, and answerable only—and directly—to Parliament”.

Among these 30 bills amended by this budget implementation bill is the shackling of the parliamentary budget officer.

I would remind the government that it is not just the opposition that holds the government accountable with regard to spending. Every elected member is responsible for holding the government accountable.

It was agreed in our committee some years back to make the parliamentary budget office reportable to Parliament, which the Liberals supported. It was a key measure to enable us to hold the government of the day accountable.

Why is the government deciding now to break its word on its election promise? Why is it shackling the parliamentary budget officer?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, our goal is to make the parliamentary budget officer more effective and independent. We would like to strengthen the office so that it actually has the ability to do the work it needs to do.

We have heard comments in this House. We are open to hearing those comments. That is the way we would like to move forward. We will take these comments into account as we move forward to committee. That is the way it should work.

Our overriding intent is to make the parliamentary budget officer more effective and more independent. That is the reason we put the measures into the bill. To the extent that there are comments and ideas on how we can go further in that regard, we are open to listening to them. That is something we expect will happen at committee. That would be in line with how we would like to move forward.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, with respect to these debates about time allocation, I would have wished we could ask questions of the Government House Leader, because decisions about the way the government is proceeding and the increased use of time allocation is the House leader's area. The breakdown in relations between the House leaders of the largest three parties in this place is leading to an increased use of what I would call Harper tactics.

Although this is not an omnibus budget bill with the weight of the egregious misuse of power we saw in Bill C-38 and Bill C-45 in 2012, this is nonetheless an omnibus budget bill, and unfortunately so. While there is a connection to the parliamentary budget officer,

because “budget” is in the title, the creation of a stand-alone parliamentary budget officer as an independent officer of Parliament, as promised in the Liberal platform, is a subject of such importance that it would have been preferable to have that discussion separate from the passage of budgetary measures.

Time allocation at this point has the effect of disadvantaging those members of Parliament who belong to parties with fewer than 12 members. Our constituents are equal. Our rights, in theory, are equal. It is disproportionately disadvantageous to members of smaller parties or independents when time allocation is used. In my view, it should be used extremely rarely. To say, as the Liberals now do, that they are using it less than Harper did is no excuse for adopting bad tactics and majority rule in a way that hurts the healthy functioning of this place.

I would urge the government to reconsider and not apply time allocation. The Minister of Finance will tell us that it must be done, but it must not be done.

•(1030)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, there were a few questions or comments in what she said. To start, we have talked about the fact that we believe it is time to move this bill to committee. We think that is an effective way for us to move forward to make sure that we can make a difference for Canadians.

With respect to the parliamentary budget officer, we have also said that we believe our overriding goal is clear: we want this office to be effective and independent. We have also said that we are open to amendments, so as we move forward in committee, we are going to listen and hear potential improvements. That is something that we are open-minded to and will consider as we move forward.

With respect to the size of the budget bill, we want to be clear that the measures in the bill are related to the budget. We are not trying to sneak things into the bill that are unrelated to the budget. We are not trying to do something that perhaps has been done in the past to get things through without due consideration. The budget bill in fact includes only measures that are related to the budget. We believe that is appropriate. That is what we committed to doing in our election campaign and that is exactly what we are delivering with this budget bill.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that the minister does not excel at math, so I will do a little math for him. He said 39 members have spoken on this particular bill. When we subtract 39 from 338, it means 299 members of this House have not had a chance to speak on this particular bill.

I also sit as the vice-chairman of the finance committee, so I would like to ask the minister if the government can assure us it will not bring closure to the finance committee as it did in the last budget. If it is going to bring closure to the House on the budget bill, let the finance committee do the work that the finance committee, as the minister says, does so well. Will he stand in this House today and assure the House that the government will not bring closure to the finance committee's work?

Government Orders

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, if the hon. member chooses, I would happily go into a math competition with him at the time of his choosing, if that is in fact what he is challenging me on. I have no problems with that. I would suggest that maybe we could do more than addition and subtraction; we might want to use even more complicated tactics than that.

With respect to his question, we have made it pretty clear that we are working on behalf of Canadians. We know it is important that members have the opportunity in this House to speak on their point of view. We have heard from 39 members. We do believe that moving the bill to committee is important. As the hon. member knows, I am not responsible for the finance committee, so I am not in any way able to dictate the terms under which that committee works. That is not my responsibility.

What I can say is that we respect the importance of the finance committee. We know, as I have mentioned, that there have been some comments in particular with respect to the parliamentary budget officer. I have said clearly that we are open to amendments. If there are constructive ways in which we can improve on our goal of making sure that the parliamentary budget officer is effective and independent, that is something that we will be able to listen to. I look forward to that. With respect to the workings of the finance committee, I will leave that to the finance committee.

● (1035)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, someone who is wiser than I once said, “Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical.”

Bill C-44 is not just any bill. It is a bill that clips the wings of the parliamentary budget officer, makes it easier for foreigners to acquire Canadian companies, and creates an infrastructure bank that will cost taxpayers a lot of money, while making a big profit for the finance minister's friends on Bay Street.

This bill also eliminates the public transit tax credits that helped ordinary Canadians. It raises taxes for wine producers and microbreweries.

I cannot understand how the Minister of Finance can say that a day and a half of debate is enough for parliamentarians to do their work on a bill that amends no less than 30 laws. The Liberal government has a lot of nerve saying that.

Why does the finance minister have such disdain and contempt for the rights of parliamentarians?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, as I said, we think it is very important to consider the items included in our budget. We have already heard from 39 members, which is a significant number.

As the member said, we think that the budget contains important things for Canadians, things that will help to improve our situation and our economic growth. That is why we want to continue moving forward so that we can accomplish the things we want to accomplish.

We think that it is time for the committee to examine the bill. That is the next step, and it is an important one. We think that now is the time to do that.

[English]

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Speaker, on almost every one of his answers, the Minister of Finance has commented that they want to move the matter into the finance committee so these matters can be properly studied. The difficulty is that the finance committee has sent off letters to four, possibly five, committees asking them to review the issues pertaining to their particular committees.

In the immigration committee, for example, there are a number of issues in the budget implementation bill that affect immigration. The immigration committee, through the majority of the Liberal voters, has said it does not want to study it, so the matter is not going to be studied in the immigration committee, and I do not believe it is going to be studied in the finance committee. Therefore, my question for the finance minister is this: why is the PMO, or whoever is giving instructions to the committees, saying that the committees will not review these matters?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, this morning we have had the opportunity to ask the same question on numerous occasions about the process that we are going through. We have heard from 39 members. We have heard 13 from the Conservative Party and five from the New Democratic Party. We know that there are going to be considerations at the finance committee level. We believe it will have the input to make those recommendations back to us. We believe it is time to move forward on this matter. We recognize that what we need to do in terms of our overall goal is to move forward on things that can make a real difference for our economy. That is our government's record. The record so far has shown that the things we have done are having the positive impact on our economy that we had hoped. It is clear.

For those people who are not paying attention to the numbers, unemployment has gone down. We have gone from 7.1% to 6.5%. Growth has gone up. That is what we are seeing as the positive outcomes. We are looking forward to continuing to have that opportunity.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the Minister of Finance provide a brief comment with regard to the tax that has been applied to Uber? I want to bring it up because in Winnipeg the taxi industry has provided so much. They are great ambassadors for our city. There are all sorts of things they have to do as small businesses, one being to pay taxes. Perhaps he could provide some comment on why it was necessary to put on that particular tax.

● (1040)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Madam Speaker, in the case of ride-sharing services, it is important to have an even playing field. We want to make sure that when someone decides to get into a taxi or some sort of ride-sharing situation, they are on an equal playing field. Putting the GST in place for ride-sharing services was the right thing to do from a fairness standpoint. It keeps intact the integrity of our tax system and makes sure we have an appropriate way of dealing with the new economy.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[English]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

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

• (1120)

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

(Division No. 265)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu

Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Nault	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tootoo
Trudeau	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
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Aboultaif	Albrecht
Allison	Ambrose
Anderson	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boucher
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Deltell	Dreeschen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Egliniski
Falk	Finley
Fortin	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin

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Gourde	Hardcastle
Harder	Hoback
Hughes	Jeneroux
Johns	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary)	Laverdière
Lebel	Liepert
Lobb	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Masse (Windsor West)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Mulcair
Nantel	Nater
Nicholson	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poilievre	Quach
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saganash	Sansoucy
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shiple
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Strahl
Sweet	Thériault
Tilson	Trost
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Van Loan	Vecchio
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The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

SECOND READING

The House resumed from May 5 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.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by nine minutes.

[English]

The hon. member for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital has six minutes remaining in his speech.

[Translation]

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my riding had the honour of a visit from the Prime Minister for a highly anticipated announcement about day cares.

[English]

About one month ago, my riding had the pleasure of welcoming the Prime Minister for a long-awaited announcement on child care. The purpose of the visit was to draw attention to our long-term funding commitment to child care. The \$7 billion 10-year time frame will support and create more high-quality, affordable child care spaces across our great country.

Over the next three years, these investments will increase the number of child care spaces for low and modest income families by supporting up to 40,000 new subsidized child care spaces. This is incredibly important for Manitoba, the province I represent, because more than 14,000 children are on waiting lists for licensed child care spaces.

● (1125)

[Translation]

Parents who want to return to work need to have quality, affordable, safe day care options.

[English]

While creating child care spaces is incredibly important, we need to ensure we have long-term funding, which is equally important. Our government has committed to be a long-term partner, with the provinces, by providing 10-year funding for the spaces created by our initial investment. This is a stable, responsible, and long-term investment by our government for middle-class families.

[Translation]

I would also remind the House that early childhood was one of the priorities identified by official language minority communities during the Standing Committee on Official Languages' study.

It is also a priority for indigenous communities across the country.

[English]

I would also like to talk about the historic health care agreements reached between Ottawa and the provinces and territories, with the exception of Manitoba.

Just as there are changes occurring in the workplace, the demands for our health care system are changing. Our government has clearly indicated a willingness to partner with the provinces to bring about transformational changes to meet the health care needs of Canadians.

[Translation]

Our priority should always be the well-being of Canadians and making sure that the care available is equitable and universal.

[English]

The question is how best to invest in the future.

Government Orders

Across the country, governments are trying to find ways to adapt to our population's needs for today and tomorrow. Research has shown that receiving better in-home care provides greater benefit to one's overall well-being. That is why our government is investing in better home care and better mental health initiatives that will help families that need it most. There are \$6 billion of new money over 10 years for better home care and \$5 billion of new money over 10 years to support mental health initiatives. This is over and above a 3% annual increase for the provinces and territories that sign on for better medical services. These targeted investments will strengthen Canada's publicly funded universal health care system and address key health care priorities over the long term. It is what we have heard from Canadians.

The final point I want to highlight is the very important measures we are taking to advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples. This is an issue of particular importance in Manitoba. I am extremely proud of the progress our government has made since the election. For example, as I speak, \$58 million are currently being invested in 24 first nations in Manitoba to prevent and address long-term drinking water advisories and improve the capacity and reliability of water and waste water systems. Of these 24 projects currently occurring in Manitoba, one is in the feasibility stage, 10 are in the design stage, and 13 are at the construction stage. These are critical investments toward our goal of ending all long-term drinking water advisories in first nation communities across our country.

In addition, budget 2017 builds on last year's historic investments for indigenous communities. We are investing over \$3.4 billion over the next five years in first nations, Inuit, and Métis health infrastructure to strengthen indigenous communities, education and training, and measures to promote language and cultural revitalization.

As a proud Métis, I am particularly happy to see that the Métis National Council and its five provincial federations, including the Manitoba Metis Federation, will receive \$85 million over five years to help build governance capacity.

[*Translation*]

As a proud Métis, I am very pleased with the \$85 million in funding over five years for the Métis National Council and the five provincial federations, including the Manitoba Metis Federation, to support and strengthen their governance capacity.

• (1130)

[*English*]

This is another important recognition of the Métis nation in Canada and another step toward reconciliation.

That is a brief recap of budget 2017. It responds to many of the top issues we have heard, which have been raised by my constituents during many meetings over many months. However, there is much more I can go on about.

There are \$90 million over five years to enhance and preserve indigenous languages. There are infrastructure dollars. There are \$16 billion over four years to support clean tech, as well as dollars for Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague is from the Prairies, and one of the changes in the budget was the elimination of grain tickets. In the farming industry, the availability of that type of program for expenses and revenue over two years in agriculture is a very temperamental thing with Mother Nature, as farmers found out again this winter. It was a great tool for farmers to use, but this budget would remove it. Although the government says farmers can consult, it gave a rationale for taking it out. It says farmers can consult, but the government has already given its rationale that the Canadian Wheat Board does not exist any more. When I talk to farmers, they say this has nothing to with marketing their grain and averaging their income and expenses.

The hon. member may want to respond, as he is from the Prairies, on the grain ticket issue in the budget.

Mr. Dan Vandal: I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that the agricultural industry is incredibly important for Manitoba and Canada. That is why we believe it is equally important to innovate, modernize, and do things in a better way. We have budgeted over \$1 billion over four years to support clean technology in agriculture to address the very issues that the hon. member speaks of. In agriculture, energy, mining, forestry, and fishing, we are committed to modernize, look at innovations, and improve our systems in budget 2017.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, in budget 2017, the government promised greater access to mental health, wellness, and suicide prevention services for indigenous young people. It did this without designating the actual program investments that are desperately needed in their communities. These are encouraging words to read in a federal budget, but they are meaningless for the young people who are without the community supports that are only possible with actual program investments.

Where will the funding come from for mental health counselling for youth, traditional healing programs, culture, recreation, and language programs? Important for the people in my riding of Courtenay—Alberni, when will these investments find their way to remote and isolated communities? I know the member cares deeply about this issue. I know that this is a high priority for the Nuu-chah-nulth people in my riding.

Perhaps the member could speak to how this will get to communities. This is urgent and a high priority for the people in my riding.

Government Orders

Mr. Dan Vandal: Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member. There is nothing more important than our relationship with indigenous peoples. Mental health is clearly a priority in the budget. We have tabled extra dollars, new dollars, not repurposed dollars, for mental health with the provinces that sign on. No government in recent memory has invested in indigenous communities the way this government has over the last two years. That is simply a fact. There were \$9 billion in new money last year, over \$5 billion in new money this year, and that is over and above what is in the line items in the departments. It is not a sleight of hand that governments often do, calling it new money but taking it from somewhere else. These are new dollars.

In my province, there are \$58 million being spent, as I speak, on water treatment systems and clean water for indigenous communities, and that is not enough. We know there is more work to do. We have to do a better job, and we are committed to doing it.

• (1135)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.) Madam Speaker, on March 22, our government delivered its second budget and today I rise to talk about the ways in which budget 2017 is meeting the needs of my riding of Sudbury and, indeed, all of northern Ontario.

Budget 2017 continues on our government's plan to strengthen the middle class, the heart of Canada's and Sudbury's economies, and makes responsible investments. These will provide Canadians and Sudburians with good, well-paying jobs and opportunities in our new innovative economy. Budget 2017 makes smart investments to help adult workers retrain and upgrade their skills, adapt to changes in the new economy, and help young people get the skills and work experience they need to start their careers.

[Translation]

Budget 2017 invests in seniors and in youth.

We are investing in social housing, as well as making investments to support our veterans and first nations. These kinds of investments are needed for communities like Sudbury, which has achieved some measure of success.

[English]

For starters, budget 2017 provides a further \$25 million in core funding for FedNor, the federal economic development agency for northern Ontario, over the next five years. The increase will boost FedNor's base budget to \$46 million a year, reversing years of budget cuts.

Last fall, I worked with my colleague, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North, to draft a growth strategy for northern Ontario. One of the things we heard loud and clear was that northerners want a budget increase for FedNor. They want to reverse years of Conservative government cutbacks. The recommendation to increase FedNor's budget was also supported by our northern Ontario caucus.

[Translation]

I was very pleased to see that our recommendation was taken into account in the budget and that our growth plan for northern Ontario is moving forward.

[English]

This is just the start of the good news, because there is a lot more for northern Ontario.

We are very pleased that budget 2017 is advancing Canada's efforts to build a clean economy. It is investing almost \$22 billion in green infrastructure, including initiatives that will support the implementation of a pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. Sudburians understand that a strong economy and a clean environment go hand in hand.

As I have said in this chamber many times before, my riding of Sudbury is an established global leader in the innovation of mining and of mining technology.

[Translation]

Sudbury has built quite a reputation. We are leaders in the mining sector. Our methods are more effective and proven than those anywhere else in the world.

[English]

Sudbury companies have been providing clean tech solutions to mining challenges for a generation, and now we are marketing these clean tech solutions all over the world. Today, Sudbury's mining and clean tech cluster consists of more than 300 companies. They employ almost 14,000 skilled workers and experts. Sudbury alone generates approximately \$4 billion in revenue each year.

Increasingly, these mining supply and services companies are testing international waters. They are making inroads in the United States, Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Russia. The Sudbury companies behind these projects are using innovation to drive economic and environmental benefits. They are using innovation to create jobs and help strengthen this vital economic engine for Canada. They strengthen Canada's middle class in the process.

[Translation]

I want to share something that makes me even prouder: our government believes in the potential and power of green technologies, which create jobs and fuel innovation.

[English]

The global market for clean technologies is already more than \$1 trillion per year and it is growing. It is creating well-paying, secure jobs for Canadians. Clean technology has contributed to the fight against climate change and it makes our economy more sustainable. I am proud that our government understands this potential.

Government Orders

This is why our recent budget makes significant investments in clean technology, including \$200 million in support of clean technology research in Canada's natural resources sector, \$12 million for a clean growth hub that will improve access to federal resources in labs for Canadian entrepreneurs and innovators, and more than \$14 million to track our progress so we can report to Canadians. Canadian companies are capturing their share of the emerging global market for mining innovation in clean technology, and we support their efforts. We support them from waste management to biofuels to greener solutions for the oil and gas industry.

This is just the beginning of what budget 2017 means for Sudbury and northern Ontario.

Almost 10% of Sudbury's population is indigenous. There are several dozen first nations communities in northern Ontario, including some of the most remote communities in Canada. Budget 2017 includes a \$4-billion investment into on-reserve infrastructure. This much needed investment will provide housing, health centres, and water treatment systems to communities that need them the most. As well, first nations people living off reserve will have access to a \$225-million investment over the next 11 years. These investments will go toward needed repairs, renewals, rental subsidies, and new construction. These are important investments being made in first nations communities across northern Ontario.

Already this year, I have had the privilege of announcing \$10 million for seniors' health and children's welfare for first nations people in northern Ontario. On top of that, on behalf of the Minister of Health, I was pleased to announce a \$1-million investment to support the work of two top researchers in the Health Sciences North Research Institute at Laurentian University.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Their work will focus on finding new ways to address two serious challenges, specifically aging and dementia in first nations, Inuit, and Métis populations.

[*English*]

As well, I was proud to stand with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to announce an investment of more than \$9 million to help first nations in northern Ontario raise their children in healthy and safe environments.

Our government will invest more than \$11 billion under its new national housing strategy. These investments cover initiatives designed to build, renew, and repair Canada's stock of affordable housing. They will ensure that Canadians have adequate and affordable housing to meet their needs. This includes \$225 million to improve housing conditions for indigenous peoples, as I have just said.

Through budget 2017, our government is advancing reconciliation as well with the indigenous peoples. It is advancing reconciliation through investments in infrastructure and first nations and Inuit health, through actions to strengthen indigenous communities, funding to support education and training, and measures to promote language and culture.

[*Translation*]

What I heard most often when I was going door to door before the 2015 election is that Sudburians wanted their federal government to start investing in social housing again. Our government heard that message. Our government has taken the necessary steps and is showing leadership on this.

[*English*]

In fact, housing is the largest single commitment in budget 2017. Our government's commitment is to rebuild, renew, and repair Canada's stock of affordable housing, and we will do that. Those initiatives include responses to indigenous housing crises on and off reserve. It is also promising more money for the provinces and municipal partners to spend on their own housing priorities.

Our government will create a new pooled investment fund that would pool resources among many housing partners, including the private sector. The fund would also expand an existing lending facility for municipalities and for the construction of new affordable housing.

One of the first things I did as an MP was to meet a number of housing service providers in Sudbury. I was shocked to learn that the Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation alone has a backlog of deferred maintenance of more than \$10 million. The corporation also has an ambitious energy management plan. The plan would retrofit most of the properties to make them more sustainable, energy efficient, and comfortable. A \$3-million investment would pay itself back in 20 years. These are exactly the kinds of projects our government needs to be investing in, and I want to help get these off the ground in Sudbury.

There is so much more in budget 2017 to support middle-class Canadians and those working hard to join the middle class.

There is help for unemployed people to access the training and employment support they need. Budget 2017 boosts the federal support by almost \$3 billion over the next six years.

[*Translation*]

For the people of Sudbury looking for work, this means more chances to update their skills, gain experience, or get help to start their businesses. It also means more support, such as job counselling, for planning their career.

*Government Orders**[English]*

In addition, we are identifying skills gaps with employers and exploring new and innovative approaches to skills development with the provinces. Adult students can face challenges in pursuing learning. Part-time students from Sudbury, as well as adult students with dependent children, will be eligible for Canada student grants. This means more non-repayable assistance for adult learners and workers. It will help them manage the high cost of post-secondary education. It will help them in balancing the financial pressures of raising a family.

As a tax lawyer, I understand the importance of a fair and equitable tax system. Our government has committed to undertake a wide-ranging review of tax expenditures. The review's objective is to eliminate poorly targeted and inefficient tax measures. The review will allow our government to identify opportunities to reduce tax benefits that unfairly benefit the wealthiest Canadians.

Under budget 2017, we are making changes to simplify the tax system by making existing tax relief for individuals and families more effective and accessible. For example, since our new Canada child benefit was implemented, more than 7,400 families in Sudbury alone have benefited from increased payments.

• (1145)

[Translation]

It is quite the investment for families in Sudbury.

[English]

The other side of the taxation coin is collections. When some choose not to pay their fair share of taxes, it places an unfair burden on the tax system, and on other Canadians.

Those are only some of the measures that are in the budget. I will take any questions on it, because I am so proud of the budget, which is investing in Sudburians and Canadians across Canada.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned many times how proud he is of the budget.

He mentioned child care. While there were billions announced in the budget, 70% of the new money will not be spent until after 2022. There is only \$10 million for the entire country this year for affordable housing. Also, nearly \$4 billion of the \$5 billion is not going to be spent until after 2022. In fact, there is no new funding in 2017-18 for early learning and child care, homelessness, home care, housing, research, northern housing, and indigenous programs.

I wonder if he could explain why he is so proud of the budget.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, what I am very proud of is these are long-term investments. This is not short term. We are not looking at the next few years. We are looking over 10 years. These are long-term investments that families need. When we invest in housing, we cannot just do it over a number of years. It takes a long time to implement, to make sure the money gets on the ground, and it is done well.

With respect to families, I have been hearing from them at the doors, right now, that the child tax benefit is life-changing for them.

That is why I am so proud of these investments. Again, these are not short term. They are long-term investments in Canadians.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about first nations and investments in indigenous peoples. The government said that the most important relationship is working nation-to-nation with indigenous people. It also promised to stop fighting indigenous people in court.

The member said that he is getting funding in his riding, and I appreciate hearing that. I will tell the House what it is like in my riding. The Huu-ay-aht were awarded \$13.8 million through the special claims tribunal decision for breaches of duty Canada committed between 1948 to 1969. Instead of going with the decision made by the special claims tribunal, the government decided to appeal that decision. The Nuu-chah-nulth have been fighting in the courts for a decade over their right to catch and sell fish, a right that we already know they have. The government has lost repeatedly. The case was thrown out by the Supreme Court twice.

The Conservatives' strategy was that of appeal and delay. The Liberal government is taking that same approach in dealing with indigenous peoples. Is this the reconciliation the member is talking about?

Maybe the member could talk about how much the government has budgeted to fight indigenous people in court, because I would like to know what those costs are.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, talking about reconciliation, we have invested record amounts with our first nations. It is a long-term relationship that we need to build back. There is no doubt that our past relationship is not something to be proud of, but it is important for us to build the relationship back again. It will not happen overnight. It is a long-term investment. It is a strong change that we need to make happen together. That is why in northern Ontario we have received investments first-hand. These investments are a start not an end. They are a start to reconciliation.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, housing is a pressing issue in my riding of Scarborough Centre. Affordable housing is increasingly limited and in poor shape. It is our job to make sure we do not pass this infrastructure debt on to our future generations.

Could the hon. member tell me how budget 2017 will help to resolve this issue?

Government Orders

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, one of the first things I did when I was elected in 2015 was to take stock of where we were with respect to the housing issue in Sudbury and northern Ontario. This issue is across the board. It is not just a northern Ontario thing, not just a Toronto thing. It is an issue across Canada. That is why I was so proud to see, in the last budget, historic investments in housing. However, again, it cannot happen overnight. It is just not a one-time hit. We need to invest over a long period of time, say over the next 10 years. People need to be assured that there is stable funding for housing to make a difference in the middle class and those working hard to join it.

I hear my colleague loud and clear. These investments are important. They will make a big difference in my riding and across Canada.

● (1150)

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really do appreciate the opportunity to participate today. I consider myself fortunate because I am going to be one of probably some 50 members of this House who are going to be able to stand and speak to the budget, because of the government invoking closure. That means that some 289 members are not going to get a chance to speak on behalf of their constituents on this budget. We certainly feel in the opposition that it is unfair. After the Liberals campaigned on openness, transparency, not using closure, and not bringing forward omnibus bills, we see where all of those promises have gotten us.

I want to take a few minutes to address a few of the issues in the budget. After the Minister of Finance delivered the budget, I was asked by the media in Calgary for my comments. I said it was a *Seinfeld* budget, a budget about nothing. Yesterday, the finance committee had Department of Finance officials before it to start to go through the budget division by division. One of the things that became quickly apparent was that I was wrong. It is not a budget about nothing; it is a budget about tax increases and the removal and rescinding of a number of tax incentives that exist.

I want to focus, on behalf of the constituents of Calgary Signal Hill, on some of the taxation measures in this budget document. I know there are other issues that, if one had more time, one could certainly debate. I know some of my colleagues have already debated the division around removing the independence of the parliamentary budget officer. I know we are going to have a debate around the infrastructure bank, so I will leave those to other speakers.

I want to talk about some tax measures and the removal of a tax credit, which is really unfortunate. First, let me talk about the rescinding of the transit pass credit that the Conservative government brought in a number of years ago. The government likes to talk about the middle class and those who are attempting to join it. If there ever was a tax relief that appealed to either the middle class or those hoping to join the middle class, it was this tax credit on the transit pass. It is only \$250 for the average user of a transit pass across the country, but that is not that one per cent on whom the government keeps saying it is increasing the taxes. That is a direct tax on Canada's working people and those who use public transit. I know that the bureaucrats have told the minister that this is just a nuisance for them to administer. We have to assume that the government is going to take the advice of the bureaucrats and not listen to working

Canadians, who every day try to get to work on our transit systems, and not give them that tax credit. I think it is deplorable, quite frankly.

The second tax measure that is not in this budget bill, but was raised by the minister and is going to be taking place, is the reduction in the petroleum drilling incentives grant that has been in existence for a number of years. I was told yesterday at the finance committee that there will probably be some future consultations and it will appear in the fall budget bill. I would like to be part of those consultations today.

I represent a riding in Alberta that has taken the hit of the downturn in oil prices globally. Recently, with the uptick in oil prices, we have had an opportunity for a number of companies that are in the exploration business to resume drilling activities, which is putting Albertans back to work. With the removal of this drilling incentive, many of those drilling companies are going to do one of two things: they are going to take that drilling rig and park it back in the yard, or they are going to take it across the border and drill in the United States where the incentives and the bottom line are much better.

● (1155)

The government can talk all it wants about creating jobs, but if it wants to create jobs in Alberta, removing this incentive is not a way to do it. If the government is listening and it is not part of the budget bill, I would strongly encourage the government to back off on this initiative before bringing forward its budget bill in the fall.

I know that a number of members have commented on and have raised this issue, having heard from their constituents regarding the increase in what is described as sin tax by governments, the taxes on alcohol and cigarettes. It is hard to argue against an increase in sin taxes; however, what the government needs to take into account is the spinoff effect of the increase in alcohol taxes.

The Canadian restaurant association has been very public about saying that it was blindsided by this, and it is going to significantly impact small businesses in this country. Again, I am an Alberta representative, and we have an Alberta government that has been hammering the same industry with increases in sin taxes and minimum wage, and a carbon tax. Now the federal government loads on additional taxes. Small businesses involved in the restaurant industry, not to mention those in the wine and beer industry, are clearly going to feel the impact of this.

During their campaign, the Liberals promised to reduce small business taxes. In fact, they did that to match what the other parties were saying, and then once they formed government, they reneged on that promise. Now they are hitting small businesses with this additional tax.

Government Orders

Those are just three areas, because I have limited time. I want to focus a little on one other chilling aspect of the budget document. In committee yesterday we were going through the budget implementation bill. There is an important division to which I would draw all members' attention: part 4, division 2, under the title "Public Debt", "Enactment of Borrowing Authority Act". What this particular division does is allow the government to go out and borrow up to a maximum. This particular bill, and it is right here in the bill, allows the government to borrow up to \$1.3 trillion. We are talking trillions here.

That covers the current debt, which is almost \$700 billion today. It covers some \$275 billion in debt that crown corporations have incurred. Then there is a bunch of provisions in there, the differential of some \$300 billion for future debt and also for a contingency fund.

Let us just take a minute and talk about our debt situation. The member for Louis-Saint-Laurent has asked the Minister of Finance on numerous occasions—I think it is up to 25 or 30 times—when we are going to balance the budget. He refuses to answer that question. We have to assume that he is refusing to answer the question because his finance officials were correct when, the day before Christmas, they released a document that said we will not balance the budget until 2055.

What does that mean to Canadians? First of all, it means that we currently pay \$25 billion a year in interest payments alone, and that is only going to go up. What does that mean to an individual Canadian? It means that each Canadian owes \$17,563, and it means that, in the 10 minutes that I have been speaking, our debt has gone up by another \$0.5 million. That is the seriousness of this particular strategy of the federal government.

I could go on for quite some time, but while I am up, I also want to put my stake in the ground, as the member for Bow River has done. Within the budget, the federal government has said it is going to consult on the proposed tax changes for the farming community. If this is the consultation process, let us be on the record to say that, clearly, this is not something that the federal government should be doing. I hope that when it comes forward in the fall, common sense will prevail and this is one that it will back off on, along with the petroleum drilling incentive that it is planning to cancel.

● (1200)

I will sum up with one—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member will be able to sum up during questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member talked about jobs in the natural resources industry, and I would like to put a challenge to him. In a year and a half, this government was able to not only put in place a process that would take both the environment and economics into consideration in the development of pipelines, but we were also successful at getting pipelines to tidewater. Something the Harper government failed to do in over 10 years we were able to do in a year and a half.

The member made reference to the small business tax, along with small businesses. I would be interested in his thoughts on that. Liberals and the minister have recognized that small business is the backbone of Canada's economy, and one thing we did through a middle-class tax cut was put hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of Canadians, thereby allowing a higher amount of disposal income. That means more consumer spending in small businesses.

Would he not agree that by putting more money into the pockets of Canadians, we are in fact supporting Canada's small businesses?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member to come to Alberta during the summer break. I will take him to Bruderheim and ask him to show me where those two pipelines actually start. There is no shovel in the ground.

The federal government has given approval, which was already given by the National Energy Board, and it cancelled the one that was ready for construction that the Conservative government had approved, called "northern gateway".

Be careful what you ask for, Mr. MP.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind hon. members to direct their commentary to the Chair. We try to avoid going into the second person mode in the House. Members should try to be mindful of that.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member comparing this bill to a *Seinfeld* show. That can also be used to describe the government's legislative agenda for the spring so far. The government said we have had several days to debate this bill and completely ignored the fact that two of those days were a Wednesday and a Friday, for a grand total of an hour and 15 minutes on that one particular day.

I think the government is looking at the fact that we are in May and is getting quite worried, which why we are operating under the yoke of time allocation. This is all by the government's own doing. Liberals played games in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs by not agreeing with the opposition and their entire legislative agenda for this term has been a train wreck, but it is all their own doing.

Would the member agree with me and maybe provide further illustrations of the Liberals' wrecked legislative agenda?

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more, and it scares me when I agree 100% with the member from the island, but I totally agree.

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I think there is one factor at work here. I think the government wants to get this legislation passed and get out of here as quickly as it can, because it knows it is under attack and that the Ethics Commissioner is about to release her report on the Prime Minister's ill-fated Christmas vacation. The government is using closure, and I believe it will use it again in the finance committee, because when the member for Gatineau sat on the finance committee in the last go-round, he put forward a closure motion, so at the next finance committee meeting, I am expecting the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge to bring forward a closure motion.

•(1205)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully and would like the member to perhaps elaborate on the nature of the government's election campaign, in which it promised a one-time stimulatory deficit to fund real infrastructure. It won the election on that promise and on the promise to quickly return to a balanced budget. It completely abandoned these promises and has given us a structural deficit that will last until 2055. It is outrageous.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, what is even more outrageous is that most of those infrastructure dollars that have been budgeted are sitting there. They are not actually being deployed into communities. I cannot name one project in southwest Calgary that has been funded by the government that is under way. What is happening right now is that monies that the Conservative government allocated for things like the ring road are being used and the projects are actually taking place, and the Liberals are taking the credit.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise in this House to speak to budget 2017 and to talk about the positive impacts it will have in my riding of Brampton West.

Before I begin, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Finance for putting forward a budget that continues to help middle-class families and those working hard to join it. It builds on our ambitious last budget, and I have seen first-hand the impacts it has had on families in Brampton West and right across Canada.

One of the first things we did as a government was to lower taxes on our middle class and raise taxes for the top 1%.

Our Canada child benefit has helped thousands of families in my riding of Brampton West. I hear this constantly from my constituents, who have benefited from this policy. It has helped them enrol their children in summer camps or even put food on their table. This is real change.

Budget 2017 is the next step in our government's ambitious plan to make smart investments that will create jobs, grow our economy, and provide more opportunities for middle-class Canadians. I will focus on three aspects of the budget that are very important to my riding of Brampton West: health care, especially mental health and a caregiver tax credit; housing; and, finally, our youth.

I would like to speak about a particular family I met in my constituency office a few months ago, the Dhillon family. They were going through a very pressing time. They were extremely stressed, knowing that Mr. Dhillon's aging mother needed constant care. They told me that Mr. Dhillon had to quit his job so he could provide support to his mother in her deteriorating state. The cost of one

income-earner not being able to work was great. We are seeing a similar situation today with families all across Canada.

Providing support to families in this situation is crucial. As a registered nurse and as the member of Parliament for Brampton West, I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes these extremely important challenges and takes action. Budget 2017 proposes to invest \$6 billion over 10 years to provide Canadians with improved access to home, community, and palliative care services, as well as more support for caregivers. This means that more people will get the care they need in their homes and that more families will be getting more support from their government.

