



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Friday, May 12, 2017**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 12, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

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*Prayer*

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The first amendment adopted by the Senate modifies the ministerial authority to post a public notice and solicit input concerning a specific application.

The version of Bill C-37 adopted by the House of Commons proposed allowing the minister to determine an appropriate length of time for public comment, up to a maximum of 90 days. The amendment adopted in the Senate requires that any consultation must be a minimum of 45 days, and retains the previous maximum of 90 days. Our government supports this amendment.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

●(1005)

[English]

### CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.)** moved:

That a Message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that the House:

agrees with amendment 1(a) made by the Senate to Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other Acts;

proposes that amendment 1(b) be amended by deleting section 56.2; by renumbering subsection 56.3(1) as section 56.2; by replacing the words “shall offer”, with the words “may offer” and by deleting subsection 56.3(2).

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House of Commons today to speak in support of Bill C-37, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other acts and to discuss the amendments adopted by the Senate. This is an important bill, as all members know, a bill that will save lives.

[Translation]

First, I would like to thank the Senate, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, and the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs for their swift but thorough consideration of Bill C-37.

It is clear from the discussions and debates that have taken place that, while we may not always agree on a way forward, we all understand the urgency of the situation and share the same goal of saving lives and reducing the growing number of opioid overdoses.

The Senate has adopted three amendments to Bill C-37, all of which deal with the proposed application process and requirements to obtain an exemption under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for a supervised consumption site.

I understand that there have been some questions from public health stakeholders on whether setting a minimum consultation period could delay applications. I want to reiterate that this consultation period is not required, but rather that a public notice can be posted, if there is a need. Such an authority would likely be used if there were concerns that community consultations were not sufficient. Further input would be helpful in making a decision in such instances, ensuring a reasonable amount of time is provided to the public to comment on a specific application. We think it makes sense. Therefore, we support this amendment.

The second amendment adopted by the Senate specifies that the Minister of Health may establish citizen advisory committees for approved supervised consumption sites where it is deemed appropriate.

While such committees could be seen as a way to maintain an open and ongoing dialogue with the surrounding community, it also represents a level of citizen oversight and influence that is not in place for any other health care service. We know that people who use drugs already face discrimination and stigmatization that can prevent them from accessing the services they need to stay alive. By including a process that could further add to the stigmatization faced by people who use drugs, this amendment runs against the intent and the spirit of Bill C-37. For this reason, our government respectfully disagrees with the second amendment.

Finally, the last amendment adopted by the Senate would require staff who supervise the consumption of substances at a site to offer clients access to an alternative pharmaceutical therapy before they consume illegal drugs at a supervised consumption site.

*Government Orders*

I would like to explain some of the concerns that our government has with this amendment as it is currently written. I want to make it very clear that our government is entirely supportive of providing immediate access to evidence-based treatment options for people living with addictions who are ready and willing to enter treatment. This would be the ideal situation. However, the situation in practice at a supervised consumption site is far more complex than simply writing the words into legislation. There are a number of factors that must be considered.

First, as I have already mentioned, people who use drugs already face significant barriers in accessing the health and social services they need, often due to stigmatization and discrimination. Supervised consumption sites are meant to be low-threshold, easily-accessible services. The more requirements or rules that are added to the process for accessing supervised consumption sites, the less accessible this service becomes to the vulnerable population it is meant to serve. Further, if this amendment is included in the legislation, I want to make it clear that none of the supervised consumption sites operating in Canada, nor most of the 18 applications that are currently before Health Canada for consideration, would meet the legislated criteria for operation. If the single word “shall” is kept in the amendment, additional requirements and burdens are automatically imposed upon supervised consumption sites and those who operate them.

• (1010)

This would make it more difficult to establish new supervised consumption sites in communities where they are wanted and needed. As such, requiring staff to offer immediate access to treatment could cause significant delays in the opening of any new supervised consumption sites. The purpose of Bill C-37 is to reduce burden and streamline the application process so that communities can open supervised consumption sites as part of a comprehensive plan to reduce harms associated with illegal drug use, including deaths. Given the current opioid crisis, these considerations raise major concerns for our government.

Finally, except in certain specific circumstances, regulating health care services is generally the responsibility of the provinces and territories. Our government has taken concrete action to pave a path forward towards improving treatment, for example, by removing barriers at the federal level and undertaking knowledge-exchange activities to improve awareness of the options available in Canada. However, at the end of the day, the provinces must make health care decisions based on the needs of their citizens. There are also costs associated with offering access to immediate treatment. This is something that would have to be considered by the provinces and weighted against their other health priorities.

The fact is that Canadians are dying every single day, and communities are urging us to set up supervised consumption sites to stop the overdoses and the deaths. I do not want the federal government to be what stands in the way of communities saving lives here and now. Improving access to treatment is a goal that our government will continue to support. I can assure the House that our government will continue to support future supervised consumption sites in developing a strong link with treatment services. We will encourage all potential sites to work closely with their respective provincial governments to make this happen. However, for the

reasons I have just outlined, our government submits that the word “shall” in this provision must be changed to the word “may”.

By now, everyone in this room is well aware of the critical and urgent nature of the opioid crisis that has been devastating communities across the country. The rising mortality rates and drug overdoses are deeply concerning. These are real communities where real people are dying, communities where front-line workers are exhausted, and friends and families are losing loved ones. We are facing a public health crisis, and we need to work together to stop it from claiming more lives. In order to do so, our actions must be collective, comprehensive, and aimed directly at protecting the health and safety of our communities. This is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive approach.

[*Translation*]

The Minister of Health has been clear that Canada’s drug policy must be comprehensive, compassionate, collaborative, and evidence-based, and use a public health approach when considering and addressing drug issues.

[*English*]

To that end, on December 12, 2016, the Minister of Health announced an updated drug strategy for Canada. The Canadian drugs and substances strategy would replace the current national anti-drug strategy. This strategy formally restores harm reduction as a core pillar of Canada’s drug policy, alongside prevention, treatment, and enforcement. All pillars are supported by a strong evidence base. The minister further supported this approach when she introduced Bill C-37, a bill that proposes many important legislative changes to address the opioid crisis. Problematic opioid use involves an intricate web of intersecting issues that must be addressed simultaneously, using different tactics.

[*Translation*]

Today I would like to underline the importance of continuing to move quickly through the legislative process.

[*English*]

First, the proposed changes contained in the bill would provide the law enforcement community with the tools needed to better address the supply of illicit opioids and other drugs in Canada and to reduce the risk of the diversion of controlled substances. The sharp rise in opioid-related overdoses and deaths has been intensified by an increase in illicit fentanyl coming into Canada. Bill C-37 would ensure that law enforcement is better equipped to keep deadly drugs like illicit fentanyl out of our communities, in a number of ways, such as making it a crime to possess or transport anything intended to be used to produce or traffic a controlled substance, allowing temporary scheduling of new psychoactive substances, and supporting faster and safer disposal of seized chemicals and other dangerous substances.

*Government Orders*

•(1015)

[*Translation*]

It is critical that we support members of the law enforcement community who work on the front lines of the opioid crisis. It is critical that this bill be passed quickly so we can prevent illicit opioids and other drugs from reaching our communities.

[*English*]

Our government is also committed to working with its partners to help reduce the harm to citizens and communities associated with problematic substance use. Evidence has shown that supervised consumption sites, when properly established and maintained, have the potential to save lives and improve health without increasing drug use and crime in the surrounding area. Bill C-37 proposes to support communities seeking to operate supervised consumption sites by streamlining the application process, as well as the renewal process for existing sites, to align with the five factors set out by the Supreme Court of Canada, without compromising the health and safety of the surrounding community.

[*Translation*]

A key component of this legislation involves ensuring that the voices of communities are heard by being more flexible and supporting the ability to tailor consultations to each community as appropriate. This improved approach preserves the requirements for community engagement. Each application would be subject to a comprehensive review, without delaying the implementation of these life-saving sites in the communities that need them the most.

We all have an important role to play in overcoming this crisis. We must support the efforts of all community members, from the volunteers, civil society organizations, health professionals, legal professionals, and of course law enforcement groups, if we are going to tackle this crisis.

[*English*]

The legislative changes proposed in Bill C-37 demonstrate our government's concrete support for communities grappling with this crisis by increasing law enforcement's ability to respond to the evolution of the illicit drug market and to take early action against suspected drug production operations. Furthermore, the changes proposed in the bill to remove unnecessary barriers to establishing supervised consumption sites and to emphasize community engagement would support communities by ensuring that these sites ultimately met the objectives of saving lives and reducing harm.

Our government will continue to work collaboratively with communities, provinces, territories, and key stakeholders through a comprehensive approach to drug policy.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank every one of you for your work on Bill C-37 and for your commitment to this urgent matter. We cannot turn our backs on the communities being affected by this crisis across the country.

[*English*]

I urge all members of the House to move forward with the proposed legislative changes, which would support communities, and ultimately, save lives.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate how we got here. I think members will remember that when this bill was put forward to the House, the Conservatives offered to split the bill and pass the majority of it unanimously, because we actually agree with the majority of the bill. However, the section regarding injection sites is a little bit controversial, so we wanted to debate that. Unfortunately, the Liberals used their majority and basically pushed it through committee without having a reasonable debate. I want to thank the Senate and its members for actually having a full debate and welcoming witnesses who had something to say about it.

How did we get here? Out of the three amendments, one that was almost unanimously supported was the amendment to allow for pharmaceutical substitution.

When addicts present at clinics asking for help, they come in with vials of poison, basically, made up in a drug dealer's basement. They are not safe. They are dangerous. This amendment would allow addicts to be offered a pharmaceutical-grade option instead of forcing them to use these dangerous drugs.

Why would the minister not allow addicts, who have a treatable condition, to get quality care and have pharmaceutical grade alternatives offered each and every time they come to those clinics?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Mr. Speaker, as the member pointed out when he talked about how we got here, one of the reasons we got to Bill C-37 is that initially, the Conservatives' Bill C-2 established 26 criteria, which were very burdensome for communities that need and want safe consumption sites, which science demonstrates save lives.

Our idea was to come back to the five criteria established by the Supreme Court and to get closer to those criteria so we could move more swiftly, because we know that every single day Canadians are dying from opioid use in this country. We need to take swift action and act decisively, with respect for the communities where they would be established. We need to make sure that where they are needed and wanted, these safe consumption sites are established.

•(1020)

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the parliamentary secretary on a couple of things. I agree that this is a national health crisis. British Columbia, Vancouver and my community of Victoria, is ground zero, so I could not agree more with that. I also agree with the need to move this through as quickly as we can. The NDP has pledged to do all we can in that regard.

What I do not agree with the member on is his characterization of the Senate being swift but thorough in its assessment. Three months is an unacceptably long time in a public health crisis like the one we are facing.

*Government Orders*

Specifically, the government has said it will accept one single amendment proposed by the Senate, a minimum 45-day public consultation period for supervised consumption site applications. This will slow down the approval process and will hinder quick action in the case of an emergency.

I can do no better than to cite not one, not two, but three Liberal members of the health committee: the member for Brampton South, the member for Oakville, and the member for Calgary Skyview.

The member for Brampton South said:

This amendment would remove the minister's discretion and prevent sites from being approved in an urgent situation. We don't need a delay of extra days, particularly if there's urgent need of a site.

She goes on.

Why would the government, in the face of resistance by virtually all of our allies in this matter, accept such a regressive amendment? [Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. NDP member for the question and the entire NDP party for its response to the opioid crisis and all its work in committee and in the House of Commons on Bill C-37. We know that this bill will save lives. It probably should have been introduced sooner, by the previous government perhaps, but so be it.

As far as the member's question on the amendment is concerned, it should be noted that this amendment requires a 45-day minimum consultation, if necessary. Not every request is subject to a 45-day minimum consultation. In cases where this is necessary, where there might be a need for community consultation, there would be a consultation period of no less than 45 days and no more than 90 days. In these cases, we think it is only right to give the public time to be heard.

As I said in my speech, this will only happen if there is a need for such consultation. It will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health for his excellent speech, which gave us a little more insight into our government's approach to the opioid crisis. In that context, he mentioned a few pillars.

Can the hon. member explain to the House what are the key pillars to our government's approach that will help him address the important issues associated with the opioid crisis?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Mr. Speaker, there are different pillars, but I think it is clear that the police have an important role to play.

The important thing is to stabilize the crisis that is currently affecting Canada and ensure that fentanyl does not find its way into our communities. We need to ensure that drug dealers, those who shamelessly put this drug in the hands of the young people of our community, are severely punished. We need to give police all the tools they need.

It is vital that we take a public health approach in responding to this crisis, since we know we have a duty to protect Canadians, even if it is sometimes from themselves. I believe that safe consumption sites allow people to use drugs while preventing overdose deaths, by

reducing the stigma associated with the use of illegal drugs and the discrimination these users face. There has never been an overdose death at a safe consumption site. That is a fact, and it is clear that we need to adopt a public health approach to deal with this crisis, which has had an often devastating effect in too many communities across Canada.

[English]

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate my question, because the parliamentary secretary did not answer it.

We know that pharmaceutical substitution is successful. The evidence from Switzerland is very clear that it works. Under the amendment put forward by the Senate, the addict would not have to commit a crime. The addict would not have to worry about the potential of an overdose. The public would not have to worry about being the victim of a crime. When this was done in Switzerland, we saw a dramatic reduction in illegal drugs. We saw less criminal activity and more people actually moving into treatment.

Again, if we have diabetics who need pharmaceutical-grade insulin and obtain it illegally, and they go into a medical facility, what are the ethics and the moral responsibility of that facility? We are talking about offering an addict who has a treatable condition the exact same quality care we would offer any Canadian who required treatment for a treatable condition.

My question, again, is to the parliamentary secretary. Why would he not give addicts, who are at the lowest point in their lives, the same quality of medical care we would give any Canadian who had a treatable condition?

● (1025)

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Mr. Speaker, I outlined the reason pretty clearly in my speech, if the member had been paying attention. We have nothing against allowing those pharmaceutical options to be offered. The word "shall" in the amendment is what causes us a problem. If it were to be changed to the word "may", that would make it acceptable.

The member is well aware that there are jurisdictional issues. We are not delivering the services. We have to work with the provinces and territories, and we are willing to do that to encourage them to get that support.

We have to look at the reality. The word "shall" would jeopardize the operation of safe consumption sites in Canada and the approval of safe consumption sites in Canada, which is definitely not our goal.

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member across the way defended the government's acceptance of the first Senate amendment on the grounds that it would not really do anything, that it would not actually require a 45-day waiting period in all cases. It would only happen, if necessary, some of the time.

*Government Orders*

I would like to clarify whether the government is supporting this amendment because it believes it would actually improve the legislation or whether this a matter of giving the Senate a pat on the head and validating the changes the government has made to the Senate, which have really emboldened that outdated and undemocratic institution to push back against urgently needed legislation passed by the great majority of elected representatives in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Senate for its work. We support the first amendment because we think that when there is a need for such consultation, and it is not required that there be consultation, the consultation period would be a minimum of 45 days to allow the public to make its voice heard in such circumstances.

I thank the Senate and all members in both Houses for the work they have done on this important issue.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today we are debating a motion put forward by the Minister of Health. The motion addresses the amendments proposed by the Senate in regard to Bill C-37, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other acts.

First, I want to stress that the opioid crisis continues to be an absolute tragedy. People across the country are still dying at an alarming rate, and there is no one solution to this. In fact, I think most Canadians would agree that there are many factors that have contributed to and continue to contribute to this serious issue.

When Bill C-37 was first introduced in the House, I made a point to let the minister know that my colleagues and I were very much in favour of the majority of the bill. I had the chance to take part in a health committee study that had taken place prior to the tabling of the bill which looked specifically at the opioid crisis in our country and what we were facing.

Taking part in the study allowed me to truly learn and empathize with struggling addicts, communities, first nations, health professionals, and families that have had to endure an opioid-related death. We learned that there were many factors that contributed to this crisis. While one cause of the crisis results from illegal substances and organized crime, many people are battling addiction because of the practice of over-prescribing of painkillers. Some of these causes have yet to be addressed, but I definitely think the right steps are being taken, at least for the most part.

I stated earlier that I was in favour of most of the bill, and that is because the minister recognized that tackling the production, distribution, importation, and consumption of deadly drugs needs to be made a priority. She listened to the advice of Conservatives on the health committee and in the Senate, and I commend her for that. I will not get into details about Bill C-37 as I have already had the opportunity to do so twice now, but I do think it is important to acknowledge and point to the bill's attempt to weaken public consultation in the approval of injection sites.

That is why, when I had the chance to review the Senate's amendments to Bill C-37, I was glad to put my support behind them. I will summarize the Senate's amendments.

The first amendment ensures that there is a minimum consultation period of 45 days prior to the approval of an injection site. The second amendment looks to establish a citizen advisory committee responsible for advising the approved injection site of any public concerns, including public health and safety. The amendment also looked to have the committee provide the minister with a yearly update on these matters. The third amendment directs those working at the site to offer the person using the site legal pharmaceutical therapy before that person consumes illegal drugs obtained illegally.

Unlike here in the House where the Liberals rammed the bill through with minimal debate, the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs was able to hold five meetings and hear from 22 witnesses. That is in contrast to the health committee, which only scheduled one meeting on the bill, with only four witnesses appearing, and none of whom was the Minister of Health.

The Senate's amendments are well thought out and take into consideration communities and those battling addiction. I must admit that I was surprised to see the minister agree to the first amendment, as her colleagues voted against the same amendment brought forward by the Conservatives. I am happy that she made the right choice in ensuring that communities at least will have some chance to be involved, if only in a small way.

I do, however, want to acknowledge my disappointment with her rejection of a voluntary community committee. The minister's refusal to include community involvement in regard to injection sites goes against the majority of testimony we heard. Over and over again, witnesses at committee stated that injection sites would not be successful without community support. Community support goes beyond harm reduction advocates. It includes mothers, fathers, law enforcement, and of course the local government. The minister knows that by passing the Senate's amendment to establish a citizen advisory committee, it would demonstrate and respect the fact that not everyone wants an injection site in his or her backyard.

