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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 22, 2017

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 22, 2017

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone put their best foot forward at COP23. Everyone was a leader in the fight against climate change. Everyone promised to do more, and Canada even launched an international coalition against coal. Then, everyone went home. The government realized that phasing out coal was the right thing to do, but that is not stopping it from selling coal to the Americans.

Next, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change praised the United States' decision to green-light the Keystone XL pipeline project on the same week there was an 800,000-litre oil spill from a pipeline. There is also the Premier of Alberta who is calling on the federal government for assistance in building more new pipelines. This is the same Premier that the NDP leader says shares many of his values.

The Liberals are sticking with the strategies used by Mr. Harper, who skipped UN meetings to go eat doughnuts at Tim Hortons.

Canada is certainly not finding any solutions to climate change.

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[*English*]

MISSISSAUGA POET LAUREATE

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last May, Mississauga got a new poet laureate. Wali Shah, a 22-year-old UTM student, has a remarkable story. He arrived in Canada, with his family, from Pakistan when he was three years old. He had turbulent teen years. When he was 15, he faced assault charges and

jail time, but because of his mother and teachers, he turned his life around. Today he is a TEDx speaker and an eloquent voice on mental health issues and anti-bullying.

In 2013, Wali released his first hip hop album, entitled “Rhythm & Poetry”. In 2014, he was named one of Canada's top 20 under 20. Today his words inspire, motivate, and help thousands.

I congratulate Wali on his awesome appointment. This is an appropriate time to quote Wali's words back to him: “Seize the day, make it your moment...you're the king of the castle.”

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MISSING PERSONS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to a matter of deep concern for the tens of thousands of families who each year experience the most horrific of circumstances, that of finding a loved one missing. Anyone who has experienced the tragic loss of a family member or close friend will tell us that closure is an important part of the healing process, but for so many Canadian families with missing loved ones, this process cannot even begin. Canada has many national days of observance, but we do not have a national missing person's day.

The latest RCMP numbers suggest that approximately 71,000 people went missing in 2015 alone.

At the request of the Boyle sisters, from Scarborough, Ontario, whose brother Jay went missing in 1995, at the age of 17, I was honoured to sponsor a petition calling on the Government of Canada to enact a national day of solidarity and remembrance, a day for action to prevent this tragedy from happening to another family. I urge all Canadians to support the petition for a national missing person's day, which can be found at petitions.ourcommons.ca.

*Statements by Members***VIMY RIDGE OAK**

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I was pleased to join Principal Gretsinger and the students and staff of Oakridge Public School to plant an English oak sapling. However, this was no ordinary oak sapling. As Callie Germain, an Oakridge student, noted, the Battle of Vimy Ridge was a significant moment in our collective history, a defining moment for Canada. One hundred years ago, that battle left Vimy Ridge a barren wasteland. Of the many oaks that once stood tall, only one remained. Lieutenant Leslie Miller, of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, found the acorns from that remaining tree and brought them home to Canada. The sapling we planted in St. Catharines is a direct descendant of that remaining oak.

It was my pleasure to personally donate one of the remaining saplings to Oakridge. Its location holds personal significance for me, as my son Ethan will one day attend Oakridge Public School. My hope is that this tree grows tall and serves as a monument for the students of Oakridge and the residents of St. Catharines to remind them of the tremendous sacrifice given by so many in service to St. Catharines and to Canada.

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● (1410)

ROHINGYA

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, years of persecution, fuelled by anti-Muslim hatred, have exploded into an Islamophobic, government-led pogrom against the Rohingya in Myanmar.

I had occasion to meet with special envoy Bob Rae during the recent Commonwealth parliamentary assizes in neighbouring Bangladesh. His remarks were chilling. The Canadian delegation there played a major role in getting the CPA to take the uncharacteristic step of adopting a strongly worded statement on the Rohingya, one that referred to genocide.

[Translation]

At the end of the Second World War, when the horrifying magnitude of the holocaust was revealed, the whole world swore to never forget, to be vigilant, lest hatred once again give rise to state-sponsored murder on a massive scale.

[English]

On the very day when the butcher of the Balkans has been sentenced to life in prison for genocide, Canada must do everything we can to ensure that the butchers of Burma suffer a similar fate.

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SUKHI THIND AND DOUG NICKERSON

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commemorate two inspiring residents of my riding who recently passed away.

First, I would like to commemorate Sukhi Thind, who passed away unexpectedly on September 8. Sukhi was a political activist for the Prof. Mohan Singh Memorial Foundation. She fought long and hard to bring recognition of the victims of the *Komagata Maru* incident, including an official apology from the Government of

Canada. In doing so, she performed a great service to the South Asian community and to Canadians as a whole.

Surrey Centre also lost Doug Nickerson, the guardian angel of the Surrey strip. Little Doug, as he was known to his friends, protected some of the most vulnerable people in our society by racing around 135A Street, on his bicycle, administering naloxone to those overdosing on opioids. In total, Little Doug saved an incredible 148 lives.

People like Sukhi Thind and Doug Nickerson make Surrey a better place to call home.

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CIK TELECOM

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week I visited a telecommunications firm in Markham. The name of the company is CIK Telecom. CIK stands for “customer is king”. It is a small telecommunications provider.

CIK Telecom is the story of the Canadian dream. In 2003, Mr. Deng and Mr. Jin started CIK in their basement. Today it has grown to over 400 employees, and it recently celebrated its 14th anniversary.

Without the efforts of entrepreneurs like Mr. Deng and Mr. Jin, Canada would not be what it is today. I am glad to see that a competitive company, with five-star services and two-star pricing, was able to be successful.

While the finance minister accuses small business owners of being tax cheats, we in the Conservative caucus will continue to stand up for small business owners and the people who work for them. I am proud to have growing businesses in my riding that are creating jobs and prosperity.

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LABRADORIANS OF DISTINCTION

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to rise to pay tribute to the 150 extraordinary Labradorians who were honoured this past week across Labrador. In celebration of Canada 150, I launched the Labradorians of Distinction awards as a way to acknowledge the contributions of Labradorians to their communities. Through an independent process, Labradorians were nominated and selected, and 150 incredible people, both living and deceased, were honoured for their contributions to our culture, history, economy, and environment.

A diverse culture of indigenous peoples and settlers from around the world make up Labrador. When I think of these people who have moulded our great home, I see only the faces of hard-working, resilient, creative, and genuine people. From the people who walked the land in moccasins to those who came in uniform to serve, from those who sailed the Labrador Sea to those who dug the first iron ore, and from those who harpooned their food from the ice to those who opened their first modern facilities, we—

● (1415)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vimy.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

74TH ANNIVERSARY OF LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in recognition of the 74th anniversary of Lebanese independence.

[English]

This is the second time I have had the pleasure to rise in this chamber to bring attention to the proud people of Lebanon, who celebrate their independence on November 22. This is a day defined by happiness, autonomy, and the progress of a people whose history goes back thousands of years.