Right now Canadians who are caring for loved ones face a caregiver credit system that is very complex and difficult for families to navigate, so we have simplified it by introducing the Canada caregiver credit. This new non-refundable credit would provide greater support to those in need and would apply to caregivers whether or not they live with the family member who is receiving the care. This measure will provide \$310 million in additional tax relief and will support families struggling to take care of their loved ones. I know how significant this investment is for families like the Dhillon family in my community.

Another reality that is far too true in our community and our country is the lack of support systems for mental health. I had the opportunity to participate on a ride-along with a Peel police officer in Brampton West last summer. During the one-night shift, we did about 15 calls, and 11 of those calls were related to mental health. That is a sad reality in our communities.

While great strides have been made to improve our understanding of mental illness and its impact on people's lives, wait times to see a mental health specialist in certain regions of our country can range up to 18 months. That is just completely unacceptable. That is why I am extremely proud of budget 2017, which will invest \$5 billion over 10 years to support mental health initiatives. These investments will have a significant impact in Brampton West and all across Canada. Improved access to mental health supports will result in improved health outcomes and shorter wait times for hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

We know this is just a start, and I would like to thank my colleague, the hon. Minister of Health, for the leadership she has shown on these very important issues.

I would like to now address how budget 2017 will improve access for Canadians to housing that is safe and affordable. It is an issue I hear about almost constantly in my constituency office. The rising cost of housing in Brampton results in many people not having access to adequate housing.

Government Orders

● (1210)

The wait time in order to get access to a subsidized unit within the Region of Peel is currently seven and a half years, which is one of the longest wait times in Ontario. I hear about seniors not being able to afford housing because they live on a fixed income. I hear about low-income families not being able to access social housing because of the long wait times, as I just stated.

I need to reiterate that all Canadians need and deserve housing that is safe and affordable. Without it, Canadians feel less secure, making it harder to accomplish every other goal, from raising healthy children to pursuing education to getting good jobs and opportunities.

Budget 2017 would make a historic investment of \$11.2 billion over 11 years to build, renew, and repair Canada's affordable housing and to ensure that all Canadians have their housing needs met. This would include \$5 billion that would go toward our new national housing fund to address housing issues in our cities, including co-op housing.

An additional \$2.1 billion over the next 11 years would go toward a homelessness prevention strategy, working with communities across the country to combat homelessness and to provide support to mitigate underlying issues that lead to homelessness.

Finally I would like to turn toward an issue that is very close to my heart, our youth.

I am very proud of our Brampton West youth council, which continues to advocate for issues that are important for the youth in my community. One of the issues that it has continued to raise is about uncertainty about the future, about lack of support to pay for college or university and then about finding good, well-paying jobs after their education.

I am also very proud to report that Brampton will be home to a new Ryerson University campus soon. That is why investments in post-secondary education are essential to my community in Brampton West.

Budget 2017 is investing in post-secondary education, making it more accessible and affordable, building the skills for tomorrow, and helping youth gain the work experience that they need to succeed.

We are investing \$12.5 million over six years for a pilot project to explore new ways to increase awareness for the Canada learning bond and to reduce barriers to access among low-income families.

We are also investing \$59.8 million over four years and \$17 million per year ongoing to expand eligibility for Canada student loans and grants for students in part-time studies to help even more students qualify for student financial assistance.

To build the skills of tomorrow, we are committing \$10.8 million over five years for hands-on learning experiences to introduce diverse groups of young Canadians to the power and potential of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields, as well as investing \$50 million over two years for a program to provide coding and digital skills education to more young Canadians.

To help youth gain work experience, there will be an investment of \$395 million over three years in the youth employment strategy for additional employment and skills development opportunities for our youth. These investments will ensure that our youth are able to access every opportunity possible now and in the future. I am extremely proud of that.

These are just some of the initiatives in budget 2017 that will have a significant impact in my community of Brampton West. I am very proud of our government, our finance minister, and our Prime Minister, who really listened to Canadians and put forward a budget that has taken steps to address the real challenges and issues that every Canadian faces every day.

I am proud to support this budget on behalf of the constituents of Brampton West and I hope that my hon. colleagues from across the country will do the same.

● (1215)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure the member was in the House this morning when the Minister of Finance was giving his rationale as to why the Liberals needed to invoke closure on the budget bill. One of his reasons was that Canadians are becoming impatient and want to see this budget take effect. I would have to say that Canadians are not impatient but are actually extremely apprehensive.

The middle class and those working hard to join it know that they are facing greater debt because of the actions of the current government. They know that their Canada child benefit, which is supposedly more, is actually outweighed now by the loss of tax credits, the increase in taxes on small business, and the increase in fees. They know that the tax break for middle-income Canadians that was done on the backs of the wealthy 1%, which was supposed to be revenue-neutral, is costing taxpayers \$1 billion annually. Therefore, they are very concerned about the budget. They are apprehensive, not impatient.

There are the controls on the parliamentary budget officer, concerns about the infrastructure bank, commitments to DND that are now in the air so that we do not see where the money is, and now, \$1.3 trillion in borrowing. How will this budget impact the apprehension of Canadians?

Ms. Kamal Khara: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague asked many questions. I will try to summarize, as I did in my speech, all the significant steps our government is taking to address the real challenges Canadians are facing every day and how badly we need these changes implemented so that my constituents in Brampton West, and Canadians all across the country, can benefit.

Again, I encourage all members in this House to vote in favour of our budget. That is what Canadians expect of us. That is what Canadians elected us to do. We will continue to work extremely hard for all Canadians.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

However, I cannot understand why the Liberal government is imposing closure on an omnibus that is full of bad news for Canadians.

I would like someone to explain the Liberals' change in strategy. During the election, they said it was the right time to borrow money to invest in our public infrastructure now that interest rates are so low. However, they never said they were going to use so much private sector money. They are essentially privatizing our infrastructure.

Why are they giving private investors a 7% to 9% return on their investment when we were told they were going to borrow money at a 2% interest rate? It makes no sense.

[English]

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous government, our goal is to support our municipal and provincial partners to support the infrastructure they need. We have put forward an ambitious plan. More than \$180 billion would be invested in our infrastructure. It would include investing in housing, child-care spaces, public transit, and clean infrastructure.

I was very proud to announce, with all my Brampton colleagues, an investment of over \$30 million in the city of Brampton a few months ago. It has helped the city get more buses and build more shelters and has tremendously impacted the commuters and residents of Brampton West.

Our government believes that we can do more for our municipal and provincial sectors by engaging the private sector, and that is exactly what we are doing.

• (1220)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to address my comments to the unacceptable use of time allocation in this debate and put to her, and hopefully to her caucus, the reality of the consequences. The citizens of my riding have rights equal to those of the citizens of Brampton West. Saanich—Gulf Islands citizens do not entertain second-class status. However, unfortunately, I have been informed that due to time allocation, I will not be allowed to speak to this bill. I will not have an opportunity at this moment to speak to this bill. We heard the Minister of Finance say that a number of Conservatives have spoken and a number of New Democrats have spoken. Can the hon. member find it in her heart to ask the members of her caucus to give up one of their speaking slots so that I might have a chance to comment on this bill?

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for all the hard work she does on behalf of her constituents.

I described and discussed the budget in my speech and the significant steps our government is taking to address the real challenges facing Canadians every single day. I encourage members to send this bill to committee. We can then hear from witnesses and let the committee do the important work it is mandated to do. I am not sure about the procedure, but there may be a possibility at third reading of the bill of having the hon. member speak.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss our government's plan to build a stronger middle class through what I see as a three-pillar approach. It is an approach that includes investments in infrastructure, a focus on innovation to ensure that our economy continues to unlock new possibilities, and the final pillar, continuing investments in lifelong learning and skills training for Canadians to help them succeed in an evolving 21st century job market.

Budget 2017 would continue our government's bold vision for a more prosperous Canada and a brighter future for all Canadians, including the residents I have the privilege of serving in the riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge. Bill C-44, the budget implementation bill, would ensure that the plan laid out in budget 2017, a plan to strengthen the middle class and to help those working hard to join it, is fully implemented.

Bill C-44 contains a number of measures I am particularly proud of and represents my core values of compassion, inclusiveness, and a desire to ensure a better future for my children.

Measures in the budget include our government's commitment to provide stable, predictable, and longer-term funding for all provinces for home care and mental health care services over the next 10 years. In my province of Ontario, the home care and mental health care funding component would amount to a \$4.2-billion investment over 10 years, which would improve access to home care, home-based palliative care, and community-based care.

In addition, Bill C-44 would introduce a new Canada caregiver credit and would change the employment insurance caregiver benefit. The new Canada caregiver credit would simplify existing tax measures for caregivers by replacing the existing caregiver credit, the infirm dependent credit, and the family caregiver tax credit with a more inclusive and enhanced benefit. This new credit would be better targeted and would extend tax relief to some caregivers who may not have currently qualified due to the income level of their dependents. The fiscal impact of this measure over the next four years would be \$310 million to Canadians in this situation.

In addition, Bill C-44 would create a new employment insurance caregiver benefit. Presently, EI benefits are available to eligible caregivers in cases where a loved one is gravely ill and at significant risk of death or where a child is critically ill or injured. However, the existing provisions miss a lot of Canadians who provide informal care for seriously ill family members.

Government Orders

I am very proud to say that budget 2017 would dedicate nearly \$700 million over five years to create a new benefit to assist caregivers. This new credit would cover a broader range of situations where adult family members are providing care to an adult family member who requires significant support to recover from critical illness or injury.

I wish to focus a majority of my remaining time and remarks on our government's historic plan for investments in infrastructure. It is a plan that would commit nearly \$180 billion-plus in investments over the next 12 years. This significant investment would be guided by a firm principle that investing in Canada and Canadians from coast to coast to coast would create long-term economic growth, build inclusive communities, and support a low-carbon, green economy.

Our government was elected on a platform that committed to making significant investments in infrastructure, a plan that included the development of an infrastructure bank. I am pleased to say that Bill C-44, the budget implementation act, would create the new Canadian infrastructure bank, which would oversee the investment of approximately \$15 billion in infrastructure projects.

In my humble view, a view shaped by my nearly 25 years in the global financial services sector, the creation of the Canada infrastructure bank would provide the ability to accelerate and expand investments in infrastructure in Canada from coast to coast to coast by leveraging private capital.

Canada is blessed with a multitude of natural resources, but we are also blessed with significant human capital resources as well as financial institutions that manage literally tens of billions of dollars for Canadian pensioners from coast to coast to coast.

In Ontario, firms such as the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, OPTrust, the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan, and OMERS collectively manage hundreds of billions of dollars for pensioners. These are globally respected firms that employ Canadians. They provide ongoing benefits for their retirees, be it teachers, hospital workers, janitors, or engineers, who in turn support our economy with their spending. These institutions would be ideal partners for the infrastructure bank in undertaking strategic investments to help strengthen and grow the Canadian economy.

• (1225)

I cannot understate the importance of the Canada infrastructure bank as a new and innovative financing tool to help public dollars go further and to help build infrastructure projects in Canadian communities.

For Canada and all Canadians to succeed, we must be innovative. We must foster an economy that is flexible and adaptive and that responds to technological change and globalization, an economy that will lift literally millions out of poverty and not leave anyone behind. It is one of Canada's core national values, and our obligation as a government, to ensure that no Canadians are left behind and that they have the skills and tools necessary to thrive in the 21st century. The Canadian infrastructure bank would be a tool that would create good middle-class jobs and ensure a brighter future for all Canadians.

Let me say again that our plan to invest nearly \$180 billion in infrastructure over the next 12 years is historic.

I would like to close by outlining some of our commitments contained in Bill C-44 and budget 2017. One is \$29 billion for public transit to build new transit networks and service connections to get people to work and home again more quickly in the evenings to their families, or in my case, to my daughters' swimming lessons.

This year, the city of Vaughan and my riding will see the benefits of our government's infrastructure investments with the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension set to begin operation. The TYSSE is already transforming the city of Vaughan with the development of a revitalized city centre that will eventually be home to approximately 30,000 to 40,000 new residents and nearly 20 million square feet of new office, commercial, and residential space.

We would invest \$26 billion in green infrastructure to ensure that all Canadians have access to safe water, clean air, and green communities. I am proud to state that we will ensure that all our children, including my two daughters, inherit a country cleaner and greener than we did.

Budget 2017 would deliver a further \$25 billion for social infrastructure that would provide safe, adequate, and affordable housing as well as access to high-quality and affordable child care spaces. Our recent historic announcements related to housing would ensure that we would see inclusive growth that would enable all Canadians to step up and contribute to a brighter future for their families.

There would be \$10 billion for trade and transportation corridors that would provide safe, sustainable, and efficient transportation systems and allow Canadian companies to access global markets, creating more high-paying jobs for middle-class Canadians.

Finally, our \$2-billion investment in rural and northern communities would ensure that these communities would have the necessary resources, including broadband infrastructure, to help them succeed.

I am proud of our government's commitment to invest in infrastructure and the future of this great country. It is the right thing to do.

Bill C-44, the budget implementation bill, is the beginning of the implementation of budget 2017. It is the right legislation to ensure a stronger, more prosperous middle class, to ensure that those who are working hard to join it do so, and to ensure that all of our children, including my daughters, Natalia and Eliana, who are at school today, have a bright future ahead of them.

• (1230)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for talking about the budget implementation bill and in particular for talking about this new infrastructure bank.

Government Orders

Coming from the financial industry, the member should be well versed in how this bank would operate. From the outside looking in, it appears as though this bank would best serve Liberal fundraisers and hedge fund organizers and would really be another opportunity to pad the pockets of Liberal elites.

Why, instead of disbanding the Canada savings bonds program, would the Liberals not have chosen to build on that program, providing ordinary everyday Canadians, the middle class and those working hard to join it, instead of all the Liberals' billionaire friends, with an opportunity to invest their hard-earned dollars in Canada savings bonds, which could have funded this bank?

With interest rates the way they are at the banks today, a Canada savings bond that would generate the kinds of returns their Liberal buddies are going to expect could have served hard-working Canadians very well.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, before I became a member of Parliament and before I entered into financial services, I worked at McDonald's as a kid. I worked at a pulp mill growing up in northern British Columbia, and I cleaned fish as a fish filleter in northern British Columbia. I know very well how hard Canadians work day in and day out, and I take great offence at this word "elite". I am not an elite. I have worked very hard my entire life. My parents came here as immigrants, and we worked, whether it was cleaning or working at a fish plant, or whether it was my mother working as a dietician or my dad working at a pulp mill in northern British Columbia as a carpenter, a sheet metal worker, or a roofer. I take offence to that.

The infrastructure bank would invest in projects from coast to coast. That is the target. We would leverage private capital to ensure that this was done in a way that respected taxpayers' dollars and respected Canadians' rights, and we would do it with institutions in Canada. That would allow us to undertake projects and accelerate investments in infrastructure.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to my Liberal colleague who used the well-known expression "coast to coast to coast". I would like members to think about the meaning of this expression, because people who live far away do not have the opportunity to speak in the House.

Nevertheless, there is one means available to them, and that is delegation. Canadians elect members to speak for them in the House. The government, however, is saying that it does not want to listen to them. It is imposing closure on perhaps the most important bill that will be passed this year. Not only is the budget implementation bill an omnibus bill—even though we were promised there would be no more of those—but, on top of that, the Liberals are invoking closure.

It is fine for them to say "from coast to coast to coast", but democracy is important. I will join my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands in asking the government to revisit its position and to listen to parliamentarians. It is not true that after listening to only 39 or 40 members the government can make an informed decision in the interest of Quebecers and Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-44 undertakes historic investments in health care and mental health care across Canada from coast to coast to coast.

A number of measures in the bill will help Canadians, whether it is the new Canada caregiver tax credit or improvements to EI. These measures will benefit all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Our investment in infrastructure will remain ongoing.

I have the privilege of sitting on the Standing Committee on Finance. We look forward to a healthy list of witnesses coming forward. We will study the bill and we will do so in a prudent manner.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-44, the budget implementation legislation.

It is important to acknowledge that time allocation has been moved by the government on this bill. When the Liberals were in this section of the House of Commons, they screamed from the highest rooftops that this was undemocratic. They are moving closure at a record pace, even more than was done under the Harper administration, and that is unfortunate.

For the practical person who is watching the debate at home, this means some members will not have a chance to talk about how the budget will impact them, their ridings, and the country in general. Time allocation is done for expediency.

Bill C-44 is being called an omnibus bill. The omnibus approach is a lazy style of governing. The government does not have to move legislation through the proper parliamentary process and procedure in order to get it done. In layman's terms, it basically means the government is putting all kinds of things into one giant box and then shoving them out the door versus going through things individually and ensuring legislation is done properly. Over 30 pieces of legislation would be affected by the bill. This is not like setting up a household budget. This is about making strategic decisions with respect to the rules of how legislation goes through the House of Commons.

It is important for people to understand the necessary and proper planning process for certain legislation. Things will end up in the courts and will cost taxpayers more money. Things will not get the necessary review they need. Issues involving businesses, consumers, the environment will all be impacted by Bill C-44, because the Liberals are, quite frankly, lazy, and that is unfortunate.

Since the Liberals took office, their record shows that committees have been underutilized. That is because very little legislation has come to the House. Plenty of people and organizations want to provide input, but this denies them that opportunity to change things.

I want to talk about a couple of things in the budget bill that relates to issues on which I have been working. They are important not only to my constituents but to all taxpayers across the country.

Government Orders

Manufacturing is one of the issues on which I want to focus. Manufacturing in the United States and other countries around the world is seen as a key sector for national interests. An argument has been made for the national security of a nation state to have solid manufacturing in that country.

The Liberal government's approach to manufacturing has not been a healthy one. The Prime Minister went through southern Ontario. He singled out manufacturing in London, saying it was past what should be done and that we needed to find different ways. No one has ever argued against innovation and change. No one has ever argued against adding supplementary elements to our economy. However, we have always had to fight for manufacturing and we have seen great success from that fight. Our national coffers have been filled by the wealth from manufacturing over the last number of decades. To this day, manufacturing is over 10% of our GDP relating to what we can bring in as income.

On top of that, we have revenue from taxation that comes in from employees who work in the manufacturing sector as well as the taxes that come in from benefits in other types of support systems, which help people to have a decent job, to send their kids to college or university, to invest in a small business, or to get additional training for the future.

For nearly a decade, I have fought in this place for the automotive sector to be singled out for a specific manufacturing strategy, which has been done by most industrial states. The automotive sector is losing out in this budget by the mere fact that it is lumped in with other types of manufacturing or other types of initiatives, including agrifood. Both of these sectors deserve their own strategies.

Agrifood is another sector that relates to national security when we look at food safety, food management and economic development by having stability. Agrifood deserves its own separate strategy.

• (1235)

Manufacturing and auto, in particular, is lumped in again as opposed to a separate auto innovation fund designed specifically to meet some of the exciting challenges and opportunities in the automotive industry.

Before NAFTA, Canada was number two in the world in auto assembly and manufacturing. In fact, before we signed onto the free trade agreement with the United States, we had been very successful through a negotiated agreement called the Auto Pact. Assembly and manufacturing in Canada was at unprecedented levels because we tapped into the skill set of employees. We also exported automobiles to many parts of the world, but predominantly to the United States. We created quite a system of wealth, education, training, expertise, industrial development, and innovation that was critical.

With NAFTA, our Auto Pact agreement was challenged, and we lost it. At that time, the Liberals did not even bother to take us to a secondary challenge at the WTO. The government abandoned it. It is quite shocking in the sense that almost every other country will always fight to the end for something. Not only did the Liberals sign an agreement that killed our dominance in that industry, but they simply gave up. We have a historical problem with the Liberal Party.

The budget shifts away from a special \$500 million fund. Then the auto parts manufacturing fund is being lumped together with other elements. To be fair, the government has increased the overall amount of money going into that fund, but it is very small compared to our competitors to the south, Mexico and other places in the world. However, it did go up somewhat. The problem is that the types of different qualifications of that fund have been opened up, instead of having a special designated fund with over \$500 million for innovation, especially when we look at autonomous vehicles, hybrids and electric vehicles. Canada has not had a greenfield, a brand new auto plant manufacturing development, in over 15 years, so there are significant challenges to begin with.

With all those things put together, we have abandoned that type of approach. I will still champion and continue to fight for auto manufacturing jobs and benefits, especially right now. Canadians want that. Canadians want to work in a stable employment environment that has decent wages for the amount of effort, education, and training they put into it. They would have benefits so they could live their lives and ensure that if they had health issues, they would be paid. They would have a value-added industry with a connection to personal relationships, the fact that they could take pride in the work they did and contribute to the overall economy. They would have accountability. Last year, so many workers did not come home safely from their job. Some children were left without fathers and mothers because of industrial accidents. In the past, jobs in the auto sector had some accountability and a working relationship to improve those things.

We have lost out on those types of opportunities because of a lack of industrial strategy. Canadians are asking for that. They want to be part of a greater communal effort to improve their quality of life and to raise the quality of life for the middle class. The budget fails in many respects because it has abandoned the strategies necessary to that.

• (1240)

When we look at the watering down that is taking place on this one specific element I have talked about in terms of the auto manufacturing issues, it is a missed opportunity given the industrial development and advances environmentally and economically in the industry, and because of that, I cannot support this budget.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, in the recent Ontario economic outlook report that was published in February, pointed out that the major concern for small, medium, and large businesses in Ontario is recruiting staff. The top seven concerns included infrastructure investments and training of the workforce, among other things. We have invested quite a bit of money in innovation, which is going to replace some of the industrial jobs that we have lost in the past, but we will invest more in innovation and advanced manufacturing in this country. What is the member's comment on that?

Government Orders

• (1245)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, it is a great example of what has taken place in terms of the challenges we face. The problems of the Ontario Liberal Wynne government and the federal government are quite specific when we look at training. In my area, there is manufacturing and tool and die mould-making. The policies of the Liberals and their lack of support to keep a middle class working and functioning includes the offloading of training and education expenses onto students and young people to such a level that when they go into the workplace or get training, be it college or university, it has resulted in students paying for their education well beyond what their career could gain them once they actually complete their education.

It is a challenge to get workers into tool and die mould-making, which is actually getting a resurgence in my area, because the cost of their education is so high and burdensome that it intimidates them. Employers and the government need to do more to make sure students are not entirely burdened by this landslide of debt and prevented from actually entering the workforce.

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Windsor West and his party also campaigned on a balanced budget in the last election. I recognize that his riding is much like mine. There are two automotive assembly plants, a medium-sized truck assembly plant, and a lot of suppliers in that whole field in my riding. Very recently, General Motors announced the layoff of 600 people from one of those plants.

As his and my communities suffer under the Ontario Liberals and the high energy costs, I wonder if he, as I have, has wondered about all of the spending that the Liberals are so proud of. They have not talked about where the money is going to come from and which generations are going to end up paying for it. I wonder if he has any of those same concerns as we go forward. We need to take care of people today, but we also need to be concerned about the young people of tomorrow.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, there is no question about the cost of borrowing. One has to look at why one is borrowing and what one is going to get in return. Similar to my constituents, the member's constituents will be very hard pressed to understand why some of these expenditures have taken place and at what cost. There are many policies of the Conservatives and Liberals with regard to manufacturing that I differ with. I believe in a sectoral strategy, which has been done in South Korea's automotive industry. We can look at what has been taking place in Germany, the United States, and Mexico. They have identified auto manufacturing as a specific strategy to actually set targets and numbers. Similarly, to reduce our debt, we have to set the targets, look at the benchmarks, and evaluate them. One of the key elements is to try to make sure there is going to be accountability for those things.

I could go on all day about the infrastructure bank alone and ask for unanimous consent to do so, but the lack of accountability will be its Achilles' heel because we will not be able to see what the value for money will be at the end of the day.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand today to speak in support of budget 2017, specifically in relation to Canada's youth and our young generation.

My riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills contains the renowned University of Toronto Mississauga campus. When we door-knocked and I met with constituents over the past year, one of the recurring themes that kept arising and continues to arise is the concern among our youth about their security in the future, their job prospects, and their career prospects. I am very happy that budget 2017 addresses all of this.

Young Canadians will be the ones who drive the future growth of Canada's economy, yet too many struggle to complete the education they need to succeed now and in the future. Even young Canadians who do well in school can find it difficult to get the practical work experience they need to find and keep good, well-paying jobs after graduation. To help young Canadians succeed, budget 2017 proposes a number of measures that will help create good, well-paying jobs and support young Canadians as they transition into the workforce.

Canadian youth have the talent and the drive to succeed in the labour market. To help them make the transition from school to work and get a strong start in their careers, the government invests in the youth employment strategy, a government-wide initiative to help support Canada's newest workers. Last year, the government announced new investments in the youth employment strategy and the Canada summer jobs program, which help to create short-term job opportunities for students between the ages of 15 and 30. This initiative specifically created hundreds of jobs for students in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills.

These investments are supporting the creation of over 5,000 opportunities for young Canadians under the skills link stream, which helps vulnerable youth overcome barriers to employment; nearly 2,500 new green jobs that help young Canadians learn about their natural environment and contribute to economic growth in the environmental sectors; and additional job opportunities for young Canadians to work in the heritage sector through the young Canada works program. To further expand employment opportunities for young Canadians, budget 2017 proposes to provide an additional \$395.5 million over three years starting in 2017-18 for the youth employment strategy. Combined with budget 2016 measures, these investments will help more than 33,000 vulnerable youth develop the skills they need to find work or to go back to school; create 15,000 new green jobs for young Canadians; and provide over 1,600 new employment opportunities for youth in the heritage sector.

Government Orders

Budget 2017 presents youth with a new and ambitious approach to work-integrated learning. Co-operative education and work-integrated learning programs such as the ones offered by various universities in Canada are a proven way for students to get the work experience they need to build their resumés and build a network of professional contacts. To create new co-op placements and work-integrated learning opportunities for post-secondary students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, or STEM for short, and business programs, budget 2016 provided \$73 million over four years for job-creating partnerships between employers and interested post-secondary institutions. This investment is expected to create up to 8,700 new work-integrated learning placements over the next four years, making more opportunities available to young women and men interested in STEM.

Young Canadians are curious, talented, entrepreneurial, and well educated. These are traits that make them well positioned to deliver the next great breakthrough in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. In order to unlock this potential, young Canadians need to have equal access to the formative experiences that can spark new ideas and inspire careers in these important fields. This is especially true for those young Canadians who are traditionally under-represented in the STEM fields, including women and indigenous peoples.

• (1250)

The PromoScience program helps to introduce diverse groups of young Canadians to the power and potential of these exciting fields through hands-on learning experiences such as space camps and conservation projects. To support these efforts, budget 2017 proposes to invest \$10.8 million over five years, starting in 2017-18, to allow PromoScience to support more STEM learning activities for Canadian youth, in particular, under-represented groups.

Teachers also play an important role in keeping students engaged in formal STEM learning and in developing the culture of innovation that Canada needs today and in the future. Budget 2017 proposes to invest \$1.5 million over five years, starting in 2017-18, to expand the prime minister's awards for teaching excellence, to include 17 new STEM-themed awards. These awards will recognize teaching excellence and allow for broad sharing of teaching practices at the national level.

To help more Canadians learn about and celebrate extraordinary accomplishments in research excellence, budget 2017 also proposes to create a new prime minister's gold medal. This award would recognize scientific excellence and bring greater international acclaim to Canadian scientists and researchers.

To create even more work-integrated learning opportunities for Canadian students, the government announced it would renew and expand federal funding for Mitacs, a not-for-profit organization that builds partnerships between industry and educational institutions. Budget 2017 proposes to provide \$221 million over five years, starting in 2017-18, to achieve this goal and provide relevant work experience to Canadian students. This investment in Mitacs' work-integrated learning programs would help deliver 10,000 internships per year to post-secondary students.

Meric Gertler, the president of the University of Toronto celebrated this investment and added, "The Government of Canada

is to be commended for this investment in Canadian talent through Mitacs. It will provide career-building opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, and top-quality expertise for businesses and other organizations. These are key factors in building our country's capacity for innovation and in driving our long-term prosperity."

In addition, budget 2017 is set to renew investments in Pathways to Education Canada. Each year, too many young Canadians drop out of high school, often because they do not have access to the basic supports needed to succeed in school. To help these young students, the government provides support to Pathways to Education Canada, a charitable organization that helps youth in low-income communities across Canada complete high school and successfully transition into post-secondary education and employment.

Budget 2017 proposes to renew the government's support for Pathways to Education Canada by providing \$38 million over four years, starting in 2018-19. With this renewed funding, Pathways to Education Canada would provide more vulnerable youth with the supports they need to succeed in school, including tutoring, career mentoring, and financial help, such as scholarships and internships.

Furthermore, budget 2017 provides solutions to reducing employment barriers for first nations youth living on reserve. First nations youth on reserve face unique challenges to enter the labour force. It is important that youth have the supports they need to access employment opportunities so they can begin careers that will benefit them over the course of their lifetimes. To help first nations youth acquire better pre-employment skills, access education and training, and overcome barriers to employment, budget 2017 proposes to invest \$39.2 million in 2017-18 to provide case management services for youth living on reserve.

Budget 2017 takes the next step in the government's long-term economic plan, understanding that in the face of unprecedented change, a confident Canadian middle class and an empowered youth will always be the beating heart of our country and the engine of our economy.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her interesting and important speech.

Government Orders

• (1300)

[English]

My colleague emphasized youth and the young generation. We agree it is important to invest in them. However, we do not share the same attitude of the government because, when it borrows money, the bill will be paid by the next generation. If it cannot pay its bills today, it will be our children and grandchildren, many of whom are not born yet, who will have to pay for its misjudgement. I would like the member on this side to explain how the government can be so concerned about youth when it will be handing them a bill for its bad administration, with huge deficits, three times what was expected. She was elected under the oath of a \$10 billion deficit, and now we are talking about \$30 billion. She was elected on a zero deficit by 2019, and we are now talking about a zero deficit by 2055. How can she deal with that?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, our government believes that Canadians are strong, and we need to provide them with the foundation to help continue to build our country. Budget 2017 is an investment into our future. It is an investment into the Canadian people and our middle class. When we empower our youth, when we empower our middle class, we will help our nation prosper.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to put a question to the member. I appreciate her putting the emphasis on the value of education. However, what is a great disappointment to aboriginal children in this country is that the government has taken the position that it does not have to respond to the directives of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. It is astounding that it would take that position. It is greatly disappointing for all of the children in Canada who stood up to say that aboriginal children should have the same right of access to quality education as other children in this country.

The government has decided, yet again in this year's budget, not to ensure the same equal access to services and education for aboriginal children as other children in the country have. What is the member's response to that? Does she agree with her government that it does not have to comply with the determination of the Canadian Human Rights Commission?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, our government has made it very clear that we stand for the rights of aboriginal people in our country, and we will do what it takes to make sure that equal access is provided. Therefore, budget 2017 makes major investments into aboriginal youth to ensure that their education is preserved and that they are also able to prosper and become part of a working economy here in Canada. We look forward to working with all members in this House to continue to work for all people of Canada, including our aboriginal communities.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like the member to go further into the discussion about the investments that our government is making, the investments in education, investments in STEM, which she mentioned, and the investments in child care and support, which will help get people of all genders working on behalf of Canadians and their own prosperity, as well as the prosperity of our country.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for giving me the opportunity to continue to comment on this important topic.

As the census results came in for 2016, I found that there were approximately 3,000 more women than men in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills. Therefore, I am very happy with the great initiatives that this government has taken ensuring further equality in our workforce, making investments with respect to STEM, and ensuring that our diversity of opinion is also reflected in the great work that is done by Canadians in this important field of STEM.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank the voters of my riding for giving me the responsibility to represent their interests in the political affairs of our nation. While my constituents are pleased with the calibre of representation they receive from their federal member of Parliament in Ottawa, their worst fears are being realized by an arrogant Prime Minister who is totally out of touch with the concerns of average, everyday Canadians.

What Parliament has before it today with Bill C-44 is more than 300 pages of out-of-control spending to implement another deficit budget that promises to mortgage the future of our children, their children, and the generation after that. For a government that claims to be implementing its election promises, I have yet to be shown where the promise of budget deficits until maybe 2055 was told to voters. The worst parts of this budget are the huge deficit and that it continues to fail veterans. The Liberal Party talked a mean game when it preached to have empathy for veterans.

Unfortunately, the biggest failure of the government, after cutting \$12 billion from the defence budget, was not insisting on the resignation of the Minister of National Defence. The minister has disgraced his office, his comrades, and his position. This is a deplorable situation. He lacks the courage to even provide a real explanation for his repeated need to embellish the truth, and he lacks the courage to do the right thing and fall on his sword, which is what honourable soldiers would do if they found themselves in the situation of the Minister of National Defence, which is entirely of his own making.

The Prime Minister has, with his deficit budget, betrayed soldiers and veterans like Warrant Officer Roger Perreault. Unlike the Minister of National Defence, for whom stolen valour was his way to curry favour with his boss Gerald Butts, who is the architect of the Green Energy Act in Ontario and who provides the talking points for the Prime Minister, Warrant Officer Perreault is a Canadian hero. He was critically injured serving his country in Afghanistan.

Government Orders

On February 8, I posed a question to the government on behalf of Warrant Officer Roger Perreault, a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, regarding his eligibility for the critical injury benefit. Unlike the current defence minister who prefers to embellish his service record, Officer Perreault was an Afghanistan veteran who, in the process of serving his country honourably, was critically injured by a roadside bomb. He is being denied the critical injury benefit, being told that at age 46 his injuries are the result of his body wearing out. It is unbelievable. Rejected by the Liberal government for the critical injury benefit in March 2016, he appealed that decision, only to be denied his next appeal.

Veterans are not interested in hearing how many new bureaucrats have been hired or that empty offices are being opened in a government-held riding. Veterans want action. What happened to the election promise to draw, from all circumstances of a veteran's case and all the evidence presented to the government, every reasonable inference in favour of the applicant? Warrant Officer Perreault and other Afghanistan veterans are the real Canadian heroes. Let us start treating them like heroes.

Budget 2016 marked the beginning of a second Liberal era of darkness for Canada's women and men in the Canadian Armed Forces. The decision to relocate or re-profile—which is Liberalspeak for cut—\$8.5 billion in defence allocations in budget 2017, in addition to the previous cuts, confirms the worst fears of our women and men in uniform. Canada's veterans are being told that they should just wait, that tomorrow and the next budget will fix everything. It is the tomorrow budget, but tomorrow never comes. It is a false economy to plan on denying veterans benefits with the expectation that the veterans will eventually give up fighting for what they are entitled to receive.

In addition to the treatment of veterans, this budget fails Canadians by what it hides from Canadians. What is not explained to Canadians with this budget, and so much of what the government is doing behind the backs of Canadians, is the real impact of plunging this country into a series of massive deficits in pursuit of agenda 2030: the radical UN climate agenda that is bankrupting individual Canadians and causing massive financial hardship.