I want to talk about the reasons I support a community committee. By establishing a community committee, it would ensure that the injection site remains clean, and that it operates in a way that prioritizes the health and safety of Canadians. It would ensure that the minister of health, the individual who is responsible and who ultimately approves the site, remains in the loop about the community's concerns with regard to the site. It would ensure that he or she, along with the actual operators of the site, would be held accountable and to a high standard. That should be the goal. The health and safety of those battling addiction and the health and safety of all citizens should be a priority.

• (1030)

That is why I was shocked that the minister's motion looks to change the wording of the Senate amendment that would improve the bill. The third amendment seeks to offer pharmaceutical therapy as a substitution to an illegally obtained and possibly deadly poison. I realize that the minister's concerns lay in the fact that these sites may range in different services such as an injection site within a hospital to mobile injection sites, but what strikes me as odd is that we would discourage the use of a legal substitution for heroin such as methadone.

*Government Orders*

For those who may not know, methadone is a maintenance treatment which, according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, CAMH, prevents opioid withdrawal and reduces or eliminates drug cravings. It is by offering substitutions that are legal and of pharmaceutical grade such as methadone that could lead a serious drug dependent individual to seek treatment and get the help he or she needs to get clean. Again, should that not be the goal?

The CAMH also states that an individual who is physically dependent on opioids such as heroin or fentanyl is kept free of withdrawal symptoms for 24 hours after a single dose of methadone. In contrast, a person who uses heroin or other short-acting opioids must use three or four times a day to avoid withdrawal. There is no argument here. By ensuring that users are offered legal substitution, crime rates will decrease and the likelihood of seeking detoxification treatment will go up.

I would like to read testimony from the Senate's hearing in which the minister was actually a witness.

I will quote Senator White:

I spent last Sunday night and Monday night in East Hastings with police officers and health officials walking up and down those streets and visiting some of the facilities. The biggest concern raised by community members who aren't addicts and by police officers and health officials is the use of illegal drugs.

I notice that we did see a regulatory change that will allow for the use of medical-grade heroin, but we did not see any regulatory changes that will allow for the medical use of other than medical-grade heroin.

My perspective and that of most people around supervised injection sites is that they move to the relationship between a doctor and an addict, not organized crime, a drug dealer and an addict who is committing crimes but an addict and the doctor which is where it is now. Will we see regulatory change that will allow for greater use of prescriptive pharmaceuticals rather than illegal and illicit poison? I don't want to call them drugs because they're not that.

At that time, the Minister of Health responded. She said:

Thank you for the question. It is a very good one. I encourage honourable senators to work with us in ensuring that access to all range of treatments and responses to this health problem are there. Some of this requires the decisions of provinces and territories as well as medical practitioners who obviously make decisions about what appropriate treatments are.

There is nothing in the bill and nothing in the law that would prevent provinces from expanding a treatment centre associated with a supervised consumption site to be able to allow these kind of treatments to which you are referring to work closely. I think it is an outstanding model and it's a model that we have to perhaps talk about a little more in public.

I know, senator, you are well aware of the work done in other countries. Switzerland is perhaps the best example of that. When people are determined to have opioids use disorder and/or have legal problems associated with their substance use disorder they are introduced to the possibility of being able to be prescribed medications. It certainly has been effective in decreasing crime rates in those areas, very dramatically decreasing overdose rates and treating this as a health issue.

That is what the minister said when she was a witness. Why the change? In Switzerland, they do in fact offer drug substitution as proposed in the Senate amendment, and as stated, it has led to a dramatic reduction of illegal drugs, has reduced crime rates, and has lowered overdose rates. This model has seen high levels of acceptance because rather than an addict illegally obtaining illegal drugs, the individual is able to get pharmacological help from a doctor with the goal of leading to seeking proper treatment. That is why this is so important.

This amendment would allow an individual to enter a site and be offered a legal drug by a medical practitioner as opposed to a

dangerous and potentially deadly drug, a poison bought from a drug dealer. This, as I have stated, removes the potential of overdosing and eliminates criminal activity. If the Liberals really wanted to treat addiction as a health problem, they should be encouraging doctors and nurses to be at these sites administering alternatives that many addicts do not even know about.

• (1035)

We should not be encouraging irresponsible administering of illegal drugs that are manufactured and mixed in a drug dealer's basement lab. We know that they are being laced with fentanyl, carfentanil, and much more. We have an overdose crisis in this country. I will not object to the assertion that injection sites can temporarily save lives, as it is always better when an individual is revived, but we need to be looking at ways to prevent the overdose from happening in the first place.

I believe this amendment that would guarantee that the drug user is offered an alternative pharmaceutical therapy prior to putting something poisonous and potentially deadly into his or her body would do just that. That is why it is crucial that the Liberal government take initiative and ensure that injection sites do not become a place for people simply to get high. If injection sites are wanted in communities, they should be used to ensure that addicts are offered legal, safer alternatives to dangerous and illegal street drugs that have been obtained illegally from drug dealers, alternatives that would decrease overdose rates and decrease crime rates, which I believe should be the overall goal.

I realize that the minister has not flat-out rejected the amendment, but by changing the words "shall offer" to "may offer", we would guarantee that the majority of users would not be offered a legal, safer alternative. We would not force diabetic Canadians who rely on insulin to commit a crime or numerous crimes to find an illegal insulin supply and to buy their treatment from drug dealers, would we?



*Government Orders*

Canadians expect their government, if it truly feels that addiction should be treated as a health problem, to provide safe treatment options and detoxification programs for those suffering from addiction. The Liberal plan, unfortunately, provides none of that. The response to this crisis has been horribly slow. We are still debating a bill that was tabled in December and communities are still seeing an increase in overdose deaths. Our country has seen no progress in increasing access to detox treatment, which is another issue that must be addressed but has failed to be addressed by the current Liberal government. We know that not all addicts are willing to go into treatment, which is why I believe that, with the certainty of many new injection sites opening up in the near future, we should at a bare minimum be ensuring that users have a choice between a poisonous street drug or a legal alternative.

In conclusion, this is how I view the situation. The motion put forth by the minister leaves out communities and eliminates the likelihood of reducing crime and overdose rates by offering legal substitution. The approval of an injection site will have a profound impact on any community. Perhaps some will be successful and some will not, but the individual approving the site, the minister of health, should be putting the health of Canadians first. He or she should be encouraging the use of pharmaceutical alternatives over illegally obtained street poison. He or she should be held accountable for the success or failure of approved sites, and not just be the individual responsible for rubber-stamping them. The minister has not even stated how she will measure that success. Will she keep statistics on how many addicts get referred to treatment and on how many are referred to detox programs?

This is why I would encourage all parties and members of this House to review very carefully the Senate amendments. They would not make the application process any more difficult and they would not slow down the approval process. All they would do is give citizens within a community that has an approved site a voice, and give those who are addicted to deadly drugs a safer alternative. In a caring country such as ours, should that not be what it is all about?

The Senate amendments were well thought out and put the health and safety of Canadians first. I challenge the Liberals to do the same. Therefore, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-37, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, be now read a second time and concurred in."

•(1040)

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that most concerns me about the bill and the amendments is that the Liberal government continues to be hypocritical, always saying that we have to respect the provincial jurisdiction and other jurisdictions. However, it has not respected the jurisdiction of municipalities to determine whether municipalities want safe injections sites.

My riding of Sarnia—Lambton wants a detox centre, but it does not want a safe injection site. The bill would do nothing to protect the rights of municipalities to decide what they want.

Could the member comment on that?

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague brings up an extremely important point.

Remember, when during the election, the Liberals said that they would return postal delivery to all Canadians. How did that go? They did put into effect a consultation process for communities about the community mailboxes. In other words, if Canada Post decides it wants to put a mailbox in somebody's community, it now has to consult with municipal leaders and the community. It also has to listen. It has an ombudsman. If the community mailbox is not working out for a community, the community has a way of getting back information.

In other words, the Liberals want to consult with everybody it seems, except for communities, with respect to what some people call "safe injection sites". We know there is nothing about these sites that are safe. Addicts, unfortunately, are taking illegal drugs, obtained illegally from crime sources, deal dealers, and injecting them into their arms.

If these sites are to be put into a community, we need to ensure we respect the communities and their right to have a say in where the sites go.

•(1045)

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member for Oshawa, noted that the amendment the Liberal government accepted from the Senate was one the Liberals previously voted against when put forward by the Conservatives.

I wonder if my colleague believes the Liberals have changed their minds on this point or whether they are just trying to validate the million dollars per year they are spending on this new process to appoint, supposedly, independent senators who now feel emboldened to push back on and delay legislation passed in the House?

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Mr. Speaker, my NDP colleague will have to excuse me if I cannot explain why the Liberals are flip-flopping on these things. We really cannot explain it.

The reality is, quite correctly, that the Liberals did vote against this before. Now, instead of allowing the bill to be split and most of the bill to be passed immediately and allowing the health committee the opportunity of debating this and getting proper amendments put forward, they had to put it to the Senate. The Senate has brought these back.

These amendments are based on the testimony of witnesses who came forward. When we look at this, I think everyone would agree that these are simply reasonable amendments. It helps to protect communities and protect addicts themselves, to ensure the proper treatment is offered to them. At the end of the day, as a compassionate society, this is a crisis. If we are using that link that an injection site is being put into a community to get people into treatment, we should be ensuring the proper treatment is there. We should ensure that pharmaceutical substitutions are there and that these addicts can be properly referred to detox programs and addiction programs. Unfortunately, none of that is ensured in the legislation.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 40 or 50 people are dying every week in our country from drug overdoses. All parts of Canada have been affected by this crisis, none more than British Columbia and, in particular, Vancouver and Victoria, the epicentre of this opioid crisis.

This bill deserves the attention of the House on an immediate basis, and I am pleased it seems to be proceeding quickly through this place. It took the government much too long to recognize the magnitude of this crisis affecting so many Canadians, but it did so. Finally, on December 12, the minister tabled a bill that would allow us to take action, certainly not to eliminate the opioid crisis but to at least address its symptoms. We supported the bill then and we will support the bill going forward in an expedited basis through this place.

It is perhaps unusual for an opposition party to agree to time allocate anything but, as the Conservatives have acknowledged, we have a national health emergency and Canadians expect us to act accordingly, and we will do so.

My hon. colleague from Vancouver Kingsway moved, on December 13, to fast-track this legislation to the Senate. Sadly that was blocked in the House and more time was wasted and more lives were lost. The Senate has now made amendments to the bill, taking months to get it back here for us to get on with the job.

We are here today to talk about those amendments the Senate brought forward after those three months.

I have spoken with people in my community of Victoria and Vancouver, those who are on the front lines of this crisis. They have asked us to speak against these amendments, and we do so today. They undermine the intent of the bill and essentially disregard what we, as an elected body, have worked so hard to implement over the last few months.

In a question for my colleague across the way, I pointed out that the Liberals at health committee essentially agreed that these kinds of amendments ought not to be proceeded, yet we have them back here again. The Senate seems to think it can do a better job, taking a long time to arrive at the same place. It is really quite disappointing that in light of that history the government has seen fit to accept one of those amendments, which I will turn to momentarily and address in content.

The one of the three amendments that was accepted by the government this morning was amendment one. It would create a minimum 45-day public consultation for supervised site applications. Why would we reject that? Why would all the allies encourage us to do so? They claim that it will slow down the approval process and hinder quick action in the event of an emergency.

I can do no better than to remind the government what three Liberal members said at committee when the same issue was up for discussion there. I quote, for example, the Liberal member for Brampton South, who said:

...it is important to note that one of the five criteria in this bill already includes community consultation. It is important, but it's sufficiently covered off in the proposed legislation. It includes all the broad information in there.

She is right. It is already in there. Everybody knows public consultation is a critical aspect. Of course it is one of the criteria for the approval of any site. It seems entirely redundant and potentially disturbing when people have an emergency and do not need to have any minimum times addressed.

I would refer to what my Liberal colleague from Calgary Skyview said:

Time is of the essence when we are setting up these clinics. This amendment will constrain or tie the minister's hands for 45 days in terms of taking any action. Look at all the lives that may be lost in that delay. Those are my comments.

I do not know why we are here to talk about what the Senate has done. Why the government would accept those amendments is frankly beyond us.

The second amendment we have heard about from our Conservative colleagues is on alternative pharmaceutical therapy and serious constitutional doubts about it. The parliamentary secretary referred to whether a federal government could mandate a particular kind of therapy. At first blush, it would be squarely within provincial jurisdiction. This has to be considered as something that could be problematic. Any amendment to that effect that would perhaps discourage people from using supervised consumption sites would undermine the purpose of this bill.

• (1050)

The New Democrats called for legislation to address the opioid crisis over a year ago, and we will not allow this to be delayed any longer. We cannot allow more people to die. At a minimum, 2,000 people will die this year in our country. Last year, 914 people died in my home province of British Columbia alone. With fentanyl and now carfentanyl, the crisis is only escalating geometrically. The bill needs the urgent attention of this place.

We must get on with it and we will do whatever we can to support moving on with this as we go forward. We cannot accept the Senate amendments and will vote against them, but we will vote strongly in favour of this public health bill to deal with a national health emergency.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are occasions when I truly agree with the NDP on positions, and this is one of them. With the national crisis we face today, we have seen strong action from the Minister of Health, working with the different stakeholders of all political parties in different regions of our country. We want the legislation to pass.

Would the member not agree that the universal acceptance and need for this legislation, which goes beyond Ottawa, is quite impressive and the sooner the bill goes through both Houses, the better it will be for all Canadians?

• (1055)

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, I can return the compliment to my friend across the way. It is somewhat unusual for us to be agreeing on very much, but on this one, I could not agree more.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

I knew people in my community who died. I know what the bill would do and how important it is. Therefore, I accept the challenge from my colleague to get on with the job and not let small problems get in the way. That is why we put water in our wine when the bill was before us initially. It is not perfect. It went to committee. I was pleased not that the Senate took as much time to come back with the same things, but that members of the health committee rolled up their sleeves and looked at it really quickly.

I will not be hung up on these Senate amendments. I do not understand why the government feels it has to accept one, which is clearly regressive in the minds of their own Liberal colleagues. However, that is not the point. The point is to get this done as quickly as possible. The New Democrats will support the government moving it forward, given the national health crisis this entails.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I admire the work that has been done by the member for Victoria and I know his heart is definitely in the right place.

There are great concerns within my own community. I have reached out to police officers and many different individuals, including the chief health officer in my area. The issue is that communities have to be involved because it is about safe communities. I am very concerned with the Respect for Communities Act being repealed in this situation.

As the member said, when we talk about Surrey, B.C., or places like Coquitlam, I recognize the urgency. That is why Conservatives tried to ensure that parts of the bill moved forward and other parts were delayed so we could have further discussion. My communities want to be part of that conversation. I would like the member to talk about how communities could still have a say on this.

**Mr. Murray Rankin:** Mr. Speaker, I do not challenge for a moment the member's good faith and desire to move forward in this crisis.

The ability to involve the community is at the core of the bill. It is one of the key criteria. I can only speak to the experience in my community. Victoria is anxiously waiting and desperate to get a safe consumption site up and running. The first thing they did was work with the communities, carefully and fully, with the full support, I am happy to say, of the police, which recognizes this as not only a public health issue but a public safety issue.

I do not think the bill does anything but support community involvement. The amendment that would require a citizen advisory committee is not well-thought out. It has the effect of (a) being redundant to a core criterion in the bill and (b) possibly delaying the creation of safe consumption sites and the saving of lives.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Victoria will have six minutes left for questions and comments when the House next takes up debate on the motion before the House.

[English]

**CANADIAN WILDLIFE HEALTH COOPERATIVE**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the United Nations' sustainable development goals aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.

[Translation]

These goals cannot be achieved without protecting life on land and life below the seas. Canada is committed to meeting these goals, and the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative is a valued partner in that effort.

[English]

The co-operative is Canada's national wildlife health program, ensuring we meet our international obligations in conservation, agricultural trade, and public health.

In February 2017, federal, provincial, and territorial ministers agreed that a national approach to wildlife health is needed.

● (1100)

[Translation]

The co-operative provides us with expertise and experience in wildlife health so that Canada is ready to tackle challenges like climate change, emerging diseases, and pollution. The co-operative helps us to be better prepared and focused on preventing problems before they arise.

[English]

This year marks—

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are out of time. The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

\* \* \*

**MOTHER'S DAY**

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend many Canadians will join together with their families to celebrate Mother's Day. This gives me the opportunity to celebrate my mother, Pat Martyn.

In 1959, she married my father Harold, and together they have four children: my sisters Linda and Ann, my brother Paul, and, of course, I am her baby.

My mom knows that if I have a bad day, her phone will be ringing. Whether it is stories about Noah and Maddie or an update on Britney's hockey team, she always puts things into perspective. She is very well known for her apple pies and her date squares.

My mom is not just a mom to us as siblings, but to so many others. Cousins, friends, and people who have worked with mom and dad always know they are welcome at her place. Her heart is just so big. We can go over any time for dinner. She has prepared dinner for two, but she can feed 10.

*Statements by Members*

I am so proud of being Pat Martyn's daughter. A cup of tea and piece of pie does fix all at my mom's house. I thank Hubbard. I love her to pieces. To all of the special moms, mothers-in-law, grandmothers, and nanas, I wish a happy Mother's Day to all.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL NURSING WEEK**

**Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today during National Nursing Week to congratulate an outstanding nurse from my riding, Alliah Over.

Alliah is the Canadian Nurses Association's theme contest winner for suggesting the new hashtag campaign #YESThisIsNursing. The campaign will run for two years and will highlight the broad and important roles that nurses play in all of our lives.

Alliah is a registered nurse, employed by York Region as a public health nurse. Congratulations, Alliah, and we thank her for her important contributions to Canadian nursing.

We thank all of the hard-working nurses in Newmarket—Aurora and across Canada for helping to make our country the wonderful place it is. Keep up the great work.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL HEALTH DAY**

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is national health day, and I rise to focus upon the challenges that seniors face every day in my community of Victoria and across the land.