[Translation]

Despite rising tensions, the people are unflinching. Like a phoenix, the Lebanese people have survived decades of political turbulence. Today, November 22, I hope everyone will join me in wishing the people of Lebanon a happy independence day and a swift return to peace and prosperity.

[Member spoke in Arabic]

* * *

[English]

LEBANON

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 74th anniversary of the independence of Lebanon. Lebanese people are multi-talented, with many achievements of which they should be proud.

Today, as we celebrate 74 years of independence, my message to all Canadians of Lebanese origin is for them to celebrate their love for Canada as much as they celebrate their love for Lebanon; celebrate their entrepreneurial spirit as their ability to contribute to the diversity that we enjoy in the country, welcoming people to practise their religion and beliefs free of persecution; and celebrate our flourishing democracy, as all countries should be independent of interference from regional involvement.

I invite all members to join the Canada-Lebanon Parliamentary Friendship Group this evening for a celebration of Lebanon independence in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building.

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[Translation]

LEBANON'S 74TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today being Lebanon's 74th anniversary, I wish Lebanese people around the world, and especially Lebanese Canadians, a happy national holiday.

[English]

The Lebanese community, the largest Arab Canadian community, is making a remarkable and growing contribution to Canadian heritage. The Lebanese, most of whom have chosen the province of Quebec as their home, are not only bilingual, they are also a diverse group, comprising of 18 religious denominations. They are active in politics, science, medicine, music, and the economy.

Through this diversity, the Lebanese community reinforces the fundamental values of the charter of Canada.

[Translation]

I hope that Lebanon will find the best possible ways to maintain peace within its borders.

Once again, I wish all of the Lebanese people and all Lebanese Canadians a happy national holiday.

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[English]

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour today to welcome to Canada the President of the Republic of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi.

This week, accompanied by members from the House, the president laid flowers at Canada's Peacekeeping Monument to thank Canada for our contributions to bringing peace to Kosovo during and after the brutal conflict there, and for accepting thousands of refugees from Kosovo 18 years ago. Those former asylum seekers are now leaders in Canada in business, culture, sport, and so many areas.

I had the privilege of living and working in Kosovo 10 years ago as an adviser to its Parliament, and it is impressive to see how far Kosovo has come in developing pluralistic, multi-ethnic, inclusive democratic institutions, including strong gender representation and a modern, professional public service. It is a country with a young; educated population; natural resources; and a progressive, outward-looking attitude.

I look forward to this visit deepening the ties of friendship between our two countries.

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ZIMBABWE

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for Zimbabwe and Africa, the resignation of Robert Mugabe is excellent news.

Having been born in Africa, I witnessed the winds of change blowing. At independence for the people of Zimbabwe, a new era of hope and prosperity was in the offing, but Mugabe's subsequent abuses of human rights and crimes turned those hopes around quickly into an dictatorial regime, drowning in poverty.

I met with the official opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, when he visited Canada and discussed extensively our shared hopes for a democratic future for Zimbabwe. It has been a long journey but today that hope has returned.

We will support the people of Zimbabwe in the bright future ahead of them. Good luck to Zimbabweans.

Routine Proceedings

●(1420)

ATTACK IN MUBI

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest condolences to the people of Nigeria following the terrible attack yesterday in the Mubi, Adamawa state.

Nigeria has been facing multiple threats to its peace and security in recent years. As a United Church minister, it is appalling for me that this attack happened in a place of worship where people should feel safe.

As co-chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, I know of the important relationship between Canada and Nigeria, but this tragedy should serve to draw us even closer. Today, we stand in solidarity with the people of Nigeria, especially those injured and their loved ones. We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this heinous crime. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Today, more than ever, we must work together to support a more peaceful future, free of hatred and violence here and around the world.

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ABANDONED VESSELS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for decades, jurisdictional gaps have left coastal communities with nowhere to turn when they need help cleaning up abandoned vessels. Oil spills and marine debris from thousands of vessels pollute our waterways and put local fishing and tourism jobs at risk. This is the 83rd time I have raised this.

Fifteen years of coastal community solutions are built into our legislation to fix vessel registration, deal with the backlog, support good green jobs and recycling, and end the run around by making the Coast Guard the first responder and resourcing it.

However, on November 9, the Liberals blocked debate on my bill, an unprecedented interference. This week I will appeal so that coastal voices are heard. The government's new legislation and my bill would complement each other and, with the public's help, both could proceed.

I ask Canadians to please ask their MP to vote yes in next week's first-time and historic secret ballot vote to have Bill C-352 be votable, and to hear coastal community voices.

* * *

GREY CUP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, one team will take home the Grey Cup. It is very apparent that the Calgary Stampeders is the team that is on its way up.

The cup is contested between the east and west winners of the CFL, but this year I think it is clear which team is truly the best.

The Stamps know that this weekend they can win it all. Unlike the federal deficit, the Argos are sure to fall.

We have Bo Levi Mitchell, a killer quarterback. There is absolutely no way that his mad skills will lack. Then there is the work of punter Rob Maver who will surely keep the Stampeders on their best behaviour. As well, Coach Dave Dickenson has been called the smartest in the league, even if the Argo's Marc Trestman finds that hard to believe.

On Sunday, we will proudly sing "Ye Men of Calgary". We are looking forward to the match of the century, so giddy up, Argos. We are cheering on our Stamps. With a great big yahoo, they are sure to be Grey Cup champions.

* * *

NATIONAL HOUSING DAY

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we recognize National Housing Day. Safe and affordable housing is central to our lives, our health, and our families. It is essential to vibrant communities and a strong middle class.

Vancouverites from all walks of life face housing challenges. Our most vulnerable citizens sleep on the streets, seniors and single parents cannot afford rising rents, and the next generation is giving up on home ownership or moving away.

When our new government was appointed two years ago, my first priority was to ensure that the ministers and the Prime Minister were well informed and prepared to act on housing access and affordability challenges in Vancouver and beyond.

I am proud to celebrate today's announcement of Canada's first-ever national housing strategy, which comes with historic levels of investment. By listening to local residents, by partnering with housing advocates and all levels of government, we are thinking nationally and acting locally.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

●(1425)

[English]

NEW MEMBER

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Mr. Dane Lloyd, member for the electoral district of Sturgeon River—Parkland.

* * *

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Dane Lloyd, member for Sturgeon River—Parkland, introduced by Hon. Andrew Scheer and Mr. Gordon Brown.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister join me in condemning the egregious crackdown on free speech at Wilfrid Laurier University?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to creating open spaces for Canadians to debate and express their views. In a free society, we may disagree with someone's views, but we must defend their right to hold them, unless those views promote hate. Intolerance and hate have no place in Canadian society or in our post-secondary institutions. We will continue to fight to ensure that the charter rights of Canadians are upheld and that every Canadian can feel safe and secure in their community.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Prime Minister cannot just simply denounce what happened at the university.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister defends and protects hidden companies in France, shares that go up in accordance with the Liberals' decisions, and a bill that could result in personal gains. The Minister of Finance still controls many numbered companies we know nothing about.