Canadians are asking where the line item is in this budget bill to compensate for losses, damages, and the destruction of private property due to environmental policies that have not been properly costed, including a proper cost-benefit analysis.

● (1305)

Canadians are being misinformed that radical environmental policies are necessary to save Canada and the world, with no explanation of cost or whether many of these policies are really necessary or just another tax grab, like the Liberal carbon tax.

Residents in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke are only now finding out about plan 2014, after reading about it from American media sources, which has forced some media in Canada to report about it. Plan 2014 was an agreement signed by the dying Obama U.S. administration after the recent American U.S. election but ratified before the new president had taken office. It was signed on December 8, 2016, the day the lame duck U.S. vice-president, Joe Biden, showed up in Ottawa for a visit shrouded in secrecy and speculation as to the true nature of his trip.

Plan 2014 was never brought before Parliament. There was no discussion or debate regarding the cost, including who would pay for the losses. The plan contains no promises or built-in provisions for more federal or state aid to deal with problems it might cause. This treatment is quite different from the treatment given by the Liberal government and the finance minister to nations in Africa, who are given billions of Canadian dollars, taxpayers' dollars, to fight climate change in their countries. The official readout for Biden's Ottawa visit stated “combating global climate change” and other things.

The plan 2014 agreement changes a regulating system that had been in place on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River since 1958. Plan 2014, which is designed to more closely mimic the lakes' natural ups and down, adds muskrats, fish, and other wildlife to the list of interests regulators must now consider when they decide how much water to release.

The new regulation blocks the flow of water through the Moses-Saunders dam located on the St. Lawrence River between Cornwall, Ontario, and Massena, New York. By blocking the flow of the St. Lawrence, the entire Great Lakes watershed has now backed up. One of its many goals is to create 64,000 acres of wetland to fight climate change. Another goal is to increase hydroelectric power.

The mismanagement of the electricity sector in Ontario is well documented. The Province of Ontario has been politically interfering with the water dams that produce electricity to pay for its failed energy policy by holding back too much water in the reservoirs. With too much water in the reservoirs, there was no place to accumulate the winter melt and any additional rains from the late spring. This is backed up in the Ottawa River watershed and into the St. Lawrence, flooding Montreal as well as the Ottawa Valley and the Great Lakes.

The combination of Ontario's failed electrical policies and the decision by the government of the Ottawa Liberals to change a 59-year-old water agreement between Canada and the U.S. has created a manmade crisis. We had a late spring, and we have the perfect storm of incompetence.

Climate change gets blamed for everything these days, including the deficit budget. The Liberal government in Ottawa has adopted the practice of the Liberal Party in Toronto in blaming every bad policy as necessary to fight manmade global warming. Taxpayers have every right to be skeptical.

Government Orders

Flooding in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is beyond crisis, as residents watch their front yards turned into wetlands. On behalf of the flooded residents, I contacted the Minister of National Defence, who was too busy sandbagging calls for his resignation to respond to the cries for help to fill sandbags to hold back the rising waters. There is no doubt that, had the Liberals responded to my call for help back on April 21 with a flooding crisis, the damage and destruction could have been reduced.

The bill to the federal and provincial Liberal governments, who share blame for this crisis, will be substantial. Will municipalities be expected to borrow from the Liberals' infrastructure bank, which is referred to in this legislation, to rebuild the destruction of the infrastructure, taxpayers borrowing their own tax-paid dollars and then paying \$9 billion in interest payments?

Bill C-44 is filled with distorted incentive, blame avoidance, credit taking, ideological policy, finger pointing, and the competitive and duplicative provision of programs in popular spending areas. It is time to send budget 2017 back to the drawing board.

• (1310)

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

Mr. Speaker, I am always intrigued when the member opposite delivers a speech. I reflect on the days when she was in government and had to criticize something, so she criticized the provincial government because it was Liberal. If it is not Conservative, it is bad, bad, bad. I think that is the message the member gets across better than any Conservative, New Democrat, or Bloc member. If there is a dark side to anything in life, the member has a way of pulling it out.

I have a challenge for the member. I have listened to many of her speeches. Is there anything at all that she believes is remotely positive in this budget from her perspective? Canadians as a whole understand, appreciate, and support this government's budget, but it seems she may be the only one in the country who might not have a positive thing to say about the budget or maybe even life in general. I wonder if she could say something positive about it.

• (1315)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I have to thank the member opposite, my biggest fan in the House, for his elocution. In any case, I always look forward to his being in the audience to make sure I can draw further attention to the important points that I make.

With respect to the provincial government, that was a warning to the people who were about to go to Ottawa, because the actual architect of the green energy act is now the key adviser to the Prime Minister, and he is driving this country into the hole just the same way he drove Ontario into the hole.

This is not just my opinion on this budget. I talked to constituents and asked for feedback. They gave me the five worst things about the budget. Number one is it betrays veterans. Number two is electronic T4s, because they do not have any faith in the government's being able to stop hacking. Next was student loans for non-citizens, then raising the takeover review threshold, and then the infrastructure bank, where we pay interest on borrowing dollars that taxpayers already put into that bank.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are many sawmills in my riding. We are talking about the budget, but, unfortunately, I will not have the opportunity to speak about it because the government moved a time allocation motion.

A very important issue was not addressed in the budget, even though we have been asking the government to prepare for it for over a year and a half. The sawmills in my riding are on the verge of a crisis. They may even have to shut down because of the surtax, the countervailing duties, currently being imposed. This will have a negative impact on workers. The government keeps boasting that it is working for the well-being of the middle class, but what are we supposed to tell these people when the government did not include anything in the budget in preparation for this crisis?

There is a major crisis with regard to supercalendered paper, for example, which is very heavily taxed. Two plants, one in Dolbeau-Mistassini and one in Kénogami, will have to close their doors in the coming year. This is a federal tax and, if the federal government does not assume its responsibilities, then thousands of people in my community are going to lose their jobs.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the government's inaction in this budget.

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, when it was apparent that there was not going to be a deal in time and that the countervailing duties were about to come down, my office received a call saying we would get help for all our unemployed forestry workers. That is not the answer we wanted.

In eastern Ontario, parts of Quebec, and parts of northern Ontario, our chief production is white pine and red cedar. Those products should never have been put into the softwood lumber agreement in the first place. Softwood lumber was for construction lumber. White pine and eastern red cedar are specialty woods. They were thrown into the agreement, and now here we are, asking again to have exclusions for these species.

I want to thank the hon. member for providing me with the opportunity to talk about this important industry. At the end of the day, the Province of Ontario keeps on shrinking the footprint of areas where forestry workers can actually harvest forests. We have the model of sustainable forestry for the world—for every one tree harvested, three are planted in return—but the federal government is not interested. It said from the outset that it wanted to change from being a resource economy to a Google economy.

In any case, the Liberals do not care about forestry workers, and that is the bottom line.

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege and an honour to rise in this House, especially when we get an opportunity to speak to budget 2017, *Building a Strong Middle Class*.

Government Orders

Our government has been hard at work ensuring that Canadians in the middle class and those working hard to join it have the policies that put Canadians first, but today I want to speak about things that in a changing economy can have a real impact on the lives of Canadians and how our budget is going to help Canadians thrive over the long term. Our success as a country will be determined by our ability to prepare for and adapt to these changes to grow and strengthen the middle class and those working hard to join it.

As a large country that relies on trade for its economic success, Canada needs to ensure that people and products can move quickly and safely, whether from home to work or from harvest to warehouse. The success of many companies depends on high-quality transportation infrastructure to get goods to market.

Here are some names in the agrifood sector in Brampton that members may recognize: the Coca-Cola bottling group, Maple Lodge Farms, Loblaw's Companies, Italpasta, Sun Rich Fresh Foods, Maple Leaf Canada, Bacardi Canada, and Frito-Lay Canada.

As announced in the 2016 fall economic update, this government will invest \$10.1 billion over 11 years in trade and transportation products. This investment will build stronger and more efficient transportation corridors to international markets and help Canadian businesses to compete, grow, and create more jobs for Canada's middle class. As part of the \$10.1-billion investment, we will launch a new national trade corridors fund to prioritize investments that address congestion and bottlenecks along vital corridors and around transportation hubs and ports that provide access to world markets. Building on Transport Canada's gateways model, this fund is expected to target congestion and inefficiencies at marine ports as well as along the busiest rail and highway corridors to ensure that small- and medium-sized businesses in Brampton can produce in Brampton but have access to markets all around the world.

An additional \$5 billion or more would be provided through the Canada infrastructure bank to address trade and transportation priorities. In addition to identifying priority investments that would help streamline transportation along Canada's major trade corridors, the fund would look for ways to improve the flow of supplies to northern communities, which is important, and unlock economic development in Canada's three territories and create more well-paying middle-class jobs.

As elsewhere in this country, there are countless people in Brampton who drive trucks to and from our southern neighbour to support their families. Their livelihoods depend on a transportation sector, a booming economy, and a strong trade relationship with the U.S.

Expanding Canada's trade links requires an important discussion around our economic success. Strong trade relationships create more opportunities for middle-class Canadians to succeed and prosper. According to the Brampton Board of Trade, Brampton sees roughly \$6.7 billion in goods sold to the U.S. Over 420 Brampton companies export to the U.S. and consider the U.S. to be their most important trading market, responsible for over 34% of their sales. That is why the government is engaging with the United States, with which we share one of the most successful economic relationships in the world, highlighting the fact that our strong interconnected trade relationship

is balanced and beneficial to millions of middle-class families on both sides of the border.

We are also prioritizing trade and investment with key markets in fast-growing areas such as Asia, including with China, India, and Japan, to deepen Canada's ties with this continent and create jobs here at home. Succeeding in the global economy of tomorrow requires openness to the world and strategic partnerships. A key example is the March 22 announcement by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that it has accepted Canada's application for membership.

● (1320)

Membership in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank will help enable high-quality infrastructure and other development projects that would have benefits for people in the region, as well as for Canadians, by supporting inclusive sustainable economic growth in Asia and beyond. Budget 2017 proposes to invest \$256 million over five years to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

When it comes to the engines that power our economy in Canada, Canada's agriculture and agrifood sector accounts for more than 6% of Canada's GDP and employs one out of every eight Canadian. The industry is strong, and in recent years farm revenues, annual exports, and farm incomes have reached record highs, but there is room for improvement, driven in part by the innovative potential of value-added products as the middle class grows in Asia and demand for food rises. Budget 2017 introduces a series of measures to help our agricultural producers and processors excel.

For over 15 years, federal, provincial, and territorial governments have relied on agricultural policy frameworks to promote a collaborative approach to agricultural programming that encourages investment, adaptation, and sustainable growth in the sector. These frameworks have provided the foundation for government agricultural programs and services.

The current agricultural policy framework is set to expire in March 2018. We are committed to working with provinces and territories to develop a new policy framework that supports sustainable growth, innovation, and competitiveness, and helps the sector to adapt to a technology-driven reality.

As part of the development of the next framework, which will be launched in 2018, we will consider the ways in which innovation in agriculture can help strengthen the sector as a whole and create more well-paying jobs for middle-class Canadians.

Brampton is part of the Ontario food cluster, the second-largest food processing cluster in North America. Ontario is home to more than half of Canada's food processing companies. Just a short drive from my neck of the woods, the Ontario food terminal is the largest wholesale fruit and produce distribution centre in Canada and the third-largest in North America, distributing an average of 5.4 million pounds per day.

Government Orders

As part of the innovation corridor, companies in Brampton, like Embassy Flavours, Zadi Foods, Hans Dairy, and KFI Incorporated would have the ability to rely on an innovative agrifood sector, a strong trade relationship, and dependable transit infrastructure. They rely on their governments for this.

That is why our government is taking a multi-faceted approach in budget 2017 to harness change for our benefit. When the middle class is strong and when people feel optimistic and confident about the future, Canadians can and will succeed. When middle-class Canadians believe their hard work can translate to a better life for themselves and their children and grandchildren, they become an unstoppable force.

We know that better is possible and we know the best way to deliver more prosperity to the greatest number of middle-class Canadians is by making smart investments in people and in the economy. The tools that are needed to help Canadians succeed and prosper over the long term are included in budget 2017.

• (1325)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the Asian infrastructure bank. Interestingly enough, the Obama administration and the former Conservative governments decided not to join the bank because it was not in the best interests of taxpayers. It is \$1.3 billion that taxpayers are on the hook for, when direct funding through CETA guarantees Canadian involvement.

I am wondering, with \$35 billion for the latest Liberal infrastructure bank and with the taxpayers at risk, why does he think this is a good idea?

Mr. Raj Grewal: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague started off by saying that the previous Harper government decided not to join the Asia infrastructure bank. However, as she knows, on October 19, 2015, there was an election, and Canadians across the country overwhelmingly voted for change. What real change brought, as opposed to the last 10 years of the lowest growth in the country and lowest job growth in the country, was the highest increase in jobs. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the last eight years because of our investments in the economy.

The Canada child benefit that we implemented has been game-changing for families in Brampton East and all across the country, so we are going to continue to invest in middle-class Canadians and those working hard to join it. Our infrastructure investments are paying off by reducing the unemployment rate in our country, which is at 6.5%. We will continue to work hard to ensure that all Canadians looking for a job have a great one to go to.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has a lot to say about the infrastructure bank. In my riding, the Bagotville airport needs to be renovated and expanded because we want to bring in more tourists.

We want UNESCO designation for the fjord, and we hope the committee will support that. That designation is a global seal of approval. Expanding the Bagotville airport is critical to developing our tourism industry.

In the last election, the government campaigned hard on the infrastructure bank idea and went on and on about a huge infrastructure boom, but sadly that will not help Promotion Saguenay, nor will it get the Bagotville airport expanded. We will not be getting any help from Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions either.

What does my colleague have to say to Promotion Saguenay about the fact that it will not be getting any help from the government or from the federal government program because there is no such help for it?

[*English*]

Mr. Raj Grewal: Mr. Speaker, our government has made record investments in infrastructure. The Canada investment bank will make a further investment of \$35 billion over 11 years.

The NDP's rhetoric has always been about helping Canadians to prosper, about helping middle-class families get jobs that provide food on the table and clothes on their backs. The member opposite talked about infrastructure funding for her airport. I would encourage the member and her party to support our budget, because it invests in infrastructure at a record pace. We will continue to do this. We know that investing in Canadians and in the Canadian economy allows all Canadians to succeed.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, reflecting the position of cabinet and those working hard to join it.

The member gave a reasonably good speech but better is always possible. It would have been good to hear about why the government supported the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The government can invest in infrastructure without giving the Chinese government complete control over where those dollars go. When it comes to accountability, when it comes to human rights, the way in which a bank based out of Beijing operates will be different. The previous American administration chose not to participate in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank precisely because of these concerns.

Why can the Liberal government not make infrastructure investments that do not involve the Chinese government calling the shots?

Mr. Raj Grewal: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I generally do not agree on anything, and that trend continues today. He is a very nice gentleman and I wish him nothing but the best under the future leadership that is about to occur.

Government Orders

When it comes to infrastructure, we will not take lessons from a party that had 10 years in government to help build roads, airports, and transportation hubs in our country. We will ensure we invest in a globalized economy so countries know Canada is ready for their investments, that Canada is willing to ensure Canadians and hard-working small businesses have access to world markets.

When it comes to infrastructure, it is so important for us to ensure that the small manufacturers in Brampton have an opportunity to get access to world markets. That happens with sound, fiscally responsible infrastructure investment.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that it is not in my nature to admit defeat at the outset, but this sure feels like an impossible task. I have 10 minutes to do an in-depth, detailed analysis of Bill C-44.

I will start with the title: an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017—so far, so good—and other measures. Obviously, those measures are not listed. I think a list of the measures that are not mentioned would be three or four pages long. This bill is 290 pages long and amends 30 separate acts.

Let no one think this is an omnibus bill. That was how the Conservatives did things. The Liberals will probably come up with some other name for it, but it is all the same thing.

Worse yet, if we in the NDP wanted to pool our resources together and tackle this budgetary measure, Bill C-44, together as a team, we would not be able to. Time allocation has been invoked, which means that many members of the House, who were elected to be the voice of their constituents in Ottawa, will not be heard yet again because apparently the Liberals have heard enough from us.

I am sorry, but we are light years away from a democratic measure and a democratic discussion or exchange worthy of this place. I will have to pick and choose from the items in this budget that I want to address.

When my speaking time is up, then I will give the floor to one of the few people who will have a chance to speak in the few hours remaining in this debate.

This bill contains not a single tax measure that would restore some semblance of balance among the citizens of this country. There has been a lot of talk about the middle class. The Liberals mention it in practically every paragraph. Strangely enough, those who are part of it are the ones who will be most affected. I have an example that illustrates my point quite well. I could go off on a long diatribe about how there is nothing in this budget to help people who, unfortunately, by a quirk of fate, lose their jobs at some point in their career and must relocate. The budget does absolutely nothing to establish fairer eligibility standards.

Over on this side of the House, we have often advocated for a single eligibility threshold of 360 hours. There is nothing on this in the budget. At present, six out of ten workers who pay premiums are not eligible for benefits when they need them. Let me remind the House that the government is not putting one red cent into EI.

The Liberals are very skilled at window dressing, and there really is something in the budget for employment insurance, in particular parental benefits. It is a well-intentioned measure that, in the end, does not amount to much. To create a better work-life balance, I suppose, and to allow parents who choose to do so to stay home longer after their children are born, they are now being told that parental leave will be flexible and can be extended. However, the amount of benefits they will get will not increase.

A parent can use their credit, if I can call it that, for up to 18 months and receive benefits equal to 33% of their salary. The parent can also choose to take 12 months off and receive 55% of their salary. Obviously, living on 55% of their income already requires substantial changes to their lifestyle in order to make ends meet every month. However, it is for a good cause, namely having a new child in the family and spending the first months, even the first year, with their child. That is important. That person is also prepared to make a certain number of sacrifices and adapt to the situation.

• (1335)

However, can middle-class people really afford to take 18 months of leave with 33% of their income? Once again, the government will claim over and over to have helped the middle class when the only ones who will actually be in a position to benefit from the measure are those who are wealthy enough to live off 33% of their income. This measure sounds good in theory, but in practice it is aimed at a completely different group.

I would like to draw members' attention to something else: the budget watchdog. It may not be the nicest expression, but it is definitely an accurate one. I am talking about the parliamentary budget officer. If there is one resource that is absolutely essential for all members of the House in order to fully grasp the measures that are put before us and to introduce effective checks and balances, it is the work of the parliamentary budget officer, who, in theory, is completely independent.

The parliamentary budget officer will now have to have his work plan approved by the Speaker of the Senate or the Speaker of the House. In theory, both are independent, but in reality, that is certainly debatable. According to the parliamentary budget officer's research, in the 17 countries with such an office, no such approval is required and political interference is not allowed. Once again, the Liberals have come up with a proposal that is novel, but not noteworthy.

Government Orders

The Liberals want to prevent the parliamentary budget officer from being a watchdog, as I mentioned earlier. For example, if this bill had already been passed, we would not have known that the Liberals' tax plan benefits the wealthy, nor would we have uncovered the real cost of the F-35s. Furthermore, individual members will no longer be able to ask the parliamentary budget officer to conduct research, which I feel is a disaster. As we know, sometimes there are important items that concern a riding or a very specific region, but not all of Canada, and which require study as though they were of general interest. I have some examples from my own riding, but I will not expand on them because my time is quickly running out.

To conclude on this point, I would like to quote Jean-Denis Fréchette, the parliamentary budget officer, who said: "I think this bill is problematic. I think it is weaker than the existing legislation." He is more polite than I am, but that is understandable, given his position.

Regarding prior approval for the parliamentary budget officer's work plan, he said that he:

...can easily imagine that a Speaker might not approve a future parliamentary budget officer's decision to assess the fiscal impact of a controversial spending initiative because it would affect the Speaker's party's chances of getting elected.

Those are the parliamentary budget officer's words, not mine. He added that it was difficult to understand how the measure could really work in the interest of greater transparency and get us the results we need.

In the short time I have left I would like to talk about the cuts to international aid. We know that Canada is probably on track to achieve its worst record in international aid. The Minister of Finance announced not too long ago that organizations working in this area would just have to learn to do more with less. That is an old refrain that we have been hearing for ages, and apparently, it will not stop under this Liberal administration.

With respect to tax credits, there is an absolute abyss between what is in here for the middle class and what is in here for the wealthy. Instead of keeping the public transit tax credit, which helps everyone, the Liberals are getting rid of it, but big corporate CEOs get to keep their tax breaks. On the one hand, we have a legal loophole worth about \$800 million per year, and on the other, we have a tax credit that truly is for middle-class people because they use public transit a whole lot more than CEOs do.

• (1340)

They are getting rid of a tax credit that cost about \$200 million. If that is not a double standard, I do not know what it is.

Here is what Mark Hancock had to say about Bill C-44: "If you're an infrastructure bankroller or a billionaire tax dodger, today is a good day. For working Canadians, not so much."

• (1345)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to listen to New Democrats talk about this issue. They say there should be more of a tax on Canada's wealthiest, but the facts speak differently. When the Government of Canada said it believed in Canada's middle class and was going to

give Canada's middle class a tax break, the NDP voted no. When it came to putting a special tax on Canada's wealthiest, the NDP said no. That is the reality. That is black and white. That is in legislation and in the budget. Now the member talks about why Canada's wealthiest should be given special treatment.

Can the member explain to the House today why the NDP voted against the tax put on Canada's wealthiest one per cent?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, when I heard the first part of my hon. colleague's question, I was moved because it seemed like the Liberals were listening to the NDP. It finally dawned on me, however, that they are willing to hear our proposals, but not really listen. There is a difference between hearing and listening and I would love for that gap to narrow.

The measure to increase taxes on the wealthy was supposed to offset the tax cut for the middle class and those wishing to join it. Since its introduction, however, this measure alone has been costing us over \$1 billion a year.

In other words, the government took a few dollars from the rich, but not enough for them to notice, in order to give that money to the middle class and charge the deficit to their children's credit card.

I think it is pretty clear why we voted the way we did. Let us not forget that the budget included a host of measures, not just one.

[English]

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague referred to listening and hearing. My spouse reminds me often of that same listening and hearing skill.

This morning the minister talked about less than 12% of members having spoken to this bill, but he also suggested that Liberals had listened to some of the ideas from some of the members. With only that small percentage that he heard from, if we had longer to speak on it, not closure, there would have been more ideas to listen to, if we had the opportunity. What is the member's response to the closure motion and some of the good ideas that the minister said he had already listened to, and other members not having a chance to suggest more good ideas?

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Aubin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I do not know his wife, but she seems like a wise woman. Unfortunately, like us and my colleague, she will not have the opportunity to be heard in the House.

I thought that no one would ever manage to beat the Conservatives' record for the number of time allocation motions moved during the previous Parliament, but the way things are going, I think that the Liberals may once again outdo the Conservatives and prove to be even more disgraceful than the Harper government.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in this House today and highlight the many positive investments budget 2017 makes in northern Ontario and how these investments would benefit the people who live, work, and play in Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

Our government is committed to moving forward on its plan to make a meaningful impact in the lives of northern Ontarians, and budget 2017 does just that. Under the previous government, significant cuts were made to FedNor, causing economic hardship across the region. With budget 2017, FedNor will receive a \$25 million increase over five years to promote job creation and economic growth in northern Ontario.

Along with my colleagues in the northern Ontario caucus, I am pleased with the dedication to strengthening our economy and recognizing the key role our region plays in Canada's economy as a whole.

The Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development also launched the prosperity and growth strategy for northern Ontario, a targeted approach to economic development through innovation. This strategy will focus on ways to build on the unique strengths and competitive advantages that northern Ontario has in mining, resources, and agriculture, among other sectors. The strategy will identify ways for these sectors to seize new opportunities in emerging industries, such as clean technology, and develop new businesses that will create the well-paying jobs of today and tomorrow for northern Ontarians.

This regional strategy for northern Ontario is part of the Government of Canada's innovation and skills plan, an ambitious effort to make Canada a world-leading centre for innovation that will create more well-paying jobs and grow the middle class. The goal of this plan is to encourage innovation and attract global investment in every region of the country. It will provide Canadians with the support they need, wherever they live and work, to continuously learn, enhance their skill set, and be equipped for the jobs of the future.

On top of this, budget 2017 invests \$2 billion into infrastructure projects in rural and remote communities. This will have a real impact on families in Ontario's north. No longer will FedNor serve as a catch-all for projects in Ontario's north. This shift will free up important FedNor dollars that can then be invested in innovation and economic development, which is why FedNor was initially created. This is an important change in how our government addresses the needs in northern Ontario.

Growing our economy in northern Ontario also means investing in our people and making smart investments. Budget 2017 is assisting in transforming northern Ontario into a world-leading centre for innovation, creating more good, well-paying careers that will help strengthen and grow the middle class.

We are taking measures to ensure that our forestry industry is innovating and growing new opportunities for expansion, such as the partnership between Resolute Forest Products, FPInnovations, and Lakehead University at Resolute's facility in Thunder Bay.

Our government is also supporting early-stage mineral exploration through the extension of the mineral exploration tax credit. Budget 2017 will also create a new strategic innovation fund to attract, support, and grow Canadian businesses in areas such as agrifood, digital, clean tech, and advanced manufacturing.

Northern Ontarians also know the importance of having access to reliable, fast Internet. Our government is working hard to ensure people in Thunder Bay—Rainy River and across the country have access to high-speed Internet. Through budget 2017 we are supporting the affordable access program for low-income families, and the expansion of high-speed broadband for rural communities.

This is in addition to budget 2016's \$500 million to support expansion of high-speed broadband for rural communities. This means that in the future families, individuals, and small business owners in Murillo, Kakabeka Falls, Barwick, Mine Centre, and across the riding will be able to enjoy the benefits of reliable and fast service that broadband provides.

When I was knocking on doors in Thunder Bay—Rainy River, many community members also expressed concern over access to health care services. Through health funding agreements with Ontario, we are providing additional support so families can get the mental health care and home care they need. We are also improving access to pharmaceuticals to help lower the cost of prescription medication and make sure people in Thunder Bay—Rainy River can afford medications.

Thanks to budget 2017, northern Ontarians will have better access to the health services they deserve. We are also working to create good, well-paying middle-class jobs.

● (1350)

Budget 2017 helps Canadians to get the skills they need through employment insurance without the fear of losing benefits.

We are also supporting greater career flexibility for parents of young children with the creation of up to 40,000 new early learning and child care spaces over the next three years. These investments are about growing the economy in northern Ontario, supporting families, and investing in our future.

I cannot speak to the positive benefits that budget 2017 has on my riding of Thunder Bay—Rainy River without noting the continued commitment this government has to renewing the relationship with Canada's indigenous peoples. Budget 2017 builds on the historic \$8.4 billion investment in indigenous communities made by our government in budget 2016. We are improving access to primary care, mental health services, and home and palliative care, and providing greater support for maternal and child health for first nations and Inuit through an investment of \$828.2 million over five years.

Statements by Members

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

FLOODING

Budget 2017 also invests in protecting, preserving, and revitalizing indigenous languages and culture. I am especially proud of the investments budget 2017 makes in improving access to post-secondary education for indigenous learners. Our government has committed \$90 million to improving the programs, which would provide more indigenous learners with the resources necessary to achieve their academic goals.

However, we did not stop there. Budget 2017 invested an additional \$25 million over five years in Indspire, with an additional leveraging from the private sector of \$15 million. Indspire is a non-profit organization that provides scholarships to more than 12,000 indigenous learners, many of whom are ineligible to receive funding through other programs.

We have also invested in the aboriginal skills and employment training strategy, ASETS, to help them meet the growing demand from indigenous peoples for skills development and job training. Budget 2017 also renews support for Pathways to Education, which helps vulnerable youth in Ontario complete high school and successfully transition to post-secondary education and employment.

Not only do these investments in education mean more indigenous students will be attaining post-secondary success, but they also mean that our educational institutes in northern Ontario, such as Lakehead University, Confederation College, and Seven Generations Education Institute, will have more students to serve and our region will see more skilled workers enter the workforce. These investments demonstrate our government's commitment to closing the inexcusable educational gap that exists for indigenous Canadians and will mean a better future for all Canadians.

The well-being of our veterans is also a very important issue in my riding. I have heard from a number of vets in my riding about the positive impact the reopening of our Veterans Affairs office has had on their lives since the previous government closed the office. The government is committed to ensuring that we deliver the programs and services our veterans need as they transition from military to civilian life. However, there is still more work to be done.

Budget 2017 continues that work with support to ensure veterans receive the skills, training, and education they need to succeed; better support for the families of ill and injured veterans; and investments in mental health support for veterans at risk. This includes the creation of a centre of excellence for PTSD and related mental health conditions that disproportionately affect veterans and their families.

These are just some of the ways in which budget 2017 is addressing the needs of people in Thunder Bay—Rainy River, and I am proud to be part of a government that is focused on building a better Canada for all Canadians.

•(1355)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River will have a five-minute period for questions and comments when the House next returns to debate on the question.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the terrible flooding in Quebec over the past few days is unprecedented. Thousands of people have been evacuated, impassable roads have been closed, homes are submerged in several feet of water, and fields are completely flooded. It is a truly devastating natural disaster.

I want to acknowledge the courage of the flood victims and the solidarity of Quebecers. The way a people deals with hardships like the one currently facing Quebec says a lot about them. We stand in solidarity. We may sometimes disagree, but we support one another when a tragedy such as this one, which is affecting thousands of people, occurs.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to tell the flood victims that our hearts go out to them. I thank all those who are doing such an extraordinary job of helping. It is very heartwarming.

* * *

[*English*]

COME FROM AWAY

Mr. John Oliver (Oakville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on June 11, I hope everyone in the House will be watching the Tony Awards to cheer on *Come From Away*, the blockbuster musical now on Broadway that has been nominated for seven Tony Awards.

This phenomenal hit was developed and produced in my riding of Oakville at Sheridan College. The idea for the musical originated with Michael Rubinoff, Sheridan's associate dean of visual and performing arts, and was developed through Sheridan's Canadian music theatre project.

Only five Canadian musicals have made it to Broadway. Sheridan is the first post-secondary institution to have a Tony Award nomination for best musical to its name. I am proud of the hard work and dedication that the faculty and students of Sheridan have put toward making *Come From Away* the immense success it is today.

I also stand with my colleagues from Newfoundland in honouring the generosity of the people of Gander who were there in a time of need.

* * *

•(1400)

MOTHER'S DAY

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a special constituent of mine named Mary. Mary was born at the end of World War II and raised in the small B.C. prairie town of Dawson Creek, the third child of a homesteader-farmer-accountant.

Statements by Members

She was taught early on the farm that hard work and taking care of the needy was just something one did, and soon was volunteering as a Sunday school teacher, a youth leader, and later working as a church secretary and a seniors' care home administrator and receptionist.

Mary's faith in Jesus Christ inspires her to care for others, from those who show up at the church doorstep, to seniors needing a haircut and a friend, to hosting countless families in her home for dinner after church on Sundays.

She now keeps busy going for walks with friends at the local walking track, and being there for her husband of 52 years and her two grown sons and four grandchildren.

As we approach Mother's Day, I rise today to recognize a woman who taught me honesty, to work hard, integrity, and to never give up. I thank my mom for all that she does and has done for us. We love her.

* * *

ST. MARY'S UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church during Canada's 150th year. The church was built in 1917 by Ukrainian pioneers who dreamed of a safe and welcoming place of worship. Many of them arrived in Sault Ste. Marie to work at Algoma Steel and made the neighbourhood of Bayview their home.

St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church has a unique history. The church was started by 18 Ukrainian families, and is supported by local Polish, Croatian, Italian, French, and English residents. Father Jerry often boasts that volunteers have made and sold millions of perogies and cabbage rolls to the residents of Sault Ste. Marie to help the church grow, leading to the headline in our local media, "The church that perogies built".

As we celebrate its 100th anniversary, I am proud to say that its mantra of living in faith and community still holds strong today.

* * *

AIR FORCE DAY ON THE HILL

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament representing CFB Comox, it is my pleasure to honour our distinguished guests who are joining us to celebrate Air Force Day on the Hill.

To those here and to those back home, I want to share my deep appreciation for the work they do. It is an honour to express my sincerest gratitude for their enduring commitment to our country. Whether they are in a foreign theatre standing up for our shared values or at home saving lives by carrying out important work such as search and rescue missions, I know Canadians stand proud. In the process they put their own lives at risk, the most significant dedication. While their reach is far greater than all of our ridings combined, they should know that wherever they fly, this House represents a collective acknowledgement of the work they do.

Beyond kind words, the best way to truly thank them would be to invest. Let us make sure the Government of Canada is there to support them.

Happy Air Force Day on the Hill.

* * *

[Translation]

FLOODING

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to express my heartfelt compassion for the people of my riding, Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, and people in all the regions affected by flooding these past few weeks.

My colleagues and I share their pain in this difficult time. I am so grateful to municipal officials, police officers, firefighters, EMTs, armed forces personnel, community support organizations, and especially the many volunteers for working tirelessly to help the disaster victims.

My hope is that things get back to normal quickly. To those who have been directly or indirectly affected, I wish them all the best. Once again, Mother Nature proved that she is mighty, but our hard-working responders, volunteers, and army personnel are mightier. They have our unconditional support. Do not give up.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

FLAG OF CANADA

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian flag is a symbol of the unity of many peoples with different backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions; in one land, we share common liberties and values. In this, the Canadian flag is a symbol of the identity of our nation. Many Canadians have fought for our rights and these freedoms under the banner of our flag and there is no law in Canada against defacing our flag. This in and of itself is a mark of the freedom we enjoy.

As we prepare to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary, our flag will be front and centre in the celebration of our nation, of our values, and of our pluralism. In this, I ask all Canadians to be respectful of our flag. When people wave a Canadian flag that has been altered or disgraced to advocate for one cause or another, they should ask themselves whether it helps or hinders their cause, given that there are many countries where the national flag is a symbol of oppression. If their heart even has a small inkling that this is wrong, I ask that they not do it. Instead I ask that they celebrate our nation, many people of many viewpoints and passions united under one flag, our Canadian flag, in the hope of continued freedom and peace.

*Statements by Members***JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH**

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, May is Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario, a month when we can all take great pride in celebrating the accomplishments of Jewish Canadians in communities big and small across the province, including in my own riding of York Centre. This month recognizes the important contribution of Jewish Canadians to the settlement, development, and growth of Ontario. Jewish Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate, and educate future generations about the role that Jewish Canadians have played and continue to play in Ontario communities.