All of us will have heard from our senior constituents and their families about surgery wait-lists, the lack of pharmacare, inadequate home care, and a shortage of nursing home beds.

The specific challenges of dementia require urgent action. It is estimated that nearly three-quarters of a million Canadians have Alzheimer's disease or a related form of dementia. Unpaid dementia caregiving results in \$11 billion of lost income each year. By 2040, the lack of care and lost productivity due to dementia will cost taxpayers almost \$300 billion a year.

We have come together in this House before to commit to a national strategy for seniors health, and dementia in particular. Today, I would ask us to redouble our efforts to make good on our shared promises to develop and implement a Canada-wide plan.

As Canada's senior population doubles in the next 25 years, we must ensure that our seniors are able to age with dignity and enjoy the benefits they have earned in a lifetime of building this great country.

\* \* \*

**GUJARATI HERITAGE MONTH**

**Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on May 5th, Gujarati Heritage Month was celebrated at Brampton City Hall.

The Garvi Garvi Gujarati flag was hoisted in a symbolic fashion. The Gujarati community demonstrated why they are known as global economic re-energizers. This was positively evident when I

visited, with a CPA delegation, the booming Canadian McCain Foods in Gujarat.

I am optimistic and confident that this vibrant community will be playing a major role in the reshaping of a stronger Canadian economy.

*Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat.* Elation filled the air with energetic chants; enthusiasm and loyalty ignited in me to lead in. Jay Canada. Jay Canada. Jay Canada.

Welcome to all Bramptonians who are here today.

\* \* \*

● (1105)

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, approximately 32,000 Métis and first nations people work in Canada's natural resources. It is the largest private sector employer of first nations people across the country.

First nations in Lakeland and Alberta are very active in oil and gas, from upstream exploration and production to service, supply, and technology. The Liberals and the left often imply that all first nations people are against it, yet AFN Chief Perry Bellegarde says some 500 of the 630 first nations in Canada are open to pipelines and petroleum development. Fifty first nations actively support the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion; 31 first nations and Métis along the right of way, the majority, supported northern gateway and were equity partners, like the Buffalo Lake Métis settlement in Lakeland. First nations across western Canada, like Goodfish in Lakeland, want energy east.

The Liberals will not admit it, but Canada produces the most environmentally and socially responsible oil and gas in the world. It provides jobs and opportunities for first nations people and for all Canadians.

*Statements by Members***ANAPHYLAXIS**

**Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to recognize National Food Allergy Awareness Month. An anaphylactic reaction has the potential to be life-threatening and must be treated immediately. A prompt response is required to ensure a positive outcome. It is a matter of life and death.

The prevalence of anaphylaxis is increasing at an alarming rate. Between 1997 and 2010, the number of people with a peanut or nut allergy has more than quadrupled. Two weeks ago I had pleasure of having Debbie Bruce, from the Canadian Anaphylaxis Initiative, visit me in my constituency office to train me on how to use an epipen. It is as easy as blue to the sky, orange to the thigh, and call 911.

\* \* \*

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SCHOLAR**

**Mr. David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honour of Professor David Vaver, who today will be invested as a member of the Order of Canada for his leadership as an intellectual property law scholar and mentor.

His books on IP and copyright law have saved the backside of many a student, not to mention many a young professor. No one has better defined the IP balance in Canada. His crafting of the term “user’s rights” as regards to fair dealing in copyright law was unanimously adopted by the Canadian Supreme Court and by the IP community.

Professor Vaver was for a long time associated with Osgoode Hall Law School and is an emeritus professor at the University of Oxford. His leadership and mentorship of many students and teachers in the IP community in Canada and around the world, including me, have founded a generation of intellectual property lawyers, policy-makers, and academics who are today building the legal structures required by technological advancement.

I thank David for being such a great teacher, such a great scholar, and such a generous mentor.

\* \* \*

**SUPPLY MANAGEMENT**

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party of Canada has always supported supply management. We supported it during each of our election campaigns and policy conventions. Most importantly, our previous Conservative government supported supply management in our trade negotiations, signing both the massive EU and TPP trade deals while protecting our farmers and our system of supply management.

Conservatives have defended our farmers when the U.S. has tried to circumvent our import controls with pizza kits, milk protein concentrates, compositional cheese standards, and diafiltered milk. When other countries have dismantled their supply-managed systems, it devastated local farmers and did not lower prices for consumers. Supply management ensures that local Canadian farmers are able to support their families without government subsidies and provide reliable, safe, and healthy dairy, poultry, and egg products to Canadians.

I will always support the supply-managed farm families in my riding and across Canada, and I thank them for everything they do to support our communities and our country.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY**

**Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this International Nurses Day, I have the pleasure of presenting a First World War nurse, Laura Gamble, who was originally from Wakefield in the Pontiac.

[English]

This young woman was one of 3,000 nurses who served in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, many of whom were deployed overseas. In a hospital, right in the thick of the First World War theatre, Laura had to look after countless patients. She was awarded a medal at a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace in England for her service.

[Translation]

The nursing sisters of Canada made many sacrifices to save lives on the European front.

The 150th anniversary of Canada, the centennial of the First World War, and the centennial of women’s suffrage in Canada provide an opportunity to celebrate the contribution of women to our country’s history.

On this International Nurses Day, let us be proud of the work done by these extraordinary women like Laura.

\* \* \*

● (1110)

[English]

**MANITOBA DAY**

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is Manitoba Day. It is an opportunity to reflect on the richness and diversity that make our prairie province so great. Manitoba’s geography includes plains, deserts, Arctic tundra, boreal forest, a seacoast, and endless lakes and rivers. Lake Winnipeg is a provincial treasure and Canada’s sixth great lake. We are the polar bear capital of the world, and the curling capital too. Manitoba is home to 63 first nation communities and is the heart of the Métis nation. Manitoba was the first Canadian province to grant some women the right to vote.

Manitoba has a long history of welcoming people from hundreds of countries around the world. Nearly 2,000 new Canadians have joined my riding alone since I was elected in 2015. Manitoba is also home to my family and almost 1.3 million other Canadians, and I would like to wish them all a happy Manitoba Day.

*Statements by Members***COMMUNITY LEADER**

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to acknowledge a businessman from my riding who, along with his wife Tracey and friends, joins us on Parliament Hill today.

Mr. Chris Hellman is the owner of Mr. Lube and Moxie's Restaurant in Medicine Hat. However, he is so much more than just a business owner. He is a true community builder and is always the first to step up to support local charities. Chris does not just give money. He gives his time, his connections, his resources, and his complete self to numerous causes. Chris is involved with many boards, including Thrive, a poverty-reduction initiative in our community. He plays a key role in raising tens of thousands of dollars every year for many organizations across the region.

Chris is quiet in his approach to giving, not needing any praise or ever needing to be recognized. That is exactly why I believe he is so deserving of recognition today. Let us all aspire to be a bit more like Chris, whose charitable spirit and compassion are both humbling and contagious. Well done, Chris.

\* \* \*

**WHITBY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark a number of milestones for the Whitby fire department. First, the swearing in of 24 new firefighters represents the largest recruitment in the department's history. We appreciate their commitment to serving the increasing needs of our town and to protecting our community for years to come. I would also like to extend my recognition to platoon chief Douglas Miller and chief training officer Gordon Hampson on the occasion of their recent retirements. We thank them for their years of service with pride and dedication.

Finally, I want to extend my sympathies on the recent passing of platoon chief Randy Tureski. Turk will be sorely missed by his family, fellow firefighters, friends, and everyone in our community.

\* \* \*

**FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION**

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, recently the Province of Saskatchewan passed a bill that shifted power and responsibility from the locally elected school boards to the provincial Ministry of Education.

In fact, the northern school divisions are making significant progress in the achievement of the youngest and most vulnerable aboriginal children. The threat of boundary changes will disrupt this progress. There are proposed changes to the democratic structures of education in the north, and the northern people who will be directly affected are not being consulted.

Canada has a long history of doing things to first nations, Métis, rural, and northern communities and of not doing things with them. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for a change to be made in education, with the full participation and informed consent of aboriginal people. This is not happening. This is disrespectful. No one has told the north why any change is necessary. I am afraid that

this will put Canada on the wrong side of history with aboriginal people once again.

\* \* \*

**MOTHER'S DAY**

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is Mother's Day weekend, so let us take a minute to remember the lessons mothers teach us.

Mothers teach us to treat everyone with respect, even those who oppose us. Mothers teach us to treat all human beings with human rights. Mothers teach us that when we are asked a question, we should give a straight answer. Mothers teach us that we should own up to our mistakes and always be honest. Mothers teach us not to embellish our accomplishments or make things up. One never lies to one's mother. Mothers teach us not to bow to peer pressure and that drugs are bad. Mothers teach us that we have to play by the rules and not make them up as we go along. Mothers teach us the value of a hard-earned dollar and that we are not to waste money.

Do members know what else is great about mothers? Mothers do not leave their children and grandchildren with massive debt that will take generations to pay off.

Happy Mother's Day.

\* \* \*

● (1115)

**UKRAINIAN HERITAGE**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is home to 1.3 million people of Ukrainian heritage. We have a very special relationship with Ukraine. On September 17, 2014, President Poroshenko from Ukraine addressed this very chamber about the strong friendship between our two countries. Among other things, he talked about the importance of trade. On July 16, 2016, our current Prime Minister went to Ukraine, and a Canada-Ukraine trade deal was signed.

Canada has stepped up in other ways to support our special relationship with Ukraine, such as Operation Unifier, an agreement that sees 200 members of our Canadian Forces having a physical presence in Ukraine. More recently, Canada and Ukraine entered into a military co-operation agreement. On that note, I want to thank the Minister of National Defence for coming to my constituency earlier this year, where we met with members of our Ukrainian heritage community.

Speaking of Ukrainian heritage, I would encourage members to participate in International Vyshyvanka Day on May 18. Let us celebrate our Ukrainian heritage with pride. We can promote that day by wearing a vyshyvanka, tweeting, Facebook, and so much more.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***TAXATION**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, over 300,000 severely disabled people get out of bed every day and go to work, but almost 800,000 who could be working are not. What is holding them back? We are. When people on disability assistance get a job, they abruptly lose their income support and start paying taxes. Some lose \$1.20 for every new dollar they earn, according to a report released today.

Will the finance minister work with his provincial counterparts to lower the marginal effective tax rates on working disabled people to make work pay?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government consulted Canadians across the country regarding a new law on accessibility. We want to hear from all Canadians on this subject in order to develop new legislation.

We met with over 6,000 Canadians and groups during the consultation process. We are always open to suggestions so that we can create the best possible legislation for all Canadians. I look forward to working with them.

\* \* \*

*[English]***INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the Davos billionaires convention, at meetings in New York and closed door Shangri-La meetings in Toronto, and in talks with officials and ministers ever since, the richest people on earth have been directing the government on how the tax-funded infrastructure bank should work. Their instructions: they get all the profits from risky megaprojects, and taxpayers get all the losses.

Why is the government giving a \$35-billion bank to the world's wealthiest elite?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we were elected on a platform to invest in a historic infrastructure plan, including developing an infrastructure bank.

The infrastructure bank would engage private capital to build better public transit, energy transmission, trade corridors, and more across Canada. By engaging private capital in these projects, our investments will go further and free up more funding for the record investments we are making in things like social housing, disaster mitigation, women's shelters, and clean water and waste-water systems.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, imagine infrastructure were ice cream, and a wealthy aristocrat wanted to make money selling ice cream cones. If he made a profit from his sales, he could put it in his pocket, but in order to avoid losses, he has the Liberals set up the ice cream cone bank to ensure that taxpayers pay the price if he makes a loss.

Why will the government not admit that this is a gigantic, \$35-billion self-licking ice cream cone for the wealthy elite?

• (1120)

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we value the expertise that those in the private sector can offer and thank those on the economic advisory council for their advice, for example.

We have engaged a number of actors across the country, including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, unions, provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, engineers, construction firms, and more. We are proud of this level of engagement on the infrastructure bank design. From someone who comes from the private sector, for me this is absolutely a no-brainer.

We look forward to continuing to speak with a wide range of actors. We will continue to do so, all in the interest of Canadians.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps repeating that any information we want about the infrastructure bank is available.

However, through access to information, we obtained a document dated November 14, 2016, regarding a meeting arranged by BlackRock for its clients and attended by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Infrastructure, and several other government ministers.

There is a little problem. It is impossible to see the guest list, because it was completely blacked out. The list remains a mystery, and the Liberals refuse to show it, but it exists.

Can the minister tell us where to find it? If not, what is the government trying to hide?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we were elected on a promise to make historic investments worth \$180 billion to build Canada for the 21st century.

The session organized with BlackRock lasted just a few hours last fall, but we spent hundreds of hours consulting groups like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, unions, the provinces and territories, academics, engineers, construction firms, and more.

We are proud of the scope of our consultation on the development of this bank. We look forward to continuing our discussions with various groups, while we implement this important initiative.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is that he cannot tell us where to find that list, so we have no way of knowing who is involved with this bank.

*Oral Questions*

Here is what the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy, led by Kevin Page, the former parliamentary budget officer, had to say: “[The] case for establishing the CIB is not compelling, as it has the potential to increase overall costs to taxpayers while privatizing the most high-return, low-risk infrastructure assets.”

Nobody thinks this infrastructure bank is a good idea.

When will the government drop it?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we mobilize private sector dollars to build new infrastructure projects, our investments will generate more spinoffs while freeing up public funds to invest even more in priorities such as social housing, disaster mitigation, women's shelters, drinking water, and wastewater treatment.

We believe that this bank will benefit Canadian municipalities of all sizes, like the one represented by the member opposite, and we will continue to work with our partners to build better infrastructure and make good things happen for Canada in the 21st century.

[English]

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have not denied that the projects funded through their privatization bank would result in user fees and tolls placed on Canadians. They have not denied that the projects will cost more and will result in significant delays. Will the government deny today that if offered the choice, Canadians would choose not to have user fees on infrastructure?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is an important question to be asked. Indeed the infrastructure bank is an effort to leverage private capital in projects where we see fit. Again, let me remind the hon. member that these projects are put forward to us and these are projects that we will, through the infrastructure bank, examine and make the right choices for Canadians. By engaging private capital in these projects, our investments will go further and free up more funding for the record investments we are making in things of importance to the member opposite, such as social housing, disaster mitigation, women's shelters, and the like.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I guess he did not answer because Canadians were not offered that choice.

All week we have been asking specific questions about the secret Liberal infrastructure brought to us by BlackRock, and all week the Liberals have avoided clear answers, just like today. Instead they have responded with very tightly crafted talking points.

Here is my question for the Liberals: Is the government using any messaging given to it by BlackRock, yes or no?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we value the expertise that those in the private sector can offer and thank those people who have been giving us this input. If we are going to offer options to the private sector, we indeed need to consult these people and get their input and feedback as we put our best foot forward in how to leverage that private capital.

It bears reminding the member that the session with BlackRock lasted only a few hours, but we spent hundreds of hours consulting

on the infrastructure bank, including with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, unions, provinces, territories, academics, engineers, construction firms, and more.

• (1125)

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is really sad. We are trying to get clear answers, but the government keeps feeding us the same old meaningless lines.

We know that BlackRock had a big say in the creation of this bank. Just imagine the minister asking BlackRock to green-light his speech for the much talked about meeting in Toronto last November.

Did BlackRock sign off on the minister's talking points too?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this bears repeating.

The session with BlackRock last fall lasted only a few hours, but we spent hundreds of hours consulting stakeholders such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, unions, the provinces and territories, indigenous peoples, academics, engineers, construction firms, and more.

For those in the private sector, this consultation process is an extremely important part of making decisions about investments that will be leveraged to mobilize more infrastructure money to improve the lives of Canadians and Quebeckers.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it certainly sounds as if someone else wrote that.

In the debate yesterday on our motion calling for an in-depth study of the infrastructure bank, the government indicated that it had no intention of doing one. However, the report commissioned by the government recommended an in-depth study. We are talking about a bank that will be responsible for \$35 billion of public funds.

Since the bank will be responsible for taxpayers' money, does the government not think that this kind of investment deserves a more in-depth study?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in-depth studies require consultation with many people, as I said earlier. I will not repeat myself.

We must consult the private sector, which will make those investments. It is worth mentioning that the KPMG report, just one of the reports we saw and examined, stated that the Canada infrastructure bank will accelerate economic development and growth, create major national projects, and ensure quick decision-making, considering the development that Canada needs now and in the future.



*Oral Questions*

[English]

**GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what do the following things have in common: \$1 million for refurbishing the Minister of Status of Women's office, \$852,000 for furniture for the infrastructure minister, \$291,000 for vacations on billionaire island and St. Kitts, and \$30,000 for Broadway tickets for rich friends? These are all ways that Liberals have wasted the hard-earned tax dollars of Canadians.

How much more of the taxpayers' money is the Prime Minister going to waste on his rock star lifestyle, his billionaire friends, and his entitled ministers?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government's top priority is to make smart and responsible investments to strengthen the middle class, grow the economy, and prepare—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. There is too much noise in the House. I am sure that hon. members want to hear the answer of the hon. parliamentary secretary. I cannot hear her at all, so I would ask hon. members to please keep the noise down.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, once again, we can see there are positive signs that our plan is working. When we look at the job growth over the past year, we see we have created over 250,000 new jobs. When we look at the unemployment rate, since December 2015, we see the unemployment rate has dropped from 7.1% to 6.5%. It is good news, and we are going to continue to move forward.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Okay, Mr. Speaker, let us talk about Canadian workers.

Canadians who work hard day after day and watch half their pay disappear into government coffers want their money's worth. Canadian workers and taxpayers hate it when the government wastes their money on worthless stuff. The list that the member for Sarnia—Lambton just read us? Taxpayers will not be happy about that.

Will anyone over there say enough with this nonsense and make it clear that the Government of Canada will be managing the public purse properly from now on?

• (1130)

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

Strengthening the middle class will ensure a good quality of life for hard-working Canadians and better opportunities for their children. In the past year, our government raised taxes on the wealthiest Canadians and lowered them for the middle class. We brought in the Canada child benefit, which has helped nine out of 10 families keep more money in their pockets. We also helped seniors by increasing the guaranteed income supplement. We will keep forging ahead to help Canadians.