When will the Prime Minister order the Minister of Finance to disclose all the shares he bought, sold, or held in all of these private companies or trust funds since he was elected?

[English]

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in this House, I would like to start by wishing you a happy birthday.

[Members sang *Happy Birthday*]

Some hon. members: Order, order.

• (1430)

The Speaker: Exactly, order. Some things do make the House very difficult to control.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat what I have said to this House previously. I worked with the Ethics Commissioner from day one, disclosed all of my assets to the Ethics Commissioner, and I have actually decided to go further than she recommended by selling all of the shares in the company I built with my family and, in fact, make a significant donation to charity.

I will continue to work on behalf of all Canadians, doing the work that we were elected to do to make our economy better, to help middle-class Canadians, and to ensure that the future is brighter than the present.

Oral Questions

TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that we will not start singing “How old are you now?” on your birthday, but maybe as a birthday present, the minister could give you the gift of an answer to one of our questions.

It is not only the Canada Revenue Agency that taxpayers cannot get an answer from. A letter, representing thousands of small businesses across the country, has been sent to the Prime Minister asking for clarification about his unfair tax changes. The Prime Minister has created so much uncertainty and confusion. When will the Prime Minister finally end all of this confusion and just stop attacking local businesses?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to talk about what we are trying to do on behalf of all Canadians. We know that having a tax system that is fair matters to Canadians. We have put forward some measures that are going to ensure that it is just that. What we have then done to make sure it is fair for all Canadians is to look at how we can best help Canadians to be successful. By taking the money from the changes in taxes and putting it into force through indexing the Canada child benefit and increasing the working income tax benefit, we are going to show benefits for Canadians across this country while having a tax system that is fairer.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every week brings new revelations about the Minister of Finance's conflicts of interest.

First, there were his undeclared shares, then his villa in France, and now, we have the bill he created, Bill C-27, from which his own family and his company, Morneau Shepell, directly benefit.

Will the Prime Minister step up and order his Minister of Finance to show some transparency and disclose all of his assets?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know why the opposition members want to talk about me. They do not want to talk about our economy and our Canadian housing strategy.

Today is a very important day. We are going to explain to Canadians how we can improve this country's housing situation. This is very important. We are announcing major changes this afternoon.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that 81% of Canadian families are paying more taxes under this government.

My question is simple and perfectly valid, especially considering that we know this minister has been in a direct conflict of interest for the past two years.

If he has nothing to hide, will the Minister of Finance be honest and disclose, once and for all, his assets, companies, shares, and everything he is hiding from Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that nine out of 10 families are better off since we introduced the Canada child benefit. Thanks to this very important benefit, families are now receiving an average of \$2,300 more to help improve their situation. That is a significant and very positive change for Canadian families. We are going to continue to work for them.

* * *

[English]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit confused because while Liberals help Stephen Bronfman and other friends who use tax havens to avoid paying taxes, Canadians cannot speak to anyone when they call the CRA to get help with paying taxes. While the finance minister gets a free pass from the Prime Minister, despite the fact he has interests in a company he is in charge of regulating, hundreds of thousands of public servants are paying the price for the Liberal government's incompetence in the Phoenix fiasco.

Liberals have usually waited at least one full term before demonstrating a sense of entitlement. Why are they in such a rush now?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have read the Auditor General's report and agree with all of his recommendations. Moreover, serving Canadians is a key component of my mandate letter.

Our very first budget reinvested \$50 million in the Canada Revenue Agency's call centres. We have already started hiring agents to handle more calls from Canadians. We have an action plan for modernizing the telephony platform, improving training, and updating our service standards. Our investments are always made to improve the quality of the services Canadians have a right to expect.

● (1435)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question was about Phoenix.

Governing is about making choices. Let us take a closer look at the Liberals' choices.

A couple with no children gets nothing. A person who earns less than \$45,000 gets nothing. Someone who takes the bus no longer gets a tax credit.

On the other hand, someone who sends their money to the Cayman Islands does not have any problems. Someone who introduces a bill that will make him richer will write a cheque. Someone who wants to see the Prime Minister will pay \$1,500. Netflix does not pay any tax. KPMG clients will get a deal.

When will the Liberals stop working for their Bay Street millionaire friends?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has made tax evasion and avoidance one of its top priorities. We have invested almost \$1

billion to fight tax evasion. We continue to work for Canadians. It is a top priority and we will continue to do so. We will not mislead Canadians, as opposed to my colleague across the way.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is right. The Liberals are going to continue signing agreements with tax havens, as they did last year with the Cook Islands.

Interestingly, when the Liberals wants something to happen, there is no stopping them. An infrastructure privatization bank? Done. Legalization of cannabis? Full steam ahead.

However, families who need help paying the rent will have to wait until after the next election. The Liberals are incapable of paying public service employees. That is too complicated. They cannot even answer the telephone. People just have to wait on hold.

I would like to make a direct appeal to the Minister of Finance. When will he come down from his ivory tower and start working for ordinary Canadians?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, we agree with all of the Auditor General's recommendations.

I would like to point out to the members opposite that the previous Conservative government decided to reduce services to Canadians by cutting funding for call centres. Under former minister Findlay, they reduced the number of agents in call centres, the business hours, and the number of services. Rather than cutting services, we decided to reinvest. I am working to ensure that the Canada Revenue Agency treats Canadians not just as taxpayers, but as important clients—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I sense a pattern. When the Conservatives are in government, they blame everything on the Liberals. When the Liberals are in government, they blame everything on the Conservatives.

What the Liberals need to understand is that their own Minister of Finance is currently under investigation for introducing a bill that could have helped him and several of his colleagues make millions of dollars.

[English]

Bonus: he does not think there is anything wrong with this. Double bonus: he does not think there is anything wrong with holding assets in a company he is in charge of regulating. The Liberals promised higher ethical standards. Why can they not even enforce the bare minimum?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are seeing both parties in the opposition continuing to focus on me, and we understand why. What is hard to understand about the opposition member who just spoke is why he is not interested in talking about housing on a day when we are talking about historic changes in housing. We talked in budget 2017 about \$11.2 billion to be spent on a national housing strategy. Today, we are unveiling how we will make a huge difference for families across this country. It is an important day for Canadian families. It is an important day for housing.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the interesting part about making promises like the minister is just making is that he has to be trusted to deliver on them, and that is what we are talking about today. The Prime Minister set out his new mandate tracker last week and actually reiterated directives. The quote regarding the finance minister is that “As Minister, you must ensure that you are aware of and fully compliant with the Conflict of Interest Act”.