May also marks the centennial anniversary of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. In 1917, the first iteration of the United Jewish Appeal was founded and today it is the heart of the Jewish community in Toronto, overseeing or partnering with over 50 Jewish organizations and programs throughout the GTA. On the occasion of this centennial, I want to congratulate all the board members, professional staff, and volunteers who make UJA a fixture in the Jewish community.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR FORCE APPRECIATION DAY

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark Air Force Appreciation Day. [English]

As a former air force officer, a daughter of a major-general in the air force, and a wife of an air force fighter pilot, I can proudly say that the Royal Canadian Air Force is a core part of who I am.

After starting in 1914 as the Canadian Aviation Corps and then becoming the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1924, Canada's air forces have served honourably for 100 years.

I want to thank those in the air force who protect our freedom both at home and abroad. It is an honour to serve one's country, and with that honour comes great responsibility.

[Translation]

Our men and women in the air force understand this responsibility, and they sacrifice their lives in the service of Canada. I thank them for their strength, their loyalty, and their service to Canada.

[English]

Per ardua ad astra: through adversity to the stars.

* * *

HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand today in support of National Hospice Palliative Care Week 2017.

Hospice palliative care is about living well right to the end. Seventy per cent of Canadians have no access to such services, but we have the power to change that. My private member's bill on palliative care comes back to the House tonight for third reading.

This bill has been supported by all parties in the House and I hope to have members' support again this evening.

Bill C-277 would create a framework that would define the services to be covered, the training needed for different levels of care provision, the data and research needed, support for caregivers, as well as a comprehensive plan to get access for all Canadians to palliative care so that each of us can choose to live as well as we can for as long as we can.

* * *

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from all walks of life recently participated in activities in support of Mental Health Week.

As chair of the Liberal mental health caucus, I know that one in five Canadians copes with some form of mental illness. Among them are the elderly, indigenous people, youth, individuals in correctional institutions, and our veterans.

Addressing mental health illness requires more than a week. It needs a full-time commitment from all levels of government, health care professionals, and our communities.

That is why the federal government for its part is working to make a difference. Through budget 2017, the government has allocated \$5 billion to support mental health initiatives throughout Canada. With a focus on youth, the funding will also help 500,000 young Canadians.

I urge all members in the House to continue working in their communities to ensure that Canadians needing mental health support receive it and will be able to live productive and healthy lives.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the current crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Yesterday the UN estimated that there are 3.7 million displaced people in the DRC, with 100,000 added to that number just last week. Forty mass graves were found in Kasai, where two UN investigators were brutally killed in March. The postponement of the presidential election has led to an increase in violence and instability.

I worked in Congo, where I met the late Étienne Tshisekedi, who, until the end of his days, showed the Congolese people that a peaceful transition of power is possible. I therefore call for the full application of the agreement reached on December 31, an end to the violence, and a transparent, free, and credible election process.

*Statements by Members**[English]***ANTI-SEMITISM**

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the House the 2016 audit of anti-Semitic incidents made public today. Sadly, this marks the 35th year of the audit, and it is clear that anti-Semitism remains a stain on the honour of Canada.

The year 2016 was the worst year in recent history for anti-Semitism, with 1,728 incidents recorded, a dramatic 26% increase over 2015.

Most troubling is that anti-Semitic culture has become widespread at university campuses. Last year, there were numerous anti-Semitic or neo-Nazi guest speakers invited to campuses, and university staff were suspended for several anti-Jewish social media posts. In one extreme case, the Jewish community at McGill University was told to cancel its Purim celebrations by a BDS activist.

It is disheartening that university campuses, which are supposed to serve as forums for free speech and diversity of beliefs, have succumbed to the poisonous brew of hatred and anti-Semitism.

I want to thank B'nai Brith Canada for this report. I call upon all members to heed its findings and work toward ending anti-Semitism in Canada.

* * *

VOLUNTEERISM

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak about volunteerism in Canada. It is extremely important to recognize the contributions of volunteers to their community, to their province, and to their country.

Let us take a second to think of the activities we participated in over the last month. The number of volunteers who supported those activities is great.

[Translation]

We have just gone through a period of flooding in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick, and volunteers came out and made a difference. Many youth volunteers also helped out. Some 66% of young people do volunteer work in their communities.

[English]

In the last couple of weeks, I participated in two evening events recognizing volunteers in Sackville and Waverley. In both areas, over 20 organizations recognized 20 people in each one for their hard work.

Today, I would like to recognize 13 million Canadians who contribute through volunteerism. They total two billion hours—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing.

* * *

ROBERT MANUEL

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to honour the life of Robert Manuel, a

veteran of the Korean War, community activist, and long-time resident of Elliot Lake.

Bob initiated recognition for Canadian Peacekeepers Day in Ontario, but is best known for his work to have Vimy Ridge Day acknowledged as a national heritage day in Canada. A week before his passing, he was master of ceremonies as Royal Canadian Legion Branch 561 marked the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Bob had an impressive string of volunteer contributions, whether with the Legion, Korean Veterans Association of Canada, the Navy League of Canada, Chamber of Commerce, The Terry Fox Foundation, and more. Bob always gave his all. His patriotism always shone through, and his neighbours will miss his unique display of the Canadian flag on Canada Day.

I feel fortunate to have known and worked with Bob for over 20 years. He was a special person who was committed to his community. He will be deeply missed by his comrades and family.

I ask all members to join me in honouring Corporal Bob Manuel.

* * *

● (1415)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many hundreds of Falun Dafa supporters assembled in front of Parliament today for the millions in China who have suffered since Jiang Zemin launched a campaign of brutal, deadly persecution of Falun Gong practitioners 18 years ago.

In February, Sun Qian, a Canadian citizen, was arrested and abused for her beliefs. She is only one of the latest victims.

The Liberal government must balance its narrowly focused pursuit of trade and speak up publicly to condemn China's chronic denial of fundamental human rights. Canadians should work toward a day when human rights advocates are no longer considered enemies of the Chinese state, when Chinese television no longer broadcasts confessions obtained through blackmail and torture, when political prisoners are no longer subject to organ harvesting, a day when the tenets of Falun Dafa and Falun Gong can be spoken out loud in Tiananmen Square.

Zhen, Shan, Ren: truthfulness, compassion, tolerance.

* * *

FLOOD EFFORTS

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like so many Canadians, especially in Ontario and Quebec, I spent this past weekend in Constance Bay, in my riding of Kanata—Carleton, helping with flood efforts.

While it is heartbreaking to see the loss of homes and property, it was so inspiring to see the enormous outpouring of compassion and generosity. At one point on Sunday, we had over 600 volunteers from right across the region eager to load some of the 128,000 sandbags deployed, prepare and deliver food and supplies, or donate the use of their vehicles. Liberals, New Democrats, Greens, Conservatives, all left politics behind, with a single goal in mind: to help their neighbours. We could all learn a lot from them.

We stand with all the people affected, and we will offer all the support we can. For all the volunteers who once again demonstrated the very best of human kindness, I thank them so much.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one seems to know what the purpose of the Prime Minister's infrastructure bank is.

He says it will be used to build new projects and attract private investment. However, the Liberals have shown that they are incapable of carrying out existing projects, and private investors are already investing in projects across the country. They do not need a government bank.

Can the Prime Minister explain why he is moving ahead with this bogus project?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the last election, we made a commitment to invest in the infrastructure that Canadians need. We created an investment plan of more than \$180 billion, which will result in infrastructure investments right across the country over the next few years.

However, we know that even these historic amounts will not meet all needs. That is why we consulted the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the provinces, unions, and various construction and engineering firms in order to develop a mechanism to respond to infrastructure needs.

[English]

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure bank boondoggle is just another taxpayer-funded Liberal vanity project. I know the Liberals are excited to impress their friends on Bay Street and Wall Street, but it is one thing to buy them tickets to a Broadway show. It is quite another thing to buy them a \$35 billion bank.

Has the Prime Minister forgotten that his job is to serve regular working people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of underinvestment in investments in communities across the country, we were pleased to put forward a historic record amount of investment into infrastructure across the country.

We understand that even the \$180 billion we are going to be putting toward infrastructure in the coming years is not going to be

Oral Questions

enough to meet all the needs, which is why we are happy to be working with the FCM, unions, construction, and banks to look at how we can leverage dollars even further to build the kind of infrastructure that is going to help quality of life and economic growth for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

• (1420)

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with Liberal insiders, investment banks, \$35 billion in tax money, and Liberal politicians who have control over how the bank is actually run, what could possibly go wrong?

How can the Prime Minister not see this blatant conflict right in front of him?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, provinces, territories, and municipalities have been asking for a federal government that is a partner to them on building infrastructure after 10 years of a government that was a terrible partner to Canadian municipalities and provinces.

That is why we work with municipalities and provinces, with interest groups, with unions, and with a broad range of Canadians to figure out how we can meet the infrastructure needs of our communities, of our small businesses, and of our growing economy.

We are going to deliver for Canadians what, unfortunately, 10 years of Stephen Harper was unable to.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a troubling need to hand out tax dollars to people who do not want it or do not need it.

His night out on Broadway with Ivanka Trump including buying tickets for executives from some of the biggest banks and law firms in North America. Now, these folks have a lot of money. In fact, they usually support the arts themselves. They could easily have paid for their own tickets, and maybe they would have if asked.

Why did the Prime Minister think taxpayers needed to foot their bill?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United States and Canada share deep ties that go back, through economy and history, and the opportunity to celebrate how we work together and deepen the relationship between our two countries was extremely timely, particularly showcasing *Come From Away*, which is a success story for the Canadian arts scene, but also to share the story of extraordinary Newfoundlanders who stepped up during a very dark time in our shared North American history.

This is something worth celebrating, something worth highlighting, and a big part of demonstrating the strength of Canada-U.S. friendship.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have found out that the government ordered 14 full-sized cardboard cut-outs of the Prime Minister. Now, I would like to give him a chance to explain this, but I am worried his explanation might fall flat. He is not going to be able to just paper over this with his explanation.

Instead of his one-dimensional answers, will the Prime Minister tell us this: should this idea not have just gone into the recycle bin?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to re-engage on the world stage, and since I spend so much time in the House of Commons—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. It is nice to see members in a good mood, of course, but let us listen to both the questions and the answers.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, one of the differences between us and the previous government is we believe in giving our diplomatic missions the independence to make their own decisions and to make their own choices. That is something that matters on the world stage. We trust our diplomats to represent us well around the world and respect the choices they make.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal platform says that the so-called infrastructure bank will "... provide loan guarantees...to provinces and municipalities to ensure that the projects are built." It is funny there is nothing in here about corporations profiting from public infrastructure. They must have left that out by accident.

The Liberals have so far refused to answer this question, but I am sure today the Prime Minister will be crystal clear: will Canadians face user fees or tolls so that rich private corporations can get their cut, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need a broad range of infrastructure investments across the country in public transit, where they buy tickets; in delivering power lines, for which they pay fees; and in infrastructure, such as roads and bridges that are toll-free. In order to meet the needs of Canada's investments in infrastructure that Canadians and communities need, we are looking at many different ways, including historic investments of \$180 billion over the coming years in infrastructure, but we have also looked at how we can push that money even further and create more infrastructure that is going to benefit Canadians.

• (1425)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is from middle-class Prime Minister to middleman Prime Minister in one fell swoop.

[*Translation*]

Imagine for a moment that the Conservatives were in power and that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I know that members like to comment once in a while, but they should instead listen and remain calm.

The hon. member for Outremont.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, let us then imagine that we learned that the federal government was holding secret meetings behind closed doors with private corporations to cook up a new plan to privatize infrastructure.

Would the Liberals, and especially the member for Papineau, not have been the first to stand up and point out that this is a conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a government, we promised to spend a lot more time listening to what Canadians have to say, consulting them, and seeing how we can do a better job of giving communities and individuals what they need.

That is why, in establishing the infrastructure bank, we did not just consult with financial institutions. We also consulted with unions, municipal governments, the provinces and territories, the World Bank, indigenous financial institutions, and the construction and engineering industries. We consulted a huge number of people in order to keep our promise to Canadians.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we learned more about the Prime Minister's little story, where he features as the sole architect of Mr. Trump's change of heart on NAFTA.

Allegedly, Donald's son-in-law contacted the PMO to ask the Prime Minister to call his father-in-law to help him see reason, as though this were all handled among friends.

Will the Prime Minister admit that this was nothing more than a public relations stunt by Donald Trump and that he, our Prime Minister, is just playing a bit part?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect us to stand up for the interests of Canadians at all times, and that is exactly what we are doing. We have had constructive dealings with the new administration, and we worked together on ironing out the more difficult issues as well as on resolving these issues and taking the opportunity to protect Canadian jobs and enhance productive relations between our two countries.

That is exactly what I am doing, and we will continue to do the same with all our partners around the world.

Oral Questions

[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank goodness for Jared Kushner, I guess.

President Trump imposed massive tariffs on Canadian softwood, risking hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs. The Prime Minister apparently did not see any of this coming; he did nothing on this important file until this phone call from Trump's son-in-law.

The next time the Donald gets cranky, is the Prime Minister just going to stand by the phone and wait for his directions from Jared?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in every single meeting I have ever had with an American president, I have brought up softwood lumber as one of the very first things that we want to address, including my very first meeting and phone call with Donald Trump. We continue to engage at the highest levels on this important issue because it is a matter of Canadian jobs, a matter of communities, a matter of prosperity, and it is a matter of fairness. That is why we will always defend Canada's interests.

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that leadership is the problem. In one meeting with President Bush, former prime minister Harper fixed the issue for 10 years.

[Translation]

We do not need that many meetings. Back then, none of the provinces needed to appoint representatives. It was the federal government's job, and the federal government took care of it.

The provinces no longer have confidence in the feds. Yesterday, Alberta hired the former Canadian ambassador to the United States, Gary Doer, and whose job is he going to be doing? The federal government's. This is about leadership. When will they—

•(1430)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.) Mr. Speaker, it is important to keep in mind that the agreement expired on the Conservative government's watch. The U.S. Department of Commerce's countervailing duties are punitive and unfair. We will go before the courts, and we will win, just as we have every time.

We are working closely with the provinces and their representatives. We want a good deal, not just any deal.

* * *

FINANCE

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the real facts: the agreement expired in October 2015, during the election campaign. The former minister had already begun discussions with our partners. We did not wait; we were already working on it.

What the Liberals are confirming is that we live in a virtual world. So what if they promised a \$10-billion deficit and now are running up a \$20-billion or \$25-billion deficit? They think the budget is going to balance itself. They are no longer talking about a return to a balanced budget. This government is not realistic, and it is offloading today's expenditures on future generations. When will

they start thinking about our young people, rather than mortgaging their future?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's top priority is to make wise and responsible investments to strengthen the middle class, grow the economy, and prepare Canadians for the economy of today and tomorrow. There are encouraging signs that show that our plan is working. Over the last year, more than 250,000 new jobs were created, and the unemployment rate dropped from 7.1% to 6.5%.

Our plan is working and we will continue moving forward.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister believes that there should be one set of rules for him and his rich friends and another set of rules for the rest of us. Middle-class Canadians and those working hard to join it do not get free Broadway tickets paid for by taxpayers. Ordinary middle-class Canadians just get stuck with the bill.

Why did the Prime Minister bill taxpayers \$30,000 to buy Broadway tickets to impress his elite friends?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell you who were some of the government's guests at *Come From Away*. One of them was Claude Elliott, the mayor of Gander, who oversaw the set-up of the emergency operations. Another was Derm Flynn, the mayor of Appleton, who hosted passengers in his own home. Another was Diane Davis, a former teacher who organized her co-workers, students, and volunteers into housing nearly 800 people. I am proud of the work of these Canadians and I was proud to help showcase this.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is so out of touch with ordinary middle-class Canadians that he thinks \$30,000 for Broadway show tickets is a great deal. His minister claims it is to honour the generosity of Newfoundlanders. However, average families in Newfoundland and Labrador are struggling to pay their bills. They cannot afford luxuries like Broadway tickets.

Why is it that every time the Prime Minister needs to impress his fellow elites, he whips out the old taxpayer credit card to show everyone how big it is?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about some of the other great Canadians whose work and generosity and greatness of spirit was honoured and recognized at that *Come from Away* showing. Beulah Cooper was there, whose generosity led her to be nicknamed "Florence Nightingale". Oz Fudge is the municipal police officer who recreated Disney World for stranded terminally ill children, and Brian Mosher is a high school teacher who put together 12 live shows for local cable. I was proud to stand with these Canadians and see their greatness honoured.

*Oral Questions***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars on his personal travel and \$30,000 on Broadway tickets, worse yet, yesterday we found out the Prime Minister spent \$2,000 on cardboard cut-outs of himself. What is next, a cardboard cut-out of the defence minister?

The Prime Minister needs to get serious. He needs to cut the waste and he finally needs to get to work for Canadian families

• (1435)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what getting serious means. Getting serious means working incredibly hard in a whole-of-government approach and an approach that has been bipartisan to reach out to our U.S. allies and neighbours and be sure they understand our Canadian values and the history of our close relationship. That is getting serious, and getting serious is honouring the great people of Newfoundland.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$2,000 of taxpayer money was spent for life-sized cardboard cut-outs of the Prime Minister. The laughable excuse given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the vanity project cited the need to champion the values that Canadians hold dear. Does anyone buy that these two-dimensional cut-outs somehow championed our values?

Other than this laughable excuse of an answer, will the Prime Minister commit today to putting these cut-outs to good use and place them in his seat during question period five days a week, and maybe then Canadians will get answers to their questions?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is absolutely committed to working hard to advance the Canadian national interest and Canadian values around the world. We have focused in particular over the past few months on our relationship with the United States, with a huge effort involving, yes, our colleagues on the other side of the House in reaching out to our American partners and neighbours. Canadians know that this effort is absolutely essential, and I want to thank our diplomats for the hard, creative work they are doing to support us.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two very simple questions for the Minister of National Defence.

Did he decide against holding a public inquiry into the Afghan detainee situation knowing there would be conflict of interest because of his role as liaison and intelligence officer in Afghanistan? If this was not his decision, did he recuse himself from the discussions since he would have been an important witness during a possible inquiry?

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is proud of the work of the honourable men and women in uniform, as well as the civilians who served in Afghanistan. Throughout its military operations in Afghanistan, Canada committed to ensuring that every

person detained by the Canadian Armed Forces was tried, transferred, or released in accordance with its legal obligations. Canada's policies and procedures on detainees have already undergone various reviews, including by the Federal Court of Canada and under CAF internal mechanisms.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve clear answers about this decision not to hold a public inquiry into the transfer of detainees.

In the absence of a real answer to that question, let me ask the obvious follow-up. Did the Minister of National Defence inform the Conflict of Interest Commissioner of his role as an intelligence and liaison officer with local Afghan authorities, who were known torturers, when she inquired about his possible conflict of interest in quashing an inquiry into the transfer of Afghan detainees? If not, what alternative facts did he convey to the commissioner?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree that transparency was lacking on this file under the former government.

As the hon. member knows, every opposition party under the previous government had the chance to go over 40,000 documents related to the issue. The NDP chose not to. Over the course of 10 years, the Afghan detainee issue received significant attention. No less than six investigations were held by the appropriate agencies, including one that is ongoing.

We look forward to going over the findings of the investigations.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary got that wrong, completely. Veterans and Canadians are calling on the defence minister to resign for habitually using alternative facts. There is a motion before this House calling on the defence minister to step aside.

Demonstrating complete disrespect for our brave men and women in uniform during the debate on this motion, the defence minister refused to acknowledge his wrongdoing. When will the defence minister do the right thing and resign?

• (1440)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence is a former reservist. He will always hold in high regard the service of Canadian Armed Forces members, both those he served with during his missions and those who served under other commanders or at other times.

Today, it is the minister's responsibility to ensure that the members of the Canadian Armed Forces have all the equipment, training, and care they need to carry out their missions, abroad and in Canada. This policy will ensure that there is adequate funding for the Canadian Armed Forces for the next 20 years.

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Minister of National Defence for his service as a veteran, but his service as a minister has been deplorable. The minister has taken away danger pay from our troops. He fabricated a capability gap for our fighter jets. He made misleading comments about our mission in Iraq, and he has embellished his service record.

The defence minister just cannot keep the facts straight. This is a massive problem when he is tasked with our national security and entrusted with the care of our deployed armed forces around the world.

How can the families of the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces trust this defence minister with the lives of their loved ones when he so blatantly misleads Canadians?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will make sure that our troops have all the necessary benefits to carry out their duties. This government was quick to retroactively address the inequity for the soldiers who lost their tax-free status in Operation Impact.

Our government is working hard to review the compensation rules and find a long-term solution to fix the mess we inherited and to ensure a fair and equitable process for all.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to listen carefully to my question so that he can give me the right answer.

Yesterday, the Minister of National Defence did not respond to the questions about his integrity, so I am going to try again. The minister violated the Canadian Forces code of values and ethics.

With regard to integrity, the code says that being a person of integrity calls for honesty, the avoidance of deception, and adherence to high ethical standards. That is exactly what the minister is not doing. It is important that leaders and commanders demonstrate integrity, because their example has an effect on their peers and subordinates.

The minister no longer has any integrity. When will he resign?

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House, the minister pointed out that his primary responsibility and that of our government is to look after our troops and ensure that they have the support, training, and equipment needed to carry out the missions they are assigned. That has been the minister's objective for the past year and a half, and that is what he strives to do every day.

One of the key elements of his mandate is to put together a new defence policy for Canada. We will ensure that this policy is adequately funded and rigorously costed for the next 20 years.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since becoming a Liberal, the Minister of National Defence has lost his way when it comes to the truth. He has become a master of "alternative facts". This is a problem considering he is in charge of the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, whose motto is "Truth, Duty, Valour".

He is no longer in a position to set an example for recruits. If he still has a shred of dignity or honour, he must resign because he is the laughingstock of the Canadian Forces. This is too bad for him, but he has gone from hero to zero.

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister of defence was given a substantial mandate, and he is following through on it. He will soon be unveiling a new defence policy that includes making sure military personnel have the right equipment and everything they need when they are deployed.

Over the past year, we have been listening to Canadians across the country. We have done a thorough analysis to ensure that our approach meets the needs of our military personnel.

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[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a state of emergency has been declared in the community of Grand Forks, British Columbia, because of flooding. The surrounding boundary region has also been put under emergency watch, and homes and farmland are being flooded by rising water levels. The situation stands to get worse by the end of this week.

Can the Prime Minister reassure constituents in my riding that this government will provide the necessary resources and assistance if and when needed?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The government operations centre in my department is closely in touch with its counterparts in the Province of British Columbia. The situation is being monitored very carefully, and we have indicated to the Province of British Columbia that if it needs federal assistance, it will be provided, and we will give our answer instantly.

* * *

● (1445)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on April 21, 2017, the Government of Quebec decided to transfer the herd of woodland caribou from Val-d'Or to the Zoo sauvage de Saint-Félicien, despite public opposition in the region and the petition to that effect signed by over 14,000 people. Neither the Quebec government nor the federal government consulted the Algonquin people on this case.

What is the government doing for this endangered species? Has the Minister of Environment received a request from the Algonquin people to intervene in this matter?

Oral Questions

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are committed to working with the provinces, territories, and indigenous peoples on the protection and recovery of Canada's species at risk, including caribou, in a timely manner using conservation measures based on sound science and robust recovery plans.

Provinces and territories have primary responsibility to manage lands and wildlife within caribou ranges. We are supporting their efforts to develop conservation measures based on the best scientific data—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Davenport.

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[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a historic \$180 billion has been committed to building much-needed infrastructure in communities right across Canada. Residents in my downtown Toronto riding of Davenport are looking forward to public transit projects, such as the relief line. They are also looking forward to more bike infrastructure, such as the further expansion of the West Toronto Railpath and the creation of the green line.

Can the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities update this House on how the government's infrastructure plan is helping communities not only in Davenport but across Canada?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Davenport for her hard work. Our government is making historic investments to build strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities from coast to coast, including \$25 billion in public transit over the next 11 years. This funding will support the next generation of public transit projects, including active transportation across Canada, and we look forward to signing agreements with our partners.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not only is there a significant conflict of interest with the Liberals' infrastructure bank, but chief economists are now questioning the bank's necessity. Taxpayers are on the hook for \$35 billion and will be paying up to 12% in profits to the very same insiders who designed the program. The bank will only be required to report to Parliament twice over the next 10 years. That is twice in a decade.

Did the Liberals shut down debate on this legislation today so they could avoid talking about this blatant conflict of interest?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands how critical infrastructure is to grow our economy and create jobs. That is why the municipal sector, the provincial sector, and the territorial sector are supporting our plan, including the creation of the infrastructure bank, to build more new infrastructure, which was neglected by the previous government for a decade. As far as reporting is concerned, the bank will report to this Parliament on an annual basis.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are up to their necks in conflicts of interest.

The Prime Minister visits the Aga Khan on his private island and the Liberals have no problem with that. Fundraisers with lobbyists and ministers do not bother the Liberals.

Now the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities is setting up an infrastructure bank with private investors behind closed doors. Again, the Liberals have no problem with that.

When will the Liberals learn? Enough with their schemes and conflicts of interest.

[English]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the presentation made to institutional investors is publicly available. I hope the member gets to read it.

As far as the bank is concerned, we consulted with various stakeholders. We consulted with the FCM. We consulted with the World Bank. We consulted with the IMF. We consulted with the provinces, trade unions, and businesses, because we understand that we want to have an institution that will deliver on the expectations of Canadians to build more infrastructure to grow our economy and create jobs.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals say in their budget that there is roughly \$2 trillion worldwide in private sector investment looking for infrastructure projects. If that is true, then why do they need \$35 billion more from taxpayers? Division 18 of the budget tells us that it is for loan guarantees. That means the billionaires get all the profits off user fees while taxpayers get all the losses off revenue shortfalls and cost overruns.

Why do the billionaires get all the profits while taxpayers take all the losses?

● (1450)

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason we are getting a lot of support from the municipalities and provinces for our infrastructure plan is that they have seen the impact when we do not build proper infrastructure. When we do not maintain the infrastructure we have, the economy hurts, jobs are not created, people are stuck in traffic, and people are spending more time being unproductive.

That is why we want to build more infrastructure on top of the historic investments we are making to catch up with a decade of neglect, which the previous government did not pay attention to.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one has to wonder if the minister's comments here today were also vetted by the billionaires who want to set up this bank.

Oral Questions

According to documents obtained by *The Globe and Mail*, those billionaires who will profit off this taxpayer-funded bank are directing staff and officials in the minister's office on its design. Their instructions are simple: they get all the profits, and taxpayers get all the losses.

Why is the government giving 35 billion tax dollars for a bank that is of billionaires, by billionaires, and for billionaires?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed by the lack of understanding on the part of the hon. member.

Our infrastructure plan works in Canada. We support the municipalities to build infrastructure. We support provinces to build infrastructure. They are the ones who procure the infrastructure. They are the ones who decide how they are going to build the infrastructure. We have added an additional tool to support them in order to make sure they have the necessary tools to meet the expectations of their citizens, on whose behalf they are building that infrastructure.

I would encourage that member to actually read—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East.

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, stripping law-abiding former refugees of their permanent resident status simply because they travelled back to their country of origin is so wrong. Close to 300 people whose citizenship applications are on hold are faced with this. These are law-abiding people who have committed no crime, violated no immigration laws, and passed all requirements to become Canadian citizens, and they are being targeted for cessation.

Will the government halt the proceedings for current cessation applications and repeal these absurd laws?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, Canada's refugee system is widely recognized as one of the most compassionate in the world.

We acknowledge that there is room for improvement to further enhance refugee protection while ensuring that we preserve the integrity of Canada's asylum system. Our government consulted the stakeholders and looked at the current policies with a view to making improvements to the current asylum system.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is the worst in the history of the United Nations: 100,000 people are in danger of losing their lives and millions are starving. With Canada's international aid headed toward an all-time low, the Minister of Finance is telling us that we need to do more with less. To make matters worse, the government is pilfering \$300 million from its aid programs to help finance a bank

controlled by the Minister of International Trade. In short, the government is doing nothing to help resolve the crisis.

Is the minister going to come up with some money fast in order to save lives?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I was very proud to join the Prime Minister in announcing the creation of a new development finance institute. After thorough analysis, we decided to make the institute a subsidiary of Export Development Canada because the evidence shows that this will be the most effective and efficient mechanism. This will enable us to form new partnerships with the private sector.

* * *

[*English*]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, reports released yesterday show that Canada is on track to receive double the amount of asylum claims in 2017 that it did last year. Many of these claimants will enter Canada by illegally crossing the U.S.-Canada land border. This is a record high, and using 2013 as a benchmark, only 38% of these asylum claims will be accepted as valid.

When will the Prime Minister finally act to stem the flow of illegal border-crossers, so that Canada's resources can be better directed to support the world's most vulnerable?

● (1455)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud of our government's commitment to welcoming those fleeing war, terror, and persecution. Our government committed to establishing a sound, fair, and compassionate asylum system. The Citizenship Commission recently introduced new measures, including shorter hearings for simple cases, in order to make the process more efficient and productive. These measures do not compromise the program's integrity.

* * *

[*English*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is now being reported that the government will not renew the lapsing measures of the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act before they sunset on August 1.

Shippers are getting very nervous as they are being forced to negotiate contracts while the law is in flux. The Minister of Transport keeps telling them that legislation is coming, but shippers continue to be pushed down the line.

Why are the interests of grain farmers so low on the Liberals' priority list?

Oral Questions

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands the scope and importance of the grain sector and that a strong rail-based supply chain system is absolutely essential to all Canadian producers and shippers so they can remain competitive in domestic and international markets.

Therefore, we carefully consider any actions required to further strengthen the safety, efficiency, and competitiveness of Canada's transportation service. Consultation and collaboration with stakeholders has been key to helping develop a solid agenda for transportation in Canada.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food stood in front of a microphone to tell Canadians how important an efficient and reliable grain transportation system was. That is why the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act was put in place in the first place, to make the system work for more than just the railways.

Now the Liberals have deliberately delayed until important provisions for western Canadian grain farmers expire. Why did they not tell producers a year ago that their idea of efficient and reliable was giving the railways all the power, taking it away from the producers?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate that we understand that this is very important to Canada's economy and to our grain farmers and to our shippers.

In the past we had this adversarial relationship. Now what we are trying to do is get the people to the table, consult, collaborate, and come up with a solution that works for everyone. That is what we are going to do.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we know, flooding has devastated communities in several Canadian regions, including my riding of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. I would like to thank all the volunteers and first responders who have offered to help during these past few days in order to ensure the safety of my constituents and the community.

Could the Prime Minister inform the House of the most recent action taken by the government in response to this emergency?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles for her work in the House and the assistance she has provided to the people in her community. Our thoughts are with all Canadians affected by the flooding and we thank the first responders and volunteers.

Approximately 1,730 members of the armed forces have been deployed in Quebec and hundreds of thousands of sandbags have been distributed in Ontario. In addition to our support on the ground, we are pleased to announce that \$1 million will be donated to the Canadian Red Cross to provide immediate assistance.

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised that cozying up to Iran would get results, even though the Iranian regime boasts about funding terrorist proxies, has a rogue ballistic missile system, and makes proclamations aimed at the destruction of Israel. That is even while Canadian resident Saeed Malekpour languishes in an Iranian prison. Now we learn the Liberals have sent diplomats to Iran perhaps to fulfill another misguided campaign promise to open an embassy our Conservative government closed because of the security risks to diplomats. Why?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the best way to advance human rights and consular issues in Iran is by talking directly with the regime. By raising these issues directly, we are holding Iran to account. That is what I did yesterday in my conversation with the foreign minister and what our officials will do this week.

Let me be clear. We oppose Iran's support for terrorist organizations, its threats toward Israel, its ballistic missile program, and its support for the murderous Assad regime in Syria.

* * *

● (1500)

SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to a CIBC report, caring for aging parents costs Canadians \$33 billion a year in out-of-pocket expenses and time taken off work. Budget 2017's non-refundable caregiver tax credit does not help those who disproportionately shoulder the task of caregiving: women and those in lower income brackets. With a rapidly aging population, that figure of \$33 billion is expected to grow. Why is the government turning a blind eye to the impact of our country's changing demographic?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted for this opportunity to express once again our pride in the very strong record that our government has in supporting seniors since last year's budget and since last month's budget. We have put into place measures that take hundreds of thousands of seniors out of vulnerability through the increase in the CPP. We are also investing significant resources in supporting the housing and the health care needs of our seniors. We are working very hard to make sure that all of our seniors live in a dignified and secure retirement.

*Oral Questions***FERRY TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from Cap-aux-Meules, Quebec, to Souris, P.E.I., from Digby, Nova Scotia, to Saint John, New Brunswick, from Caribou, Nova Scotia, in my riding, to Wood Islands, P.E.I., federally funded ferry services in eastern Canada are crucial to the economic growth, business development, and tourism of local communities. For far too long, we have taken an inconsistent patchwork approach to funding these services.

Can the parliamentary secretary please inform my constituents, and all Canadians, on how this government plans to invest in ferry transportation services and grow Atlantic Canadian communities?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Central Nova for his important question and for his advocacy.

Our government understands that, from visiting friends and family to getting goods to market, middle-class Canadians in Atlantic Canada rely on safe and efficient ferry services. That is why, with our announcement last week seeking industry feedback, we are reinforcing our commitment to implement a long-term approach to provide high-quality and reliable service, give certainty to users and communities, and grow regional economies.

* * *

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Innovation if he would stand up for the Canadian economy and help free the beer. He claimed that alcohol was part of the Canadian free trade agreement. He misled the House. Beer, wine, and spirits are not part of the Canadian free trade agreement.

The Liberals have a chance to be the architect of unleashing Canada's economy. They just need to act as an intervenor in the Supreme Court case into Canadian free trade.

I will ask again. Will the Liberals stand up and help free the beer?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of our government in working with the provinces and territories and signing this really incredible deal with them to have a Canadian free trade agreement. Part of that Canadian free trade agreement is a working group to liberalize alcohol, so we were very clear. That is why we have the support of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, we have the support of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, we have the support of the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, and we have the support of Beer Canada, because we made sure that we put liberalizing alcohol as part of the Canadian free trade agreement.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERESTS OF QUEBEC

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the president of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal has reached the same

conclusion that we have. No one in this government is standing up for the interests of Quebec. There is no one to stand up for Quebec's forestry industry, to oppose energy east, or to challenge federal intrusions into Quebec jurisdictions. No one.

How can the Prime Minister explain that his Minister of Finance, who is all chummy with Bay Street, has more influence for Toronto than all 40 Quebec Liberal members combined have for all of Quebec?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

Our government's top priority is to make wise and responsible investments to strengthen the middle class, grow the economy, and prepare Canadians for the economy of today and tomorrow.

Signs show that our plan is working. Let us look at job creation. Over the last year, more than 250,000 new jobs were created. As for the unemployment rate, since December 2015, it has dropped from 7.1% to 6.5%.

• (1505)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the chair of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal said, nobody in the government is standing up for Quebec. As my colleague just said, that applies on pretty much every score.