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday night, the parliamentary secretary to the minister responsible for the Phoenix pay system debacle said on national TV, “Canadians don't need to know”, when asked how many times the Prime Minister has met with the Ethics Commissioner. Canadians do not need to know? That is a line that would make even Kathleen Wynne blush.

Do the Liberals share the parliamentary secretary's view that being accountable to Canadians is only on a need-to-know basis, and when did the Liberals abandon their pledge of openness and transparency?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that pledge has never been broken. This government believes in accountability and transparency and will act accordingly.

As the Prime Minister has said time and time again, he is happy to answer any questions the commissioner has during the process. I would like to encourage members opposite to remain focused on what is important to Canadians. We know that middle-class Canadians want to see results, and that is something this government is delivering every day.

\* \* \*

**FINANCE**

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is something else that apparently Canadians do not need to know about.

The minister responsible for carbon taxes blacked out documents on how much carbon taxes will cost Canadian families and businesses. The minister responsible for massive debt and deficits will not tell Canadians when we will return to balanced budgets. The minister responsible for the Liberal billionaire friends and family “in-fraud-structure” scheme will not say how much risk there is to middle-class Canadians. These are sunny ways, indeed.

Will the Liberals just admit that they had no intention of being open and transparent and that pledge was just another empty election promise?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind hon. members to use the proper titles of members in the House, the titles of their particular post and/or their riding names.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that, when we have an economy that works for the middle class, we have a country that works for everyone.

### Oral Questions

Since coming into office, our government has accomplished a lot of things. We have cut taxes for nine million Canadians, while raising them for the wealthiest one per cent. We have introduced a very generous Canada child benefit program that has lifted hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. We have also put in place an increase in the guaranteed income supplement of 10% for low-income seniors.

We are moving forward to help middle-class Canadians and we are proud of the work we have done.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government has chosen a new commissioner of official languages. Apparently, all it takes to get this position is a \$5,000 donation to the Liberal Party of Canada, a \$500 donation to the Prime Minister's leadership bid, and being a former Liberal minister.

This Liberal government's first appointment could not be more partisan, and that is a shame.

Are being a long-time Liberal and donating to the party the criteria of the Prime Minister's new appointment process?

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are an important part of our history and our Canadian identity, and they are important to us.

As far as appointments are concerned, our government is firmly committed to having a strong, open, transparent, and merit-based appointment process to find the best candidate for each position. We are very proud to have appointed a highly qualified Canadian woman under this new process. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is very important and we are certain that the person recommended will have all the required qualifications.

• (1135)

[English]

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week I asked if the Prime Minister would recuse himself from the appointment procedure for the new ethics commissioner, who may inherit the investigation into the Prime Minister's conduct, or whether he would just appoint a good Liberal to help get him off the hook.

Perhaps signalling what is to come, last week he appointed a former provincial Liberal cabinet minister as official languages commissioner. If he likes to reward Liberals, may I suggest the Minister of National Defence as the new ethics commissioner? I hear he might be available soon.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our two official languages are at the heart of who we are as Canadians, but so is redefining the process by which we select highly qualified Canadians to fulfill important government appointments.

We have revised that process to make it more rigorous, more open, more transparent, and more merit-based for all public appointments. We are proud to have appointed Canadians of the highest quality across all levels of government, thus far, through this process.

The official languages commissioner has a very important role, and we will ensure that the recommended person meets that high qualification standard.

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#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after a year and a half of not getting paid properly, the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada has been forced to file grievances on behalf of 60,000 workers it represents.

Why is this? It is because the longer the Phoenix pay fiasco drags on, the fewer answers the Liberals provide them. The hard-working men and women in our public service need to know when their pay nightmares will finally end.

Is the government tired of hearing about Phoenix? I am sure public servants are tired of not getting paid.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I join with the hon. member in my belief and this government's belief that the situation with the public service pay system is unacceptable.

We are deploying all the resources—financial, human, and otherwise—at our disposal in order to make sure this queue goes down and to make sure these situations get resolved.

The Conservatives left us 700 fewer compensation advisers and about \$70 million in phony savings in order to get a phony budget surplus. Despite all of that, we will—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. We have limited time for question period, and these interruptions take away time from hon. members. We do not want to do that. The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

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#### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to an internal RCMP document, staffing levels at the dispatch centre in Manitoba have reached a “critical level”, with a vacancy rate of 35%. As a result, Manitoba RCMP officers who are dealing with refugee border crossers at Emerson on top of their regular duties are going to see a reduction in their field support. This level of so-called “risk management” by the government is not acceptable.

When the government looks to pinch pennies, why is it always front-line RCMP officers who get the short end of the stick?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are deeply proud of the work our men and women in the RCMP do every day to keep our country safe and we are committed to ensuring they have the resources they need to do the job.

We are obviously looking at the fact that there was about half a billion dollars cut to the RCMP in the last term of the Conservatives. The damage that was done to the RCMP by those cuts is significant. We are committing to restoring the service and being there with the men and women who serve us.

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**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Hon. Gerry Ritz (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister's phone call with the president last week, Trump has gone from small tweaks to massive changes on NAFTA. Job well done.

Canadians are right to be worried, because the Prime Minister will not say what he is putting on the table. Since he does not actually have a NAFTA plan, will the Prime Minister at least ensure that Canada enters talks from a position of strength by ratifying the TPP, as Japan and New Zealand have already done? It is the right path forward, economically and strategically, and we would not even mind if the Prime Minister claimed to be the architect of such a bold idea.

**Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Canada has said on numerous occasions, we are ready to come to the negotiating table at any time. The Canada-U.S. economic relationship is balanced and mutually beneficial. Our economic ties with the U.S. are key to middle-class jobs and growth on both sides of the border.

Let us not forget that NAFTA has been “tweaked” or modified 11 times since its inception. When our partners are ready to come to the negotiating table, Canada will be ready.

● (1140)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last November, the Prime Minister said that he would be happy to renegotiate NAFTA with President Trump, without knowing what sectors the American administration would target in those talks.

After meeting with dairy farmers in my riding, I can say that their biggest fear is that they are going to be used as a bargaining chip. After the American president attacked our dairy producers last month, can the Prime Minister assure us that producers under the supply management system will not be treated like they are unimportant or, even worse, used as a bargaining chip in the negotiations with the United States?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government strongly supports Canada's supply management system; all farmers, including our dairy, poultry, and egg producers; and our country's entire agricultural industry.

We have always worked closely with the entire agricultural industry across Canada and in the regions. We will not speculate on upcoming talks, but we will continue to support our dairy, poultry, and egg producers, as well as the supply management system.

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*[English]***TAXATION**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture had a real opportunity to put to rest the bad plan to eliminate farmers' ability to use deferred cash purchase tickets for listed grain sales, but all he did was sow more dissent.

To quote one constituent, who sent them an email “It is becoming harder and harder to defend the Liberal government to fellow western Canadian farmers.”

I agree. It is impossible.

Therefore, will the Liberals listen to farmers, do the right thing, and immediately drop this reckless plan?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government strongly supports the Canadian grain industry, which is a key driver of exports, jobs, and economic growth.

With changes in recent years to grain marketing, the delivery of listed grains is now the responsibility of the private sector instead of the federal government. In budget 2017, we will launch consultations with farmers and stakeholders on this tax deferral. We want to hear from farmers before we move forward.

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**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister seems to have forgotten that fisheries and fishermen are a big part of his job. He has not been to Newfoundland or Labrador to meet with those suffering from his quota decisions, he will not release any details on the Atlantic fisheries fund, and he thinks nothing of cancelling meetings with fishermen who have travelled to see him.

Given that he so desperately wanted to be the fisheries minister, when will he actually start doing that job?

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador for their diligence and hard work in addressing many of the current challenges in that province.

*Oral Questions*

We met just this Tuesday in a whole-of-government approach, including other departments, to work on innovative solutions and opportunities for the region, including the Atlantic fisheries fund.

We understand that this is a difficult time for fish harvesters in communities affected by recent fishery management decisions, but we must ensure that we protect and conserve these valuable resources for future generations. We will continue to listen, engage, and work with these communities and stakeholders that are affected.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**SHIPPING**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport finally launched an investigation to determine what is causing the waves that have damaged a number of homes in Yamachiche. He has my thanks.

However, the minister has not given us a deadline for the investigation, nor has he promised to make the results public. The people of Yamachiche are entitled to complete transparency on this matter.

Can the minister tell us if he has set a deadline for this investigation, if the results will be made public, and if he has a plan to compensate the victims?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Trois-Rivières for his question.

I spoke to the Minister of Transport. I met with the victims in Yamachiche whose houses may have been affected as my colleague alleges.

We will investigate. I spoke to the Minister of Transport, and we will release the results of the investigation. The minister is working on it now. I can tell the member that I was with Yamachiche residents yesterday to get a better sense of the situation. We are working with the people, and we understand the situation. We are on the ground with the Canadian Armed Forces to help the people of Yamachiche.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Liberals have been anywhere from inconsistent to completely misleading. The Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs committed to adopting UNDRIP, yet her most senior official said that the government “may not consult specifically on UNDRIP”. Meanwhile the Minister of Justice has said that UNDRIP is unworkable, yet yesterday at committee committed to it.

We need a clear answer. Will the Liberals support Bill C-262 to implement UNDRIP, yes or no?

• (1145)

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I affirmed last month at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the government is committed to fully implementing the declaration and is working in full partnership with indigenous people on the path forward. We have already announced the new distinctions-based permanent bilateral tables with first nations, the Métis nation, and the Inuit, as well as a working group of ministers responsible for reviewing the laws and policies related to indigenous people.

These processes, along with others, are supporting and informing the implementation of the declaration.

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**SCIENCE**

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of Science Odyssey, Canada's largest celebration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Emphasis on these studies is key to Canada's continued success in innovation.

As a dad, I always enjoyed working with my kids on school science projects. We always got good grades. Passion for the sciences, as we know, comes with good school curricula and great teachers.

Would the Minister of Science tell the House what our government is doing to encourage and support young people to engage with the sciences?

**Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells, for the good work he does on behalf of his constituents.

Our government is committed to fostering the skills and talents of the country's bright and curious scientists and innovators. That is why our government is supporting science promotion programs such as Science Odyssey and NSERC's PromoScience, which received more than \$10 billion in budget 2017.

We know that when youth choose science, they are choosing to build a bolder, brighter future for all Canadians.

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**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals put up roadblocks to job-creating and nation-building infrastructure. Now the B.C. election and the NEB changes put approvals at risk and cause uncertainty for future proposals.

The natural resources minister claims approvals are safe, but actions speak louder than words. The Liberals are making it up as they go along. Their erratic project-by-project approach is killing investment and jobs. That added red tape drives away pipeline proponents and kills energy workers' jobs.

Will the Liberals finally champion Canadian energy and make sure pipelines get built?

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we would not have approved these projects if they were not in the national interest and did not have the support of Canadians. We have said many times that the choice between climate action and pipeline approval is a false one; we are committed to an approach that does both. We recognize that there is a diversity of opinion with respect to major energy projects, and we will continue to work with all parties and all provinces.

Our goal right now is to make sure that projects move forward in order to build a stronger future and good middle-class jobs for Canadians.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have learned that the government has given complete control over the development of its infrastructure bank to the same private investors who will benefit from it. Not surprisingly, these private investors have chosen their own backyard in Toronto as the new home of this bogus bank.

Would the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, the government's minister for Alberta, tell this House whether he fought for Alberta to be the home of this infrastructure bank, or has he simply given up his seat at the cabinet table to these Toronto bankers?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the location, while key to developing and working with our private proponents, is not of capital importance, insofar as we need to focus more on the historic infrastructure that we are making and the capital that we are freeing up in order to put forth our transformative infrastructure plans for Canadians.

Toronto was chosen among other cities because it has great access to private players. That is one of the options that we entertained, and it is one of many options that we may have had, including Montreal, Halifax, and others. Calgary certainly is a great place for private capital, a great place for investment, and that is why we are investing in Alberta.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians recently learned that our national security agencies went into scramble mode after finding out from the media that there were radicalized employees who were working at Montreal's Trudeau international airport. Conservatives called for these pro-ISIL airport workers to be fired, but the Liberals refused to act. Now we learn that the security agencies themselves were caught off guard.

Why are the Liberals sweeping these serious concerns under the rug? When will the government get serious about confronting radical jihadist terrorism and do something to keep Canadian air travellers safe?

• (1150)

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure

Canadians that their safety and their security are ultimate priorities. We have robust protocols in place to protect them.

A few weeks ago, the minister asked the department to examine all the security protocols and to seek reassurances that the highest security levels were being respected. We have identified cases of security clearances being temporarily suspended at the conclusion of those security investigations.

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**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

**Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our illegal border crossing problem from the U.S. is actually getting worse. People are streaming north across the Canada-U.S. border with no end in sight. Now we know that more than 50% of these non-refugee border crossers are staying in Canada and are not being deported as the law requires.

Has the minister had discussions with his U.S. counterpart to stop illegal immigrants before they cross? If so, will he present Canadians with a plan that works?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister met with Secretary Kelly. Both ourselves and the United States discuss regularly the situation on the border.

Let us be very clear that any individual who crosses irregularly into Canada will be apprehended. They will be placed in detention and they will have their claim heard as to whether or not they have a legitimate claim. If it is not a legitimate claim, they will be turned away.

That process is working effectively. We continue to monitor it and work with our U.S. counterparts.

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**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, getting at the cause of thousands of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls is crucial to our country, but almost a year after the inquiry's launch, families are being completely left out. Now concern and frustration are growing after the inquiry was suspended after only one hearing.

Is appropriate funding fully accessible for the commissioners? Is the government doing everything it can to support the families of murdered and missing indigenous women?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ending this ongoing national tragedy. We are confident that the commission has the tools, the resources, and the networks to ensure that voices of families are heard and that they have the support they need. We will continue to work collaboratively with all parties to ensure the commission is able to fulfill its mandate.

### Oral Questions

The government has also taken immediate action on the root causes, with investments in women's shelters, housing, education, and reforms to child welfare.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' infrastructure bank is going to leave small municipalities out in the cold. The Minister of Finance admitted it in November. He said: "The kinds of projects that are unlikely to fit the bill might be, you know, bridges or roads in smaller communities, for example."

Why are the Liberals putting the interests of their corporate friends ahead of small communities like mine?

**Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her advocacy on behalf of small communities. Indeed, on this side of the House we took note and we put \$2 billion into classical modelling of infrastructure in rural and northern communities and we plan to deliver on that promise.

The assumption that the infrastructure bank will invest solely in large projects in large cities is false. There are potentialities for transmission lines and hydro projects in the north, taking the north off diesel or coal, or rural communities where needed, where we consult with the parties and they feel that is necessary.

That is simply one option in the tool box we have for transformative infrastructure.

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### HEALTH

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the health minister is refusing to meet with Lyme disease experts and patients because she knows she is failing them. She held a conference, but is now ignoring the legitimate evidence that was presented. Instead, she released a framework that turned its back on those suffering from this devastating disease.

Will the minister finally acknowledge the thousands of letters sent to her and meet with Lyme disease advocates so they can have a voice in the final framework? Is that too much to ask?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the impact that Lyme disease has on Canadians and their families. I know it first-hand, because I have a cousin who suffered from Lyme disease for a couple of years.

Last May, over 500 individuals came together at our conference to develop a federal framework on Lyme disease. Discussions from that conference are helping to map out a draft framework. When the member says a framework has been released, it is a draft framework. The framework for Lyme disease will be released shortly.

• (1155)

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister also refuses to say how much money will be used to fight Lyme disease.

Lyme disease is on the rise in Canada and Canadians suffering from this debilitating illness need treatment and care, and they need it now. The Liberals claim to be spending money on an action plan but have not actually budgeted to do anything. No money means no action.

Could the minister tell us exactly how much new money will be spent on Lyme disease this year?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned, our government recognizes fully the impact that Lyme disease has on Canadians and their families.

We held a conference at which 500 individuals discussed a potential framework for Lyme disease. The final framework will be submitted after we have received over 350 individual or collective submissions. I can assure members of the House that the Public Health Agency of Canada will be carefully considering these perspectives as we move forward on the Lyme disease framework.

I look forward to working with the member on this issue.

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### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, May 22 is the World Health Organization's 70th World Health Assembly. This is a meeting where vital issues of health and disease control are discussed. Over the past decade, Taiwan has been an important contributor, but there was no invitation this year because the WHO bowed to pressure from China.

Has the Minister of Health done anything to advocate for the inclusion of Taiwan, or is she too afraid of offending the Liberals' friends in Beijing?

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada will of course continue to support Taiwan's participation in multilateral fora where its presence provides important contributions to the substantive agenda and to global public good.

Since 2009, Taiwan has been an observer at the annual World Health Assembly and its continued participation is in the interests of the international health community. Taiwan's presence at the World Health Organization allows it to actively participate in the global fight against pandemics and disease.

We welcome participation from the entire international community to promote global health.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Colin Fraser (West Nova, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Atlantic Canada is home to a wide range of communities, each of which has its own vibrant history.

We all face unique challenges when it comes to strengthening and diversifying our economy. Innovative sectors, especially those that are export driven, are an important part of the new growth strategy for Atlantic Canada.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development explain the commitments made in this important region?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for West Nova for his question.

We have implemented a whole of government approach to target economic growth in Atlantic Canada. As part of the growth strategy for Atlantic Canada, we have a pilot project on immigration that will increase immigration in Atlantic Canada by 50%, accelerated growth services to help businesses, and an agreement to double the trade and investment strategy by \$20 million.

I thank all my colleagues from Atlantic Canada for their work on this important issue.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has yet to give anything to the Quebec City region. There is nothing new for the National Optics Institute, nothing settled for the Institut nordique du Québec, nothing for the Port of Québec, and nothing finalized for pre-clearance at the airport. The matter of the Quebec bridge was supposed to be settled on June 30, 2016. There has been no movement on that file. Minister Blais from Quebec and the mayor of Quebec City say that the Government of Canada is incapable of addressing issues and just drags it feet. The federal Liberals do not keep their promises.