The Minister of Finance has already been fined for not being in compliance with the ethics act. Given that the minister was found not to be in compliance with it, what is the Prime Minister going to do to ensure that his directive is enforced?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the opposition in this case is likely focusing on personal attacks because the members do not want us to focus on what they did not do in housing for the last decade. What we are going to announce today is how we are going to help 500,000 Canadians have more money in their pocket for housing, or a key to a house. We are going to talk about how we are going to reduce homelessness by 50%. We are taking a historic role that has not been taken for 50 years in housing, making a huge difference for Canadian families. Important work and an important job are getting done today.

• (1440)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my issue with the minister's responses is that every time he hears the fact that he broke the compliance standards, he assumes it is a personal attack, and it is not. We are just asking him to be accountable for his actions. The mandate tracker says: “you must uphold the highest standards of honesty and impartiality, and both the performance of your official duties and the arrangement of your private affairs should bear the closest public scrutiny.”

Is anyone able to trust the minister when we know that in his personal affairs, he has broken it?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have continued to say, I have followed all the rules. What I want to do is make sure that Canadians know that while the opposition is focusing—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The time for members to respond to what they hear is when they have the floor, and not at other times.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, while the opposition wants to focus on me, we want to focus on Canadians. That is the work we are doing today, by talking about the historic change of the federal government taking a role that has not been taken for 50 years in

housing, distributing a huge amount of help to 500,000 families, allowing them to have more money in their pocket for housing, and a key to a house. This is the sort of work that we are setting out to do on behalf of Canadians, and we will keep doing it while the opposition members keep focusing on personal attacks.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is indeed historic. Never in the history of Canada have the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister been under investigation by the Ethics Commissioner at the same time. That is the Liberals' idea of making history.

The problem with the Minister of Finance is that he is hiding things from Canadians. He introduced Bill C-27, which benefited his family's company tremendously, but said he worked with the Ethics Commissioner. I believe him because that is precisely what he did after introducing the bill. That is unacceptable.

Why is the Minister of Finance not being straight with Canadians?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reason the hon. opposition member is focusing on me is because he does not want to focus on Canadians.

We will continue to improve the lives of Canadians. Today we announced our housing strategy. It is very important for Canadians. We will help 500,000 Canadians have access to housing. It is very important. We are going to help people who have nowhere to live. This is a very important day for Canadians.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are going to talk about the Minister of Finance.

It was this minister who said that he would put his assets in a trust, but did not do so until he was caught red-handed. It was this minister who introduced a bill that put him in a direct conflict of interest because of his family business and who consulted the Ethics Commissioner after the fact. The Minister of Finance still has private numbered companies.

Why is the minister not answering Canadians' questions and why has he not disclosed all his assets so that Canadians can finally properly judge him?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to do important work on behalf of Canadians while the opposition focuses on me. It is very important to continue strengthening our economy. We are in a very good position. Our economic growth is much better than it was two years ago. That is very important. We have 500,000 new jobs and the lowest unemployment rate in a decade. The economy is growing and we will continue with our work.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the finance minister has already been found guilty of breaking the Conflict of Interest Act. That is clear. What is not clear, maybe as clear as mud, is how many other conflicts of interest he is in. Therefore, the finance minister has a choice to make. He can continue to keep Canadians in the dark, or he can reveal what assets he has owned in numbered companies over the last two years, or what exactly the finance minister is trying to hide.

Yes, we are focused on the finance minister.

• (1445)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as often as the opposition focuses on personal attacks, we are going to focus on what we are doing for Canadians. That, we know is important.

Today, as we have said, is a particularly important day. We are talking about budget 2017's \$11.2 billion invested in housing, and how that is going to make a difference for Canadians.

The Prime Minister is going to be talking today about how 500,000 people are going to have access to housing. That is critically important. We are going to reduce homelessness by 50% in this country. These are important goals which we know Canadians are waiting to hear. We are looking forward to telling them more this afternoon.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as leaders in this country we all are called to a higher standard, and that includes being held accountable for our actions. That is not anybody picking on us or anybody picking on the Minister of Finance. It is him being accountable for his actions, and it is shameful to see him refusing to do that.

The Prime Minister talks about sunny ways. He talks about sunshine being the best disinfectant.

Let us give the finance minister a chance to be accountable, and instead of keeping Canadians in the dark. Let him reveal to Canadians what assets he has held, be accountable for his actions, own up, stand up, and take some leadership.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am accountable, and I will continue to be accountable to Canadians.

While the opposition focuses on fabrications, I will focus on being accountable to results for Canadians. We are focused on making sure the economy grows. We are focused on making sure that it helps Canadian families.

Those two things are demonstrably having an impact. We have seen the highest level of growth in years, significantly higher than we saw in the previous government, and importantly, a lower level of employment than we have seen in a decade. Those are important goals, and we are accountable for that.

* * *

*[Translation]***POVERTY**

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, the government promised us an anti-poverty

strategy. The parliamentary budget officer's report shows that the government has failed on that count. Not only has it not yet carried out an analysis of existing measures to see whether and how they are working, but also many of its measures are poorly designed.

If fighting poverty is so important to the government, when will it launch a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. Our first step was to introduce a strategy to reduce poverty in our country. Thanks to the guaranteed income supplement, we have helped seniors by giving them more money. We also introduced the Canada child benefit, thanks to which, again this year, 300,000 children will no longer have to live in poverty. Today, with our housing strategy, we are going to help a lot of people find a place to live. This is very important, and it is all part of our strategy to make things better.

* * *

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have a nasty habit of imposing their vision on the provinces and municipalities. We saw this with the legalization of cannabis and the health accords. We have every reason to believe that they will do the same thing with the housing strategy. Some 1.7 million Canadian families are having a hard time finding places to live.

Will the government create a true partnership with the provinces and municipalities in order to tailor the strategy to local realities?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is a very important day with regard to improving housing outcomes in our country. We will continue to work with the provinces and municipalities, but today we are announcing how we can improve the situation now.

With the \$11.2 billion allocated in budget 2017, we will explain how we can help 500,000 Canadians get access to housing. This is very important. We will explain how we are going to reduce homelessness by 50%. This is an important strategy. Today is an important day.

* * *

*[English]***ETHICS**

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister keeps repeating that he disclosed all of his assets since day one. We are not fabricating the fact he hid his offshore corporation for two years.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister says the minister has always worked since day one with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure his personal finances were in line with the expectations of Canadians. We are not fabricating the fact he never received the commissioner's permission to introduce Bill C-27, a bill from which he and his family would profit.

The minister still has mystery assets. Why will he not tell Canadians what is inside all of his other companies?

• (1450)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a fabrication of an issue. That is all I can say. Being clear on my assets was important from day one.

That is what allows me to continue—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix and the members around her to stop heckling.