Is that going to change? Will the 40 Liberal MPs from Quebec stand up and make themselves heard, or is Toronto still the only place that really matters?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the fact that we have invested \$1.1 billion in infrastructure in the past year and funded 224 projects. Those are historic numbers. The most important thing is for Quebec to get money from the investment bank.

The Speaker: It being 3:05 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, May 8, 2017—

The hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period, the Leader of the Opposition made reference to a particular document. It is a very large document, and I am not sure every member has yet had a chance to review it.

I ask for unanimous consent to table, in both official languages, the document that was referred to.

The Speaker: Order. I know the hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie is a stand-up guy and that he will not want to break the rules by using props in the future.

*Business of Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

The House resumed from May 8 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:07 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, May 8, 2017, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

● (1515)

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

*(Division No. 266)***YEAS**

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Allison	Ambrose
Anderson	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block	Boucher
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Brown	Calkins
Cannings	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Deltell	Diotte
Dreeshen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Eglinski	Falk
Finley	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Jeneroux
Jolibois	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière
Lebel	Liepert
Lobb	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Marcl	Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Mulcair
Nantel	Nater
Nicholson	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Raitt	Rankin
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Saganash
Sansoucy	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Ste-Marie
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault

Tilson
Trudel
Van Loan
Viens
Warawa
Watts
Webber
Wong

Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Waugh
Weir
Yurdiga— 122

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Samson

Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudeau
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wilkinson
Wrzesnewskyj
Zahid— 171

Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Tootoo
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Young

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

[*English*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by eight minutes, which when added to the 30-minute extension from proceedings on the time allocation motion this morning makes a total of 38 minutes.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The Speaker: The Chair would like to take a moment to provide some information to the House regarding the management of private members' business.

As members know, after the order of precedence is replenished, the Chair reviews the new items so as to alert the House to bills which at first glance appear to infringe on the financial prerogative of the crown. This allows members the opportunity to intervene in a timely fashion to present their views about the need for those bills to be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

● (1520)

[*English*]

Accordingly, following the April 10, 2017 replenishment of the order of precedence with 15 new items, I wish to inform the House that there are two bills that give the Chair some concern as to the spending provisions they contemplate. They are Bill C-315, an act to amend the Parks Canada Agency Act (Conservation of National Historic Sites Account), standing in the name of the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, and Bill C-343, an act to establish the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Criminal Acts and to amend certain acts, standing in the name of the member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

Additionally, on an exceptional basis, I would like to raise concerns regarding Bill S-205, an act to amend the Canada Border Services Agency Act (Inspector General of the Canada Border Services Agency) and to make consequential amendments to other acts, and Bill S-229, an act respecting underground infrastructure safety. Both bills have been sent to the House of Commons for consideration. The Chair expects that in due course they will be

Government Orders

given first reading in the House, as is usually the case with bills sent to the House by the other place.

[*Translation*]

As members know, certain constitutional and procedural principles inform the Chair with respect to bills containing spending provisions that would require a royal recommendation, which are also known as “money bills”.

A fundamental requirement for bills of this nature is that they must originate in the House of Commons. Standing Order 80(1) embodies this important principle, stating:

All aids and supplies granted to the Sovereign by the Parliament of Canada are the sole gift of the House of Commons, and all bills for granting such aids and supplies ought to begin with the House, as it is the undoubted right of the House to direct, limit, and appoint in all such bills, the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations and qualifications of such grants, which are not alterable by the Senate.

This stipulation explicitly prohibits “money bills” from originating in the Senate. In the past, if a bill requiring a royal recommendation was passed by the Senate and sent to the House, the Chair has seen fit to interrupt all further consideration of the bill.

[*English*]

The Chair has specific concerns about the unusual manner in which Bill S-205 and Bill S-229 are structured. Essentially, they appear to contain spending provisions that would require a royal recommendation, but they both conclude with coming into force provisions that suggest otherwise.

Receiving such bills from the Senate is exceptional and rare. Indeed it may well be the first time the House is seized with such legislative measures. Parenthetically, Bill C-343, which I referenced earlier, contains a similar provision.

If, following an anticipated first reading of Bill S-205 and Bill S-229, the Chair determines that the bills are contrary to our usual rules and practices regarding money bills, I would be obligated to disallow them to be further considered in the House. Specifically, it would be incumbent on me to order them removed from the Order Paper and any consideration of them ended. This is distinct from the process for bills first introduced in the House that require a royal recommendation, which are allowed to continue to the end of third reading before the Chair interrupts their consideration. Such would be the case for Bill C-315 and Bill C-343, should the Chair conclude that they do indeed require a royal recommendation.

[*Translation*]

In view of these considerations, I would encourage hon. members who would like to make arguments regarding the concerns about these bills that I have raised today, or any of the other bills now on the order of precedence, to do so at the earliest opportunity.

I thank hon. members for their attention.

Government Orders

•(1525)

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. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in *Animal Farm*, which is an allegory for dictatorship, George Orwell said that all of the animals were equal but that some were more equal than others. It is the same thing in the House of Commons. All Canadians and the members who represent them are equal, but some of them are more equal than others.

I therefore find myself relegated to 34th place in the speaking order with only 10 minutes to speak about a mammoth bill that is 308 pages long. This will be the only opportunity the Bloc Québécois has to speak since the government has imposed a gag order. My colleague from the Green Party wanted to speak, but she will not be allowed to do so. All of this is because the rules were designed to serve a two-party system that has not existed for a long time. Under the circumstances, I will not be able to address all the issues.

As always, before the budget was tabled, the Bloc Québécois held consultations to identify Quebec's needs. I met with about 50 groups, including unions, students, municipal officials, environmental groups, community organizations, and people from the business community in both urban and rural areas. We clearly identified Quebec's expectations.

I informed the minister and his parliamentary secretary of these expectations two months ago today. As always, they were very pleased and interested, and as always they did not take any of this into account. Under the Liberals, consultations do not accomplish much. We saw this with electoral reform as well. When we moved from the Conservatives to the Liberals, we traded “shut up” for “keep talking”.

Just look at the health and education transfers. If there is one thing that everyone agreed on during our tour it was that we must preserve our public services. With the aging population, health care costs are rising and Quebec is under pressure. Starting this year, the transfers will no longer track the rising costs. In the end, it is clear that this will no longer balance. We are heading for permanent austerity where our most essential health or education services will be at risk of imploding.

However, the government chose not to listen. Quebec's health network currently costs roughly \$90 million a day. Bill C-44 provides \$69 million in funding for that network, or less than the cost of one day of operation. We are on our own for the rest of the year. Lucky thing it is not a leap year. Obviously we will not be voting in favour of this bill.

In addition, when it comes to infrastructure, the government pats itself on the back and announces huge amounts. In its “sunny” press releases, life is beautiful and the future is bright. In real life, things are not as much fun.

The federal government owns only 2% of public infrastructure. It is no expert at this. Cities, municipalities, and the government of Quebec are the experts. The only federal infrastructure program that might be effective is a program that transfers the money to the ones who are the experts and know how to manage it. The gas tax model works well that way. However, that is not what the government is doing.

Last year, the government announced more than \$13 billion. It wrote lovely press releases and smiley face tweets. Life is beautiful. Earlier this year, however, the cat was let out of the bag. The parliamentary budget officer, the same one the government has muzzled with Bill C-44, informed us that only a third of the money had been spent.

Since Ottawa wants to stick its nose in everywhere and approve the projects one by one, everything has been frozen. Two-thirds of the money has stayed in Ottawa, and things are twice as bad and twice as slow in Quebec as elsewhere. Quebec has received only 12% of the money. What point is there in announcing amounts like that? That is half of what we were entitled to.

I would have expected the budget this year to resolve this situation, but no. With Bill C-44, the government is continuing its ineffective approach, and, even worse, it is adding fuel to the fire with its infrastructure privatization bank. That is another good reason to vote against this bill.

In their platform, the Liberals said that the government was going to offer municipalities its line of credit so they could borrow money at better rates. There is a little catch, however: their financial guarantee is being offered to the bankers. Bill C-44 is nothing but a tool for privatizing infrastructure. It is a goldmine for the Toronto financiers.

If the infrastructure projects show a loss, they are going to be able to draw on the guarantee of \$80 billion of public funds. If they make a profit, they are the ones who will pocket it. In every case, whether we are talking about money from taxes paid by taxpayers, money that comes from tolls, or both, the money will land on Bay Street.

Bill C-44 socializes losses and privatizes profits and sends them to Toronto. When the government takes from the poor and gives to the financiers of Bay Street, we are not talking about Robin Hood; we are talking about the sheriff of Nottingham. No, we will not vote for that.

Bill C-44 disappoints me, particularly because there is so much about Quebec that is attractive. We are at the forefront of the green economy. The technological engine of Canada is in Quebec. We embody creativity. We represent the future.

•(1530)

Ottawa is holding us back. As recently as yesterday, this is what the president of the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal had to say: “When it comes to the major strategic and economic issues, who is the voice of Quebec in Ottawa? For the moment, no one”. That was not the Bloc Québécois speaking; it was the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal.

Government Orders

We will not vote for that. In fact, I wonder how the 40 Liberal members from Quebec, the 40 ghosts, will be able to justify their decision to support it. I doubt that a sunny press release and a smiley face will suffice this time.

Let us talk about the green economy for a moment. What does the budget offer in this regard? The government is cutting the \$2 billion announced last year for “decarbonizing” the economy, including \$750 million of it this year. What does the carbon tax in Bill C-44 look like? It is just as absent as the 40 Liberal members from Quebec.

When the government does something, it is to prevent Quebec from benefiting from its competitive advantages. An example is Muskrat Falls, which is now competing with us, and is a monumental \$10-billion fiasco. It is a joke that is not even remotely funny, in addition to being very expensive.

When I say that Quebec is the technological engine of Canada, I am not exaggerating. Depending on the year, between 40% and 45% of Canada’s technology exports come from Quebec. At the forefront, of course, is the aeronautics industry. With the C Series, Quebec has joined the very select club of airliner manufacturers. This is a large project that is so ambitious that the development costs almost put the company into bankruptcy. When we needed Ottawa, it was missing in action. When it decided to do something, it came up with a pittance, and, even worse, it found a way to put two-thirds of its money into a project for Toronto. When Quebec is good at something, Ottawa tries to develop the same thing somewhere else in Canada, with our money.

In 1995, in the middle of the referendum campaign, Bombardier CEO Laurent Beaudoin wrote to his employees to tell them to vote no to Quebec independence. At the time, he said that Quebec was too small and a world-class company like Bombardier needed Canada’s support to expand. Times have changed considerably. We built the C Series ourselves, with no federal government help. In Ottawa, Quebec simply no longer exists. We therefore got to work and we succeeded, when we had only half a government to count on. Imagine what we could do with a real one.

However, there is not just aerospace. Canada has an economy of American subsidiaries. It is no surprise to see Bill C-44 raise the threshold for foreign investment review to \$1 billion, since it wants more subsidiaries. Protecting head offices is not a Canadian priority. There is little innovation done by subsidiaries.

Whereas Canada has one of the least innovative economies in the OECD, Quebec innovates, invents, develops and creates. Our R and D intensity is almost twice that of the rest of Canada. There are lots of start-ups, with 2,500 young technology companies operating on the island of Montréal alone. Video games, information technology—there is plenty of creativity in Quebec. One might call it our modern version of the Mr. Fixit spirit.

There is also the whole field of artificial intelligence. The greatest genius in the Americas in this field is located in Montréal. Since he has trained many young people, a whole ecosystem of innovation is developing in this sector of the future. The big players like Google and Microsoft have realized that things are happening in Quebec, and so have opened offices there.

We are preparing to join the major leagues. We are close to being able to compete with Silicon Valley, so what does Ottawa do? It announces a pan-Canadian strategy to ensure that artificial intelligence develops elsewhere in Canada.

When the Ontario automotive industry was in need of a huge hand up in 2009, Ottawa did not develop a pan-Canadian super-strategy to bring back the industry in Quebec. It sent all the money to Ontario. However, when it comes to Quebec, things are done differently. When we want to develop our industries, Ottawa treats us like crybabies and talks to us about equalization. We do not want charity, we just want development.

The industries of the future are in Quebec, not in oil or in subsidiaries that do not innovate. For us, the future is in Quebec, not in Bill C-44. In fact, I am more convinced than ever that our future quite simply is not in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am saddened by the member’s speech. As someone whose family heritage originates in the province of Quebec, I believe Canadians, as a whole, love the province of Quebec and treat it as an equal among the different provinces.

The province of Quebec has so much to offer our country. The member made reference to the aerospace industry. Manitoba also has an aerospace industry. I have talked to people in Quebec about health care. The Minister of Health has been able to achieve a health care accord, working with the province of Quebec. Canadians want that. Whether they are in Manitoba, B.C., Quebec, or Atlantic Canada, they want a national health care program.

Does the member recognize the value of a national health care program? I believe everyone across Canada supports that.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention, his comment, and his question.

Let me be clear that Quebec loves the rest of Canada. There is no question of animosity; it is just that Canada makes its policies, Quebec makes its own, and they are never in step with each other. As people sometimes say, the gears grind. They do not work. Policies created there are defeated here, and we need a hand up because all the flexibility is here and we do not get the money.

My colleague was talking about health. I recall the Quebec minister of health and social services saying that the Canadian health minister had a predatory approach and the same was true for the accord.

As for the additional transfers for this year, they do not even pay for a single day. At 4 p.m. on January 1, they were exhausted. That is not enough, and we are most disappointed with all that. The government was supposed to reverse the Conservatives’ budget cuts.

Government Orders

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. He rightly pointed out that Quebec has received only 12% of the infrastructure money. However, the level of expectation is high, for the government continues to promise billions and billions of dollars. Today we again heard the \$180-billion figure.

I represent a riding where the largest city is the 18th largest in Quebec, and the 19th largest has 10 times fewer inhabitants. These rural municipalities will never see that federal infrastructure money, especially with an infrastructure bank designed to be profitable.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks of these 1,000 Quebec municipalities that will never see a trace of the federal money.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and her intervention. We are in agreement; the municipalities will have a hard time seeing any of that money.

The party now in power was critical at the time of the slowness of the previous government's negotiations with Quebec and the municipalities regarding the transfer of money. It said that it would use the gas tax model, a model that works, to transfer the money that the government must return to Quebec and the municipalities to finance infrastructure.

Once it came to power, that did not happen. The parliamentary budget officer, who will be muzzled under the current bill, says that two-thirds of the funds have not been provided. What is more, the infrastructure bank, which was supposed to help the municipalities, has now been turned into a gift for the government's friends and the big corporations. This is the worst of scenarios in the worst of all possible worlds.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Joliette. I will try to keep my questions very brief.

I have a question about the Board of Internal Economy. In the bill, for the first time, there is an amendment to make its meetings open to the public.

As my colleague has said, however, we are members who have rights. I am in total agreement with the effort to open the meetings, since we are in the same position as the members of the public.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my Green Party colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her question and her intervention.

I am in complete agreement with her. It makes no sense. Ours is essentially a two-party system, even though there are several parties in the House. Consequently third parties are at a disadvantage. This has to change. I hope that the members across the way are listening to us on this subject.

• (1540)

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to speak for Yukon and to the budget bill.

When the government came into power, we changed the northern strategy, the Arctic strategy, to put the emphasis on people. We

believe that if there are strong, healthy people in the north, we will have strong sovereignty in the north, good resource development, and environmental protection. I was delighted that the budgets of 2016 and 2017 reflected this emphasis on the people.

I will just talk about some of the items in those budgets that made northerners very happy.

First, the large increase in the northern allowance in the 2016 budget helped to cover the high cost of living in the north. Sometimes a jug of milk in the high Arctic can cost three, four, or five times what it does down south, as an example. All sorts of things cost more, so this big increase in the northern allowance was very welcome to help keep talented people in the north and to help people who have lived there for generations afford a good lifestyle, raise their families, and provide good clothing and food for their children.

What helped with that immensely, of course, was the Canada child benefit. There was a big increase, especially for low-income families with children. We can imagine the incredible task of a single mother in the north, with these high costs, trying to raise her children. This non-taxable child benefit has gone a long way and has been a big help in the north.

It is the same for all categories of people. There is the OAS supplement, which helps the poorest of seniors. There is the increase in student grants for low-income students and the doubling of student jobs for the summer. These measures all help people, especially people who need it the most, in the north.

In my riding of Yukon, the two biggest private sectors are mining and tourism. Mining, of course, has been the biggest contributor to our gross domestic product since the great Klondike gold rush, the greatest gold rush in the world. It is very important.

In recent years, mineral exploration has been very important to our economy. We worked hard to encourage the Minister of Natural Resources, who was a very strong advocate, to extend the mineral exploration tax credit for another year. This is a 15% tax credit. A lot of the mining activity in the Yukon at the moment is exploration, and probably a vast majority of it would not occur without this tax credit. This is instrumental and a huge help to the people of the Yukon.

The second-biggest sector is tourism. Sometimes it is the biggest employer, for the number of people in the Yukon. It is a bigger part of our gross domestic product than it is in any other province or territory. When there were cuts in recent years, it hurt us more than anyone else.

We were delighted to hear the recent announcement of \$2 million for marketing and television ads for Yukon tourism as well as \$1 million for the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, because a lot of people who come to the north really want the authentic experience of first nations tourism products and services. The Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, in budget 2017, would be given \$8.6 million for indigenous tourism activities.

Government Orders

The prime marketing agency for Canada, Destination Canada, got an increase last year, a desperately needed increase after many years of cuts, of \$37.5 million to help market Canada around the world. We are delighted that this increase would be made permanent in budget 2017.

We have a curious situation in the Yukon, where we have jobs available without people, and we have people without jobs. The reason is that people need training. There are jobs available, but people are not trained to take some of those jobs. We were very happy to see that budget 2017 included \$14.7 million for the three territories for basic adult education. Whenever a person gets out of high school or college and needs more education to get into the trades or the professions, this money is instrumental. We are delighted that it has been carried on.

● (1545)

There would also be \$90 million to help indigenous students in post-secondary education and \$50 million more for the ASETS program, which is skills development for first nation people across Canada.

Another item that is instrumental in the north and in my riding is housing. I was an early member of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. For years, affordable housing has been one of our highest priorities, so we are very delighted that budget 2017 would have \$11.2 billion for a national housing strategy. On top of that, Yukon specifically would get \$24 million.

Also important to the workforce, particularly to get women into the workforce, are more child care spaces, and we are very happy with the \$7 billion nationally to help create more child care spaces.

Like everywhere else, we have had a number of Canada 150 projects going on this year, which are very exciting. I have also announced a number of seniors projects, which were very well received.

There would be \$25.6 million for the territorial health investment fund to help us with the unique challenges of health in the north, and \$89.9 million for indigenous languages, which, again, are very important in my riding. There would also be extra money for mental health for indigenous people.

I just made an announcement about indigenous youth and sport and the aboriginal games.

The Yukon government also gets a transfer from the federal government, and this would be the biggest transfer in history, with a \$24.9-million increase over last year. There would be an increase of \$.8 million in the Canada health transfer and of \$.3 million in the Canada social transfer over last year.

We are also delighted to get the new judge we asked for. We have only two federal Supreme Court judges. One is taken up with a major murder case. The other has the routine proceedings every week. A lot of civil cases were backlogged, so we are delighted that this is in the budget.

The increases for Parks Canada are also very important in my riding. Green technology support is very important across the country to help the transition to renewables.

I was in Washington a few weeks ago with the leader speaking at a conference of northern leaders from across North America, Alaska, the three Canadian territories, and Greenland. The two things needed for development were more infrastructure and more affordable energy.

The municipalities and territorial governments were delighted about the large transfers for infrastructure. Unfortunately, I do not have enough time left to go through it all in detail. There is the trade and transportation corridor, \$10 billion for the Building Canada fund, all sorts of projects for water, waste water, recreation, roads, bridges, and transit. We already have some buses from the transit fund.

There is social infrastructure, green infrastructure, and Internet infrastructure. Northern and rural infrastructure would get \$2 billion. I cannot remember a time in history when any government has put that much emphasis on Canada's rural north and come up with a fund of \$2 billion for infrastructure. The north is eligible for all these other infrastructure funds. It is on a plus basis, not on a per capita basis, where we get almost nothing. We are delighted that we get a base amount.

There is money for first nations to get infrastructure to protect them from climate change. It is very forward thinking.

The other area I mentioned from the conference is affordable energy for the north. We are delighted that there would be \$21.4 million to get northern indigenous communities off diesel, as many of them are on diesel, and \$400 million for an Arctic energy fund.

All these items are great for the economy of the north, the environment of the north, and most importantly, the people of the north, because when there are strong, healthy, engaged people who have their culture supported, we are going to have a strong northern part of Canada, which is important for all of us.

● (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I look at the 2017-18 budget, I see it as a continuation of our first budget, which delivered so much to Canadians. The first things that come to mind are the increases in the GIS and the Canada child benefit. Many of those programs are from last year, and now we have constituents receiving the benefits this year, as we are speaking today.

Government Orders

Infrastructure is a big one. We believe in building Canada through our infrastructure. What are my colleague's thoughts on just how important it is that we continue to invest in Canada's infrastructure?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, investing in infrastructure is particularly important for the north, but also for all Canadians. I think members can imagine, if they have not had the personal experience, what it is like to be without a job. They go home and tell their kids that they have to move, because they cannot pay the rent, or they have to sell the house. The kids say, "Where are we going to live?" The parents say, "We don't know." Perhaps the other kids are going on a skating trip or to a swimming pool, and the parents cannot afford to give them the money, or it is Kraft Dinner again tonight. There cannot be much in life that is harder than not having a job to support one's family.

Economists have explained that one of the best government investments to create jobs is through infrastructure, in the north in particular. Where southern Canada has had infrastructure for over a century, such as ports and roads, in the north, a lot of our communities have no access by road. People can imagine the cost of food if it has to go in by boat and air. It is incredibly costly. That is why the trade corridor is so important. Our wealth of resources cannot get out if there are no roads or infrastructure, so it is very important.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are debating Bill C-44, and I am very curious. When the Conservatives were in power, they introduced undemocratic omnibus bills that lacked the respect of Parliament. The NDP and the Liberals, when in opposition, strongly criticized the previous government for this. Does the member not find it odd that now that his party is in power, he is supporting this type of thing right here in this chamber?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, I am delighted that the member has asked that question, because it gives me a chance to explain what Canadians may have heard but do not understand. We promised that we would stop the abuse of omnibus bills, of putting in a whole bunch of things that had very little or no relation to the budget, such as the dramatic changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, as an example of what was done. Of course, any budget implementation bill, as members can see from the study done by the Library of Parliament, has to refer to a number of other bills, because obviously, the budget refers to different laws, different departments, and different agencies. The budget implementation bill naturally has to refer to those. The abuse we want to avoid, and I am sure the member wants to avoid, because we are onside on this, is using omnibus bills inappropriately to do things that are not related to the budget to get those items through Parliament without the scrutiny that would normally come with a bill that addressed something independently.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to quote the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons who said last Monday:

...it is with regret that I inform my colleagues that under these circumstances, the government will need to use time allocation more often to implement the ambitious agenda we were elected to deliver. This will be done every time with full transparency.

Today we have the first gag order since the government's new transparent approach. The government has a monopoly on the truth, and we all we can do is sit down and shut up. The Liberals' new way of seeing things more or less amounts to that.

My colleague who just finished his speech chairs a very important committee and has watched as his own government has tried to muzzle the opposition and take away its traditional rights, including the right to hold the government to account on behalf of Canadians. Our role as opposition members is to find the little chinks in the Liberals' armour. It is very easy, because there are so many of them.

We are here today to talk about Bill C-44, which is supposed to implement the measures in the Liberal government's budget. I would like to thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, who is working very hard to hold the Liberal government and the Minister of Finance accountable to Parliament. That is his role, and that is what we do every day with every good intention. Most importantly, it is our duty to meet that enormous challenge.

This government has promised a lot of things and, for the most part, has done the opposite. The promise that everyone is going to remember, not just next year or in five or ten years but also in 40 years, is the promise of small deficits. This government got elected by promising to run very small deficits and to return to balanced budgets in 2019. However, instead of very small deficits, what we have are enormous deficits. That is what our children are going to remember: the enormous deficits bequeathed to them by the Liberal Party and the colleagues of the Minister of Finance who approve of this trend of putting our children into debt.

This government promised twice to be transparent. Then it tried, on at least two occasions, to change the procedures for its benefit. In addition, it promised not to introduce mammoth bills or omnibus bills, when the one we are discussing today, Bill C-44, is truly one. Lastly, it promised not to politicize the public service. However, the parliamentary budget officer himself says that the Liberal government is doing the opposite by trying precisely to politicize his office.

Welcome to the era of transparency and sunny ways. Unfortunately, that is not what is happening. What does this government, in its infinite arrogance, take Canadians for?

Bill C-44, which we are debating today, is supposed to implement the budget measures introduced in Parliament on March 22. In fact, it is a mammoth bill that amends some 30 statutes.

If it is passed in its present form, this budget is going to cost taxpayers dearly. The Liberal government will be dipping even deeper into the pockets of Canadians; it is going to eliminate existing measures to control user fees for federal services, as well as tax credits; it is going to tax ride-sharing services; and it is going to tax Canadians' leisure activities even more by putting a new tax on alcohol and tobacco.

Government Orders

Another thing, which is not in the budget but has not been denied, is that they want to sell the airports to pay the enormous interest charges on the government's credit cards.

What then are the government's real priorities? At a time when the job situation is deteriorating, full-time jobs are being replaced by part-time jobs. In addition, they want to enact legislation to legalize marijuana.

• (1555)

The government is standing still instead of standing up to the U.S. administration, which is attacking our forestry industry and our farmers. The provinces are clamouring for judicial appointments, but is there anything in Bill C-44 that meets their needs? Quebec has asked for 14 judges. Just recently, it got four. Hurrah! Now they are just 10 short.

Dannick Lessard is a constituent of mine who was a victim of the shortage of judges in Quebec. He recently published an open letter in the papers. He says that he is not only a victim of crime, but also a victim of the justice system and the Jordan decision. Let me quickly review the facts.

In October 2012, Mr. Lessard was shot by a man armed with two 10 mm pistols. He was hit nine times, suffering irreversible physical and psychological injury. In his letter, he wrote, "That act of unspeakable violence turned my life upside down."

On Friday, April 21, 2017, a stay of proceedings was ordered under the Jordan decision for the trial that was to be held in September 2017 of a man charged with the first degree murder of Pierre-Paul Fortier as well as the attempted murder of Mr. Lessard. This ruling is part of a new trend in the wake of the Jordan decision. He said, "This ruling effectively ends any chance that my case will be heard and that justice will be served."

He asks the following:

Is it reasonable that my alleged attacker does not have to face justice for such a violent and gratuitous crime? Is it reasonable for me to live the rest of my days with the scars from my attack?

He adds, "As a consequence of the Jordan decision, victims and the public have lost confidence in the Canadian justice system."

What was in Bill C-44 to provide for the additional judges needed in Quebec to ensure that the Jordan decision is not overused? Absolutely nothing.

There are numerous important issues in this bill. One of them concerns the parliamentary budget officer. Last week, at a news briefing, Mr. Fréchette stated, "Last week, an information session at the Privy Council was requested. I left the meeting feeling furious and sceptical." Meanwhile, the Liberals are trying to make us believe that they want to give the parliamentary budget officer greater autonomy. What they want is better control over him.

The parliamentary budget officer will have to submit his work plan to the speakers of both chambers, the House of Commons and the Senate. Does allowing the Speaker of the House to approve a parliamentary budget officer's work plan not amount to politicizing the Speaker's role? How is this process going to be possible? Will the Speaker of the House have to make political decisions? Bill C-44 is really a backdoor way for the Liberals to take control of the

House, in spite of everything they say. I will conclude by saying that implementing this provision runs the risk of reducing the independence and perceived political impartiality of the office of the parliamentary budget officer.

When a budget is implemented, whether in Quebec or British Columbia or the Atlantic provinces, we rightly expect that the budget will contain measures to help our constituents. When it comes to my own riding, Lac-Mégantic, I have unfortunately seen nothing in either the last budget or Bill C 44 concerning the bypass track in Lac-Mégantic.

I have seen nothing on the use of mine tailings. Are we going to allow the cities of Thedford Mines and Asbestos to stay alive and to exploit the immense potential of the tailings? Are we finally going to see concrete measures to give all municipalities high-speed Internet access and wireless communication?

For all these reasons, I am obviously going to urge my colleagues to vote against Bill C-44, which simply exacerbates the Liberals' strong tendency to bequeath enormous deficits to Canadians.

• (1600)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is fairly consistent with his critique of government budgets, both past and current. The Conservative Party consistently talks about their concern over deficits. The member knows very well what I am talking about. Conservative after Conservative will stand up and talk about that.

I would like to remind members across the way that when Stephen Harper inherited government, he inherited a multi-billion-dollar surplus. The member across the way knows that as well as I do. He then turned that multi-billion-dollar surplus into a deficit, even prior to the recession getting under way. Stephen Harper never did achieve a balanced budget. The Conservatives might like to believe otherwise, but we know that he did not.

My question is very simple. Why should this government take advice on deficits when Stephen Harper had an accumulated debt of over \$150 billion and was never really able to prove that he had a balanced budget?

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, my esteemed colleague is used to parliamentary sparring and theatrics. He is trying to change the subject.

He has referred to deficits. Canada got through the last global crisis in better shape than the other G7 countries. We managed to do that while preserving jobs. What we were focused on, during all those years when we saved the Canadian economy, was getting back to balanced budgets. Mr. Harper left behind a balanced budget. In the Liberals' minds, it seems, there are no difficult situations and there are no problems. With the Liberals, we can have perpetual deficits. That is what we are criticizing them for.

Government Orders

When will we see a return to balanced budgets, so that our children are able to enjoy life, too, instead of paying the Liberals' debts?

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. Like him, I will be voting against the bill.

My colleague is right in describing this bill as an omnibus bill because it amends 30 laws. Almost one-third of the bill refers to things that were not even mentioned in the budget.

The infrastructure bank warrants its own legislation and debate in the House, as does the issue of the parliamentary budget officer. In our democracy, the parliamentary budget officer plays a vital role, and his jurisdiction depends on him being neutral and independent.

Does my colleague agree with me that the changes the Liberal government is making to the position of the parliamentary budget officer will reduce our ability, as parliamentarians, to hold the government to account?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague that the government is once again trying to sneakily get out of its obligation to be accountable to Canadians and to members of Parliament, particularly in the case of the parliamentary budget officer.

What the Liberals are doing is quite simple. The parliamentary budget officer will have to submit a work plan. He will no longer be able to accommodate the requests of parliamentarians when a crisis arises or when there are things we want to know, for example, the cost of a war. The parliamentary budget officer will no longer be able to respond to parliamentarians' requests. He will have to follow the work plan that he had to submit to the speakers of both chambers. That means that we are losing half of our independence to the Senate and the other half to the Speaker of the House, who will now play a political role. That is unacceptable.

[*English*]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very happy to represent my riding and have a voice for the people of Labrador in the House of Commons.

Every weekend, I travel back to my riding. It is a very large geographic region of 295,000 square kilometres, which is hard to imagine. Getting around my riding on a weekend is no small task. No matter where I go within my riding, people will say that they are seeing the improvements they have not seen for a very long time. Those improvements are not just in their communities, but in their families and the regions of which they are a part. Those changes are helping to build and strengthen the communities in rural and remote northern regions across Canada. My area just happens to be one of those regions.

When I look at budget 2017, the things that really pop out to me are those that directly affect ordinary Canadians who have long waited for programs and investment. I want to talk about a few of those today.

With respect to the national housing strategy, budget 2017 will invest more than \$11 billion in a range of initiatives designed to help

build, renew, and repair Canada's affordable housing and meet the needs that have been inadequately met and have been unaffordable for many Canadians for a long time. This is being done simply because Canadians have been asking for it.

Why would the members not support this initiative? For years and years, those who have needed affordable and accessible housing, both in our cities and rural areas, on reserve and off, have not been able to get the investments they wanted. Why would anyone want to vote against that today? They have been waiting for a very long time.

In my riding last year, we invested in Inuit-specific housing in the northern region. It was the first time ever in history that any government recognized the real need for Inuit housing across the north. We invested in those communities and ensured that the investment went to the Inuit housing corporations so they could manage their own affairs, as was the case in my riding with the Nunatsiavut government. Those are the kinds of new, innovative ways the government is doing things.

The other thing we did in this budget, which many have been requesting for a long time, is extend employment insurance to allow for a caregiver benefit. Many caregivers will be eligible for up to 15 weeks of employment insurance when they have to temporarily take time off of work to care for critically ill or injured family members. That is so important.

I remember when a lady from my riding came to me when her child was sick. Her child had to go from Labrador to the hospital in St. John's. The lady had to leave her job, which did not offer her medical benefits and no income once she left. She needed to be with her child for that 10 to 12 weeks, but there was no income program for her

. This will allow parents who have sick children and need to leave their jobs, without any medical insurance, or benefits or any other income, to tap into the employment insurance program during that period. That has been critical for many Canadians, and they have asked for this.

The other thing is medical care. Issues about medical care are raised quite often in the House, particularly mental health services.

• (1610)

This year our government negotiated with all the provinces and territories to look at a new health accord that would include, and give priority to, mental health services and elderly care. As a result of that, the government is investing over \$800 million in the next five years just to improve mental health services in first nation and Inuit communities. This is a new investment of money in communities that need it the most.

Government Orders

Why members would not support these investments for mental health services going into first nation and Inuit communities that need it so desperately does not make any sense. They are the same people who, every day, stand in the House and say that we should invest more in mental health services for first nations. That is exactly what we are doing, and we are asking for the support of the House to ensure those investments get to the people who need them the most.

I also want to talk about filling employment gaps across the country. The federal government is able to provide for skilled and advanced training, as well as on-the-job work initiatives for many Canadians trying to enter the workforce, trying to find employment. This year we gave a very significant boost in federal support to the provinces and territories by investing \$2.7 billion over the next six years to help unemployed and underemployed Canadians access training and employment opportunities so they could get good jobs.

There are major initiatives in my riding, like the Muskrat Falls energy development project, mining operations in Voisey's Bay and the expansion of Voisey's Bay, and the expansion of the Iron Ore Company of Canada in Labrador west. All these companies need skilled individuals to work in their operations. In order for them to get the skills, the Government of Canada is prepared to ensure training dollars are available for them to access, that we will help them find the employment they need, and ensure they get the training and skills they need for those jobs. That is what we should be doing as a government and because of that, I hope people in ridings like mine will take advantage of these opportunities to get the training and skills they need to get long-term, sustainable employment in these resource sectors or any sector in which they might choose to engage.