Will this government finally show some respect for the people of Quebec City? What is the new date for settling the Quebec bridge situation?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Quebec City region is a model when it comes to the middle class and economic development centred around science, collaboration, innovation, international trade, and investment in our workers.

These are all areas the new government is working on in cooperation with the entire community and the Quebec government in an effective, inclusive, and respectful manner.

Our efforts have yielded extraordinary results when it comes to the Quebec City airport, the National Optics Institute, and Le Diamant. Some of these projects were on hold for decades. We are working very hard to meet all our commitments.

\* \* \*

• (1200)

#### INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the international market for clean technology is already estimated at over \$1 trillion per year, and it continues to grow. Clean technology creates well-paid jobs for Canadians, helps fight climate change, and boosts our economy.

#### Oral Questions

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources explain how we are investing in research and innovation in order to develop and adopt clean technology that will create good jobs, promote sustainable economic growth, and protect our children and the environment?

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Pontiac for his question.

Our government committed to creating a cleaner environment for future generations by investing in clean technology. Yesterday we announced \$21 million in funding for clean tech projects in Alberta, which are designed to reduce emissions in the oil and gas industry.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### HEALTH

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, recent data released by Statistics Canada show that for the first time in history, more seniors than children are living in Canada. Budget 2017 provides almost no help to seniors today, but instead delays palliative care funding for a decade. Seniors need help now.

When will the Liberals start taking this issue seriously by making the necessary investments in palliative care and home care?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know there is more to do to provide Canadians with end-of-life care. Our government's legislation on medical assistance in dying clearly demonstrates our commitment to work with provinces, territories, and civil society to improve access to a range of end-of-life care services in Canada.

I am glad the member has asked this question about home care and palliative care. We have invested \$6 billion to improve access to home, community, and palliative care services over the next 10 years.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Prime Minister realized that the natural disasters affecting Quebec are only going to get worse with climate change.

However, his infrastructure plan does not include any measures at all to deal with it. To make matters worse, in this year's budget, he pulled the \$2 billion announced in the previous budget to fight greenhouse gases, since there was no plan on how to allocate that funding.

Can the government confirm that it is using exactly the same plan as Stephen Harper did to fight climate change, in other words, no plan at all?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was on the ground with victims, just as I was last week. I was in the riding just next door to that of my colleague from Joliette with Premier Couillard to meet with victims, civil authorities, and public safety staff to take stock of the situation.

As the Prime Minister clearly said, we need to build better. The government allocated funding to fight climate change in the budget. Canadians understand that, but the one thing that is certain is that now is the time to talk about how to help victims, and that is exactly what we are doing with the Canadian Armed Forces on the ground.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, while meeting with flood victims in Gatineau yesterday, the Prime Minister realized that climate change has a real impact on flooding. He said that we have to rebuild better because what used to happen every 100 years could very well happen every two or three years from now on.

If he is really serious, he should start taking action to fight climate change by saying no to energy east.

Will the government say no to energy east once and for all, or is this all just talk?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that climate change poses a serious threat to our health and well-being, our economy, our communities, and our natural environment. Even with concerted efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the effects of climate change are expected to persist and worsen over time.

Recently, we have witnessed extreme weather events, such as flooding, and that will continue to happen. That is why our budget includes over \$2 billion for disaster mitigation and adaptation to support—

• (1205)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

\* \* \*

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, not even 50% of francophones go to French schools in English Canada. In Quebec, there are more children in English schools than there are anglophones.

As a solution, the Standing Committee on Official Languages has proposed changes to Statistics Canada's 2021 census. Canada's entire language policy is the problem. The French language is under severe threat, in Quebec and in Canada.

Will Ottawa stop disguising the assimilation of francophones and stop contributing to the anglicization of Quebec?

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we thank the committee for its report.

Our two official languages form the very core of who we are. One of our top priorities is to promote their use across the country and ensure the vitality of our official language minority communities.

We plan to examine the report's recommendations and we will work with the Minister of Innovation to address them.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS**

**Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.):** *Qujannamiik uqaqti.* Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

In March, the new Shared Arctic Leadership Model report was released by the minister's special representative. This report highlights, and offers several recommendations, and places emphasis on the need for improved northern education, infrastructure, and conservation.

I share her concerns regarding the current status of the north and wholeheartedly support her view on how to shape sustainable and healthy northern communities.

Has the government accepted the report's recommendations? What actions are being taken to implement them?

**Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government welcomes Mary Simon's report on a new Shared Arctic Leadership Model and her recommendations.

Ms. Simon's report provides us with a strong foundation to address the real needs and priorities of northerners. We will work with Inuit, territorial, and other northern partners to ensure that Canada's vision for Arctic leadership reflects the unique history, culture, perspectives, and priorities of the north and northerners. *Qujannamiik.*

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[*Translation*]

**OIL TANKER MORATORIUM ACT**

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (for the Minister of Transport)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-48, an act respecting the regulation of vessels that transport crude oil or persistent oil to or from ports or marine installations located along British Columbia's north coast.

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

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## STATUS OF WOMEN

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women concerning Bill C-337, an act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code (sexual assault).

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House, with amendments.



*Government Orders*

• (1210)  
[English]

**PETITIONS**

## LABOUR RELATIONS

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to present e-petition 599 signed by members of the public and the RCMP calling on the government to accept Senate amendments to Bill C-7.

## PRISON CHAPLAINS

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

The first is very specific. The petitioners are calling on the government to revisit the cancellation of contracts for part-time, non-Christian denominational chaplains for federal prisons. The presence of part-time contracted chaplains without a denominational basis for a particular religion was part of the help to assist people in prison find their way forward and return to a healthy and productive existence after prison life. The petitioners want Parliament to restore them.

## FALUN GONG

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition has thousands of names of Canadians who are concerned about the People's Republic of China's persistent persecution of the peaceful practitioners of Falun Dafa and Falun Gong. They are imprisoned, they are tortured, and their lives are taken from them. The petitioners ask that Canada speak out against the abuse of human rights in the People's Republic of China.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions from people all over the country concerned about the establishment of five new commercial anchorages for vessels up to 300 metres long in the Salish Sea, on the forested and wild coastline of Gabriola Island. The petitioners note the potential for the scour of chains, impacts from the anchorage, risks of oil spills on spawning beds in the region, on commercial and sport fisheries, and on tourism. The anchorages are initially intended to support thermal coal exports from Wyoming to China, which is the icing on the cake as to why this is such a terrible proposal for our coastline.

The petitioners urge the Minister of Transport to reject the application for five new commercial anchorages off Gabriola Island.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if a supplementary response to Question No. 926, originally tabled on May 5, 2017, could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 926—**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:**

With regard to government expenditures at the Rideau Club, since November 4, 2015, broken down by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what are the details of all expenditures at the Rideau Club including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) description of good or service provided; and (b) for any memberships purchased by the government at the Rideau Club, who was the membership for?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT**

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (for the President of the Treasury Board)** moved:

That a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint their Honours that, in relation to Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Public Service Labour Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act and other Acts and to provide for certain other measures, the House:

proposes that amendment 1 be amended by replacing all the words after the word "construed" with the following:

"as affecting the right or authority of the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act to ensure that police operations are effective.";

respectfully disagrees with amendments 2 and 4(a) because the government has introduced legislation to repeal secret ballot provisions for other public servants in order to achieve balance in workplace relations, further proof of the government's intention to maintain a good-faith relationship with bargaining agents, including any future bargaining agents for RCMP members and reservists;

respectfully disagrees with amendments 3, 6, and 7 because, while agreeing with the removal of restrictions specific to the RCMP in order to allow meaningful discussions in good faith on topics of importance to RCMP members and reservists, such as harassment, removing restrictions on collective bargaining that have applied to the rest of the public service would upset processes that have worked for over 40 years;

proposes that amendment 4(b) be amended to read as follows:

on page 19, in the English version, add after the words "implementation of the term or condition;" the word "or";

proposes that amendment 4(c) be amended to read as follows:

on page 20, (i) replace line 7 with the following: "sation Act.";

(ii) delete lines 8 to 19;

proposes that amendment 4(d) be amended to read as follows:

on page 21, replace lines 1 to 32 with the following:

"(a) doing so would require the enactment or amendment of any legislation by Parliament, except for the purpose of appropriating money required for the implementation of the term or condition;

(b) the term or condition is one that has been or may be established under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Pension Continuation Act, the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Superannuation Act or the Government Employees Compensation Act; or

*Government Orders*

(c) doing so would affect either of the following: (i) the organization of the public service, the categories of members as defined in subsection 2(1) of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act or the assignment of duties to, and the classification of, positions and persons employed in the public service, or (ii) the right or authority of the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act to ensure that police operations are effective.”;

respectfully disagrees with amendment 4(e), 5, 8, 9, and 10 because they would result in two different grievance processes applying to RCMP members, because the specialized grievance and appeal processes established under the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act function well, and because allowing RCMP members to file identical grievances under two acts could undermine the Commissioner’s ability to ensure effective police operations.

• (1215)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to go over the government’s proposed response to the amendments to Bill C-7 from the other place. The government takes the responsibility to protect the safety and security of Canadians very seriously. We are also committed to supporting the dedicated and proud members of Canada’s national police service. This is reflected in our proposed response to these amendments.

I have always been impressed with the professionalism of these individuals and their commitment to the communities they serve and protect. The members of the RCMP work with the community to prevent and resolve problems that affect the community’s safety and quality of life. They are true role models and leaders. It is out of respect for these officers that the RCMP has introduced a number of measures to promote a healthy and respectful workplace. For example, in support of the 2014 amendments to the RCMP Act, several of the RCMP’s human resources management processes, policies, and procedures were updated. Let me highlight a few.

The RCMP launched a new investigation and resolution of harassment complaints policy, which provides greater clarity and a single, streamlined approach for dealing with complaints. In addition, a process was introduced to address misconduct in a more timely and effective manner, and at the lowest appropriate level. Further, a new code of conduct was developed that specifically identifies harassment as a contravention of the code. This is complemented by the amended training curriculum that was put in place to specifically address respect in the workplace and harassment. Finally, an informal conflict management program was launched.

However, there is more. On top of these measures, in February 2016 the Minister of Public Safety asked the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP to undertake a comprehensive review of the RCMP’s policies and procedures on workplace harassment and to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations the commission made in 2013.

The commission has been reviewing the adequacy, appropriateness, sufficiency, and clarity of these policies, procedures, and guidelines. In addition, in July 2016 the Minister of Public Safety announced the appointment of Sheila Fraser as a special adviser. Her role has been to provide advice and recommendations to the minister regarding the application of various policies and processes by the RCMP.

The RCMP has made great progress with these initiatives, programs, and policies that it has implemented. These two reviews

will be very valuable in helping the minister fulfill the mandate the Prime Minister handed him, to ensure the RCMP is free from harassment and sexual violence.

Bill C-7 builds on these good efforts to implement a robust labour relations regime for the RCMP. We believe we have addressed the concerns raised by the other place by increasing the scope of issues that can be bargained, while at the same time ensuring the operational integrity of the RCMP, which is so critical to its effectiveness.

Before I get to the details of our proposed response to the amendments to the bill, permit me to provide a bit of context. As we know, Bill C-7 creates a new labour relations regime for the RCMP members and reservists by amending the Public Service Labour Relations Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act. It has several key elements that reflect the clear preferences expressed by the RCMP members themselves during consultations with members held in the summer of 2015. Specifically, members were clear that they wanted a labour relations framework that provided for a single national bargaining unit, a union that is primarily focused on representing RCMP members, and the recourse of binding arbitration if a collective agreement cannot be negotiated.

Bill C-7 creates this very framework. If it becomes law, it would ensure that, if RCMP members choose to unionize, they will have an RCMP-focused, single, national bargaining unit, with binding arbitration as the dispute resolution mechanism.

As it stands today, the labour relations regime that applies to the RCMP members does not meet all of these member preferences.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

We introduced the bill in March of 2016. After a comprehensive committee study, the bill was passed with a number of amendments on June 21, 2016, and sent to the other place for review. We have taken the time to thoroughly analyze and carefully consider all of the Senate’s amendments. Our proposed response addresses the most significant concerns of the other place by increasing the scope of issues that can be bargained. Our proposed response would align the labour relations regime that governs the RCMP with the system that governs other federal public service employees.

[*English*]

What is more is that our position respects the 2015 Supreme Court decision, which ruled that key parts of the RCMP labour relations regime were unconstitutional because they interfered with the rights of members to a collective bargaining process. That was the court decision in the case of the Mounted Police Association of Ontario vs. the Attorney General of Canada. Bill C-7 as originally proposed was meant to address this and our proposed response to the amendments would continue to respect this decision.

Our intent continues to be to provide the RCMP with a meaningful process for collective bargaining that takes into account the specific circumstances of the RCMP as a police organization.

• (1225)

[*Translation*]

Let us take a closer at how we propose to address each of the changes. Overall, members of the other place said the Bill was too restrictive with respect to the matters that could be included in collective agreements and arbitral awards. Issues such as harassment, transfers and appointments, for example, could not be brought to the bargaining table.

In this respect, the other place made several changes to the bill. It removed restrictions on what could be included in collective agreements and arbitral awards specific to the RCMP. It added a management rights clause to replace restrictions that seek to preserve the commissioner's authority over human resource issues. The government agrees with removing the RCMP-specific restrictions on what may be collectively bargained.

Second, we suggest adopting a more targeted management rights clause than that proposed by the other place. Our focus is on the authorities the commissioner needs to ensure effective police operations. These two changes combined would have the effect of broadening the scope of what could be potentially incorporated in a collective agreement, thereby addressing the major criticisms of Bill C-7.

[*English*]

It would also ensure that the employer and any future RCMP member bargaining agent could engage in discussions on topics of importance to RCMP members and reservists who were excluded from the original Bill C-7.

Permit me to provide a few examples of subject matter that could be included in the collective agreement or in arbitral awards: first, general aspects associated with the appointment and appraisals of RCMP members; second, criteria and timing for conducting appraisals of RCMP members; and third, measures to mitigate the impact of discharges and demotions of RCMP members, including work force adjustment provisions.

As is the practice for other negotiations in the public service, Bill C-7 already allows for a wide range of other matters to be bargained and included in a collective agreement or an arbitral award. These include rates of pay, hours of work, and leave provisions such as designated paid holidays, vacation leave, sick leave, and parental leave.

Other amendments made by the other place removed restrictions that were consistent with restrictions that were already applied to other areas of the federal public service. Among these were restrictions preventing pensions from being bargained.

It also required a mandatory secret ballot vote for the certification of a bargaining agent representing RCMP members.

Finally, it expanded the mandate of the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board.

However, our government does not agree with these changes, and we do not believe they are in the public interest. We propose keeping some limitations on matters that may be included in collective

### *Government Orders*

agreements and arbitral awards. Eliminating these restrictions would upset processes that have worked well for 40 years.

Since 1967, certain matters that are of broad cross-sectional impact across the public service have been excluded from bargaining and have been dealt with under other legislation to ensure the public interest is taken into account.

Take pensions, for example. Pensions for the rest of the public service are dealt with under the Public Service Superannuation Act. Pensions require a high degree of stability over time to assure pension plan members that their benefits are secure and will be delivered as expected. RCMP pensions compare favourably to other police organizations in Canada.

The federal government has traditionally consulted with employee representatives on pension issues, and is committed to continue this practice. In fact, when it comes to the RCMP, the government goes further. The RCMP Superannuation Act requires that an RCMP pension advisory committee be established.

This committee, which consists of RCMP regular members and representatives of RCMP senior management, makes recommendations on the administration, design, and funding of the pension benefits.

The RCMP is a national police organization, operating within the federal public administration. This is why the proposed labour relations regime for the RCMP was designed to align with the existing federal framework for labour relations and collective bargaining.

Let me now turn to the issue of certification.

Our government believes that there should be a choice between a secret ballot and a card check system. The secret ballot only system is restrictive. It is inconsistent with providing a fair and balanced process of certification, and properly recognizing the role of bargaining agents in that process. It also does not make sense to have the RCMP members subject to a different certification regime than everyone else, a more restrictive regime. It should be aligned.

We do not believe the certification of a bargaining agent to represent the RCMP members and reservists should be subject to a mandatory vote by secret ballot as the only option. In fact, our government's Bill C-4 puts the discretion of certification method back with the Public Service Labour Relations Board to decide whether there will be a secret ballot or a card check. The board will ensure the members' interests are reflected in the choice made.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Finally, we respectfully disagree with the changes that would expand the range of matters that could be considered by the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board.

There already are specialized grievance and appeal processes established under the RCMP Act to deal with such matters, so we feel it is unnecessary. In fact, such changes would undermine the Commissioner's ability to ensure effective police operations.

*Government Orders*

[English]

I would also like to address the recent pay increase that RCMP members received. In April, the government announced a 4.8% total salary increase for RCMP members. With these salary increases, RCMP total compensation, including pensions and benefits, is in line with what is provided to the eight comparable police forces in Canada.

The comparators include local police services for the large majority of the Canadian population, in fact about 90%. The total compensation of an RCMP first constable is now 1% above the average of what is provided in these eight representative police forces. To give one specific example, the RCMP total compensation is now on par with the total compensation for Ontario Provincial police officers.

If RCMP members choose to unionize, Bill C-7 would provide a labour relations framework with the key features that the RCMP members have said they want. Under Bill C-7, future pay negotiations could occur with a single national bargaining unit that is focused on RCMP members.

Our government supports the dedicated and proud members of Canada's national police service. We continue to make progress in creating a labour relations framework that supports their collective bargaining rights. Our proposed response to the amendments of the other place will allow the employer and any future RCMP member bargaining agent to engage in meaningful discussion in good faith on topics of importance to RCMP members and reservists.

[Translation]

It is also in line with the government's overall approach to restoring fair and balanced labour laws, and acknowledges the important role of unions in Canada.

In closing, let me express my gratitude to all the members of the other place who have helped in the development of this bill.

• (1235)

[English]

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work, and good work, of the House committee on public safety and national security. It gave the bill careful consideration and made amendments, which the government accepted.