The hon. Minister of Finance

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Morneau: As I said, Mr. Speaker, by being free of conflicts from day one, we have been focused on things we are working for on behalf of Canadians, and that is having a real impact. The kind of impact Canadian families can see.

They can see it with more money in their pockets, because of the Canada child benefit. They can see it if they are a senior with the improvement in the guaranteed income supplement.

We can see that all those actions are leading to a much better economy, an economy that is helping all of our constituents and all Canadians.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): What is not a fabrication, Mr. Speaker, is the erosion of trust that Canadians are having in the finance minister.

It is not just about what is hiding behind door number two, door number three, or door number four.

What about Morneau Shepell stock held by family members? How much has he and his family profited from decisions made by the finance minister? Since the minister was sworn in, shares in Morneau Shepell have skyrocketed by 38%.

Do Canadians have the right to know if the minister's financial interests and that of his family conflict with his public duties, yes or no?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I reported to the House, I have no interest nor does my family in Morneau Shepell.

We on this side of the House work here to improve the situation of Canadians.

It is going well. Canadians are doing well. The economy has improved. There is more work to do. We are talking today about the work we are going to do in housing to help 500,000 Canadians to

have the key to their house, or more money in their pockets to ensure they have housing. We are going to make sure we have 50% fewer people who actually do not have a place to live.

This is the sort of work we are going to continue to do on behalf of Canadians.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for two years the Minister of Finance hid his Morneau Shepell shares in a numbered company, and we only found out about that because he was caught.

He said he was working with the Ethics Commissioner from the beginning, but we know that is not true. He has been caught again. He is under investigation yet again, and Canadians do not know what else he is hiding.

The Prime Minister has said that sunshine is the best disinfectant. Will the finance minister let the sunshine in, face it with a grin, open up his books, and let Canadians in on what else he is hiding?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to repeat, 100% of my assets have been disclosed from day one to the Ethics Commissioner.

The opposition is focusing on personal attacks and does not want to focus on the last decade in which it did nothing in housing. We are talking today about how we are going to make a huge difference in housing. The \$11.2 billion we set in budget 2017 is going to make a significant long-term difference for Canadians, with 500,000 people with a key to their own home, or money to actually pay for their lodging.

This is huge. We are going to reduce homelessness in this country by 50%. We are on the job for Canadians, and we will not be distracted.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at least on this side of the House we can remember the homes that we own.

For two years, the finance minister profited from his ownership in a company that made millions after he introduced legislation that benefited that same company. There was no blind trust. There was no sign-off from the Ethics Commissioner, and we only knew about his continued ownership with Morneau Shepell because he got caught. Now he is under investigation yet again.

Canadians want to know what other skeletons the minister is hiding in his closet. When will he finally come clean, and reveal what else he is hiding, so Canadians can see his other conflicts of interest?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand why the members opposite want to focus on me. They do not want to focus on what is going on for Canadians. They do not want to consider how well our economy is doing, because, of course, it paints a very different portrait than what happened over the last decade.

Oral Questions

We are seeing that the work we are doing, investing in Canadians, is paying off. Canadians are doing better. Families are doing better. We are seeing a huge benefit to Canadian families. More money in their pockets means our economy is doing better. We will continue to focus on improving the lives of Canadians, because we know that focusing on Canadians works.

* * *

• (1455)

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report is damning for the current Minister of National Revenue, not the minister who was in office two years ago. This report once again proves that the Minister of National Revenue is incapable of managing the important issues that fall under her agency's responsibility.

Her mandate letter states that she must make the CRA a client-focused agency, but she is far from achieving that goal. On the new government propaganda website, the minister has put that objective under "ongoing commitments". What does that mean? Does it mean the government does not care about this objective? The minister should have created a new category entitled "we have given up on this commitment because we failed miserably".

After two years, how would the minister grade herself on fulfilling her mandate? Would she give herself an E or an F?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we already have an action plan to improve the quality of services the CRA provides to Canadians. As of 2018-19, we will have a new telephone platform that will allow us to answer more calls, give an estimate of the wait times, and make sure that Canadians are not getting a busy signal.

As part of this plan, we also intend to provide better training for call centre agents by creating a national quality control team. What is more, the CRA will be updating its service standards to better meet its clients' expectations. All of these practical measures will improve the services offered to Canadians and respond to the concerns raised by the Auditor General.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the revenue minister's list of greatest misses is truly impressive. First, she wanted to tax employee discounts, then she started rejecting Canadians who had been granted a disability tax credit. Now we learn from the Auditor General that her department does not just reject half the calls it receives but of those that actually make it through, 30% of Canadians get the wrong information.

If the minister wants to win back just a little bit of credibility, will she make this promise today that no Canadian will face a fine or penalty if they followed the bad advice of her agency?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I can promise is that we have been working hard on this for the past two years. I agree with all of the Auditor General's recommendations. The former Conservative government

chose to cut services for Canadians by decreasing funding for call centres. That was done under the former minister of national revenue, Ms. Findlay. The Conservatives cut the number of agents in the call centres, reduced business hours, and even lowered service standards.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the opening of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk road, and the commemoration of the Alaska Highway, growth and the potential of the north has never been higher. Infrastructure investments mean growth of industry at a time when our communities are expanding and diversifying.

Fuelling this growth are clean technology projects in energy, mining, and forestry sectors. By helping reduce greenhouse gases and improving environmental outcomes, we have committed to smart, sustainable management of our natural resources.

Could the minister update the House on the importance of the clean growth program and promoting clean technologies?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Yukon for his boundless optimism and his dedication to advancing sustainable development in our northern communities. Canada's clean growth economy starts with a sustainable and competitive resources sector. That is why this week we launched our new \$155-million clean growth program to fund clean technology projects in the forestry, mining, and energy sectors, helping to reduce emissions and improve environmental outcomes. Our smart investments make our country a global leader in the transition to a low-carbon economy and a cleaner future.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government promised strict measures, like the ones Australia has taken, to stop jihadists from returning to Canada. The safety and security of Canadians is the top priority for us.

Yesterday, the minister refused to give us information on these traitors because he said that he did not want to give away operational details. Does anyone really believe that a basic question can compromise operations?

Here is a simple question. Are these murderers under 24-hour surveillance, yes or no?

Oral Questions

● (1500)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to have the hon. member's opinion, but I am even more glad to have the RCMP, CSIS, and CBSA among the best security intelligence and law enforcement expertise in the world. Their work is highly respected and highly sought after, including in the international coalition against Daesh in Syria and Iraq. They are charged with identifying and stopping all terror threats of all kinds against Canada and Canadians, and they do that job as well as or better than anyone else in the world.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear the minister mention the CSIS report, because I have a report here that states, in the last paragraph, that these people return to countries like Canada and that they wait for orders to carry out a terrorist attack.

Now, the government is taking care of these people, as though they were small children who need to be coddled.

We want to know whether these people are under 24-hour surveillance before something happens and it is too late.