The other program we announced in this budget is, again, a program that Canadians have requested for a long time. Their voices have been ignored to date because it is a difficult issue, but we have taken it on as a government. This year we propose to invest \$6 billion over the next 10 years to improve home, community, and palliative care services for Canadians, as well as more support for informal caregivers. This means more people who want to stay at home can get the care and support they need. It means more families will have more support when it comes to family members who need palliative care or that kind of assistance. This government understands and is listening to people across the country and in ridings like mine in Labrador when we make those kinds of investments.

There are so many things I could talk about today, but I want to highlight a couple.

First, our government invested in infrastructure projects across Canada. One of those projects was in my riding in Labrador, the completion of the Trans-Labrador Highway. Last year we partnered with the provincial government to invest over \$60 million in the Trans-Labrador Highway, and we will continue with our commitment in that project.

We will also continue with our commitment to other infrastructure projects across Canada, including Labrador, like small craft harbours, women's shelters and centres, cultural centres for people in communities, and clean water for communities that need it. We are a government that is not only consulting with Canadians, but we are listening to them as well.

● (1615)

When we look at the budget before the House of Commons today, it reflects the needs of Canadians in the middle class, lower class, and others across the country. It is meeting the needs of what we need to grow, be healthy, and strong as a country.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about \$11 billion for affordable housing in the budget. In fact, the budget shows only about \$10 million for affordable housing in this current fiscal year, 2017-18. Indeed, almost all of the promised \$11 billion is after 2019—in other words, after the next election. The government cannot even really commit to what might happen at that point in the future.

If affordable housing is really such a priority for the government, why is it not investing in affordable housing now while it has the opportunity and the authority to do so?

● (1620)

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, I want to clarify that the investments we are making right now in communities to serve those who need proper housing is being done out of pure need, need that had been neglected for a long time.

Our housing is reaching all sectors of society. We are looking at urban housing initiatives that we know are needed in many of our cities across the country. We are looking at the rural housing needs, especially across the northern region. We are looking at housing needs on reserves. As a result of this, the government is launching a national housing strategy. Over the life of that strategy, \$11 billion will be invested in a range of initiatives. Some of it will go into renewing older properties and making them affordable. A lot of it will be going into building new properties to ensure Canadians have adequate and affordable housing no matter where they live in the country.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, as we are talking about housing, in Vancouver, the homelessness rate has increased 30% since the last homelessness count. The City of Vancouver has advised us that the money the Liberal government committed to and announced for 2016 has yet to flow into the community for real projects. Consequently, all the promises in the world have resulted in no housing on the ground.

I have a constituent who makes \$30,000 a year and is fighting for child support. She has applied for low-income housing in British Columbia. She has been on a wait list forever, literally waiting and waiting, and there is no housing available. Her child turned 18 in April. As a result of that, she has lost her \$450 child tax credit, which, according to her, is not "play money". It is essential money. Her child is still in high school.

Government Orders

What can the parliamentary secretary and her government do to help my constituent? Should her child, who is still in high school, not be eligible to continue to receive that \$450 child tax credit?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, I do not know the specific case or circumstances of which my colleague speaks, but I do know this. We have invested substantially in our children. Under our new child tax benefit, we have been able to lift many children out of poverty. We have been able to ensure that families have the kind of supports they need to ensure their children do not go to school hungry, but with all their needs fulfilled. We are making tremendous efforts toward that.

As a government, we have done more to invest in affordable housing than any government over the last decade. That money may not have flowed as quickly as we would have all liked to see it flow, but that money is targeted. It is going to affordable housing. It is going to help the people who need it most. The sooner we can get it there, the better we will all be.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-44, the first budget implementation bill. There are a number of measures in the bill that will affect my constituents, in some cases dramatically, so I am glad to have a chance to represent the views of the great people of Souris—Moose Mountain.

Most of my colleagues here today returned to Ottawa just a week ago after spending two weeks in their constituencies. I always appreciate and cherish the time I get to spend in my riding, speaking to my constituents and getting their feedback on how they think things are going in Ottawa. Unfortunately, my constituents were less than impressed with the Liberals' 2017 budget, which does nothing to help rural Canadians and could end up hurting them in the long run.

It is not breaking news that the Liberals are completely out of touch with the wants and needs of rural Canadians. Just two weeks ago, the Prime Minister was in a small corner of my riding, touring a farm and talking about the carbon tax. My constituents do not want a carbon tax, and they are sick and tired of hearing platitudes and buzzwords from the Liberals. We all know that the Prime Minister's visit to my riding was nothing but a photo op, and that becomes clear when we look at the content of Bill C-44. If the Liberals truly care about western Canada, and specifically those who reside outside of urban centres, they would actually take action and make it a priority to help those who need it.

As I have said before in the House, there are a lot of farms in my riding. They vary in size, and there is a wide variety of produce that is grown down in the southeast corner of Saskatchewan. Something the Liberals seem to forget is that farmers are small business owners. They employ locals. With the drop in oil and gas prices over the last couple of years, these jobs are badly needed. Farmers need to know that their government is supporting them, yet budget 2017 contained almost nothing for them.

What Bill C-44 does contain is a provision that would scrap the income tax exemption for insurers of farming and fishing property. This would likely result in higher insurance premiums for my constituents and would decrease interest in private insurance plans.

This is the last thing that farmers in my riding need. They have enough to manage as it is, given that farming can be a fickle and delicate business when it comes to dealing with weather, pests, and other unpredictable variables. Now their insurance premiums could increase, taking money away from areas where it could be better utilized within the business, not to mention the threat of a carbon tax.

Not only does the Liberal budget increase the costs for farmers, it also does nothing to support them. There were no details regarding the next agricultural policy framework, so Canadian farmers have been left in the dark. Our farmers feed Canada and the world, and they expect their government to support them, not just show up for a photo op in front of a combine or play with a GPS, thinking it is a video game.

While I could likely stand here and talk about the importance of farmers and agriculture all day, I would also like to touch on what the budget contains with respect to veterans.

As some may know, I hold the title of vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. It is a role I am proud to have, and over my time on this committee, I have learned a lot about the challenges our veterans face.

The very first study the committee undertook, right after the election of 2015, was on service delivery to veterans. During that study, the committee heard from a wide range of witnesses from all over the veterans community. Many of these witnesses were veterans themselves, and I appreciate their willingness to appear in front of a bunch of politicians to talk about difficult issues relating to their service to Canada.

One of the recurring themes we heard from veterans, medical professionals, bureaucrats, caregivers, and others was the difficulty in transitioning from military to civilian life upon discharge. When a soldier is discharged, and especially those who are medically released, they lose the identity they had for so many years. They were used to being part of a family and having that unflinching support available to them at all times, and suddenly, upon discharge, that family is gone.

This is not just the case for the veterans themselves, but also for their family members, who have established a community of support with other military spouses, children, etc. It is a life-altering change, and while the Liberals have made many promises to help our veterans and their families, the 2017 budget does nothing to help these people today.

Government Orders

Another issue that came up time and time again in the veterans affairs committee was that we commission and train our soldiers to go into battle, but we do not decommission them upon their leaving the Canadian Armed Forces. While Bill C-44 does take steps to create a new education and training benefit for veterans, this does not help them with the loss of identity and purpose that many experience once they return from deployment and are discharged.

• (1625)

Soldiers in the Canadian Forces do not need to make doctor or dentist appointments. That is provided for them. They do not need to fill out paperwork or forms or parse through a convoluted list of benefits that they may not be entitled to, as that is done by someone else on the base. All of this ends once a soldier is discharged and his or her care is moved from DND to Veterans Affairs. An education and training benefit is all well and good, but that is something that is of use further down the road, once a veteran has established himself or herself into civilian life.

Furthermore, there should be no time limit for veterans to figure out whether they wish to use the benefit. Often illnesses like PTSD do not fully manifest until years after veterans are released from the Canadian Forces, and the veterans should have the option to take as much time as they need to pursue education and training following their release from the military.

What our veterans need are solid, available, and effective transition services. This is something that was suggested by the defence ombudsman, yet Bill C-44 would do nothing to enact these recommendations.

For example, one recommendation was that the Canadian Armed Forces retain medically releasing members until such time as all benefits and services from the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans Affairs Canada, and the Service Income Security Insurance Plan, or SISIP, have been confirmed and put in place. Another recommendation from the ombudsman was that the Canadian Armed Forces establish a concierge service for all medically releasing members that would provide a single point of contact to assist members and their families in all administrative matters regarding the member's transition. These are common sense measures that the Liberals chose not to implement.

Given the size of this omnibus bill, it is shameful that they could not do more to ensure that our veterans and their families have the services and benefits that they need and deserve.

The Conservative Party has always stood up for our veterans, and we on this side of the House believe that our veterans deserve programs and benefits designed to meet their ever-evolving needs, both in the immediate future and sustained over the long term. The Liberals need to do more and they need to do better.

Canadians, including those in rural Canada, are counting on their government to provide them with the support they need in order to thrive here in this wonderful country. Instead, they are getting nickelled and dimed at every possible turn.

The Liberals' spending is reckless and out of control. With a \$25.8 billion deficit, the budget will not be balanced until 2055. I do not want my children, my grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren to be paying the price of the current government's callousness when it

comes to managing public funds. The 2017 budget and Bill C-44 would not grow the economy or create jobs, but they would hike taxes on beer and wine, child care, and small business owners.

The Liberals need to wake up and realize that Canadians deserve better than this. Canadians need their government to recognize the priorities of ordinary hard-working Canadians and their families, and not just the elite. The Conservative Party will continue to stand up for these Canadians, be the voice of the taxpayer, and hold the Liberals to account for their reckless spending and their lack of touch with reality.

• (1630)

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will not spend too much time addressing the rather spurious statement from my friend across the way about the Conservatives' support for veterans, given the massive lack of investment and reduction in services for veterans by the previous government of the past decade.

I want to go back to earlier in the member's speech, when he talked about rural issues. I think this budget would help rural areas. I am from a rural riding about half the size of his, and the biggest issue we have in our riding is Internet access. I wonder if the member has similar problems in his riding. Our government has already put in \$2.5 billion for Internet through the \$500-million connect to innovate program and a \$2-billion rural infrastructure program, which has Internet as an eligible component. I think it is really important that the Internet has been called "infrastructure" for the first time.

I wonder if the member has any comments on that in particular?

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, I have had the pleasure of working with my hon. colleague on the veterans affairs committee and I am sad to see he is gone, but I know he has a new role and I wish him well in that new role.

One of the things in this budget with regard to rural Canada is we hear all this talk about rural transit. Rural transit would do nothing for my constituents. If my constituent in Maryfield, Saskatchewan, needs to get to downtown Regina, he or she needs to know and have access to all the aspects. While people may not have transportation, they do have access to the Internet, but that does not help them get to see their doctors. It does not help them get to that doctor in Weyburn and it does not help them get to see that oncologist in Regina.

The present government is promising to put money into green infrastructure. The Liberals are not going to put a green infrastructure transit line from Maryfield, Saskatchewan, to downtown Regina.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I particularly appreciated the member's comments around veterans.

Government Orders

In that same vein, a number of retirees have raised issues with me. With this set of omnibus bills, we do not see the government bringing in legislation that would improve financial security for those retirees, something that the Liberals promised, but they are doing quite the opposite with Bill C-27. This bill would allow crown corporations and federal private sector employers to back out of defined benefit pension commitments. This is impacting a lot of people in a negative way.

One of my constituents asked me to voice his concern and his outrage and his disbelief at the government tabling Bill C-27. Forced into retirement because of declining health, he paid into a defined benefit pension for 34 years, but he is going to see a penalty as a result of the Liberal government's actions.

Does the member think it is right for the Liberals to promise retirees that they would enhance their financial security, yet do exactly the very opposite when they formed government?

• (1635)

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Madam Speaker, there are a number of things that I have found with the Liberal government and its promises, particularly when we talk about the Canada pension plan and that aspect of protecting Canadians.

The Liberals promised that they would be giving Canadians security with this Canada pension plan, but it will not benefit Canadians. It is going to cost them more money, thereby adding to their expenses. We are going to end up losing jobs because of this, which is not going to help the economy. I contributed to that program for many years in my previous career as a chiropractor. I had to put double the amount of money in. Even with making a significantly good income, I will not max out on the amount that was promised.

I do not see how the promises that the present government is offering are going to work, either on your issue or on other issues.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is not my issue. I would ask members to ensure that they address their questions and comments to the Chair.

[*Translation*]

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 Elmwood—Transcona, Ethics; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Human Rights.

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the world is changing. Climate change poses serious environmental challenges. A growing number of Canadians, particularly our youth, fear they will never be able to enter the housing market. Growing concerns over the job market have Canadians anxious. These uncertainties mean new challenges for Canadians, but they also represent a source of opportunity to showcase Canadian creativity and innovation, economically, socially, and environmentally.

This is why I rise today in support of the government's proposed budget 2017, because this budget will prepare Canadians for the

future, addressing economic, environmental, and social development for our country.

This budget looks to secure and improve upon the gains made in budget 2016, "Growing the Middle Class". Canada has an economy that is strong, flexible, and full of potential. Canadians reflect this as entrepreneurs and as innovators who can adapt to changing markets as people concerned for our natural heritage and through our concern for each other.

This budget puts Canada on track to build a strong, innovative, and green economy, and improve our social support networks focusing on mental health and housing.

Budget 2017 provides Canadians and Canadian businesses with the tools necessary to continue the economic growth we are experiencing under our government. After many years of flat economic results, last year our economy grew by 1.4%. This year the OECD is predicting growth of 2.4%.

Accurate labour market data is essential in order to continue our growth trajectory. Budget 2017 commits \$225 million over four years, and \$75 million per year afterward, to support improved labour market information, skills development programs, and measurement of results in Canada. Knowing where our business is experiencing shortages and filling those gaps is essential as our economy grows and as people are now retiring from the workforce in greater numbers.

Knowing exactly what skills are in demand allows us to target the gaps in our economy. This also means addressing the needs of those struggling to join the middle class.

As it stands, Canadians on EI cannot access training programs. Preventing unemployed Canadians from accessing training programs is simply unacceptable. This is why the government is not only reversing this backward policy, but is investing an additional \$900 million in training over six years. We need to prevent Canadians from needing EI in the first place, which is why we must address the serious problem of youth unemployment. Budget 2017 builds on budget 2016 to allow part-time students to apply for Canada student loan grants. This has increased grants by 50%. To further expand employment opportunities for young Canadians, budget 2017 also proposes an additional \$395 million over three years for the youth employment strategy.

Investing in Canadians is a crucial step to building the economy of the 21st century, but governments must also strategically invest in industries where we can be a global leader. Clusters are dense areas of business activity that contain large and small companies, post-secondary institutions, and specialized talent and infrastructure. Budget 2017 commits to strategic investments in agricultural innovation, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, biosciences, and digital technology.

Government Orders

These actions will grow the economy and promote the livelihood of middle-class Canadians. Guelph can and will play a major role in these areas. This budget is almost written for Guelphites.

● (1640)

The environment is also a cornerstone of this budget. As this government has repeated many times, the economy and the environment go hand in hand. This is why budget 2017 proposes establishing centres for climate services. These centres will improve access to climate science and regional climate resilience centres. The centres will work with local, provincial, territorial, and indigenous partners. This will make it easier for governments, communities, and decision-makers, businesses and organizations to access data and information on climate science.

Investing in green public transit is also crucial. Budget 2017 commits \$17 million to develop and implement heavy-duty vehicle retrofits. This plan also includes a carbon pricing program to incentivize innovation and efficiency. This move will reward creative and innovative businesses and raise much needed revenue for the provinces to spend. These investments will help Canada reach its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and ensure a safer, cleaner world for all Canadians.

This budget addresses systemic social problems which have often been ignored. Since forming government, we have lifted 18 long-term drinking water advisories in first nations in our first year. We are committed to eliminating all boil water advisories, working on solutions with our indigenous communities, researchers, training providers, and businesses. The benefit of our approach is that it is based on long-term planning initiated by first nations leaders, which is why budget 2017 follows through on the promises made in budget 2016 to commit \$1.8 billion over five years. Of this, \$275 million in targeted funding has already been allocated and 201 projects have already begun.

First nations communities are leading the development of these initiatives, informing the government and partners of what their communities need and want. We will get this done, and we will get it done right. The will is there, the capacity is growing, and people are truly committed to finding long-term solutions based on a new trust.

Addressing the mental health crisis among indigenous groups is also a priority for this government. The effects of depression and suicide, as well as other systemic health issues in indigenous communities, are widespread and unacceptable. Budget 2017 proposes to invest \$828 million over the next five years to address the immediate health priorities of first nations and Inuit peoples.

Two areas of social concern addressed in this budget are health care and affordable housing. We are also investing \$7 billion over 10 years to create 40,000 child care spaces. Mental health is an increasing concern for all Canadians and budget 2017 proposes to invest \$11 billion over 10 years to support better home care and mental health initiatives. Budget 2017 also proposes to create a centre of excellence on PTSD and related mental health conditions. The government has committed \$17.5 million over four years and \$9.2 million every year after. As the health minister has said, there is no health without mental health. Addressing the unique nature of mental health issues is long overdue.

Adequate and affordable housing is a general concern for all Canadians. That is why we are investing \$11 billion in the national housing strategy, to develop a stock of affordable rental housing and other housing to improve the quality of life for Canadian residents. The CMHC will make upfront contributions to providers of affordable housing.

● (1645)

Budget 2017 offers genuine and innovative solutions to the challenges that face Canadians. Through strategic investments in the economy, the environment, and social programs, this budget follows through on the ambitious mandate Canadians gave the government in 2015.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the concerns I have is the infrastructure piece with respect to water for indigenous communities. I looked at the infrastructure piece and talked about it for two or three years and throughout the campaign. With respect to the budget, it is one thing to build infrastructure but there is a critical piece that I am looking for. Coming from a municipal background, I can say that it may be easy to build those things, but it is the 24-7 trained staff that we have to have in place. If we did not have them in the municipalities, we got into trouble. That is where many smaller municipalities are.

I cannot see that piece here, the education and training for people in those rural communities to maintain some \$200 million of infrastructure. If we do not have it, it will just be gone in a few years. Maybe the member could respond to that critical piece of training and good jobs.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Madam Speaker, the hon. member from out west has made an astute observation. I flew up to Dryden, Ontario, in January of this year to look at the training centre that is being established there. We know there is no point in spending money on infrastructure if there is nobody there to operate it, and operate it effectively. Part of our budget is focused on skills development and training within the first nations, as well as infrastructure investment. Hand in hand, those two investments will help us get to the clean water that our first nations brothers and sisters deserve.

Government Orders

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked about the importance of housing. There is no question about that, as in every community there is a great need. The government has talked a lot about it, but on the ground we have yet to see action. I know that in the city of Vancouver, the money has not flowed, even from the 2016 announcement. We have a crisis on our hands, with people who are in dire need of affordable housing. We have co-ops that need assistance as well. Units have already been lost because of the government's lack of action in this regard. That is affordable housing that we cannot afford to lose.

With respect to this national affordable housing program that the government likes to brag about, when will the money actually be spent on the ground to build real units, real affordable housing, for the people who need it now?

• (1650)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her passion and commitment to helping people get into affordable housing.

As the federal government, when we are working to establish housing priorities and housing trajectories, we are also working across Canada with the provinces and territories to get housing investments into their budgets. In our first year of being in government, we worked with the provinces and territories to get their budgets to match money coming from the federal government. We are now at that stage and starting to roll out projects, which have to go through a bidding process and a municipal approval process. We are working with all three orders of government. It does take time, but we are on the right track, and we will see progress.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, may I first congratulate my colleague from Guelph for his excellent speech. I would also mention that I have seen the work he has done in his riding in previous months, and I know how committed he is to working toward the development of his community and how dedicated he is to working for the welfare of his constituents. I would like to invite him to give more examples of how the investments that our government is making in communities, families, and workers will make a difference in the lives of the families and communities in his riding.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Madam Speaker, I am honoured to answer the minister. We are looking at the social impacts through the Canada child benefit, which was introduced last time, which was one of the most significant steps a government has ever taken in Canada. Now we are following up with \$11 billion, which has not been invested since the 1970s, to get us on track to create affordable housing projects in our communities, thanks to the leadership and vision of the minister and the people who work with him.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is another year, another budget, and another set of broken promises rolled up into Bill C-44, the budget implementation act.

There is, I suppose, a certain irony that the government, which claims to be opposed to omnibus bills, would bring in this massive document that touches on so many areas, rather than separate legislation for its new ventures, such as the infrastructure bank. The

government hopes that by burying the legislation in these hundreds of pages, it can avoid any detailed scrutiny.

We have to give the Liberals credit for one thing. They are treating Canadians equally, raising everyone's taxes. That is not surprising when we consider the reckless spending by the government. In the 2015 election, the Liberals made a promise to Canadians that they would run a small or modest deficit, perhaps about \$10 billion a year in the first year, and then they should be able to balance the budget after their first term. We know now that those were empty promises. I leave it to Canadian people to decide if they were lies or just incompetence.

Once again, the Minister of Finance has let Canadians down. There is nothing small or modest about the deficit he is running. He has no plan to balance the budget by the end of this Parliament, or maybe ever again. The previous Conservative budget suggested balanced budget legislation that would include pay cuts for cabinet ministers while the government was running a deficit. Somehow I do not think we are going to see this government take that sort of principled stand.

Anyone who has ever run a business knows that borrowed money has to be repaid. The Minister of Finance is sinking Canada further into debt, making future generations pay for his spending spree. It is wrong to mortgage Canada's future this way. Politicians should be setting an example, not behaving as if money grows on trees.

The government will tell us it is doing great things with this spending spree. "Look at us", they say, "Are we not great? We know how to spend money." Of course, that is the pride the government has shown people so far. Any child can delight in spending money that does not belong to them. Fiscal responsibility is a lot tougher to accomplish, and the government does not seem to want to work hard enough to do so.

What are the great things the government is doing? There are tax increases for 1.8 million Canadian public transit users, for those who drink beer and wine, and for those who donate medicines to worthy causes. There are more tax hikes on child care, on small business owners, such as farmers, fishers, doctors, lawyers, and accountants, on oil and gas companies, and on tourism. The Liberals' motto seems to be "If it breathes, tax it."

Where spending is needed, they instead cut back. We are looking at major cuts to defence spending, despite demands from the U.S. that other NATO members spend at least 2% of GDP to shoulder a greater amount of the load for our collective security. The government is deferring \$8.5 billion in equipment purchases for our military, having already deferred \$3.7 billion in the past budget. Our armed forces may be the best-trained and bravest fighting force in the world, but the men and women on the front lines cannot do their jobs without proper equipment.

Government Orders

National defence is clearly not a priority for the Liberal government. In an era of reckless Liberal spending, it is appalling that the largest cuts are consistently at the expense of the Canadian Armed Forces. This raises the question of whether or not the Liberals believe that Canada needs the ability to defend itself and our allies. Recent examples—including the Liberals' decision to pull our

CF-18s out of the fight against ISIS, their preference for fourth generation fighter jets, their lack of increased support for our Ukrainian allies, and their failure to advance important procurement projects—suggest the Liberals expect other countries to do Canada's share.

They say Canada is back, but only as long as we are not asked to do anything, except look pretty.

● (1655)

The Liberals have repeatedly delayed releasing their defence policy review. Instead of ensuring that our men and women in uniform have the best equipment, training, and support available, it is looking more and more likely that Canada's military will be further scaled back and asked to do more with less.

Since the Liberals took office, 94% of announced infrastructure projects have failed to start construction. It is just big talk, with no walk. This means that jobs are not being created and the economy is not being stimulated. Instead of coming up with a new plan that actually builds infrastructure and creates jobs, now the government wants to double down on the existing infrastructure plan that has been proven not to work. This is how the Liberals define innovation.

We already knew that the Liberals were planning to take billions of dollars away from communities to pay for their infrastructure bank. Now we learn that they are also going to cancel the public transit tax credit, making it more expensive for Canadians to use public transit. The Liberals talk about something, but do something else.

Additionally, by allocating public transit funding based on ridership, the Liberal government is disadvantaging Canada's growing communities in favour of already developed urban centres. It looks as if no new public transit spending will occur in 2017-18. Indeed, the Liberals have decreased the federal share of funding for public transit projects to 40% and failed to include provincial cost sharing requirements. Without matching funding, municipalities may not be able to complete important projects. It is a mistake for the Liberals to continue to allocate public transit funds based primarily on ridership numbers. This formula favours large urban centres that already have developed public transit systems, and it disadvantages growing communities that arguably need these funds more.

Municipalities need good infrastructure, but they also need programs that are easy to access, provide predictable funding, and do not leave small and rural communities behind. They also need money now, not at some point in the far future, in 2050 or in the 22nd century.

We know that \$1 billion of lapsed infrastructure funding from 2016 will not be reallocated until 2022-23, and that \$15 billion will be taken away from community infrastructure projects in order to finance the Liberals' new infrastructure bank, including \$5 billion removed from public transit projects, \$5 billion removed from trade

and transportation corridor projects, and another \$5 billion removed from green infrastructure projects. That is taking away money that costs less, to borrow money that would cost two or three times more.

Bill C-44 includes the Canada infrastructure bank bill, but it is hazy on some details. Will foreign investors get to decide which infrastructure projects it funds? We already know that it will not be operating at arm's length, making it susceptible to Liberal government interference in its decisions.

One last thing I would like to look at is the changes this bill makes to the operation of the parliamentary budget officer. It is important to note that the government did not consult the PBO on these changes but has introduced them unilaterally. The PBO has expressed concerns about this legislation and its impact on his ability to do his job. He feels it will undermine the independence and non-partisanship of the PBO and undercut his office's ability to support Parliament.

This should be a concern for all parliamentarians, regardless of their political affiliation. This act makes changes to the degree of control that the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons will be expected to exercise over the PBO's activities, and it places limits on the PBO's ability to initiate reports and members' ability to request cost estimates of certain proposals.

To involve the PBO in the costing of election platforms, as this act does, seems to me to risk the non-partisan nature of the office. No matter—

● (1700)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member will probably be able to continue with some of his information during questions and comments.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite has indicated that he does not feel there is much in the budget that will help everyday Canadians. I would like to remind him of things that are actually in the budget that will be helpful to Canadians: \$725 million for veterans, \$20 billion into public transit, \$11 billion into health care, \$11 billion into affordable housing, \$950 million into innovation clusters, \$10 billion into agriculture, \$30 million into the Trans-Canada Trail, \$7 billion to create 40,000 child care spaces, \$5 billion for water and waste water infrastructure plans, and the list goes on.

Would the member not agree that these are beneficial things: creating child care spaces, taking care of our veterans, creating affordable housing for people, keeping our seniors healthy, happy, and living longer in their homes through home care? I think he would agree that these are good things for everyday Canadians.

Government Orders

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, those numbers are great numbers. There is no doubt they are there, but it sounds as if we have no programs, no government, and no country. All of those numbers are what we need on a day-to-day basis, but 70% of the allocation of those numbers in the budget will not be utilized until 2022. That tells us clearly what is happening with job creation, which has really taken a big-time hit in our country. That tells us that the plan the Liberal government is implementing is not really working. They are big numbers, nice numbers, but those numbers mean nothing because they are not going to be utilized immediately. It is going to be years ahead. Speaking of the future, the government is taking a big risk to do so and taking a big risk to work toward it.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member for Edmonton Manning pointed out that the federal budget skews the allocation of transit funding in favour of existing ridership rather than population. For example, Saskatchewan has 3.2% of Canada's population but will receive only about 1.6% of transit funding from the federal government. Our per capita share of the \$20.1 billion of transit funding would be about \$640 million. In fact, the federal budget shortchanges Saskatchewan by providing it with only about \$320 million in transit funding.

I wonder if the member for Edmonton Manning could elaborate a bit on how this misallocation of transit funding would affect his province of Alberta.

• (1705)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, basically this is a normal thing we have noticed since the first Liberal budget and going to the second budget and moving forward.

I am looking at the budget and government operations from a business perspective, and nothing seems to make sense and nothing seems to add up. If it is not going to add up for Manitoba or for Saskatchewan, then it is not going to add up for Alberta.

The government seems to be treating some people, as we say, with butter and some people with oil. That is happening here. That is how we are experiencing the government's actions. Unfortunately, the budget is a reflection of the government's incompetence in the way it handles business for Canadians.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak in support of budget 2017. Our first budget last year delivered on a number of our election promises, the most significant of which were a middle-class tax cut for nine million Canadians, the new tax-free Canada child benefit, and ensuring that post-secondary education is more affordable.

We are focused on building strong communities with investments in infrastructure to support public transit and green infrastructure. Recently I was thrilled to announce transit funding for my communities of almost \$5 million for Oakville and \$3.4 million for Burlington. I know the residents of my riding of Oakville—North Burlington have seen the benefits of our investments already.

With budget 2017, we are building on these commitments to allow for more frequent two-way, all-day transit service to help commuters in Oakville and Burlington spend less time travelling to and from work and more time with their families. The Prime Minister recently

announced a \$1.8 billion investment that will help electrify the Lakeshore West GO line.

As vice-chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I am extremely proud of the work our committee has done on two key issues: gender-based analysis and violence against young women and girls. I was very pleased to see many of our recommendations included in this budget and to see that this is the first budget that was examined through a gender lens and included a gender statement.

Our committee identified the critical need to use a gender lens for ensuring that spending creates the right conditions for economic growth for Canadians of all genders. The budget's gender statement recognizes that when women and girls are given opportunities to succeed, Canada succeeds.

While we have made progress, more work needs to be done. The gender statement recognized that the gender wage gap has narrowed since 1976 but remains significant. In my riding of Oakville North—Burlington, I heard from stakeholders that young women need to see themselves in a variety of occupations, so in May we will host our first young women in leadership program. The program will allow young women in Oakville North—Burlington to be mentored in a variety of workplaces, from firefighting and community organizations to businesses, policing, and new tech companies.

In the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, we are currently studying the economic security of women, and one issue that has been repeated over and over is the need for early learning and child care. Budget 2017 recognizes the connection between economic security and child care and takes important steps to give Canadian families and children the best start in life. Building on budget 2016's initial investment of \$500 million in 2017-18 for early childhood learning and child care, this budget proposes to invest an additional \$7 billion over 10 years to support and create more high-quality, affordable child care spaces across the country.

The status of women committee has heard from witnesses who called on the government to take a leadership role when it comes to addressing gender-based violence. Budget 2017 includes an investment of \$101 million over five years to support a national strategy to address gender-based violence, which would ensure that our government provides the leadership needed on this issue. We also recommended changes to judicial education with regard to sexual assaults, and I am pleased to see that budget 2017 includes funding for the Canadian Judicial Council to support programming on judicial education, ethics, and conduct, ensuring a greater focus on gender and cultural sensitivity training. Already we have heard from the Canadian Judicial Council at committee about its plans to implement expanded training.

Government Orders

In my riding, the Sexual Assault & Violence Intervention Services of Halton work hard to provide free, confidential, and non-judgmental 24-hour support to all survivors of violence, including female-identified, male-identified, and members of the transgendered community. The services advocate against violence in the community at large and promote prevention through community education. Halton Women's Place provides shelter and crisis services for physically, emotionally, financially, and sexually abused women and their dependent children and is dedicated to ending violence against women and their children. This budget would support critical support services and organizations such as these two to further its commitment to ending all forms of violence against women.

Last month I welcomed my colleague, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, to my riding to meet with the Interfaith Council of Halton to discuss our national security. The minister had the opportunity to highlight budget 2017's increased investment in the security infrastructure program, a program that provides places of worship and community organizations with the funds necessary to enhance the security of their facilities.

● (1710)

Rabbi Wise shared with us how his congregation in Oakville had previously taken advantage of funding from this program, and a good discussion was had about the benefits and possibilities of the program at a local level. We all agree that there is no place in Canada for hate-motivated crimes and that Canadians should feel safe where they worship.

I am extremely committed to the public safety committee's call for funding for a national strategy for operational stress injuries in public safety officers and was disappointed that it was not funded in this budget. I will continue to advocate on this issue, but I also recognize that the Minister of Finance had to make some tough choices when drafting the budget. I was pleased to see that we kept our campaign promise to our public safety officers to establish a tax-free community heroes benefit to be implemented in co-operation with the provinces, territories, and municipalities. Budget 2017 committed \$80 million over five years to support this benefit.

The budget also recognizes that we need to do more for Canadians living with a disability. The enabling accessibility fund would be expanded to provide funding for projects such as adding ramps, accessible washrooms, and other improvements to the accessibility of community spaces and workplaces.

Our health care system is consistently one of the things that Canadians hold dear. Oakville North—Burlington is home to the new Oakville hospital that opened in 2015 to meet the needs of residents in my community, not just today but well into the future. This state-of-the-art facility is the result of the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history. In 2017-18, the government will provide over \$37.1 billion to the provinces and territories under the Canada health transfer, an increase of \$1.1 billion from last year.

Our Minister of Health has worked tirelessly to implement new agreements with our partners, including my Province of Ontario. I heard from residents in my community about their struggle to juggle caring for aging parents while raising their own families, so I was pleased with our investment of an additional \$6 billion over 10 years for home care.

I have also worked with local organizations like the Reach Out Centre for Kids and the Paul Hansell Foundation, which do tremendous work to improve the mental health of our young people. Our government will be providing an additional \$5 billion over the next 10 years targeted toward mental health services. In my home province, the Province of Ontario has made a concerted effort to improve mental health services, and this additional investment will build on the work already being done.

My youth council recently met with the youth advisory council of the Positive Space Network, a safe and welcoming community for LGBTQ2 youth to meet, share experiences, and also organize Halton Pride. I welcome our government's investment in an LGBTQ2 secretariat, with funding of \$3.6 million over three years.

Canada is taking a leadership role around the world in improving the lives of women and girls. I was pleased to see our government invest \$650 million over three years to support sexual and reproductive health. After seeing first-hand the impact that our international development investments can have in areas such as nutrition in the first 1,000 days and the measurable decrease in stunted growth because of these investments, I look forward to the release of our international assistance review, which will outline how Canada will put women and girls at the centre of its development programs.

The budget's commitment to make surplus federal lands and buildings available to housing providers at low or no cost could help groups like Habitat for Humanity Halton-Mississauga, a leader in my community, to ensure hard-working families in need have a safe and affordable place to live.

As chair of the Golden Horseshoe caucus, I know that our region depends on the success of our businesses from automotive to steel, wine to peaches, and that small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of our communities. Our educational institutions, such as Sheridan College, are critical to the success of the next generation of entrepreneurs, innovators, and artists.

Through initiatives like the ones I have mentioned today and our progressive, vital investments in innovation, technology, health care, and education, we are firmly positioning Canada as a leader in the world. I am proud of the work we are doing and look forward to Canada's many successes as we prepare to celebrate our great nation's 150th anniversary of Confederation.

Government Orders

●(1715)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, what the member had to say was very encouraging, but what she forgot to mention or did not have time for and was missing is how the government is going to promote and empower the private sector to create jobs and roll this economy forward.