While we do not accept all the amendments from the other place, its work has given us a better opportunity to improve Canada's labour relations regime for our RCMP and to serve the men and women who benefit from it.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member today. I wonder if she could tell us, specifically, why she thinks a card check system is better than a secret ballot system.

We are elected here in a secret ballot. Even things as simple and lowdown as choosing high school councils are secret ballot. On something so important as to whether people decide to join a union, why should they not be given the same priority, which is a secret ballot?

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, frankly, I am surprised to hear the member opposite compare the work, the complexity, the responsibility, the critical nature of the RCMP and the safety and security of our country from coast to coast, *d'un océan à l'autre*, with a high school student council.

Our government disagrees with the Senate amendment that adds the requirement narrowing the options for certification to a single option, which the previous government introduced as part of its attack on the unions.

Bill C-4 would restore the choice. We have a mechanism for the Public Service Labour Relations Board to ensure whether the secret ballot or the card check system is in the interests of the members in a particular situation.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thought I heard the parliamentary secretary say, although something may have been lost in translation, that Bill C-7 originally passed the House on June 21. I am sure she may have said, or she meant to say, that it passed in the House on May 30 and it was sent back to the House by the other place on June 21. That means it is about 11 months since we have known the product of the deliberations of the other place.

It has been a very eventful 11 months with respect to the organizing drive for RCMP members. There was a lot of time before April 5 when the first application for certification was made by a prospective bargaining agent. The legal uncertainty created by the lack of an answer to the amendments proposed by the Senate has made it very difficult for those prospective bargaining agents to know what the rules are. Now we are faced with the situation that a bargaining unit has applied to represent only members in Quebec, while Bill C-7 proposes one national bargaining unit.

Could the parliamentary secretary shed some light on why it took the government so long to come up with a relatively simple response to the Senate amendments? Does she think it was worth the confusion that this has created for prospective agents and the challenges they face now?

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-7 is a significant and historic movement forward in respecting and supporting the members of the RCMP. I am very proud that our government has been working carefully to ensure that we have the best possible regime for collective bargaining.

The Senate made significant changes to Bill C-7. It was not just a few words here or there. There were changes to a complex set of other bills that are implicated in Bill C-7, and we wanted to do a careful and thoughtful analysis of those changes to identify which ones we would accept, which ones we would amend, and which ones we simply did not feel were in the interests of the public or the RCMP members themselves. That is exactly what we did.

I appreciate the work the member for Elmwood—Transcona has been doing on this bill and other matters of public interest.

*Government Orders*

• (1240)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of presenting a petition, just before this debate began, from close to 1,500 RCMP members and citizens asking that the government accept the Senate recommendations, save for the secret ballot. They apparently were not interested in that, which could be of interest to the other hon. member.

My concern is that we are looking at a framework for the RCMP that is aligned with the public service. I want to ask my hon. colleague whether she believes that the adoption of Bill C-7 has to reflect the competition the RCMP has with jurisdictional police forces, to which the force has been losing membership at an alarming rate over the last number of years, and whether our approach is going to give members the confidence to stick with the force.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. The RCMP received a pay increase of 4.8%, which brings members on par with the vast majority of police forces and in fact is comparable to the Ontario Provincial Police force, which has the same array of small town, remote, large city, and suburban policing responsibilities. Not only that but we now have some amendments that have been accepted on Bill C-7 that would ensure that the framework would enable RCMP members to bring to the bargaining table issues that are specific to the RCMP. Many of those are now being accepted and can be bargained.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary, in her speech, said that a secret ballot is inconsistent with a fair and open process. In response to that, my colleague from Edmonton West asked a very reasonable question. He asked her to explain how she thought a secret ballot, on an important question like this, was not the way to go. Her answer was a ridiculous and outrageous mischaracterization of the question my colleague asked her. I would like to give her another chance to answer that question and to perhaps apologize to the member for Edmonton West.

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the opportunity to provide more information about why having a choice of a card check system or a secret ballot is in the public interest and in the interest of the members of the RCMP. It would allow a uniform system for certification across the public service labour relations landscape.

I have not heard any rationale from the member opposite, or the previous member from the Conservative Party, as to why they believe the RCMP should be singled out for a more restrictive certification process than all the other groups that bargain with the government in labour relations. The RCMP are certainly not asking for that. The members are not asking for that. I would encourage Conservative members to think very carefully about whether they want to continue to defend a law they passed, which was contrary to the RCMP members' desires, and to continue to push a single element of this law, ignoring all the strong features that are in support of the interests of the RCMP—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mark Strahl):** The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

• (1245)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I want to return to the answer from the parliamentary secretary to my earlier question about the 11-

month delay between getting the amendments from the other place and the government's response tabled last night.

She said she was very proud that the Liberals took the time to study this legislation and come up with an appropriate response to the Senate amendments. However, the Senate amendments were consistent with amendments presented at committee during the House of Commons process. At that time, the government said that we had to rush to pass the legislation or the sky was going to fall. It used time allocation to push the bill through the House of Commons. Therefore, I am wondering why it then took almost a year to get this response back to the House. What were the Liberals doing in those 11 months?

**Ms. Joyce Murray:** Mr. Speaker, we were doing the thoughtful, careful analysis required to explore the whole portfolio of amendments made by the other place and to come forward with our response to have a robust regime for collective bargaining for the RCMP.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to rise to speak to the government's motion in respect of the amendments brought forward by the Senate to Bill C-7.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to take this moment to personally thank the 28,000-plus regular members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Throughout Canadian history, they have played an integral role and to this day continue to serve and protect the communities they are posted to.

The Conservative Party respects the Supreme Court's decision that RCMP officers are entitled to organize and bargain collectively. We will always support the RCMP, and we thank all members for the great work they do on the front lines in keeping our communities and neighbourhoods safe.

For the most part, Bill C-7 was a reasonable response to the court's ruling. However, I did not and cannot support any legislation that denies employees, especially RCMP members, the right to vote in a secret ballot on whether to unionize. RCMP members risk their lives every day. The least we can do is give them the democratic right to vote free of all intimidation on whether to unionize.

It is crucial to step back and understand the full context of how this legislation got here in the first place.

Currently, RCMP members are not allowed to unionize and bargain collectively. They have no recourse to arbitration or strikes. These matters were brought to the Supreme Court of Canada, which rendered its decision that struck down the exclusion of RCMP members from the definition of "employee" in the Public Service Labour Relations Act as being unconstitutional.

*Government Orders*

Moreover, the Supreme Court said that sections of the RCMP regulations breached the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It was that Supreme Court decision that stated that careful and methodical consultations must take place. It also required members of the House of Commons to enshrine the constitutional freedom of RCMP members and reservists to engage in meaningful collective bargaining if they so wish.

It was during those consultations that a significant majority of those who participated supported the idea of forming a union. It was through those consultations that members of the RCMP indicated that they preferred to use binding arbitration, without the right to strike, as the way to resolve stalled collective bargaining. This is in line with various other police organizations across the country. The members were also clear that they wanted to be represented by a single national employee organization, whose primary mandate would be the representation of its members.

Many members in the House represent constituents who have been or currently are serving members in the RCMP. In fact, there are currently RCMP members posted to Parliament Hill, and they are part of our daily lives while the House is in session.

Many members are following this legislation closely and applaud the work of the Senate and the amendments it brought forward on Bill C-7, a bill to amend the Public Service Labour Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act, and other acts, and to provide for certain other measures.

I feel it is appropriate to point out that the Senate passed these amendments and sent the legislation back to the House over ten months ago. My colleague just pointed out in his question that it is actually closer to 11 months.

I understand that the government wanted to fully review the amendments and to consult widely. Public Safety Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Privy Council Office, and the Prime Minister's Office were all involved in determining the government's response to these amendments. Even though there were many government departments and officials involved in this process, the government should have moved on this debate months ago, a point that was just made, as the Supreme Court ruling, I point out, contained a time frame for implementing legislation that is collecting dust.

● (1250)

I know many members of the RCMP and the various other stakeholders involved in drafting the legislation would have preferred to have been at this stage at a much earlier date.

Second, on a procedural matter, the rank-and-file members of the RCMP should know that the Liberal government only tabled its motion to the Senate amendments late last night and expected members of this chamber to be prepared to speak to it today. I can only speculate on why the government took this course of action. However, I do believe that at the outset of this legislation back in 2016, even the government's own caucus was deeply divided on the exclusions from the bargaining table found in the legislation.

For example, the hon. member for Beaches—East York said during the public safety committee meeting on April 21, 2016, during clause by clause consideration:

I actually have serious concerns with the exclusions as they exist, for the simple reason that in all the evidence we heard, we heard repeatedly that these exclusions as they relate to workplace safety specifically are major issues that unions are not going to be able to put on the table when they collectively bargain.

While I will not lament too much the government's disregard to providing the ample time to prepare a response to its motion on which amendments it is willing to accept, I will at least thank the Liberals for finally getting back to the task at hand and allowing us as members of Parliament to speak to the Senate amendments. Enough time has already been wasted and it is time to move on with this much delayed legislation.

To provide greater context on how we reached this point, it is important to highlight that many of the amendments the Senate passed were brought forward during the original House debates and at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. After reviewing the minutes, it is important to thank the hon. members for their due diligence in pointing out some of the flaws that were found in the original bill.

In particular, I would like to thank my fellow Manitoban, the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona, for the work he did, as he just pointed out, on reviewing the legislation and providing different points of view.

It is abundantly clear that our Conservative caucus members were very much willing to work with the government to meet the timelines as outlined in the Supreme Court decision. The legislation could not have been drafted overnight, as the very make-up of the RCMP is distinctive and unique from every other public service occupation. We know the paramilitary nature of the RCMP had to be considered as a unique element when designing the bargaining environment.

This will not shock the members of the NDP when I say the RCMP should be given explicit language, found in this legislation, that will guarantee members of the RCMP the right to a secret ballot if they do decide to form a union and collectively bargain with the crown. This basic democratic principle must be enshrined in law, not only in Bill C-7 but also in Bill C-4, which was amended by the Senate. I want the record to be clear that our Conservative caucus supports the Senate amendments in both Bill C-7 and Bill C-4 that pertain to the right of workers to have a secret ballot.

Previously I have spoken out against any attempts to roll back the rights of hard-working union members and to repeal the transparency of unions, which finally allowed sunshine to be let into their financial ledgers. While Bill C-7 does not relate to union transparency, it sure has a lot to do with the ability of the RCMP to certify or decertify a union. I do believe the current government is trying to eliminate the guarantee of a secret ballot, not because it wants to support hard-working Canadians but because there are ulterior motives, such as a bargaining chip with various other public service unions.

● (1255)

The elimination of the current government policy of enshrining secret ballots goes far beyond just the RCMP. It involves hundreds of thousands of federally regulated employees across the country.

*Government Orders*

I originally criticized the Liberals for the lightening speed at which they introduced Bill C-4, the legislation that stripped away workers' rights, but I would like to draw attention to the fact that we are still debating the legislation that was brought forward in February 2016, and it has yet to receive royal assent. This is not such a bad thing and to give credit where credit is due, the Senate also amended that legislation and sent it back to the House.

Liberal MPs in the House today should carefully review the legislation, which was amended by the Senate. They will quickly see that the Senate wanted this legislation to provide RCMP members with the guarantee they would receive a ballot and be able to cast the vote on whether to form a union in secret. This is the only guaranteed way to ensure there is no coercion or intimidation applied from any side of the argument. This would ensure that no matter the rank or seniority, all members of the RCMP are treated equally and fairly and, most of all, without any fear of repercussions on how they proceeded on collectively bargaining.

The Senate has been applying its powers to amend legislation quite frequently in the past few months. I applaud it for its ability to take a deep dive into complex and politically sensitive matters. There is no expectation that the government has to accept every amendment brought forward, but it would be wise for Liberal members to note that even their government House leader in the Senate and all the new independent members, including all former Liberal members who are now part of the independent Liberal caucus, voted to ensure the RCMP was guaranteed its right to a secret ballot. It is far and few between that unanimity is reached on legislation, except in exceptional circumstances or on motherhood and apple pie sorts of issues.

I think we can all agree that Bill C-7 is a rather complex and nuanced issue and the fact that all senators, regardless of political stripe, agreed that the right to a secret ballot must not only be given to the RCMP in Bill C-7, but that all federally regulated environments must be given the same protection. I do not buy the line from the government's benches that giving the RCMP the right to a secret ballot would treat it differently. I would remind the House that in a briefing presented to the public safety committee, it was told that all previous certifications of public sector unions were done by secret ballot. By accepting this amendment, it would actually treat the RCMP equally in terms of certification or decertification, as other public sector unions.

Furthermore, I would like to quote my colleague, the hon. member for Durham, who stated:

...my friends in the other parties are in Parliament not through a card check of their voters and their constituents but by their secret ballot vote, which is a fundamental tenet of our democracy.

It bothers me that we would suggest the federal government and the federal government's unionized work environment would have the same sort of intimidation stories you hear in relation to some private sector unionization efforts from years ago with unfair labour practices...

The importance of the secret ballot as a democratic principle must be upheld. Every member in this chamber is here today because residents in their ridings chose to give them the most personal thing they possess: their vote. We have no higher duty in our role as members than to safeguard the democratic principles that hold our country together. The secret ballot is the highest pillar of this process and it seems absurd to me that any member of the House could argue

that we need less voter protection, that we need less transparency, that we need less democracy.

While I recognize that the right to a secret ballot was just one of the amendments the Senate asked the government to revise in Bill C-7, it is, among others, that the government has decided not to accept it.

● (1300)

In continuation of the real and deep criticism I have of the Liberal government's intentions of stripping away the rights of workers, I would like to quote the hon. member for Carleton who originally spoke on the legislation.

He said that by removing the right of a secret ballot vote, it was important to be very clear on what this meant. It meant that a union could take over a federally regulated force without there being a vote by the member who worked in that workplace, that thousands of employees from any number of federal employers could be forced to pay dues and be represented by a union for which they never had a chance to cast a vote.

He said that this would be particularly alarming when it related to the RCMP, an organization comprised of members who put their lives on the line each and every day, in part to defend our democratic way of life. Therefore, it was a great irony that members of the RCMP would be deprived of the most basic democratic right, which was the right to vote in secret on whether to certify a union.

It is my sincere hope today that I will be able, through this debate and my arguments, to convince enough members of the government to demand the executive branch accept the Senate's amendment on enshrining the right to a secret ballot.

For example, Conservative Senator Nancy Greene Raine asked Senator Larry W. Campbell, who was appointed a Liberal Senator by Paul Martin in 2005 and was also an RCMP officer, about his thoughts on a secret ballot vote and if he was concerned that without a secret ballot vote, it might set up some ill will. Senator Campbell agreed with her statement. Senator Campbell also went on to say that it was wonderful to be an independent who moved second reading of Bill C-7 and then was able to actually talk about it.

That is refreshing to hear, that even the senator who introduced the bill, who in fact was a former Liberal before the senators were made independents, can step back, have an objective view, apply his sober second thought, and agree the legislation can be improved upon.

It was during his remarks at debate in the Senate that he noted the bill excluded the following from the collective bargaining process: law enforcement techniques; transfers from one position to another and appointments; appraisals; probation; demotions or discharges; conduct, including harassment; the basic requirement for carrying out the duties of an RCMP member or reservist; uniform, order of dress, equipment or medals of the RCMP. That is quite a list.

*Government Orders*

We know that through the Liberal government's motion on the Senate amendments, they have accepted the removal of all the exclusions to collective bargaining with their own amendment, that the government has increased the authority of the commissioner in an expanded management rights clause and that the government rejected a RCMP specific grievance procedure, which sends grievances through the RCMP act grievance system, unless it has to do with a collective agreement.

I look forward to hearing if RCMP members across the country find the government's response satisfactory. I also look forward to hearing from members of the House of Commons who sit on the public safety committee and from the senators who were involved in the legislation.

I would like to reiterate my support for the Supreme Court's decision and that I firmly believe RCMP members should be given a secret ballot to certify a union. I hope through today's debate that the government will reverse its decision of not accepting that amendment.

• (1305)

**Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the hon. member's speech with great interest and, again, the focus on narrowing the options for certification.

The member was part of the former government that suppressed its own internal report, which concluded that a secret ballot only undermined the unions seeking to represent members and advantaged the government.

It is the opposite of the member's comments. It strips away the rights of workers to insist on a secret ballot rather than have the board have two options and the ability to select the one that is in the interests of the members in the situation.

Since the board will ensure that the interests of RCMP members are reflected in the choice of certification process, why would the member insist on limiting that choice? How can he defend to RCMP members that he is insisting on something for which they are not asking?

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, that is a prime example of why people are wrong when they say that all political parties are the same. Only a Liberal would think it would be limiting the rights of individuals by giving them a free choice on a secret ballot to vote to belong to a union. It is devastating that the parliamentary secretary can actually stand there with a straight face and say that the Conservatives were limiting the freedom to have a secret ballot in the first place. That is a right individuals should have in any union, in any business today, as opposed to having that right to a secret ballot stripped away.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it will come as no surprise to the member that on the principle of the card check, we have a serious disagreement, but we will let that lie. We have spent a fair bit of time on that in the debate on both this bill and Bill C-4.

There is a practical issue when it comes to a secret ballot vote for certification for RCMP members, which is that RCMP members are

spread across the country. Many live in rural and remote communities. Some are posted internationally.

To organize a new union with very little experience, plus management that is not used to dealing with the unionized culture, plus a government that has not seen a certification within the public service for a very long time, and to organize a vote that has the reliability and integrity members would expect to make sure that their votes are counted, becomes very difficult. With the card check system, it is much easier to canvas members as to whether they want a union.

I am wondering if the member would support the government hiring a third party, with knowledge and experience providing resources, to ensure that a vote was conducted as it should be and that all members, wherever they were posted in the country or the world, got that ballot and had it safely returned, to ensure that there was integrity in the process. Would he agree to support the government in resourcing that vote if the secret ballot vote were upheld?

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I know that the member for Elmwood—Transcona has done a lot of work in this area. He also recognized that it took an awful long time to get the bill back to debate here in the chamber and that the Senate did good work in providing this clause bringing it back to having a secret ballot, because members felt it was important.