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman can be absolutely assured that our forces are doing exactly the job they need to do. Approximately 60 terror travellers returned to Canada under the previous Conservative government. Not a single one of them was charged by the previous Conservative government. In fact, the previous Conservative government cut \$1 billion from the security services of Canadians.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, radicalized ISIS terrorists are returning to Canada right now under the Liberal government, and it has admitted that it does not have any capacity to monitor or assess the risks to our national security or public safety. Many Canadians are asking why the Liberal government is not following the lead of our allies and refusing entry, or more. Instead, it is throwing out the welcome mat. Canada cannot and must not become a safe haven for terrorists.

To the minister, how many terrorists who have already returned to Canada under their watch are under 24-hour surveillance?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the innuendo and insinuation in the hon. member's question is simply completely false. In this country we have the RCMP, CSIS, CBSA, and other security services that do a superlative job, and anyone who needs to be under surveillance is indeed under surveillance.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course the public safety minister has taken away the powers from all those police agencies. Two Canadians travel to Iraq. One goes to fight ISIS with the Canadian Armed Forces, the other decides to join the death cult as a terrorist. Both come back to Canada. The Canadian soldier is injured while serving our country, and the Liberals cut his pay. The ISIS terrorist, on the other hand,

also comes back to Canada, but is offered taxpayer-funded reintegration training by the Liberals.

Why is the Prime Minister cutting the pay for our injured troops while funding support services for ISIS terrorists?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only cutting of the Canadian Armed Forces that was done was by the previous government of billions of dollars.

Under our new defence policy, we are investing in our people. In chapter 1, we are looking after people, increasing their pay, increasing their benefits, and, more importantly, for any deployed personnel on an international named operation, it will be tax-free. We are going to be making sure that we look after our forces.

We are making sure that we are going to be looking after Canadian Armed Forces members.

* * *

● (1505)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is more bad news on the inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women. Following its interim report, which blamed Liberal interference for slow progress of the inquiry, there have been eight resignations and firings.

The Prime Minister said he would review the report and pay attention to its recommendations, but nothing has changed. The Liberals have broken their promise to families to do everything in their power to help this vital inquiry succeed.

When will the Liberals finally put words into action and bring this national tragedy to an end?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ending this ongoing national tragedy, and to ensuring that the commission has all the support it needs to succeed.

We have heard, and take very seriously, the concerns raised about how existing government policy and processes were impeding the work. A working group has been created to provide effective back-office support to the commission to ensure it is able to do its work effectively.

Our government remains fully committed to ensuring that families get the answers they have been waiting for.

*Oral Questions***TAXATION**

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we keep getting told in this chamber that nothing has changed, and people are still eligible for their disability tax credit.

However, we receive calls every day at our constituency offices about new rules that are rendering people living with type 1 diabetes, autism, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and developmental disorders ineligible for the disability tax credit, despite having receiving it for years.

Families are desperate for help. When will the government stop making excuses and fix this problem?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no changes have been made to the eligibility criteria for the disability tax credit or the tax credit for people with diabetes.

For 10 years, the previous Conservative government made cuts to scientific research. Last year, our government invested \$41 million in research into diabetes and \$5 billion into mental health services for more than 500,000 young Canadians under 25.

We are making this credit more accessible. We have simplified the forms and are allowing specialized nurse practitioners to fill out the forms if the applicants do not have a doctor.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, getting through to a real person at the CRA is notoriously difficult, unless of course someone is a personal friend and fundraiser for the Prime Minister. In that case, he just picks up the phone for them.

The Auditor General reports that 64% of calls were blocked, given the busy signal, or told to call back and disconnected. The government is raising taxes on diabetics, small businesses, and middle-class families, and it will not even pick up the phone to answer questions.

Why does the government only answer questions for wealthy Liberal insiders and hang up on everyone else?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have an action plan for improving the quality of services the agency provides to Canadians. We have no lessons to learn from the Conservatives, who chose to make cuts to the call centres year after year.

While the number of calls were increasing, they reduced the number of agents at the centres, the opening hours, and the standards of service. Instead of making cuts, we have chosen to make investments. We will continue to take tangible measures to provide Canadians with the best service.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is unfairly adding to Canadian entrepreneurs' tax burden.

The Minister of Finance is telling our disappointed entrepreneurs to call him, but the Auditor General indicated that more than 29 million Canadian entrepreneurs did not have their calls returned. That represents almost half of the people who called the minister.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance a simple question: when will he pick up the phone and answer the calls of concerned entrepreneurs?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat that I agree with all of the Auditor General's recommendations. The former Conservative government decided to cut services, cut staff, and to cut the evaluation of the quality of services. That happened under former national revenue minister, Ms. Findlay.

Instead of making cuts, we have chosen to reinvest \$50 million over the next four years. We are taking real action to ensure that Canadians have the services they are entitled to expect.

* * *

• (1510)

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in July, our American friends released detailed documents on their NAFTA priorities, including considerable detail on rules of origin for autos and other goods. They updated this document a few days ago. In August, Canada did not really release a detailed plan, but the minister gave a speech with considerable detail on the War of 1812. Today, Scotiabank is predicting the failure of NAFTA. When will the minister step away from the dinner parties and her progressive talking points and start fighting for the two million jobs that rely on NAFTA?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me assure the member opposite and all Canadians that at the NAFTA negotiating table we are fighting very hard, and in a very smart, fact-based way, for the Canadian national interest. We made good progress on some of the technical chapters in the Mexico round. However, I must tell members that significant differences remain on some of the key issues, such as rules of origin and chapter 19. I want to say to Canadians that we will always stand for the national interest.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is making unprecedented investments in infrastructure of \$186 billion over 12 years. We know that these investments are essential. We also know that we have to be innovative.

I would like to ask the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to update this House on the progress of the Canada infrastructure bank and its leadership team.

Oral Questions

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on investing in public infrastructure to create long-term economic growth and build strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities. We have appointed 10 outstanding Canadians to the board of the infrastructure bank. These appointments will help us mobilize pension funds and institutional investors to build more public infrastructure that Canadian communities need, and create jobs for the middle class.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months we have pushed the government to take leadership on the Rohingya issue, the greatest humanitarian crisis facing the world today. There are 600,000 Rohingya who have been forced out of Myanmar.

The United Nations has determined that it is ethnic cleansing. Today, the U.S. government declared the Myanmar military operation to be ethnic cleansing. Our foreign affairs minister has said that this “looks...like ethnic cleansing”.

With this kind of international consensus, when is the government going to do something substantive to hold the Myanmar regime responsible for these horrendous atrocities?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for raising this very grave issue. This absolutely is ethnic cleansing, and the responsibility falls squarely on Myanmar's military leadership and civilian government. These are crimes against humanity.

In Da Nang, the Prime Minister and I raised the treatment of the Rohingya directly with Aung San Suu Kyi. Our special envoy has visited Myanmar and Bangladesh to see first-hand what is happening.