We heard of a lot of big-government thinking and government-knows-best spending, but we did not hear anything about the small business tax rate being cut or about expanding ways for people to save. We had the tax-free savings account and the public transit tax credit cut back, but nothing is actually there to help the people and allow the private sector to grow and create jobs and wealth in their communities.

I wonder if the member could enlighten me on how the government is doing this, because I do not see it.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I think we both agree that small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of our economy.

Quite honestly, they are creating jobs. We are seeing growth in the economy. We are seeing tremendous job growth, and it is coming from those small and medium-sized businesses in our communities. I have not had one business in my community ask for the small business tax cut to be made.

What I have seen them ask for are the kinds of things our government is doing around innovation and clean technology. They want consumers to have more money, which our tax cut allows, so they can go out and buy their products, whether they are buying gelato or going out for dinner or spending money in their community.

Those are the things they want. They want residents to have the money and to be able to spend it, so they can grow their businesses in the community.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member across the way talked about a tax cut putting money in the pockets of consumers to spend. I wonder if she would agree that the consumers most likely to spend any extra money they receive are those earning less than \$45,000 per year, precisely the Canadians who will not receive anything from the so-called middle-class tax cut.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I would disagree.

We introduced the Canada child benefit to benefit those individuals who were most in need of receiving additional support. It is lifting children out of poverty. It is putting that money into people's pockets so that they can do more for their families.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I noticed in the member's speech that she made the case at length that this bill deals with a number of important issues.

In her speech I did not hear about a couple of those issues that have to do with the establishment of the infrastructure bank. Another, just off the top of my head, would be the changes to the parliamentary budget office.

I wonder, given the complexity of the bill, if the member would agree that the infrastructure bank, for example, which is a significant change in its own right, represents a meaningful change in the way the government is going to deliver on infrastructure projects. If so, should we not be able to study that separately?

●(1720)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I would say that we certainly agree that infrastructure investment is important. We are having the debate right now, and the debate will be held at committee, about all of the things that are included in the bill.

If we can make more investments in infrastructure, I know that in my community that is really important. We see things like the flooding that is taking place, which happened in Burlington a few years ago, and if we are able to put in place some investments to prevent these kinds of things from happening, that is where we need our infrastructure dollars going. The more we can do, the better.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity today to speak to Bill C-44, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017 and other measures.

I will begin by talking about the part “and other measures”.

Bill C-44 before us is an omnibus bill, as were the budget implementation bills that we became used to seeing for many years. If it passes, this bill will amend more than 30 existing laws even though a third of these amendments were not even included in the budget presented on March 22.

What is strange, or maybe not, ultimately, is that it seems to me that I did hear the Liberals criticizing the previous government many times for the excessive use of omnibus bills. In fact, they promised to abolish this practice, which they deemed to be undemocratic.

I would like to read from page 30 of the Liberal Party of Canada'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.

Those are the very same Standing Orders that the Liberal Party of Canada is trying to change in an undemocratic way, but that is another issue.

The platform is not the only place where the Liberals have called omnibus bills undemocratic. On June 9, 2015, the member for Kings—Hants, who is now President of the Treasury Board, said 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...

Nevertheless, here we are debating the budget implementation bill under time allocation.

Here is another empty promise made in the House:

Government Orders

Liberals will end the abuse of omnibus bills which result in poorly reviewed laws.

Who said that? The Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, the member for Vancouver Quadra.

The member for Bourassa had to remind her of the following:

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.

I just wanted to point out to my Montreal colleague what he said in the House because his government's budget implementation bill is essentially an omnibus bill, even though it is not quite 290 pages long. He should be pretty ashamed, but do I look surprised? No.

It is part of the DNA of the Liberal Party of Canada to say one thing and do the opposite, the best example, of course, being electoral reform, a promise they broke, plain and simple, despite the fact that they solemnly promised that the 2015 election would be the last election under the current voting system. Shortly after that, they tried to force changes to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons down our throats, changes that are likely to affect our members' privileges, saying that they had promised to do so. Talk about hypocrisy.

During the election, and again today, the Liberals and the Prime Minister talked ad nauseam about "the middle class and those working hard to join it", and yet those working hard to join it are by no means the people who are given priority in this bill.

In fact, while they eliminated the public transit tax credit that middle-class Canadians actually used, the Liberals are also making it easier for their rich friends to purchase our public infrastructure, the kind of people who can afford to pay \$1,500 to have access to the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, by creating the Canada infrastructure bank.

I want to emphasize that this is not about the middle class and those working hard to join it.

This bill also severely limits the parliamentary budget officer's role, which is to conduct independent studies and produce reports that he believes are in the interest of Canadians. This changes the role of the PBO, who would now have to submit a work report for the approval of the Speaker of the House and the Speaker of the Senate, as well as the chair of the finance committee, who is an elected member of the governing party. He would be the only officer of Parliament whose work plan must be approved.

• (1725)

In addition, research requests to estimate the costs of measures that fall within Parliament's jurisdiction would now be reserved for committees, whereas at the present time all MPs and senators can make such requests.

Incidentally, it is the research of the parliamentary budget officer, made at a member's request, that showed us that the Liberals' tax breaks benefited only the wealthiest, and not the middle class and those working hard to join it.

It is clear that this bill seeks to limit the ability of parliamentarians to hold the government to account and demand that it take responsibility for its actions.

I have spoken enough about what this omnibus bill contains. Now I want to talk about what it does not contain.

The 2017-18 budget provided substantial long-term funding for social and affordable housing. Following the government's announcement, we were expecting to move on to consultations in preparation for the establishment of a real national housing strategy, for which the NDP has been calling for many years. We also thought they had finally acknowledged the ongoing housing crisis in Canada. It would seem, however, that they are in no rush to allocate the necessary resources immediately, in this budget and associated implementation bill. In fact, the government has decided to hold off on releasing over 90% of the budget announced for housing until after the next election.

However, the needs exist right now. More and more Canadian families are finding it hard to find adequate and affordable housing. The 2011 national household survey showed that 40% of Canadian tenant families were spending more than 30% of their income on housing, 19% were paying over 50%, and 9.5% of families were spending over 80% of their income on housing. There are many reasons to believe that these figures are no better today.

At the present time, the waiting lists for low-income families in need of social housing have hit record highs in our country's cities. For example, in Edmonton, 5,800 households are waiting for housing. In Montreal there are said to be 24,000, and in Toronto, 90,000. Ageing social housing infrastructure is in need of major renovations, and with the lack of funding, many housing projects have simply closed down. Property prices in major Canadian cities are skyrocketing because of speculation, to the point that fears of a real estate bubble are growing. For too many Canadian families, access to property is virtually impossible.

I have not mentioned the housing conditions and shortages in indigenous communities. However, in response to immediate and urgent request, the government has announced several billion dollars over 11 years, but has injected only a meagre \$20 million in new money this year under the 2017-18 budget, \$8 million of which will go to research on housing. Considering the immediate needs, \$12 million more is not going to house a lot of people.

Last week I went to the national convention of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, the largest national association of housing stakeholders.

While people were generally happy with the investments announced in the last budget, many concerns came up regularly. Since we are already drafting omnibus budgets that include non-budgetary measures, I will cite a few of the measures that were suggested at the convention.

Government Orders

The association would like the housing strategy to formally recognize the right to appropriate and affordable housing, and would like the government to speed up the funding announced for housing in order to meet immediate needs, because the longer we wait, the worse the situation becomes; to take concrete steps to counter real estate speculation; to announce the construction of new social and community housing units; to establish a special strategy for the immediate and glaring housing needs in indigenous communities; and to include in its budget incentives for renovation and energy-efficient construction, which would be a smart investment.

I would add that the government should provide funds that are specifically dedicated to social and community housing, instead of including that funding more generally in the category of affordable housing.

Although I know that the government is going to remind me that I voted against certain measures it put forward in its budget, I will be obliged to vote against this bill, both for what it contains and above all for what it does not contain.

• (1730)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always have found it interesting when members of the New Democratic caucus talk about the things that should have been or could have been in the budget. The member raises concerns about housing. We have invested literally billions of dollars in trying to ensure Canadians will have better housing into the future, no matter what region of the country they are from. However, when it really comes time to demonstrate support for a progressive budget, the NDP continues to vote against it. We have seen very strong, progressive budgets that have dealt with tax breaks for Canadians, that have increased the Canada child benefit program, that have increased the GIS, and many other tax initiatives.

In its platform, the NDP said that it would balance the budget. Where would it have drawn the funds from to pay for some of the things member talked about? Please do not just say it is corporate taxes, because that continually comes across from the NDP.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Well, I certainly will not say that. I would just remind the parliamentary secretary to address his questions to the Chair.

The hon. member for Hochelaga.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Madam Speaker, the answer could not be simpler.

Making a budget comes down to making choices. When they decide not to invest enough money to go after tax cheats, or to let big corporations pay only 13% income tax when it is more than that in the United States, I say that they could have made different choices. For example, they could have invested more money in aboriginal housing.

Looking at the budget, in 2017-18, \$56,7 million will be invested in housing in northern and Inuit communities. I don't know if the member has gone to Nunavik, as I have, but that amount is not going

to build a lot of dwellings and houses. Choices could have been made to increase the budget in the right places. In my opinion, those choices were poorly made.

[English]

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being here today. Earlier today the finance minister said that the Liberals had heard, in the short time we have had, some good suggestions that they would take under consideration.

In the speeches today, there have been several instances where I heard members making specific references to specific things. If we had more opportunity, rather than only 12%, we could provide more solid and good possibilities for the government to consider. Maybe she could respond to the short time we now have had to suggest more ideas, which the finance minister said were credible ideas, the government could take under consideration.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, if I understand correctly, the member is referring to time allocation and the short time we have to discuss all of this.

If that is his question, in fact I do not agree with limiting the time for debate. We have had very little time to discuss everything that is in this budget. Earlier, I mentioned that 30 laws will be amended. This morning, the Minister of Finance said that 39 people spoke. In fact, 39 members did not speak; I believe that it was 32. That is one-tenth of the members sitting in the House of Commons.

There are many very important topics, such as the infrastructure bank. First, this bill should be split. Several items should be studied separately and we should have more time to study each of them. We are under time allocation, we have to hurry, and the majority of members cannot even take the floor.

• (1735)

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to our government's second budget.

Budget 2017 is the next step in our government's ambitious plan to make smart investments that will create jobs in the four cities in my riding. It will also grow Canada's economy and provide more opportunities for the middle class and those working hard to join it in communities all across the country.

As a member of Parliament and a businesswoman who is very involved in my community, I cannot help but be pleased with a budget that does not leave anyone behind and that addresses real issues. This budget provides opportunities for seniors, families, entrepreneurs, and job creators.

Government Orders

The concept of providing opportunities for all is the cornerstone of the new Liberal approach, and that approach is working. Over the past seven months, the Canadian economy has created some 250,000 jobs. Since December 2015, Canada's unemployment rate has dropped from 7.1% to 6.6%. What is more, January marked the longest run of trade surpluses since 2014, a sign that we are finding more buyers around the world for our exports.

As a member of the Standing Committee of International Trade and the only member from Quebec on this committee, I am proud that businesses back home will have new opportunities to export their products and find new clients around the world. The Liberal approach is indeed working as we can see by the growth rates. As a government, we have made decisions and implemented important measures for the people back home and across Canada.

Over the past year, our government has implemented a plan to grow our economy in a way that works for the middle class and those working hard to join it. Again, under this plan we raised taxes for the wealthiest Canadians who represent 1% of the population in order to lower taxes for the middle class. We implemented the Canada child benefit, which gives more to nine out of ten Canadian families, including 10,000 families in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, and which will lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. We also enhanced the Canada pension plan in order to help Canadians have the secure and dignified retirement they deserve.

Budget 2017 also contains new measures to make the tax system fairer by eliminating the tax loopholes that create unfair advantages for some at the expense of others, by investing \$524 million more in the Canada Revenue Agency to support its sustained efforts to counter tax evasion and fight tax avoidance, and finally, by eliminating tax measures that are of inordinate benefit to the wealthiest.

When I go meet with my constituents, they are proud that our government is acting to ensure more tax fairness for the middle class.

Budget 2017 directly affects my riding with three important measures: major health transfers, especially for our seniors; infrastructure investments, particularly in affordable housing; and finally, investment in our human capital and innovation.

As I have just mentioned, budget 2017 provides for clear action on health. As of today's date the government has concluded new health funding accords with the 12 provinces and territories, which have accepted their share of the federal offer of \$11 billion over 10 years to provide better support to Canadian families in the areas of home care and mental health.

In my case, when I led round tables in my riding, the vast majority of stakeholders were in favour of more support for home care. I am therefore very happy that budget 2017 responds to this important demand.

The government will also be simplifying the current tax relief for caregivers by replacing three existing income tax credits with a new tax credit called the Canada caregiver credit. This new credit will offer improved support for those who need it most, and will apply to caregivers whether they live with the family member they are caring for or not.

● (1740)

That is why the Government of Canada will be allocating \$11 billion over 10 years, \$2.5 billion of which will go to Quebec, to support home care and improve mental health care.

The infrastructure investments, including in public transit and affordable housing, are another strength of budget 2017, and directly affect my constituents in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. The infrastructure investments we make today will be beneficial for many years to come. They will ensure clean and sustained economic growth, make it possible to build stronger, more inclusive communities, and create more good jobs for the people of the Lower Laurentians region and elsewhere.

To do this, our government has set up the Canada infrastructure bank, which will be charged with making investments totalling \$35 billion over 11 years. Our infrastructure plan will include investments in the Montreal region that could help build the réseau électrique métropolitain, the REM, a high-frequency train project with a branch line starting in Deux-Montagnes, in my riding.

On affordable housing, we realize that housing needs vary greatly across different communities, and that is why our government is determined to work with the provinces and territories to ensure that the specific needs of communities all across Canada are met.

Budget 2017 thus proposes to grant some \$3.2 billion over the next 11 years to the provinces and territories so they can address their main affordable housing priorities. This news has been very well received by the local stakeholders in my riding, who took part in large numbers in a round table recently organized by my staff.

Finally, budget 2017 puts the skilled, talented and creative people of Canada at the heart of a more innovative economy of the future, which is good news for the dynamic and innovative companies in my constituency.

For our government, relying on innovation also means relying on the know-how of Quebec and Canadian society, and that is very important in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. The role of elected officials is now to focus on and invest in their fellow citizens, and to give the workers of the Lower Laurentians region the tools they need to succeed in the economy of the future.

Many of the measures in budget 2017 are designed to put Canada in a leadership position within the global economy.

Government Orders

First, we will be investing \$225 million over four years to identify and address skills gaps in the economy and help Canadians to be as prepared as possible for the economy of tomorrow. Next, we will create a strategic innovation fund which will serve to attract, support and grow Canadian companies in dynamic and emerging sectors, such as agrifood, digital technology, green technologies and advanced manufacturing, thanks to an investment of \$1.26 billion over five years.

We will also be offering greater support to “superclusters” of companies that innovate in key sectors such as digital technology and green technology, and that offer the greatest potential for accelerating economic growth, thanks to an investment in 2017-18 of up to \$950 million over five years.

I have always been proud to say that the greatest strength of Canada and of the Lower Laurentians region lies in its skilled, hard-working and creative workforce. Hence it is important to strengthen Canada as a global leader in the innovation economy, so as to create jobs and grow the middle class, since innovation is transforming the way we live and work, ushering in new challenges and new opportunities for everyone.

Innovation is the economy of tomorrow. Let us work in lockstep and, together, seize this opportunity to become a world leader in tomorrow's economy. I would like to inform the House that I have full confidence in budget 2017 which, with its concrete measures, will enable the middle class, seniors and innovative companies in my region to prosper in the years ahead.

• (1745)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

The Liberals used to think that omnibus bills were not fair, that they were a bad idea, but then they went and put a lot of different things in this bill, including the new infrastructure bank.

Since the government seems to think this is an innovative way to make infrastructure projects happen, does the member think this measure should be examined on its own, apart from the other measures in this budget implementation bill?

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his question about infrastructure.

The infrastructure investments we are making will pay dividends for years to come. They will deliver clean, sustained economic growth, build stronger, more inclusive communities, and create more good, middle-class jobs for all Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in our budget we have announced some significant investments in health care and child care spaces: \$11 billion in health care, \$11 million in affordable housing, and \$7 billion to create 40,000 child care spaces. How are these kinds of investments going to benefit the constituents of the member's riding?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his question.

This budget will definitely help people in my riding. When I went door to door in 2015, lots of people told me they wanted our health care system to include home care for seniors. That is why we are investing so much in this area. We will also be investing heavily in mental health, which is something that affects a lot of people.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating my colleague from Rivière-des-Milles-Îles on her speech. I also want to thank and congratulate her for all the work she does for the people in her riding. I had the chance to see her over the past few months not only in Ottawa, but also in her community. I know how important it is to her to work for all the constituents in her riding, especially those who are less fortunate, such as the people whose housing conditions are less than ideal. I know she is working very hard with agencies in her riding to try to improve life for these people.

I want to ask her what are the greatest socio-economic challenges that she sees in her community and that will be alleviated by the Canadian government's investments.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for the question.

Budget 2017 considerably helps my constituents. In Saint-Eustache, we have housing for the homeless. There are units for youth aged 12 to 17 and for those aged 18 to 25 years. Many people benefit from this. The homelessness partnering strategy will help ensure that people have access to these units. The challenge is to get homeless people to live in social housing and regain control of their lives. There is a clear need for affordable housing, but first we need homes to fight homelessness and to bring these people back to a way of life where they are contributing to our society.

I thank the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for helping provide assistance to all these people in my riding and to all the stakeholders.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), I would like to designate Wednesday, May 17, for consideration in committee of the whole of the main estimates for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development.

I would also like to designate Monday, May 29, for the consideration in committee of the whole of the main estimates for the Department of National Defence.

The Deputy Speaker: The House appreciates the notice on the part of the hon. government House leader.

Government Orders

• (1750)

[Translation]

Before I recognize the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska to resume debate, I must inform him that he will have approximately three minutes remaining in the time provided for government orders.

* * *

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. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in your presentation, you did a masterful job of highlighting the absurdity of our current situation. I have exactly three minutes to talk about Bill C-44, which the government is ramming down our throats as hard as it possibly can, to shut us up and make sure that we cannot point out the inconsistencies and everything that will happen after this budget implementation bill passes.

The bill makes amendments that will affect 30 departments. I will name a few of them. I will talk about the entire mechanism the Conservatives had put in place, during the previous government, in order to prevent the government in power from increasing fees unreasonably on the backs of Canadians.

The Liberal government will simply eliminate this mechanism and will take more money out of taxpayers' pockets. We are not at all surprised, given that the Liberal government is accumulating deficits. The only way for the government to generate revenue, which it does not have enough of, is to legalize marijuana, which will generate revenue at the expense of our youth and Canadians, and to increase costs by cancelling the public transit credit. That is absurd coming from a government that calls itself green.

In the last budget, the government eliminated tax credits for families whose children play sports or participate in cultural activities. Even worse, when tired Canadians go home on Friday and want to relax, the beer they open or the wine they pour will come with another tax on alcohol.

What we are seeing is completely ridiculous. I am not even talking about the infrastructure bank, which will be established at the expense of Canadians. The \$35 billion should be used to help all municipalities across Canada, but will grease the palms of private investors who are controlling the government agenda.

Given all of that, we do not understand the purpose of this budget. The government says that it wants to support the middle class, but it is currently doing exactly the opposite.

The government gave us three days to discuss the budget. Really, it gave us only two days, not three, because last Friday, we had only an hour and fifteen minutes to discuss it. Today, I have only three minutes to tell my constituents about the aberration we are dealing with today.

What the government is doing does not make any sense. It is racking up debt for future generations, going forward with spending, and leading people to believe that it is lowering their taxes. It does

not make any sense. As an MP who represents his constituents, I am extremely frustrated with this situation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the three wonderful minutes you gave me to speak.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:53 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

• (1755)

[English]

The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1835)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 267)

YEAS

Members

Aboulttaif	Albrecht
Allison	Ambrose
Anderson	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Brown
Cannings	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Deltell	Diotte
Dreeschen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Egliniski	Falk
Finley	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Genius
Gill	Gladau
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Hughes

Government Orders

Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Krniec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière
Lebel	Liepert
Lobb	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Mulcair	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poilievre	Quach
Ramsey	Rankin
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Sansoucy
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shiple
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Wong	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 127	

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier

Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Romanado	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tootoo
Trudeau	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Young
Zahid — 171	

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.*[English]*

The next question is on the main motion.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.**Some hon. members:** Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.*And five or emembers having risen:***The Speaker:** The hon. Chief Government Whip.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this one, with Liberal members voting yes.

Mr. Gordon Brown: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives agree to apply the vote and will be voting no.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, the NDP agrees to apply the vote, but you will be surprised to hear that we are voting no.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees to apply the vote, but we will obviously be voting no.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the Green Party agrees to apply the vote and is voting no.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Mr. Speaker, I agree to apply the vote and will be voting yes.

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

(Division No. 268)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Beech	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hardie	Hehr
Holland	Housefather
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)

Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Nault	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tootoo	Trudeau
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
Young	Zahid— 170

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Allison	Ambrose
Anderson	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Brown
Cannings	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Christopherson	Clarke
Clement	Cooper
Deltell	Diotte
Dreeschen	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Eglinski	Falk
Finley	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Généreux	Genius
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Jolibois	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Laverdière
Lebel	Liepert
Lobb	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Mulcair

Private Members' Business

Nantel	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Plamondon	Poilievre
Quach	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Sansoucy	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shiple	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Trost	Trudel
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Warawa
Warkentin	Watts
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 128

PAIRED

Members

Foote

Moore — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:40 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

FRAMEWORK ON PALLIATIVE CARE IN CANADA ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-277, An Act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Deputy Speaker: 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*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC) moved that C-277, An Act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada, as amended, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to be standing in the House today at third reading of my private member's bill, Bill C-277, an act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada.

The need for palliative care is increasing in our country. What began as a seed with the all-party parliamentary committee on palliative and compassionate care that studied this issue in the 2011 session and brought forward a report, recommendations, and motion to the House, grew into this bill, which has been supported both here and at committee, and is now ready for final consideration in the House.

Canadians need palliative care services now more than ever. Less than 30% of Canadians have access to this vital service, which allows them to choose to live as well as they can for as long as they can.

Bill C-277 is the next action required to define the services to be covered, to bring standard training requirements for the various levels of care providers, to come with a plan and mechanism to ensure consistent access for all Canadians, and to collect the data to ensure success. Through the amendments at committee, it will also consider re-establishing the palliative care secretariat.

[*Translation*]

A growing number of individuals of all ages in Canada suffer from chronic pain or deadly diseases. Palliative care services can replace a wide range of services, such as short-term care, home care, crisis care, and psychological or spiritual assistance services.

A palliative care philosophy is needed to meet all sorts of needs through a process that is adapted and patient-centric. Increased demand for home and palliative care will split the cost of health care in four, compared to the cost of short-term care or palliative care in hospitals.

The creation and implementation of a palliative care framework would provide consistent access to high quality palliative care in hospitals, at home, in long-term care facilities, and in nursing homes.

[*English*]

The bill is timely, since the special committee that studied the Carter decision on medical assisted dying legislation said that without good quality palliative care there would be no true choice. We want Canadians to have a choice.

During discussion in committee, we heard testimony from some of the outstanding Canadians who pioneer in palliative care, people like Dr. David Henderson, a lead physician in palliative care, and Dr. Pereira, another pioneer in palliative care. We heard from national organizations of nurses, hospices, and other palliative care experts. As a result of their testimony, several amendments were brought.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

The first amendment tasks the federal government with developing a palliative care framework though the provinces are responsible for implementing it. Of course the federal government will support the provinces in this, and I was pleased to see the \$11-billion investment in palliative and mental health care in budget 2017.

Private Members' Business

The second amendment clarifies the wording of the provision dealing with the training of palliative care providers. Many individuals are active in this field, including health care providers, volunteers in a variety of settings, and family caregivers. The committee felt it was important to better define training for health care providers and other people involved, so it amended the wording of the provision accordingly.

The committee also requested that the provision amending the Canada Health Act to include palliative care as a protected service be removed.

From what the witnesses told us, there were clearly other mechanisms that the federal government was already considering, such as health accords, infrastructure spending reviews, and programs for palliative care and home care.

The focus of the bill was on developing a plan, and there are many ways to do that.

[English]

One of the amendments brought forward at committee was that the proposed framework designed to support improved access for Canadians to palliative care evaluate the advisability of re-establishing the Department of Health secretariat on palliative and end-of-life care. In June 2001, the secretariat on palliative and end-of-life care was established as the first step in Health Canada's work to co-ordinate a national strategy on palliative and end-of-life care.

Nearly a year later, the secretariat brought together over 150 national, provincial, and territorial specialists in the field. This included practitioners, researchers, and those making decisions in palliative and end-of-life care. This summit, the national action planning workshop on end-of-life care, resulted in the establishment of the main priorities or working groups deemed as essential for quality palliative and end-of-life care in Canada.

These five working groups led to the beginnings of the Canadian strategy on palliative and end-of-life care and focused on best practices and quality care, education for formal caregivers, public information and awareness, research, and surveillance. I am very interested to see what an entity similar to the Department of Health secretariat on palliative and end-of-life care could look like today.

The bill now outlines the advisability of re-establishing this secretariat, which could be discussed at length. However, I would like to elaborate on what such a secretariat or regulatory body might look like.

It would be known as the central entity for palliative care information, education, and accessibility in Canada. Setting a national standard, or a national framework, would create consistent care across the country through a variety of mechanisms. Virtual care, home care, palliative care, and hospice care are only a few of the current possibilities.

Working all of these types of different care into community networks would be beneficial to all Canadians and would facilitate the process of finding and transitioning into palliative care. At the heart of these operations would be our health care workers, our nurses, doctors, palliative care physicians, and all the many other caregivers that exist.

An amendment to improve the wording of the need to provide research and collect data on palliative care was approved, as well as an amendment to remove ongoing responsibility for measuring the performance of the framework, since the provinces would have metrics in this regard.

The committee felt that the wording of the bill was adequately clear to cover all Canadians and, as such, no further amendments were required. I want to thank the committee members for their diligent consideration of the bill.

I was able to tell the committee what I would like to see happen when the framework was implemented. In terms of covered services, I would like to see the covered services include pain control, crisis intervention, spiritual and emotional counselling, as well as all services provided in home care and hospice. In an overall patient-oriented palliative care approach, these things are brought forward when needed and do not necessarily apply to the circumstances of every patient.

I would like to see the government leveraging training on palliative care that is already available through organizations like Pallium Canada and many universities. I would like to see us encourage more palliative care specialists to work in Canada, since we only have 200 versus the current need of 600.

I have heard a lot of innovative ideas that have been implemented to accelerate getting palliative care in more remote parts of Canada. For example, there are places where they have trained paramedics and home care workers, and then they are connected to a virtual call centre with palliative care specialists who can guide the care providers. Training at this level really accelerates the actual care that can be provided in remote communities, which is currently a real challenge.

● (1850)

An excellent example of palliative care done right can be found right at home in my riding of Sarnia—Lambton. With an increasingly aging population, Sarnia—Lambton has done incredible work by creating and continuing to expand its senior care network in our communities. With 20 palliative care beds, five palliative care physicians, and our integrated network of home care and hospice care, I believe Sarnia—Lambton is ahead of the pack.

I am proud to say that St. Joseph's Hospice in my riding survives on fundraising currently of \$1 million a year, so hopefully we can have the government provide support for these hospices, which provide such a great service. I would like to thank Dr. Glen Maddison who, along with his many colleagues at St. Joseph's Hospice, provided input on this bill.

I believe all Canadians should have access to consistent and quality care, such as is available in my riding. I would like to thank Sarnia—Lambton's many institutions and groups that support and deliver palliative care, such as the St. Joseph's Health Care Society, Bluewater Health Palliative Care Unit, the Erie St. Clair Community Care Access Centre, and of course, St. Joseph's Hospice. Unfortunately, these resources are not abundant everywhere, so I am doing everything in my power to create them in the rest of Canada.

Private Members' Business

I would also like to have the data we need to take improved action on palliative care over time. We know, for example, that palliative care in home care settings costs about \$200 a day versus \$1,200 a day for an acute care hospital bed, but we do not know how much the true cost of palliative care averages. Because of the numerous ways people receive palliative care, and the many who have no access, there is a clear lack of information about what the true demand is. Knowledge about which treatments are more effective or are more cost-efficient are also needed. Knowing how many hospices we would need to adequately address the demand is equally important. There are only 30 hospices in Canada versus 1,300 in the U.S., so there is definitely a need.

Using some of the infrastructure money that the government has announced, I would like to see it spent to create Canadian jobs and to build palliative care infrastructure. That would certainly be money well spent. The palliative care framework in Bill C-277 will contain the plan, and the government will then determine the pace of spending and where it will be focused.

There has been so much interest in this subject, and such great support from the many arenas, I hope that when I thank people I will not forget anyone.

I want to thank the many organizations that have supported this bill through its journey, such as the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians, Pallium Canada, ARPA, The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, with many of their member hospices, like Bruyère continuing care, St. Joseph's Hospice in my own riding, and West Island Palliative Care Residence. I want to also thank the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Kidney Foundation, the ALS Society, the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, the more than 50 organization members of the Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition, and the interfaith groups, including the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Canadian Council of Imams, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Armenian Prelacy of Canada, the Canadian Conference of Orthodox Bishops, the Ottawa Main Mosque and the Ottawa Muslim Association for their ongoing promotion and support of this bill. It is through organizations and groups like these that we can integrate palliative care into the current health care system and make a true difference in the lives of Canadians.

I also want to thank my colleagues on all sides of the House who have spoken passionately, and in support of this bill.

I want to thank the thousands of Canadians who have written letters to MPs and the Prime Minister, and who sent more than 84 petitions to this House asking for palliative care.

I want to thank the Minister of Health for her advocacy on this issue with the provinces, and for putting dollars into the budget to begin the journey to ensure that all Canadians have access to palliative care so they can choose to live as well as they can for as long as they can.

The time is right. This bill has been another fine example of how political parties can come together and work for the common good of Canadians, and it has been an amazing experience being part of it.

With that, I encourage each member of this House to support this bill. People in their ridings and people all across our nation desperately need access to good quality palliative care. This bill is another step in the right direction.

• (1855)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, palliative care is something that all members of Parliament are concerned about. We have a government that has allocated a considerable amount of resources, and the Minister of Health has raised the issue with her provincial counterparts. I recall the fantastic work that a very good, dear friend of mine, Sharon Carstairs, a former senator, did on this file.

I compliment the member on bringing the bill forward, and being open to the amendments. I would ask her to provide some thoughts on how it is this issue has brought many of us together, because we do recognize the importance of palliative care in Canada.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader for his question and for his support on this issue. As he has said, this is an issue that is timely because of the assisted dying legislation, but even more so, because of the aging population in Canada. We see the incredible need out there. It is daunting to think about remote communities and how we going to get access for the 70% of Canadians who currently have no service.

We are going to require some innovation. There are pockets of innovation that have already started to happen. The provinces are all starting to march along in their own ways. The government can have a role in bringing standardization to the whole thing. With that, there is an opportunity for the government to partner.

We have infrastructure dollars we want to spend. We know that we need hospices. We know that acute care is not the way to go, so I appreciate the Minister of Health putting money in the budget for home care, recognizing in budget 2017 home care and palliative care and some mental health funding, because as people go through these end of life issues, quite often there is an emotional and spiritual component and a mental health component to address.

I see that all parties recognize that people need this. It is something we need to do, and we need to begin that journey.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the tremendous amount of work she has done to bring the bill forward. I think every member in the House is proud of the fact that we can come together, especially on a topic such as this.

I want to ask my colleague, in terms of the assisted dying legislation, how this plays an important role and what her thoughts are on that.

Private Members' Business

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the assisted dying legislation, the important thing to note is that the committee that studied the Carter decision said that without good palliative care, we do not have a real choice. For many Canadians who are in places where they have nothing, they are suffering horribly in pain, and they really do not have a choice.

We want people to have a choice. We have heard many examples and testimonies. I have heard stories that would make us cry, of people who went into palliative care and were able, in a pain-free way, to enjoy their last moments with their families, living much longer than many had anticipated and much better than many had anticipated.

Although Bill C-14 was more to address the Criminal Code with respect to assisted dying legislation, I think this bill brings the framework for palliative care and starts to build on the various aspects of that.

I appreciate the minister working with the provinces, because that will be key. We know that the provinces implement the work and the government funds the work, so there is an opportunity to partner with them to get a really great result for Canadians.

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to express support for Bill C-277, an act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada.

Our government believes that Bill C-277 provides us with a timely opportunity to take a leadership role on this issue. I would also like to recognize the efforts of the member for Sarnia—Lambton, who had the class and the elegance to send flowers to the minister with whom I feel fortunate to work. I would like to return the favour. I think she did an excellent job on this issue and has put forward a very thoughtful proposal. I sincerely congratulate her.

I also want to congratulate the members who served on the Standing Committee on Health and who studied this bill with a great deal of attention and care.

Our government understands that palliative care is a critically important part of our health care system, providing much needed support to patients and their families at one of the most difficult times of their lives. We also know that Canadians overwhelmingly support a palliative approach to care at the end of life.

Still, studies have reported that as few as 16% to 30% of Canadians have access to palliative care, depending on where they live in Canada.

[*English*]

There is no question that we must improve palliative and end of life care so that Canadians, irrespective of where they live, have access to timely, high-quality care at the end of their lives. If we are going to be successful in achieving this goal, however, it is paramount that the federal government collaborate with the provinces and territories and draw on the considerable expertise that key stakeholders, health care providers, and caregivers have to offer.

I would now like to take this opportunity to speak to some of the amendments made by the Standing Committee on Health, which I believe strengthen the bill.

The Standing Committee on Health received a number of briefs from key stakeholders on Bill C-277, including the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Nurses Association, and Pallium Canada. All of these organizations expressed strong support for the implementation of a federal framework on palliative care. However, they also indicated that a significant amount of work had already been done and should be leveraged in the development of any federal framework on palliative care.

[*Translation*]

For example, most provincial and territorial governments already have a palliative care strategy, plan or framework in place to support palliative care. Several of the briefs submitted to the committee also identified the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association's "The Way Forward: Towards Community-Integrated Hospice Palliative Care in Canada" as a key resource that could be built upon.

Funded by Health Canada, "The Way Forward" Framework was developed through an extensive consultation process with health care providers, experts, key stakeholders and all levels of government. It provides guidance, best practices, and other resources to help communities and organizations adopt a palliative approach across all settings of care.

Organizations across Canada, including the Government of Alberta, the Canadian Home Care Association, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Canadian Medical Association, have used the framework to guide their efforts to implement an integrated palliative care approach.

I was pleased that the members of the Standing Committee on Health acknowledged this significant body of work and that it will be studied when developing any future framework.