As I pointed out earlier, among all the Liberal Senate members, regardless of what background they came from, it was unanimous that there be a secret ballot. A secret ballot is easily determined as far as the credibility of that process is concerned. We are going through a one member, one vote ballot right now in our leadership. I know that the New Democrats are going through a leadership ballot.

I am sure there is a list of addresses of all the RCMP members in Canada, and I am sure they could design a ballot that could be mailed to them and mailed back, as well, with integrity.

I urge the member to get onside and provide the opportunity for people to have a secret ballot so they can actually maintain the integrity of the force today.

• (1310)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary across the way revealed just now why we need to give workers the right to vote. She said that there is a report that was in the possession of the Department of Employment and Social Development, under the previous Conservative government, that showed that when workers have a chance to vote, they are less likely to choose unionization of their workplaces, and that is proof that we need to get rid of the right to vote, according to her.

The Liberal philosophy on this is that because workers do not make the choice Liberals want them to, they should not be entitled to make the choice at all. That is why the Liberals want to take away the right to vote from workers and force them to unionize through an intimidating card check petition that allows unions, or even employers, to look over workers' shoulders when they are deciding whether they want a unionized workplace, instead of letting those workers go into the privacy of a voting booth to mark their X, yea or nay, as they wish.



*Points of Order*

Does the member agree that this is about defending the right to vote for Canada's workers?

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is bang on. Of course this is about the right to vote, and we want to ensure that we maintain that right at every opportunity for unionization in Canada.

It is not just about this, either. One of the senators, a former Liberal senator and former RCMP officer, noted during his remarks in the Senate that the bill excluded from the collective bargaining processes a number of processes, and those are what he put in there: law enforcement techniques, transfers from one position to another, appointments, appraisals, probations, demotions, discharges. That list is extensive.

My colleague is absolutely right that we need to make sure the right to vote in these types of situations for any organization, but especially one that is as expressly different and unique as our Royal Canadian Mounted Police, is maintained and that the members have the opportunity to have a secret ballot.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I represent Nanaimo—Ladysmith, a region that is served entirely by RCMP members, who are doing fantastic front-line work. I would like to know whether the member agrees with this encapsulation of the problem as identified by one of the members in my region.

This is a letter to me from Clay Wurzinger, who has been a member of the RCMP since 2005. He says:

We as a membership are now approaching 2 years without contract, we have lost all representation within our organization and we are arguably further from a union now than we were 6 months previous.

He goes on to say:

If trends are to continue and members are not provided a comparable payment package to our municipal counterparts you will very likely see manpower issues becoming even more prevalent in your district as recruiting and training will not be able to keep pace with attrition, all the while we will continue to lose our best and brightest and the futures they had to dedicate to tax paying Canadian citizens.

Is that a problem the member is seeing echoed in his own region, and does he think this bill, finally allowing RCMP members the right to unionize, will ameliorate those problems?

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we are short of RCMP members across Canada. The previous Conservative government tried to deal with that. There is a shortage still in most provinces. However, whether or not the person who sent the letter to the member is in a union or not is not the question we are dealing with here; it is how that union is chosen and how those RCMP officers have the right to choose their own mechanism for being within a union or not.

In this particular case, the key issue is whether or not that individual actually has the right to have that secret ballot. I am sure in this particular case that it would not change that person's view of whether they wanted a union or not. I am not arguing that. I made that clear in my statements. However, they should have the right to vote to have a union or not by a secret ballot.

●(1315)

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask for your patience in that I hope to get through two issues dealing with points of order raised earlier.

First, I am rising on a point of order respecting four bills on the order of precedence that require a royal recommendation. These bills include Bill C-315, respecting the conservation of national historic sites account; Bill C-343, an act to establish the office of the federal ombudsman for victims of criminal acts; Bill S-205, to appoint an inspector general of the Canada Border Service Agency; and Bill S-229, an act respecting underground infrastructure safety.

Without commenting on the merits of these bills, I submit that these bills contain provisions that infringe upon the financial prerogative of the crown.

Members will note that section 53 of the Constitution states that:

Bills for appropriating any Part of the Public Revenue...shall originate in the House of Commons.

Section 54 of the Constitution requires that bills that appropriate any part of the public revenue must be recommended to the House by the Governor General.

Standing Order 79(1) states that:

This House shall not adopt or pass any vote, resolution, address or bill for the appropriation of any part of the public revenue, or of any tax or impost, to any purpose that has not been first recommended to the House by a message from the Governor General in the session in which such vote, resolution, address or bill is proposed.

I submit that all four bills stand in contravention to the Constitution and, more important for you, Mr. Speaker, to Standing Order 79(1).

Additionally, I would cite page 769 of the second edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which states, "An amendment intended to alter the coming into force clause of a bill, making it conditional, is out of order..."

Bourinot, fourth edition, page 407, refers to the financial initiative of the crown as a constitutional obligation and states that "No principle is better understood than the constitutional obligation that rests upon the executive government, of alone initiating financial measures..."

Erskine May, 21st edition, page 691, defines the financial initiative of the crown as the "long established and strictly observed rule of procedures, which expresses a principle of the highest constitutional importance, that no public charge can be incurred except on the initiative of the Crown...."

The procedural authorities are clear. Bills that seek to appropriate monies for a new and distinct purpose must originate in the House and must be recommended to the House by the Governor General through a minister of the crown.

*Points of Order*

I therefore submit that the two aforementioned Senate public bills should be ruled out of order and the two private member's business bills should not be put to a vote at third reading absent a royal recommendation.

Both Senate public bills in question, as well as Bill C-343, contain a provision that prohibits the coming into force of the bill unless the appropriation of monies for the purposes of the act has been recommended by the Governor General and such monies have been appropriated by Parliament.

By including such a provision, it is an explicit acknowledgement that the bills require a royal recommendation.

Let me quickly review the provisions in each of these bills that would result in a new and distinct spending request.

Bill S-205 provides for the appointment of an inspector general of the Canada Border Services Agency.

Subclause 15.12(3) provides for the salary and expenses for the inspector general. Subclauses 15.12(4) and (5) provide for the pension benefits and other benefits under the Government Employees Compensation Act and regulations. These proposals are not authorized by any statute or appropriation.

Clause 17 of Bill S-229, an act respecting underground infrastructure safety, authorizes the minister to enter into agreements, including funding agreements, that the minister considers necessary for carrying out the purposes of the act. Subclause 17(2) provides greater detail around the operation of such funding agreements between the federal government and the provincial governments. These specific purposes are not authorized by any statute or appropriation.

• (1320)

Bill C-343, An Act to establish the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Criminal Acts and to amend certain Acts, would provide for an appointment of a federal ombudsman for victims of criminal acts. The bill would also provide for remuneration, the payment of expenses related to duties and functions, and the hiring and remuneration of staff to assist the ombudsman in the discharge of his or her duties. These purposes are not authorized by any statute or appropriation.

Precedents clearly state that the establishment of a new body requires a royal recommendation. For example, the Speaker ruled on July 11, 1988, on the report stage amendments for Bill C-93, an act for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada, that two report stage motions were inadmissible because they would have established a new government department, which in turn would have resulted in significant new spending.

Precedents also show that a royal recommendation is required for the establishment of a new office. The Speaker ruled on February 11, 2008, on Bill C-474, respecting the Federal Sustainable Development Act, that:

Clause 7 of the bill provides for the governor in council to appoint 25 representatives to the advisory council. Section 23 of the Interpretation Act makes it clear that the power to appoint includes the power to pay. As the provision in Bill C-474 is such that the governor in council could choose to pay a salary to these representatives, this involves an appropriation of a part of the public revenue and should be accompanied by a royal recommendation.

With respect to the use of a provision in the bill to elude the requirement for a royal recommendation, the Speaker has ruled that this approach is unacceptable. On November 9, 1978, the Speaker ruled on Bill C-204, which included a clause stating:

Nothing in this act shall be construed as requiring an appropriation of any part of the public revenue.

The Speaker ruled that:

...the House should be cautioned that the Chair could not interpret the incorporation of such a clause in a private member's public bill as an acceptable way of eluding the requirement for a royal recommendation where such a recommendation is required.

I submit that the approach of eluding the requirement for a royal recommendation by tying it to a coming-into-force clause is a clear attempt to accomplish something indirectly that cannot be accomplished directly.

With respect to Bill C-315, respecting the conservation of national historic sites account, I submit that the bill's proposal to create a conservation of national historic sites account requires a royal recommendation.

Proposed subsection 22.1(4) would authorize that payments may be made out of the account. The creation of an account within the consolidated revenue fund requires a royal recommendation. The royal recommendation for such a fund would cover the purposes of the fund and the authority to make credits to the account as well as the authority to make payments out of the account.

The member may be attempting to assert that the fund would be separate from the consolidated revenue fund, but precedents demonstrate that all separate accounts are only notionally separate and are in fact part of the consolidated revenue fund. For example, the employment insurance operating account was established in accounts of Canada by the act. All amounts received under the act are deposited in the consolidated revenue fund and credited to the account. The benefits and the costs of administration of the act are paid out of the consolidated revenue fund and charged to the account.

On June 13, 2005, the Speaker ruled on Bill C-280, An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (Employment Insurance Account and premium rate setting) and another Act in consequence. He said:

I have carefully reviewed the submissions to determine whether Bill C-280 in clause 2 does anything more than rearrange the method of accounting for public funds.... On close examination, it seems to the Chair that clause 2 in Bill C-280 involves more than accounting methodology.

...Bill C-280 effects an appropriation by spending or authorizing the spending of public funds by transfer of the funds from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to a separate EI Fund with the result that these monies are no longer available for other appropriations Parliament may make.

• (1325)

What Bill C-315 contemplates is the creation of a fund within the accounts of Canada for the purposes of spending to maintain national historic sites. The creation of such a fund and the authority to spend to preserve such historic sites would be a new and distinct purpose that is not specifically authorized in any statute or appropriation. Therefore, without a royal recommendation attached to the bill, it should not be put to a vote at third reading.

*Privilege*

The procedural authorities and the precedents are clear that bills that seek to appropriate monies for a new and distinct purpose must originate in the House and must be recommended to the House by the Governor General through a minister of the crown.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for responding to the request from earlier this week for comments in respect to these four pieces of legislation.

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**PUBLIC SERVICE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I should have indicated earlier that we were at the end of the period for questions and comments for the hon. member for Brandon—Souris.

We are going to continue with resuming debate, albeit we have about three minutes left in the time provided for government business for today, with the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am really glad to finally get a chance to weigh in again on the Bill C-7 debate. It has been a very long wait, so it is good to see that the process is back in action.

As I mentioned in some of my questions previously on this bill, it is a bit of a mystery to me, given the content of the government's opinion with respect to the amendments coming from the other place, why it essentially took 11 months to get back to this place, particularly when previously, in the debate last spring, the government was very anxious to move the bill through the House.

At that time, the government made arguments essentially to the effect that the sky would fall if we did not get these amendments in place. Of course, we know now that the sky did not fall. What did happen was that it created a significant period, still ongoing, of legal uncertainty for prospective bargaining agents. That has made it very difficult for them to be able to organize properly.

We are now in a situation, as of the beginning of April, where there are two applicant now, one to represent RCMP members across the country, which would be consistent with what is in Bill C-7, but because Bill C-7 is not law, and again I repeat that is due to delays on the government's part, having had amendments from the other place as early as June 21 of last year, there is also an application from an association to represent members from Quebec alone. If Bill C-7 passes in its current form, that would not be allowed.

Because of dithering on the Liberal side with respect to getting this done, and the companion legislation Bill C-4 as well, which gets rid of some bills from the previous Parliament affecting certification and decertification of unions, we are now in a real mess.

I think the government risks the perception, at least, of interfering in an ongoing certification process, because it is now trying to advance legislation which, had it passed earlier, there would be no question about it and there would be no problem. Now, because there is an application for regional representation within the RCMP, the government may be perceived by some as taking sides as to which organization should represent members in Quebec or any other region of the province that has an organization apply to represent

either members of a certain province or certain region in the meantime.

That is why it was really important, as the government itself argued last spring, to get this legislation through. That is why we in the NDP were happy to help move that legislation through and work with the government to meet its timeline, while nevertheless improving the legislation, for instance, by taking out the needless and prejudicial exclusions on bargaining that were included in the original part of the legislation, and which the other place saw fit to remove.

Now the government is indicating that maybe it thinks it is not a bad idea to get rid of those, although it is replacing them with some other language. As the member for Brandon—Souris indicated, we only saw notice of that motion yesterday late in the evening. It is early to try to provide detailed comment on that.

Mr. Speaker, I will resume my comments on Tuesday, when hopefully I will have been able to take the time to examine the response in more detail.

● (1330)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona will have up to 16 minutes for his speech when the House next resumes debate on the question.

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

## PROPOSED CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Victoria on Wednesday, May 10, respecting the selection process for the prospective positions at the proposed Canada infrastructure bank.

The member alleges that the government's posting of a selection process for the prospective positions of chairperson, directors, president and CEO of the Canada infrastructure bank constitutes a contempt of the House since the bill to create the organization has not received royal assent. The member is correct in his assertion that the establishment of the bank and the ability to hire staff, provide remuneration, and to cover expenses are authorized by royal recommendation that is attached to those provisions, but the spending for those purposes can only occur once the bill has been promulgated by Parliament.

Where the member's argument falls short is in his assumption that the government is seeking to establish the bank and hire staff in advance of royal assent for Bill C-44. The government is not authorized to spend for those purposes until the bill has been duly promulgated. That, however, does not prevent the government from undertaking planning for the potential establishment of the bank. That is precisely what the government is doing.

I would draw to the attention of members that the news release posted on Infrastructure Canada's website, entitled "Government of Canada launches Leadership Search for the Canada Infrastructure Bank", states:

*Private Members' Business*

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Bank would operate at arms-length from the government as a Crown corporation and would work with provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous, and private sector investment partners to attract pension funds and other institutional investors to new revenue-generating infrastructure projects that are in the public interest.

No member has been impeded in the discharge of his or her duties in the consideration of Bill C-44 and, in particular, the provisions relating to the establishment of the bank. The finance committee is considering the bill, and once it is reported back, it will enjoy further debate in the House and in the Senate. To suggest that the government is not able to undertake planning processes for anticipatory or proposed initiatives cannot be taken seriously. The government has been clear that it cannot authorize spending for the purposes set out in division 18 of part 4 without parliamentary approval.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for these additional comments with respect to the question of privilege.

I see the hon. member for Victoria rising on the same question of privilege.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief, and I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for that response.

When he characterizes this as merely policy processes and not the expenditure of funds, I would point out the obvious, which is that money is being spent to make this advertisement open to people. There is money being spent in respect of a bill that has not been passed. I fail to understand how he can minimize this by simply referring to it as planning processes. That is simply not the case.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank both hon. members for their additional interventions on this. I will certainly take those comments under advisement and get back to the House in due course.

It now being 1:35 p.m., the House will proceed to the consideration of private members' business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

### RAILWAY SAFETY ACT

The House resumed from March 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-322, An Act to amend the Railway Safety Act (road crossings), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-322, which was introduced by the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, is based on one simple principle. It would authorize the Minister of Transport to order a rail company to construct a road crossing and authorize the payment of grants for that purpose.

This bill is about keeping Quebeckers and Canadian safe. Thousands of people are being forced to take long detours to get to work and access services. In many cases, those detours are unreasonably long, so some people avoid them by crossing the tracks where there is no crossing.

It is a simple image. What is important to understand here is that urban landscapes are constantly changing. I often use the example of a new park, where those who designed and conceived of the park planned the walkways and paved or laid stone in certain areas. A few months later, it becomes clear that the park's users have decided differently, and they create their own paths that reflect how they actually use the park. I am not saying that we should let people walk around as they wish and create the crossings afterwards, but we do need to take into account how people actually move, the development of certain neighbourhoods, and the shifts in urban landscapes so we can adapt to situations that reflect reality.

Transport Canada figures show that the risk of fatalities is twice as high at unprotected locations. In some spots, there are reports of hundreds of people every morning crossing the tracks where there is no crossing. For example, consider the railway right-of-way in Mile End in Montreal. In one day, 289 pedestrians and 81 cyclists were reported to have crossed the tracks at the wrong place, because they had no other real choice.

Despite pressure from businesses, cities, and citizens groups, railway companies often refuse to co-operate on adding crossings and yet this is critical to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, as we just saw in the example.

The lack of safe crossings jeopardizes public safety and causes mobility problems in our communities. We New Democrats have introduced this bill because we want to improve safety for all Canadians and promote active transportation.

In its response to my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie, the Liberal government seems to oppose this bill because it thinks the solution already exists under current legislation. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport said, and I quote:

...under the Railway Safety Act, the Minister of Transport has the appropriate tools and authorities to respond to safety concerns or threats to safe railway operations...It is for these reasons that the Government of Canada does not support Bill C-322.

The government would have us believe that everything is fine and that we do not need to amend the law to protect the safety of Canadians. However, nothing could be further from the truth. A Library of Parliament study shows that the Railway Safety Act is so vague and unclear that it is impossible to determine whether the transport minister does or does not have the authority to order a company to build a railway crossing under the existing legislation.

I asked the Library of Parliament to look into this because I wanted to get the most objective opinion possible on this bill and try to make sense of it. An examination of the existing legislation on railway safety shows that large sections of the text are quite vague to say the least. Actually, they are about as clear as mud.

Therefore, this is not just the opinion of the second opposition party. We are talking about the findings of a non-partisan study involving a rigorous and detailed review of the legislation. The concept of railway safety comes up at least 66 times in the act, but it is never clearly defined.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1340)

Just because the word “safety” is used so many times does not mean we have a clear understanding of what it means. Subsection 31 (1) of the Railway Safety Act is very confusing because it is not clear whether the notion of railway safety is meant to be interpreted more narrowly here than in other parts of the act.