This is an urgent issue and Canada is absolutely seized of it.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a leaked Parks Canada memo alerted British Columbians that thousands of plastic feed bags escaped from an aquaculture farm and washed ashore in the Broken Group Islands, yet for some reason the Tseshaht First Nation and other local groups were never notified. We only know about the spill due to the memo, riddled with talking points and concerns about negative press but containing no plan.

Clearly, the government cares a thousand times more about its image than protecting the environment. Will the Liberals apologize to Vancouver Islanders and finally act to create a permanent, dedicated, and annual fund to help with marine debris cleanups?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that we care greatly about the environment, that we are concerned about this incident, that Parks Canada is involved with the cleanup, and that we will continue to work very hard to ensure that we protect our oceans.

As members know, we have our oceans protection plan. We are absolutely committed to protecting our oceans and protecting the environment.

* * *

●(1515)

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many Quebecers are concerned about rail safety. However, we are heartened by the tireless work of the Minister of Transport, who is clearly making rail safety his number one priority.

Could the minister tell us about some of the measures he has taken to improve rail safety in Quebec?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Alfred—Pellan for his excellent question and for the work he does on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

Rail safety is indeed my number one priority. To give a few examples, we have added safety barriers on Saint-Ambroise Street in Montreal, on Saint-Georges Street in the Saint-Hyacinthe subdivision, and on Pont-Mitchell Street in the Drummondville subdivision. These are great examples of how we have improved rail safety. Rail safety is my priority.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago, Lyle and Marie McCann were brutally murdered. Their family was never able to give them a proper funeral, because the murderer refused to reveal the location of their remains.

Convicted murderers who re-victimize families by withholding the whereabouts of their victims' remains should not be eligible for parole. Will the Minister of Justice do the right thing and pass legislation that will fix our broken parole system to ensure closure for families like the McCanns?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I welcome the hon. gentleman to the House and congratulate him upon his recent election.

Second, all members of the House share the angst and concern the member has expressed with respect to this particular situation. I would look forward to an opportunity to discuss with him and with the Minister of Justice any constructive ideas he might wish to offer about how we can improve our criminal justice system.

Point of Order

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking for the 600 workers at the Davie shipyard who will be out of a job within days because of the federal government. Winter is here. We urgently need icebreakers on the St. Lawrence, and the navy desperately needs two more supply ships, including the future ship *Obelix*, to achieve its mission. The members on the other side need to open their eyes. Ottawa is asleep at the wheel, and our operational capability is under threat as a result.

Why is the Liberal government boycotting the best shipyard in North America? Why is it determined to put the Davie shipyard's top skilled workers out of a job?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Coast Guard's icebreaking services are essential for keeping our waters safe, protecting our shoreline economy, and strengthening our economy. We are working hard to ensure the continuity of these services, and the interim icebreaking services will supplement the program.

* * *

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Hashim Thaçi, President of the Republic of Kosovo.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, during question period, the Minister of National Revenue accused me of spreading disinformation. That is not very nice. I am therefore requesting the unanimous consent of the House to table the Auditor General's report on the Canada Revenue Agency, because I get the sense she did not read it.

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

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

POINT OF ORDER

ETHICS

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, subsequent to the point of order my colleague from Joliette raised on November 8, I would like to share some additional observations that I hope will inform your consideration of the matter. I also believe that the vote was marred by irregularities and should be retaken.

As my colleague from Joliette said, the code of conduct for members of Parliament, which is part of our Standing Orders, clearly prohibits an elected member from furthering his or her private interests. In addition to taking part in the vote on Motion No. 42, a motion that will have an impact on his private interests, the Minister of Finance influenced the debate through his then-parliamentary secretary, the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

As stated in the “Guide for Parliamentary Secretaries”, issued by the Prime Minister on January 16, 2016, a parliamentary secretary speaks on behalf of the minister. In other words, when a parliamentary secretary takes the floor in the House, it is the minister's words that we hear, as we can see on pages 1 and 2 of the guide. On page 1, under Your Role and Responsibilities, it says:

Section 47 of the Parliament of Canada Act sets out the following succinct job description: “The Parliamentary Secretary or Secretaries to a minister shall assist the minister in such manner as the minister directs.” In this context, the responsibilities of parliamentary secretaries generally fall into two broad categories: (1) House business and (2) department-related duties.

On page 2, under House Business, it says:

In this context, the role of parliamentary secretaries in supporting ministers' House duties includes:

- attending Question Period;
- piloting the minister's legislation through the legislative process on the floor of the House, in parliamentary committees...and with caucus and opposition MPs;
- supporting the minister's position on Private Members' Business;

Later on, the guide specifically talks about the role of parliamentary secretaries with respect to private members' business. On page 4, under Private Members' Business, the guide states:

Given that ministers do not generally participate directly in debates on Private Members' Business, this is an opportunity for parliamentary secretaries to bring their parliamentary skills to bear. This is particularly so since all Private Members' Business comes to a vote. Parliamentary secretaries play a key role in the Government's handling of Private Members' Business, in that they:

- may be called upon to speak for the minister during Private Members' Hour;
- work with the Government House Leader's office to organize and deliver the minister's response to Private Members' Bills and motions;

As members can see, Minister of Finance, by way of his his parliamentary secretary, reassured members of the House about the government's actions on this matter. He also urged them to vote against Motion No. 42. I remind members that if this motion had passed, it would have affected the minister's personal interests.

I want to be clear. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance should have recused himself from the debates on Motion No. 42, since he speaks on behalf of his minister. I repeat, this minister's interests are directly affected by Motion No. 42. As my colleague from Joliette pointed out, we are talking about the results of a vote and about the integrity of the House of Commons as an institution, which you oversee, Mr. Speaker. We are here, at the heart of representative democracy, and at the heart of the trust that the public must have in its representatives. This vote should be taken again, since it was tainted.

● (1520)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Montcalm for raising this point of order. As he said, it is related to another point of order that was recently raised by the hon. member for Joliette and that I already responded to, but I will come back to the House at a later time.

The hon. member for Manicouagan on a point of order.

Routine Proceedings

FINANCE

● (1525)

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek consent for the following motion: That this House call on the Department of Transport to prohibit the carrying of a knife with a blade measuring less than six centimetres on board aircraft.

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

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
[*English*]**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

* * *

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the forum Parlementaire Transatlantique.

[*Translation*]

The forum was held on December 5 and 6, 2016, in Washington, D.C., United States of America.

* * *

[*English*]**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present two reports today, in both official languages.