[*English*]

A number of stakeholders also expressed their support for the priority areas identified in the framework, including palliative care education and training, support for care providers, and data collection and research. Each of these elements is widely understood to be essential in improving access to high-quality palliative care services by patients and their families.

Our government has been very clear in expressing its support on these issues. For example, the government has provided \$3 million in funding to Pallium Canada to support training in palliative care to front-line health care providers. This initiative has developed a range of educational materials, trained trainers, and facilitated sessions to increase the palliative care capacity of health care providers.

• (1905)

[*Translation*]

We also recognize the critical role that unpaid caregivers play in the care of so many Canadians.

Private Members' Business

As announced in budget 2017, the introduction of the new Canada caregiver credit and a new EI caregiving benefit will provide additional support to Canadians caring for critically ill or injured family members.

[English]

Supporting the development of a solid evidence base has also been a clear priority for our government. Through the government's research funding arm, the Canadian Frailty Network centre of excellence is receiving \$23.9 million in support over the next five years to facilitate evidence-based research, knowledge sharing, and clinical practices that improve health care outcomes for frail older Canadians, their families, and caregivers. It is my sincere hope that these foundational investments can be leveraged to guide future work in this area.

[Translation]

Our government is also committed to working co-operatively with provincial and territorial governments to improve the quality and availability of palliative care for Canadians.

While the federal government can provide leadership through the implementation of a framework to help support and unify efforts to make positive change, it is the provinces and territories that have primary responsibility for the delivery of health care services, including palliative care.

[English]

When first introduced in the House, Bill C-277 called on the Minister of Health to develop and implement a framework designed to give Canadians access to palliative care provided through hospitals, home care, long-term care facilities, and residential hospices. The bill is significantly strengthened by the changes made at committee to indicate that the federal framework on palliative care developed through Bill C-277 would support improved access to these services by Canadians. While the federal government is well positioned to complement and bolster the important work under way across the country by provincial and territorial governments, this wording better reflects the constitutional realities of the Canadian health care system, as it is the provinces that deliver the services on a daily basis.

[Translation]

The amended bill being considered by the House today no longer requires an evaluation of “the advisability of amending the Canada Health Act to include palliative care services provided through home care, long-term care facilities and residential hospices”.

While this would no doubt highlight the importance of palliative care within the health care system, I would agree with the briefs sent to the Standing Committee on Health by the Canadian Nursing Association and the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians, expressing concern over potential amendments to the Canada Health Act as part of this bill.

Given the complexity of the Canada Health Act, there is a real risk that this measure would lead to lengthy delays in the implementation of the framework, when more immediate action is needed. That is definitely not our objective, nor that of the member for Sarnia—Lambton, I am sure.

These organizations also expressed concern that the review on the state of palliative care, as prescribed by section 4 of this bill, may not necessarily result in increased access to community and home-based palliative care services, services for which Canadians have expressed the greatest support.

[English]

With these considerations in mind, the removal of this point will focus attention to where it is most needed, the development of a framework which would support provinces, territories, and stakeholders in their front-line efforts to improve palliative care.

I would like to thank the House for the opportunity to reflect on some of the important changes that were made to Bill C-277, which I believe significantly strengthen the proposed framework.

I will conclude as I started by thanking the member for Sarnia—Lambton for putting forward such a well-considered proposal, and offer my support and the government's support for the amended bill currently before the House.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-277, an act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada. I would like to thank the sponsor of the bill for her work and the members of the Standing Committee on Health for this new version.

The New Democrats have long supported and advocated for the idea of a Canadian palliative care strategy to provide end-of-life care to Canadians. With Canada's aging population taxing our health care system, the need for a coherent, coordinated, nationwide palliative and end-of-life care strategy is becoming more acute. This issue affects and will continue to affect us all directly or indirectly.

I was pleased to see these words in the new version of the bill:

2(1)(g) evaluates the advisability of re-establishing the Department of Health's Secretariat on Palliative and End-of-Life Care.

I would remind members that we are in this situation because, when the Conservatives were in power, they decided to abolish the secretariat on palliative and end-of-life care and stop work on the palliative and end-of-life care strategy. We therefore missed an opportunity to make incredible advances for the well-being of patients, their families, and our society. Those decisions, combined with 10 years of inaction on this issue, have had a negative impact.

I hope that, with this bill, the Liberals will take this opportunity to restore the secretariat on palliative and end-of-life care and that it will be given adequate funding. I also hope that health care professionals will have the resources needed so that they can provide services across the country, because as we all know, there is a great and ever-increasing need.

Private Members' Business

I was able to gauge the extent of these needs when I had the opportunity to sit with my colleagues from the House and the other chamber on the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying. At the hearings, the vast majority of witnesses and experts told us how vitally important accessible and good quality palliative care is to Canadians. I was made aware of the fact that across the country only 16% of Canadians have access to quality palliative care. Thus, one in ten Canadians have access to quality palliative care. One in ten is too little, far too little.

The NDP respects the fact that a good part of health services are provided by the provinces. However, the federal government has a fundamental role to play when working with them. For that reason, we have been asking for a long time for a national palliative care strategy that respects provincial and territorial jurisdiction, but that seeks to find way to provide adequate palliative care services for everyone.

At the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, we made informed and necessary recommendations on palliative care that called for reestablishing the secretariat on palliative care and funding, creating a properly funded national palliative and end-of-life care strategy, and support for family caregivers and better compassionate care benefits.

These recommendations have to be considered. They respond to the concerns of Canadians. As everyone probably knows, National Palliative Care Week is from May 7 to 13. It is happening right now.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who work with our constituents day after day. I am talking about health professionals and volunteers who devote their time to this. Their commitment is essential and I thank them from the bottom of my heart. I want to take this opportunity to specifically thank the health professionals, agencies, and organizations, and the many volunteers in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot who work directly or indirectly with the patients. The role these people play in providing high quality palliative care cannot be measured. They provide patients and their families the support they so desperately need during one of the most difficult times in their lives. The palliative care that they provide whether at home, a palliative care centre, or a hospital, is indispensable.

In my riding, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, countless organizations do exceptional work.

● (1910)

These organizations offer palliative and respite care. Others raise funds to ensure that those who need quality palliative care can get it. One of these is the Hôtel-Dieu-de-Saint-Hyacinthe. The centre's palliative care team has been providing palliative care for 30 years. Hundreds of people go to the nursing home to live out their last days. It is around 500. The hospital has hundreds of beds, but only 12 palliative care beds.

In Acton Vale, the Centre d'hébergement de la MRC-d'Acton has just one palliative care bed. All of the people who work with patients and their families, on user committees and elsewhere, are doing exceptional work, and I am deeply grateful to them.

In support of Hôtel-Dieu residents, the Fondation Aline-Letendre will be holding a spaghetti supper and "Rock à la Sylvain Lussier"

party on Saturday, May 13, at 7 p.m. in the Centre communautaire Douville in memory of Lucie-Anna Gaucher and Jeanne Palardy, who both received palliative care at the Hôtel-Dieu-de-Saint-Hyacinthe.

This Saint-Hyacinthe organization does crucial work in our community. I want to recognize the incredible work of its executive director, Christine Poirier, its volunteers, and its board members. Since it was created over 20 years ago, Fondation Aline-Letendre has given over \$7 million to the Hôtel-Dieu-de-Saint-Hyacinthe. I am also thinking of the staff and volunteers at Les Amis du crépuscule, a community organization that provides assistance to people receiving palliative care and later to their grieving families. We also have the Maison Marie-Luce-Labossière, which provides support and assistance, as well as accommodations, in a safe, peaceful environment to people suffering from "preterminal" cancer, among others. The Maison Marie-Luce-Labossière also has spaces for short-term stays in order to allow caregivers a period of respite during the summer months.

Like me, the members of these organizations believe that a national palliative care strategy would have a positive impact on patients and their families, and that it is high time Canada developed such a framework for palliative care.

The growing demand for palliative and end-of-life care poses a major challenge for our society. The bill before us today encourages us to think about existing frameworks, strategies, and best practices in palliative care. In that regard, I would like to acknowledge the exceptional work that Quebec has been doing for the past several years to deal with this reality and provide appropriate services to Quebecers. Quebec created a palliative and end-of-life care development plan in 2015, which builds on other existing measures, such as the end-of-life palliative care policy. Quebec is a leader in this area and we should learn from its example. There is also another inspiring initiative in this regard, and that is Motion No. 456, which was moved by my NDP colleague on October 31, 2013. The motion sought to create a pan-Canadian strategy on palliative and end-of-life care in co-operation with the provinces and territories.

New Democrats have been working with many stakeholders and organizations for a long time in order to develop and implement a palliative care strategy. We are proud that the member revisited the NPD's motion on palliative care, which was adopted in 2014. The motion was adopted in the House three years ago, but no real progress has been made on this vitally important issue since then.

That is why it is high time that we move forward without delay. The federal government must demonstrate leadership and take immediate action to establish a palliative care framework that will give all Canadians better access to quality palliative care.

I would like to once again thank the sponsor of this bill, which I urge all of my colleagues to support. We should be in unanimous agreement in the House on this subject.

Private Members' Business

●(1915)

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it truly is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to an issue about which I am very passionate. I wanted to have the opportunity to speak to this important legislation, brought forward by my colleague the member for Sarnia—Lambton, who is seeking to develop a framework for palliative care in Canada. This is an extremely important issue.

I enjoyed listening to the speeches from my colleagues, but I would like to start my speech off on a different tangent. I would like to look back to a very crisp winter day in 2012. In my previous career, I was the editor of a local community newspaper. I distinctly remember getting a phone call one afternoon asking if I would be willing to come down to the Foothills Country Hospice to cover an interesting story that was unfolding. It was a story about a man, Greg Garvan. He was in the Foothills Country Hospice, unfortunately, with a rare form of cancer. Knowing he was in his final days, he was really hoping to have one thing before his life ended. He was hoping to have one last visit with two of his favourite companions. Mr. Garvan was a horseman. He enjoyed the country living in rural southern Alberta, and certainly as any rancher and cowboy would know, he wanted to spend some time with his friends. His two friends were his two horses, Kiwi and Russell. The Foothills Country Hospice staff on that very cold winter's day wrapped Greg up in a blanket, rolled his bed out into the parking lot of the hospice, and there were his two horses, Russell and Kiwi.

It was very difficult, I must admit, to take photos that day and talk to the staff without having a tear in my eye. There are certainly not too many other staff or institutions that would have taken that kind of effort and passion and shown how much their patients and patients' families meant to them, to ensure they were able to make the dying wish of one of their friends come true. We have photos of Russell and Kiwi snuggling right up to Greg, wrapped in his blanket in his bed, in the parking lot of the Foothills Country Hospice.

To cap off the day, Greg's mother, who is from New Zealand, was staying in Okotoks. This was in early December. The staff at the hospice held an early Christmas dinner for Greg and his family, at the hospice. I am sure that was a memorable day in what was a difficult time for his family. It certainly was not one they will soon forget.

Those of us who do not have the fortune of having a hospice in our communities certainly would not have the opportunity to understand the wonderful things that hospice staff can do. I am very honoured that we have the Foothills Country Hospice in our community.

That really highlights the debate today. When we have an opportunity to have a facility like a hospice, with the ability and the things it is able to do for its community and its patients, I find it unfortunate that not everyone in Canada has the opportunity to experience that as an end-of-life option. The stats I have seen show less than 30% actually have access to a hospice facility. That is truly unfortunate.

Some of my colleagues have talked about how this really came to a head, and it is how I became more interested in the hospice facility and its lack of access for other Canadians. This was a very prominent

issue during the debates on doctor-assisted dying. It was a very difficult issue for my constituents. I held four town hall meetings throughout my riding in Foothills and southwest Alberta. I had hundreds of people attend the town halls. I also sent out a survey to my constituents asking them how they felt about the doctor-assisted dying legislation. I had 4,000 responses to that survey, which was a very high response rate, along with the carbon tax.

My constituents were very torn on how they felt about doctor-assisted dying. It was a very difficult issue. Some were adamantly opposed. Some were adamantly in favour. The one theme that went through all my town halls and through those surveys was the importance of offering palliative care as part of that legislation.

●(1920)

If the government was to provide doctor-assisted dying, my constituents wanted to ensure there were resources in place and that a framework for palliative care would also be a part of that legislation.

It was very clear that my constituents wanted some options. One of those options, if we were truly going to have doctor-assisted dying, was that Canadians had to understand that they had another option, and that option was end-of-life care through hospice.

What has made this so profound and so loud and clear in my constituency is that we have the Foothills Country Hospice. Many other constituents and many other Canadians do not have that.

We are certainly blessed in my constituency to have the hospice, but also to have the people who work so hard to make it a reality. It has been about 10 years since the hospice was opened, but it has been almost 20 years since my constituents worked hard to make this project come to fruition.

I really want to take the opportunity to thank a few people who were instrumental in ensuring this hospice became a reality in rural Alberta, people like Dr. Eric Wasylenko and his wife Louise, David and Leslie Bissett, Jean Quigley, Dr. Jim Hansen, Doug and Susan Ramsay, Beth Kish and Dawn Elliott, Mark Cox, and the Council of the Municipal District (MD) of Foothills in the town of Okotoks. These people worked extremely hard to make this project a reality.

The annual budget for the Foothills Country Hospice is about \$2.8 million. The province has picked up a significant part of that budget, but the community is also being asked to raise close to \$1 million or more each and every year to ensure the hospice is able to operate. One of the wonderful stories about the hospice is to see the community buy into it and each year come forward to raise that type of money. It also shows that this is not an easy task, when it comes to having a hospice in a community.

Private Members' Business

We cannot have these types of facilities and the wonderful people who work in them without support from all three levels of government. That is why this private member's bill is so important. We need to develop a framework to ensure we can have the resources there to offer hospice care to Canadians, but also to ensure we have the resources there to make it a reality. That is what we are missing.

I know on both sides of the floor, during the doctor-assisted dying debate, many of us wanted an amendment as part of that legislation to ensure there was funding available for hospice. I am encouraged to see support among all parties in the House to ensure this becomes a reality. It is one thing to talk about it, but we have to ensure we provide the resources and the commitment as a federal government. As we proceed with doctor-assisted dying, one of the most important parts of that is also to ensure we have a framework for hospice care and a commitment that it is funded.

I spent a lot of time talking about the Foothills Country Hospice in my riding. I thought it was important to put a personal face on this service. I know many of us talk about hospice care and that it is an important option for that end of life. I have been through it many times, I have toured, and talked to the nurses, the doctors, and the many wonderful volunteers and staff that take their time to work there. It is hard to explain a hospice unless people have had an opportunity to experience it. Unfortunately, that is not something many of us want to experience, but it is a life-changing option.

As parliamentarians, we have to get across the fact that this truly brings a new definition to end-of-life care, that there are ways to make those difficult times as comfortable as possible for people and their families. If we are truly to have doctor-assisted dying, we must also have that other option, palliative care.

I want to again thank my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton for all the work she has done, which has been yeoman's work, to make this a reality. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the floor to ensure this becomes a reality.

● (1925)

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to address Bill C-277, an act providing for the development of a framework on palliative care in Canada and to discuss our government's commitment to improving palliative and end of life care for all Canadians.

This bill comes at the right time in our national dialogue on palliative care, and I would like to recognize the efforts of the member for Sarnia—Lambton in moving this discussion forward.

I had the opportunity to review this legislation with my seniors' council in Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam at our last meeting. I want to thank the members for their input and for helping me better understand just how important it is for this bill to proceed.

Our government knows that the quality and availability of palliative care is an issue of great importance to Canadians. A Harris/Decima survey found that more than 90% of Canadians believe that palliative care improves the quality of life for both patients and their family members. Studies have shown that patients who receive palliative care services are happier, more mobile, and, in some cases, live longer than patients who do not.

The recent legislation on medical assistance in dying has amplified the public conversation on options for care at the end of life. While medical assistance in dying is only one potential option at the end of life, experiences in other countries suggest that only a fraction will seek it.

● (1930)

[*Translation*]

It seems that many Canadians who could benefit from palliative care do not receive it. For example, Health Quality Ontario found that two in five Ontarians had not received palliative care services at the end of life in 2015.

[*English*]

Palliative care is a priority for our government, and I support the creation of a framework to guide our work. I was pleased to see the amendments made by the Standing Committee on Health so that the framework takes a more targeted and integrated approach and builds upon the important work already under way to improve palliative and end of life care in Canada.

There is a wide range of promising initiatives established in provinces and territories as well as in stakeholder organizations in the health care sector. These initiatives touch upon many of the elements put forth in this bill, including identifying training and education needs for health care providers and other caregivers, providing supports for care providers, facilitating access to care, and promoting research and data collection.

[*Translation*]

The federal government recognizes the advantages of and the growing need for palliative care and has funded a series of strategic initiatives in order to establish key fundamental approaches and to address key issues.

[*English*]

For example, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, an independent national cancer organization funded by the government, has convened a group of palliative care experts from across the country to create the palliative and end of life care initiative. The network includes representatives from every province and territory, officials from provincial ministries of health, representatives from both professional medical organizations and patient advocacy groups, and patient and family representatives.

Through this venue for national conversations, the palliative and end of life care initiative is working to improve coordinated support for patients and families through the education of health professionals, patients, and caregivers. The network is also increasing access to evidence-based, integrated, high-quality palliative care services that align with patient preferences.

Adjournment Proceedings

Apart from the network, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer has also funded a series of studies focused on the experience of palliative care from the patient and family perspective. This patient-centred approach focuses on the importance of early and ongoing assessments of the expressed wishes of the patient and family for symptom management and quality of life. The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer has been expanding the visibility of its work by distributing its findings widely so as to bring this evidence to the broader health care community. By emphasizing the centrality of the patient and family, the Canadian health care system can provide end-of-life care that is responsive to patient needs and provide an improved experience for patients and families going through the most trying moments of their lives.

The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement is another national organization funded by our government to help identify proven health system innovations and accelerate their spread across Canada. In recent years, one of its priorities has been to evaluate and disseminate data on best practices with respect to palliative care services. The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement's programming in palliative and end-of-life care is well under way and focuses on identifying and validating high-impact innovations and practices ready to be spread and scaled up across the country. For example, in February it launched a pan-Canadian call for innovations to identify and validate high-impact palliative care models, practices, and tools. Projects identified as having the greatest potential impact will be featured at a forum of experts, decision-makers, and health administrators in June to discuss how these innovations can be scaled up and spread to other organizations and jurisdictions.

I would also like to highlight the important work being undertaken by Canadian researchers to understand the current status and potential of palliative care in Canada. Since 2011, the government has invested over \$546 million with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to support research on aging, including palliative care or related late-life issues. One area where the Canadian Institutes of Health Research is supporting a wide variety of research is through its team grants in late-life issues. In the past, these research projects have examined some of the most pressing issues on palliative care in Canada, including improving knowledge uptake across providers and institutions, appropriate protocols for transferring patients between different levels of care, and developing ways to measure the quality of patient experience.

Another example of CIHR research is the improving end-of-life care in first nations communities project. Led by Dr. Mary Lou Kelley from Lakehead University, this project was designed to improve the end-of-life care in four first nation communities through developing a culturally appropriate approach to palliative care. Providers in each of the communities chose a series of clinical, educational, or administrative interventions to build local capacity, with each activity being evaluated for its contribution to developing palliative care. The four communities created locally designed and controlled palliative care programs. This demonstrated the feasibility of providing local palliative care at home in first nation communities, the effectiveness of first nations community capacity, and the associated benefits of enabling among first nations people the choice to receive palliative care at home. Furthermore, the project produced a series of reports and resources for first nation communities and the government, with recommendations that will be critical for the

improvement of palliative care in first nation communities and nationwide.

To build on this work, our government has now provided funding to work with Lakehead University to provide coaching and mentoring support to 24 first nation communities in Ontario who want to implement palliative care services within their community. The message is clear: Canadians want access to high-quality palliative care.

● (1935)

Based on these existing foundations and accomplishments, our government is poised to play an important role in helping Canadians receive the most appropriate, timely, and compassionate care at the end of their lives.

I am proud of the work our government has already supported in this area and the significant strides we have seen in the provinces and territories, as well as among stakeholders in the health care sector. I look forward to continuing to work toward improving access to quality palliative care services for all Canadians.

The member for Sarnia—Lambton should be commended for her work on this and for bringing this legislation forward. I also appreciate the work my seniors' council did to prepare me for this debate.

● (1940)

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

ETHICS

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to follow up on the issue of lobbying. I had originally raised this issue in the context of a PMO staffer going to work for consultants.

Adjournment Proceedings

The issue has come up again around the so-called infrastructure bank, or the privatization bank as some like to call it. Essentially, industry experts are being allowed to write rules for what will ultimately be a benefit to them. People in my community are concerned that something similar happens in the rail industry, where people go from working in government to working in the company, then go from working in the company to working in the government, and then from working in the government back to working in the company. This kind of intermingling of lobbyists making government policy or moving between companies and the regulator undermines the integrity of the regulatory process.

With respect to the example I gave on rail safety, for instance, I wonder what the government will do to ensure Canadians can have confidence that regulators will not be undermined by too much industry presence.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the most important thing to recognize is that we do have a Lobbying Act. We have legislation and protocols in place to ultimately ensure that there is a lot of common sense, that individuals who are leaving government offices have cooling off periods, where the need to be at arm's-length is applied. We have to recognize that we have amazing talented individuals both in the public sector and the private sector. As long as it is managed in a transparent fashion and ensures accountability is what has been very important to the government and we will continue to push on that.

The member made reference to the private infrastructure bank that has just been established. It is important to acknowledge that as a government we have seen the benefits of investing in Canada. It is important that it not be distorted in any fashion. The government has invested historic amounts in Canada's infrastructure for the coming years, well in excess of \$100 billion. It is difficult to imagine \$1 billion, let alone \$100 billion.

The member would be sympathetic to this time of the year in Winnipeg. There are a lot of potholes in our community. Whether it is pothole or different capital infrastructure, there is a need for government to get engaged and to assist. We would have to go back 50, 60, 70 years before we could see a government such as ours that has recognized how important it is to support that.

When we make reference to the infrastructure investment bank, that is over and above that historic amount. I do not know who is going to be eligible or want to put that package together, but it is yet another tool for potential projects. It is important to recognize that this is not happening alone, but takes into account the municipalities and provinces. The minister made reference to different stakeholders such as unions. Some of the greatest investors will be unions. We will ensure that there is a high sense of accountability and transparency.

The Prime Minister and this government take the issue very seriously. I would try to provide assurances to my colleague and friend across the way that the government is on the right track. We do have legislation and there are protocols in place so that we can avoid as much as possible any appearance of a conflict of interest.

●(1945)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says we need to go back 60 or 70 years in order to find a comparable government. I would say we would have to go back to the 19th century to find a government that is so unabashedly willing to use taxpayer dollars to line the pockets of global capitalists. I would go back further than the member suggested we do.

As the member is from Winnipeg, I am sure he will recognize the names of Sam Katz and Phil Sheegl. Those are the names that come to mind when we talk about people in the private sector who come into the public sector and are not clear about how the public sector relates to the private sector. As Winnipeggers, we know what the outcome for us was in terms of the use of tax dollars. We saw a lot of that money go to waste. There were investigations about who that money went to and under what circumstances and why.

In order not to repeat those kinds of errors, it is important that we be clear from the start as to what role private investors are going to have when it comes to setting public policy for the infrastructure bank. I have to say that the current rules do not satisfy me that taxpayers are going to be protected.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, at times we will have to agree to disagree. One of the things I know is that we have pension funds. Many of those pension funds are union member pension funds. There are all sorts of investments there. I believe I read a while ago that one of the biggest investors in Canada is the teachers' pension fund in Ontario. We are talking about millions of dollars. A lot of that money leaves Canada and is invested in other infrastructure around the world.

This is just an option for municipalities and provinces to look at. It also provides an option for pension funds. Why not allow for it? It is not as if this is the only pot. Remember, this is a secondary pot. The primary pot is one of public finances of over \$100 billion, which is a historic amount of money.

I do not believe the member across the way should be as fearful as he tries to portray. There is a lot of good in this, and we need to start looking for more good in things.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the Phoenix payroll system, which has burdened federal employees in our country for well over a year now. People who are delivering important public services all across Canada continue to be paid incorrectly and to have problems accessing benefits. This is really a travesty.

If we look at the advanced economies around the world, their national governments are able to pay their workers correctly and on time. Provincial and municipal governments in Canada do not seem to have a problem with this, so it is really quite an embarrassment that our federal government still has not fixed the Phoenix payroll system.

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This program started out as a Conservative scheme to cut costs and cut corners by merging the payroll systems that existed in different departments and agencies. There were a couple of major flaws with the idea. One was the notion that this new centralized payroll system could be run using off-the-shelf software from IBM. Another mistake was to locate the new pay centre in Miramichi, New Brunswick. The only reason it was put there was to replace the jobs that were lost when that former government eliminated the firearms centre. It was not put there because there was a population there that had expertise in managing federal government payrolls. We had the Government of Canada laying off people who had experience in federal payrolls and moving this new centre to Miramichi for political reasons.

The current Liberal government rushed ahead with the implementation of Phoenix, despite many indications of problems and despite many warnings that the system was not ready to go. The government had to admit this summer that there were some 80,000 public servants who had been paid incorrectly or not at all.

The federal government set for itself a deadline of October 31, 2016, to fix Phoenix. That seemed like a long time. However, that deadline came and went, then the end of the year came and went. As a result, many federal employees received incorrect tax information. Some 50,000 T4 slips had to be recalled as a result of Phoenix problems.

That original backlog has not totally been cleaned up. Worse yet, there are more Phoenix cases cropping up every day. Indeed, there are some 280,000 payroll cases currently that have been in a queue for three weeks or more.

The government's solution to this has been to appoint this dream team of half a dozen Liberal cabinet ministers to tackle Phoenix. I hope this is an indication that the government is finally taking it seriously. I hope that it will not lead to a situation where none of these ministers are actually responsible for what happens. I think that is one of the risks with a committee of six people.

I am hoping that we will receive some clearer answers from the parliamentary secretary this evening. I also hope that he will finally provide an answer to the question I asked a couple of months ago about setting up a dedicated phone line for MPs' offices to deal with Phoenix so that at least we, as parliamentarians, can help our many constituents who have been impacted by these payroll problems.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. Basically, we are political adversaries, but I believe that he brings a constructive attitude to this debate. I truly appreciate his concern with respect to the Phoenix pay system.

[*English*]

I would take issue, however, with a number of the comments made by my hon. friend. The first is that this government never took seriously, until recently, the issues surrounding the Phoenix pay system. In fact, those issues were identified very early when the Minister of Public Services and Procurement opened satellite pay centres across the country, put some \$50 million back into the

system in terms of aiding with financial and human resources, and was able to work with public sector unions, our partners, to work out categories that would be addressed in priority order, such as maternity or parental leave, acting appointments, and disability. In a couple of those cases, we have reached the steady state of which the member speaks.

Of course the Prime Minister recognized that the situation required a more whole-of-government and coordinated approach, one that brought together central agencies: the Privy Council Office, with its co-ordinating ability; the Treasury Board Secretariat; of course, Public Services and Procurement; and some experienced political insight, such as the member described. Yes, we are deliberating on ways that the system can be improved, that measurable improvements can be made, and that we get to a situation where we are improving our service levels on our service standards all of the time.

I would end by saying that, as the member of Parliament for Gatineau, I am perhaps the member in this House who is the most touched by this situation. If not, I am pretty darn close. I have seen first-hand the impact on families and the insecurities, annoyance, and inconvenience of the problems with the Phoenix pay system. The member, this House, Canadians, and public servants can be assured that there is no one more motivated in this government, but there is no government I can think of more motivated to solve the problems with the Phoenix pay system than is this government. We understand what people are going through, the challenges, and we are bringing the resources and the people to bear on this problem to give all members of this House, and in fact all of those who get up every day and work very hard for the people of Canada in our fine public service, the reassurance that these problems will be resolved

• (1955)

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary mentioned the resources being brought to bear on the Phoenix pay system, but we have never really received a proper accounting of what this boondoggle is costing. The parliamentary secretary mentioned \$50 million to keep temporary pay centres open, but what we do not know is how much the government will ultimately need to spend over and above that amount to compensate federal employees who have incurred interest and penalties as a result of not being paid the money that they have earned.

As part of announcing this task force, the government has talked about spending \$140 million to fix Phoenix. I do not think that is based on an actual accounting or estimate of cost. The government said that Phoenix was forecast to save \$70 million a year, so if we use the supposed savings from Phoenix for two years, that comes to \$140 million and will be enough to solve the problem.

That is kind of fun with numbers, but I think we need an actual audit and accounting of the specific and tangible costs of cleaning up this mess.

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Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, first, I assure my hon. members that the *Public Accounts of Canada* are published every year. That will provide a reliable accounting of all the costs incurred by the Government of Canada.

It is important to remember the history of this, as the member did earlier. Some of the member's diagnosis was in fact correct. The previous government decided that it would summarily fire 700 people, experts, and compensation advisers, and send them home and then consolidate pay operations in one location, to account for, before it realized, \$70 million annualized in savings. Those were all wrong assumptions, wrong actions, wrong management. Anyone who reads up on IT best practices would recognize that as a disastrous way to kick off such a massive project.

We are now recovering from all those mistakes, the poisonous legacy left to us by the previous government. We will come to the end of this issue. That is the commitment we would give our public servants and all Canadians.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see my friend the parliamentary secretary here, ready to answer the question. I look forward to continuing to work with the government on this issue, which is so important and should transcend party lines.

I have spoken out regularly in the House and elsewhere about the human rights violations confronting the Muslim Rohingya people in Burma. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights released a report into the situation three months ago. I would like to read an excerpt from the press release. It states:

Mass gang-rape, killings – including of babies and young children, brutal beatings, disappearances and other serious human rights violations by Myanmar's security forces in a sealed-off area north of Maungdaw in northern Rakhine State have been detailed in a new UN report issued Friday based on interviews with victims across the border in Bangladesh. Of the 204 people individually interviewed by a team of UN human rights investigators, the vast majority reported witnessing killings, and almost half reported having a family member who was killed as well as family members who were missing. Of the 101 women interviewed, more than half reported having suffered rape or other forms of sexual violence. Especially revolting were the accounts of children – including an eight-month old, a five-year-old and a six-year-old – who were slaughtered with knives. One mother recounted how her five-year-old daughter was trying to protect her from rape when a man “took out a long knife and killed her by slitting her throat.” In another case, an eight-month-old baby was reportedly killed while his mother was gang-raped by five security officers.

Two days ago, Aung San Suu Kyi said that she would not allow a UN fact finding mission on the ground in Rakhine State, saying, “we do not think that the resolution is in keeping with what is actually happening on the ground.” To claim that these atrocities are not happening, while denying anyone the capacity to investigate, is despicable and is complicity.

At present, Aung San Suu Kyi is choosing to be complicit in these abuses. She should either allow international access to Rakhine State now or she should give back her Nobel Peace Prize.

In Canada, we need to up the diplomatic pressure on the Burmese government and on Aung San Suu Kyi in particular. She is, after all, an honorary Canadian citizen, honoured in the past for human rights activity, yet we have this deplorable situation, with her in particular saying that they will not allow the investigation to proceed in Rakhine.

Having reflected on these atrocities, there can be nothing more important than saving these women, children, and men who are facing horrific abuses in Rakhine.

I want to ask the government specific questions. I know we have had statements in the House, and I appreciate those statements. However, will this be raised directly with Aung San Suu Kyi and the government of Burma? Will the government direct our embassy to speak out and do clear, public advocacy on the issues facing Rohingya, Kachin, and other minorities in Burma?

I believe we need a stronger voice from the Canadian embassy, speaking clearly and publicly on behalf of our values.

● (2000)

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for having a strong voice on this issue. When we talk here, we are not really debating. It is really important to make sure that the Canadian Parliament goes on record in commenting on our frustration concerning the ongoing situation over there and in condemning the violence against ethnic minorities, particularly the Rohingya, who are facing violence day in and day out. Our government continues to monitor the situation and has not missed an opportunity to raise this case.

I agree with my colleague. The situation the Rohingya are facing is incredibly troubling, and it is complicated further by the fact that the state of Rakhine has been completely closed off to the media and international monitors. This is making it a troubling situation.

Our government has never missed an opportunity to raise our concerns with the Burmese government, whether with the president, with Aung San Suu Kyi, or with the commander and chief. We have never missed an opportunity to express our concerns on behalf of our government, but frankly, also on behalf of Canadians, who are watching what is happening over there and are expressing deep concern about the targeting of ethnic minorities, including the Rohingya.

We also note the instability it is causing in the region. The Rohingya today are becoming the largest stateless group in the world. There is a refugee crisis over there, and neighbouring states, like Bangladesh, are having to deal with the situation.

Last month, I visit the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, and I had the opportunity to meet with the UNHCR Asia desk, where they briefed me on the situation in Burma. I heard directly from them their concerns about stateless Rohingya and their situation, whether it is inside Myanmar or in Bangladesh. This was important for me to hear on behalf of the Canadian government. We have offered close to \$4 million in humanitarian aid to help people in need in that region.

When the former minister of foreign affairs, Stéphane Dion, visited Burma last year, we directly expressed our concern. We publicly supported a United Nations fact-finding mission. I know that the Myanmar government is rejecting our calls for this and international calls for this, but we will continue to push for that and will work with like-minded countries to push for it.

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We know that the special commission, led by Kofi Annan, has issued an interim report, and we are encouraged that the Burmese government has endorsed the findings. However, that is not enough. We will continue to call on the Burmese government to find a way to end the violence and to help those in need, particularly the Rohingya.

• (2005)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, this push for a proper inquiry that would involve the Burmese government allowing access to Rakhine is extremely important. Of course, I have been critical of the government on some of these issues in the past, but I recognize that Minister Dion did tweet calling for that access. That was important, but now we need to continue the pressure.

I do not expect that the parliamentary secretary will have an immediate answer to this proposal, but I want to propose that the Prime Minister directly contact Aung San Suu Kyi. We know that the Prime Minister has an international profile when it comes to issues of inclusion. We recognize that, and this would be an opportunity for him to contact Aung San Suu Kyi directly and strongly express Canadians' concerns on these issues and push for that necessary access. That advocacy is so important.

I strongly encourage the Government of Canada to look for further opportunities to increase that pressure, because it clearly has

not been enough up until now. There needs to be more pressure from the international community.

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, I commit to working with my hon. colleague. I know the Minister of Foreign Affairs will work with him and our colleagues in the House of Commons to ensure the voice that represents all Canadians who are concerned and troubled by what is happening there will be conveyed to the Burmese government. We will ensure that human rights are defended and protected abroad, particularly in this troubling situation. It has been going on for too long and all international voices have been calling for a fact-finding mission and opening up the state of Rakhine. We will continue to do that.

I appreciate the support from the hon. member on this issue and welcome his ideas and input. Canadians are a voice around the world that people look up to, that defends human rights, inclusion, and pluralism.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:09 p.m.)

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