I will read subsection 31(1). I just want to warn my listeners that I might lose them here. I might even get lost myself, but that will prove my point about how the act that my colleague's bill would amend is very confusing. Here is subsection 31(1):

If a railway safety inspector is of the opinion that a person's conduct or any thing for which a person is responsible constitutes a threat to the safety or security of railway operations or the safety of persons or property, the inspector shall inform, by notice sent to the person and to any company whose railway operations are affected by the threat, the person and the company of that opinion and of the reasons for it.

I imagine everyone gets the meaning of this paragraph. The words “or the safety of persons or property” might suggest they are there to add to the concept of the security of railway operations and therefore that the safety of persons or property is not necessarily included in that concept. What is more, nowhere else in the Railway Safety Act is the security of railway operations followed by the phrase “or the safety of persons or property”.

Let us take a deep breath and try to make sense of that. That is precisely what Bill C-322 wants to address and why it is important. It clarifies the minister's authority to order the construction of level crossings. Unfortunately, the government is hiding behind outdated regulations that prevent the minister from ordering new crossings to be built even though he has the authority to order them to be closed or modified.

Let us also admit that in reality, the public's bargaining power is disproportionate to that of the railway companies, to say the least. The agreement process for creating a level crossing is also problematic. The person submitting a proposal is supposed to negotiate an agreement directly with the railway company. If the company rejects the idea of building a new level crossing, then the applicant can call on the agency to mediate the negotiations or make an official ruling on the matter.

There is a growing number of examples of individuals, citizens groups, and municipalities pulling together to establish new road crossings, but at the end of the day, the rail company basically has the veto, and nothing happens, even though the risk to public safety, I would remind the House, is well known and even statistically proven.

The problem lies in the unequal balance of power between the parties negotiating the construction of a new crossing. When rail companies cite safety reasons, for example, to justify their refusal to install crossings without releasing the results of their safety studies, the government should have the authority to intervene to ensure public safety and to protect the public interest. That is what we are proposing in the next bill.

Unfortunately, I am running out of time, but I could have quoted many organizations that support the bill sponsored by my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie. They are sending a very clear message that this is a crucial need, not only in the Montreal region, which is

represented in part by my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie, but also in many other parts of the country.

● (1345)

Indeed, as I said in the beginning, the urban landscape is constantly changing, and we need to adapt railways that have been there for more than a century to the reality of urban development.

In closing, the current situation is worrisome, and crossings need to be built in strategic locations so that pedestrians and cyclists can move around safely. Improving active transportation and people's mobility are important priorities, and this is true across Canada. This bill will help us achieve that.

[English]

**Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill C-322 this afternoon.

My experience with crossings is a little different from my colleague's. In my riding, the issues around crossings have typically been the removal of them, particularly in small towns. Train lengths have gotten longer and longer, and we now find freight trains that are two miles in length. The rail companies have actually come in and removed crossings, in their words, to try to remove the danger of people trying to cross at those places. It has made it inconvenient for a number of small communities whose people often have to go around another way to get back to the place where they started.

The second issue I have had with rail crossings in the riding is CPR removing crossings that were used privately and actually not even acknowledging our contacts with them to try to get them to explain what they had done.

I sympathize with my colleague on this issue, but I do not think she has found the correct solution to the problem. In short, the bill before us proposes to amend the Railway Safety Act to give the minister of transport the power to order a company to construct a railway crossing and to authorize the payment of subsidies in that regard. The bill is designed to address a particular problem in Montreal.

I find this to be typical of my NDP colleagues' approach to legislation. The solution is always more and more government intervention and bigger and bigger government. With these issues that should be resolved locally, they always seem to take a national hammer to them to try to repair them that way. I think that is what is happening here.

*Private Members' Business*

For those of us who have lived under NDP governments, this is a very familiar picture for us. We believe the solution is not always more and more government involvement and government telling people what they need to do. Of course, in my province it has had a huge impact over the years. We find ourselves, after 50 years of the NDP running the province, with an economy one-third the size of that of our neighbouring province, and it is for that particular reason. Every solution was seen to be more and more government involvement until people left and businesses left and we did not have the economic development that we actually needed in our province. We ended up with, I think, up to 80 crown corporations in a population of less than a million, and nationalized industries, such as potash, which was just about destroyed before it was sold into private hands and then became a crown jewel in our provincial economy.

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Nonsense, sheer nonsense.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, I hear my colleague in the back heckling me, but he should be apologizing to the people of Saskatchewan for having supported such policies.

We see the consequences in other provinces now. Unfortunately, our neighbour to the west, which was once three times the economy that we were and had three times the population, is suffering through the choice of an NDP government. We are all familiar with things like Rae days. In British Columbia, although the NDP has destroyed that provincial economy twice, it seems some people have forgotten that and may be giving the NDP another opportunity to drag British Columbia down.

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Relevance.

**Mr. David Anderson:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague wants this to be an issue of relevance, but it is relevant because this is the only solution that the NDP has. This legislation is principally designed as a national solution to a challenging circumstance in her riding where, according to her, there are not enough rail crossings, and therefore pedestrians in her riding are crossing the rail track at multiple uncontrolled locations and trespassing on private property. At issue is just that lack of pedestrian crossings on the Canadian Pacific Railway Outremont spur.

I wonder if the bill in its present form is actually necessary. Is this type of large-scale reach the only solution to the illegal crossings that my colleague referenced when she brought the bill forward?

I would like to take a minute or two to look at what is in place presently. My NDP colleague just referred to the Railway Safety Act being vague and confusing, and he gave some examples, but I do not think this bill is going to be the solution to clear that up. The Canadian Transportation Act includes some provisions on rail crossings. Section 100 of the act defines a road crossing as “the part of a road that passes across, over or under a railway line, and includes a structure supporting or protecting that part of the road or facilitating the crossing.”

The member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie says she wants to increase the safety of affected areas where pedestrians are crossing. I believe her approach is sincere, but as I have mentioned, we have questions about the method that she has chosen.

●(1350)

When we try to correct at risk situations, we should be very careful that we do not create new ones. I think that would happen if the bill were passed.

Although it tries to deal with a local issue, the bill would be national in scope, and it should be judged on that basis. Federal legislation already provides municipalities and local authorities with the authority to deal with these types of situations, with the ability to get a railroad to the table to get a crossing built.

Section 101 of the Canada Transportation Act states that if a municipality or a local authority and a railway cannot come to a conclusion and negotiate an agreement to build a crossing, the Canadian Transportation Agency can step in. It can authorize the construction of that crossing. It can determine what percentage of the construction costs each party will be responsible for. It can also determine who will maintain that crossing.

This current process puts the onus on individual local authorities, which is where it should be, to determine whether a new railway crossing is required, where and when that crossing is built and should be built, taking into consideration development plans and how much they are willing to contribute financially to see that crossing built.

The current legislative framework stipulates that if a local municipality or entity and a railway cannot come to an agreement, then the Canadian Transportation Agency can take over and assume responsibility. It can authorize the construction and determine how those costs will be split between the parties, both for the construction of the crossing and for the ongoing maintenance of it.

The minister can already help parties find common ground through various existing policies and can do it in a way that deals with the financial consequences for the stakeholders. As with so many other things, money often ends up being the sticking point on many of these negotiations.

The member told us about her work and the support she had from various agencies. However, the Montreal Port Authority is not one of those agencies that supports her proposed legislative amendment. That is the local entity involved in this situation.

Municipalities have the primary responsibility for their own infrastructure. It makes sense for them to be the ones that decide when, if, and where the railway crossings should be built. It should not be up to the Minister of Transport to determine whether a crossing must be built in a local area. It needs to be given over to the local government to make those decisions, and that is where it should stay.

As I said, the Montreal Port Authority does not support the bill. The rail line affected by the member's initiative serves the port. Setting up new crossings would disrupt port operations. Given a train cannot stop at each grade crossing, the port authority has said the company would have to uncouple and recouple the train and allow people to cross. That would significantly disrupt the operations and increase the risk for company employees and the public. I know the member does not want to hear that as a consequence of her legislation.

When people are crossing at uncontrolled locations, they are in effect trespassing on private property. The sponsor of the bill is saying that just because people are trespassing and putting themselves at risk, the minister has some obligation to build crossings for them. We do not believe this is the case. Increasing the number of pedestrian crossings increases opportunities for people to be injured and/or killed. That is not a good solution to the issue we are faced with here.

Statistics show that railway and road crossings are dangerous for Canadians. Data at the end of October 2016 indicated a total of 89 accidents at road crossings, 16 fatalities, and 20 severe injuries. These problems happen across the entire rail system, not only at these uncontrolled crossings.

We do not see how Bill C-322 in its current form could help improve and solve the problem once and for all. In our view, a broader approach to this is needed. Specific measures should be taken to improve the safety of people crossing railway lines illegally in Canada. We need to come up with a framework to deal with that.

We will oppose the bill because it proposes the wrong solution to the problem in Montreal and other densely populated cities that have rail crossings in them.

The issue is really that pedestrians are trespassing on private property, which typically has industrial activity also occurring, thus exposing people to major danger. The answer is not to give them even more opportunities to be injured and/or killed.

• (1355)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by thanking the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, who, during his speech, gave the House a demonstration of how to strain the limits of relevance. One is compelled to think that he perhaps sought out private tutoring from the member for Winnipeg North, but I am confounded as to why.

On the substance of the matter, I would like to point out, in response to some of the arguments made by the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, that this is not just a Montreal issue. For instance, there are people from Toronto who are behind the bill and who signed the petition. One said, “Railway lines act as Berlin walls, separately east and west in Toronto. Given the infrequency of trains, they routinely cross safely after railway fence holes have been cut. Legal crossings would make them even more safe while removing the inconvenience of cycling to an opening only to find it's been closed off by the railway. It would be good if the city could put these crossings on an official map.”

Therefore, there is support in places other than Montreal for this.

We know that illegal crossings mean double the number of deaths and casualties compared to legal crossings.

We are talking about giving power to the minister to make that decision. That would not require the minister to make imprudent decisions. That would not require the minister to make those decisions without consulting stakeholders, including the railway. It would just empower the minister and give some leverage, frankly, to communities that would now have a clear place to go to get

### *Private Members' Business*

decisions on having legal crossings put where they feel they need to be put, in consultation with the railway, and to get it done.

Part of the problem right now is that it is not clear who has the authority to get this job done. In fact, that lack of clarity has been promoted and put into evidence by the government itself during the debate on this bill. Initially it said that the minister already had the power, yet today it seems to be silent on the bill in the face of the New Democrats providing a legal opinion that it is actually quite unclear whether the minister actually has that power. We are seeking clarity. If the government wants to be open and transparent, the cornerstone of openness and transparency, at the end of the day, is clarity.

We want to be clear where the power exists to compel the railway, in certain cases, to create these crossings if they do not already exist. We know that communities are asking for crossings. They have made the case for those crossings, yet they are being frustrated, because at the end of the day, practically speaking, if not legally, although we suspect legally as well, the ultimate decision lies in the hands of the railway. That is not right, because there are going to be times when the economic interests of the railway clash with the safety interests of communities, and it should not be the railway that is the ultimate arbiter in those conflicts of interest.

We see that in other communities as well on similar issues. The reason I raise this is that there is a theme with respect to the government's treatment of the railway. For instance, in my community, there has been a serious issue for the residents of Mission Gardens, who have seen a unilateral change in the staging practices of CN behind their homes since an underpass was built for Plessis Road. That has meant that there is pretty much a straight shot between the Transcona Shops and Symington Yards, so the railway has decided to use that as a place to build trains.

Yes, people lived on a main line of the railway. They were quite conscious of the fact that it would mean there would be through traffic back and forth, and they lived with that quite happily for 30 or 40 years. They are now in the very different situation of the railway slamming cars together, building trains. They are getting cracks in their foundations. Their windows are beginning to break. Pictures are falling off the walls. There are diesel fumes in their homes and there is constant noise, which they never had in 40 years of living in that neighbourhood. It is a very significant change to the way they enjoy their properties. It could mean a significant change to the values of their properties in that neighbourhood.

They have been seeking justice from the railway on these issues and on rail safety issues, which is another speech, such as things going on in the Shops and in Symington Yards and trains being used when the machinists and mechanics who look after those trains are saying that they are not safe.

At the end of the day, all of this ends up coming back to the railway itself, because successive Conservative and Liberal governments have taken the approach that they should be hands-off and let the industry regulate itself.

*Private Members' Business*

●(1400)

The fact of the matter is that is failing people when it comes to safety on the railway. It is failing people in my community, who have now had their homes, their life at home, and their health affected by a decision of the community. They are trying to go through the CTA process, but it is frustrating and they are up against an army of corporate lawyers. They are being told, and I think this speaks somewhat to the point that the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands was making, that they should empower local communities.

Local communities are trying to take on the railway. The fact is they do not have the leverage or the support to be able to get that done. That is part of the real frustration. Part of the motivating spirit behind this bill is not about big government; it is about Canadians being able to use their government to get the leverage they should have over major players in their neighbourhood that decide when traffic is stalled, how much noise is in their neighbourhood, and also, in the case of people in Mission Gardens, damage to their homes.

This bill does take the right approach, because it says that the lines of accountability should be clear. It says that Canadians should be able to organize collectively and ask their government to act on their behalf, and to do it with all the leverage of other Canadians who are experiencing similar issues in communities from coast to coast to coast behind them to get action and to get results, instead of always circling back to the railway and then finding out, no surprise, that the railway is not going to budge an inch. The railway has decided what makes more money for the railway, and what is more convenient for it. It does not particularly have to care about what that means for the community around it.

Now, when it is easy for the railway, sure, it is happy to do some community things. I am not suggesting the railways do not do anything for the community. CN has been a sponsor of a number of good projects in our community, whether it is infrastructure projects or community events. However, when it comes down to these issues that conflict directly with the railways' economic interests, that does not mean they always get to win. It certainly does not mean they should get to be the final arbiter of whether or not they are going to win, because it is a clear conflict of interest.

Whether it is major changes to the staging operations that affect the health and safety of Canadians, whether it is whether or not to install a new grade crossing, the minister already has the power to close or modify grade crossings. The idea that we would add to that power, the power to also require a new one, is not some new institution of big government. It is simply a logical expansion of the powers that already exist for the minister, powers that the minister himself or his representatives at various times have claimed that he already has. We are just saying that we should make that more clear, so that there is no question that these decisions ultimately come back to the minister. When Canadians are seeking justice in their community, they will know who to go to and who has the power to do that and to stand up to the railways when they are not willing to listen.

This is a very reasonable tool to give to the minister. It involves discretion. It does not say that anytime someone puts up their hand and says they would like a legal crossing the minister is required to

do it. Of course the minister is going to consult with the railway. However, we hope the minister, in a way that the railway is not required and would not feel the need to consult with the community, is going to feel that obligation. We hope the minister would go out and talk to Canadians who are concerned about the operations of the railway in their community, and be able to make an impartial decision, rather than this kind of “leave it to the railway” attitude.

I know a number of guys who work in the yards and the shops close to home. I have seen some pictures of what goes on in the yards and the shops, and I can say that there is a need for more hands-on oversight of certain kinds of questions, particularly with regard to safety. This is a safety issue we are talking about today. Someone has to step in. This sort of trusting that the railways are always going to do what is in everyone's interest is just not the case.

Anyone who has been in a business is going to know that there are different kinds of conversations that have to be had within a business. There is a role for the business leadership. Their role is to maximize profit for their shareholders. That is their legally mandated role. It is not to optimize safety within communities. They are always looking at the bottom line.

I understand that. That is the way our system is set up. I might think there are problems with that and that would be a debate for another day. However, given the current structure of companies and what they are expected to do, and us knowing that, I think we have an obligation to make sure there are measures taken to have an independent third party with the ultimate authority to make those safety decisions. We are putting those companies in a conflict of interest, between their obligation to maximize return for their shareholders on the one hand and our desire to see Canadian communities as safe as possible on the other. Sometimes that is going to mean the railway forking out some extra cash to put in a crossing, and the consequences it means for its operations, a delay here or there.

●(1405)

If we think that is reasonable to ask of them, then we should have the power to do it. The bill would give us the power to do that through the Minister of Transport. That is why it is a good idea.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's comments with interest.

[*English*]

Notably, I listened to the comments of my colleague on the Conservative side.

[*Translation*]

He seemed to be saying that only Montreal has this problem, but that is not true at all. This is a serious issue in places like Toronto too, and a lot of people have taken an interest. It is also a big deal in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Several organizations in those provinces have expressed support for this bill.



*Private Members' Business*

Interestingly, my colleague started off by saying that this is a problem in communities in his riding and that crossings have been closed with no right of appeal and no consultation. My bill can help with situations like that. My colleague said that these situations should be resolved locally. That is the problem.

This has been an issue in Montreal for 25 years, and negotiations have been going on that whole time. My colleague said these decisions should be left to municipal authorities. In Montreal's case, the City has been asking for strategically located crossings for 25 years, but nothing is happening because the company is refusing to co-operate. I think it is the government's job to intervene in situations like this. I am not saying that because we like big government. I am saying it because a government's primary purpose is to keep citizens safe.

There are twice as many accidents at illegal crossings than there are at safe crossings. If the minister sits down to examine the situation, takes responsibility, takes action if he sees fit, and saves only one life by building crossings in certain locations, then I would feel as though my bill had served a useful purpose. That is one of the minister's key roles.

What is more, it is a simple matter of logic. The minister has the authority to close a level crossing or any other crossing for safety or other reasons. We are talking about level crossings, but sometimes there are bridges or other ways to cross railways. He has the authority to modify them, but he does not have the authority to open a new one grade crossing for safety reasons.

We are not saying that a crossing must be built in a certain location. The bill simply says that the minister should have the same authority to close, modify, or open a crossing.

At one point, the parliamentary secretary indicated that the minister already had the authority to open a crossing. I do not want to question his word, but other government members have had different interpretations of the legislation. We asked for a legal

interpretation, and the opinion that we were given is that the existing legislation is unclear. It does not make much reference to the minister's authority.

Why not clarify the act and give the minister equal authority to close, modify, and open level crossings?

I will end there because I can see that I am running out of time. If this bill were to save even one life, I think it would be worth it.

● (1410)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, May 17, 2017, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[English]

It being 2:12 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:12 p.m.)



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