The first one is the 32nd report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled "Report 4, Mental Health Support for Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, of the Spring 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I also have the pleasure to present, in both official languages, the 33rd report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled "Public Accounts of Canada 2017". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Finance in relation to Bill C-63, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2017, and other measures. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

I want to thank all committee members from all parties, who worked diligently and co-operatively to get this bill back in a timely manner.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled "Strengthening Canadian Engagement in Eastern Europe and Central Asia". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

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2017 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WINTER GAMES ATHLETES

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

I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, following Question Period on Wednesday, November 29, 2017, the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to welcome Canada's 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games athletes; provided that:

(a) the Speaker be permitted to preside over the Committee of the Whole from the Speaker's chair and make welcoming remarks on behalf of the House;

(b) the names of the athletes, coaches and mission staff present be deemed read and printed in the House of Commons Debates for that day;

(c) only authorized photographers be permitted to take photos during the proceedings of the Committee; and,

(d) when the proceedings of the Committee have concluded, the Committee shall rise.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

● (1530)

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by residents in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The petitioners call on the government to cancel its tax grab against doctors, farmers, and small business owners, which directly affects local employment, access to timely medical care, and the affordability of food.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to present a petition today on behalf of constituents from Creston, Wynndel, Erickson, Kitchener, and a couple of guests from Abbotsford concerning Bill C-51, specifically section 176 related to the Criminal Code on the protection of faith leaders and ceremonies. I believe the committee has recommended that it not be removed from the bill.

I look forward to a very positive response to this petition.

VETERANS

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to table e-petition 1140, initiated by Angus Gus Cameron of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Mr. Cameron is a devoted veterans' advocate in my riding and a veteran himself. He, along with 1,724 petitioners from across the country, ask the Government of Canada to create and implement a national veterans identification card.

In 2012, the office of the veterans ombudsman recommended that the government issue such a card to veterans, citing the same sentiment I have heard from Mr. Cameron and numerous veterans in Halifax; that being a veteran is a source of great pride and veterans ought to have a tangible means of identifying themselves as veterans. A veterans ID card would serve as a small token of Canada's appreciation for their courage and allow veterans easier access to the services and benefits they have rightly earned.

I trust the government will give the petition due consideration.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, petitioners in my riding remain concerned about the government's intentions to raise taxes on a variety of different things. In this case, they note that a carbon tax forced on all provinces is not in the best interest of Canada, that this tax will increase the price of everything and drive jobs out of the country, and that it will not be helpful for the environment. They say that more effective measures would involve exporting Canadian technology to less environmentally-friendly jurisdictions, not sending jobs to less environmentally-friendly jurisdictions through higher taxes.

The petitioners call on the government to reverse this misguided carbon tax policy as soon as possible.

I commend this for the consideration of the House.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table petition e-1192, signed by 3,570 petitioners.

The petitioners draw the attention of the House to Bill C-51 and the proposed removal of section 176 of the Criminal Code. They also draw attention to the House how eliminating such protection for faith leaders and malicious interference for funerals, rituals, and other assemblies of any faith is not in the best interest of Canada.

They ask the Canadian government to abandon any attempt to repeal section 176 of the Criminal Code and to stand up for the rights of all Canadians to practise their religion without fear of recrimination, violence, or disturbance.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present two petitions for my constituents on issues that are keenly felt locally.

The first petition calls for the government to take action to protect the British Columbia coastline, not merely the north coast but a permanent ban on crude oil tankers along the entire west coast of British Columbia.

The second petition is from residents throughout Saanich—Gulf Islands. The petitioners call on the government to reduce the multilateral communication, the difficulty in paperwork, and delays in creating marine protected areas. I acknowledge that the work in amendments to the Oceans Act is quite relevant and encouraging.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1535)

[English]

CANNABIS ACT

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-45.

On October 13, I introduced two pieces of important legislation in the House of Commons. First, Bill C-45 proposes a framework for legalizing, strictly regulating, and restricting access to cannabis in Canada. The second complementary piece of legislation, Bill C-46, proposes new and stronger laws to more seriously tackle alcohol and drug-impaired driving, including cannabis. I am proud to note that Bill C-46 has been passed by the House and is being studied in the other place.

I am pleased to speak again today about Bill C-45 and discuss some of the amendments that were carried during the Standing Committee on Health's extensive study of the bill. I would like to thank all committee members for their considerable amount of work on this file. The committee reviewed 115 briefs and heard from nearly 100 different witnesses, who provided their invaluable perspectives on a wide array of issues, ranging from law enforcement to public health.

Groups represented at committee included the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Criminal Lawyers' Association, the Métis National Council, the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Public Health Association, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Officials from Colorado and Washington state also provided testimony on their states' experience in the legalization of cannabis.

After hearing from the witnesses, several amendments were proposed at clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. I will speak to some of these worthwhile amendments in a moment, but first I would like to remind members what Bill C-45 is all about.

Bill C-45 would create a legal framework whereby adults would be able to access legal cannabis through an appropriate retail framework sourced from a well-regulated industry or grown in limited amounts at home. Under the proposed legislation, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments will all share in responsibility for overseeing the new system. The federal government will oversee the production and manufacturing components of the cannabis framework and set industry-wide rules and standards.

To that end, our fall economic statement of 2017 has earmarked \$526 million of funding to license, inspect, and enforce all aspects of the proposed cannabis act. Provincial and territorial governments will in turn be responsible for the distribution and sale components of the framework.

Government Orders

Beyond the legislative framework outlining the rules for production, retail sale, distribution, and possession, cannabis will remain a strictly prohibited substance.

Division 1 of part 1 of the proposed act clearly sets out that many of the offences that currently apply to cannabis under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act will continue to exist under the proposed cannabis act. This is very much in keeping with the recommendations contained in the final report of the task force on cannabis legalization and regulation.

In its report, the task force recommended that criminal offences should be maintained for illicit production, trafficking, possession for the purposes of trafficking, possession for the purposes of export, and import/export.

I will now speak to the amendments adopted by the committee. Let me begin by saying that our government supports all the amendments adopted by the Standing Committee on Health. At this time, I would like to speak about five specific amendments that were adopted during clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-45.

First, the height restriction for cannabis plants permitted to be grown at home was eliminated. The 100-centimetre height restriction was intended to balance the interest to allow personal cultivation while safeguarding against the known risks associated with large plants, including the risk of diversion outside of the licit regime. The height restriction, indeed the proposal to allow even limited personal cultivation, attracted significant commentary both before the health committee and in the general public.

We understand the complexities leading to the task force's recommendation of a 100-centimetre height limit and accept the health committee's conclusion after it listened to several witnesses about the problems that such a limit might realistically create.

• (1540)

Our government agrees that this issue is best addressed outside of the criminal law. Should they wish, provinces and territories, relying on their own legislative powers, could address plant heights and if legislative authority exists or is extended to municipalities, they could do so as well.

Second, the addition of the good Samaritan provision will exempt individuals from criminal charges for simple possession if they call medical services or law enforcement following a life threatening medical emergency involving a psychoactive substance. Evidence demonstrates that individuals experiencing or witnessing an overdose or an acute medical condition are often afraid to call emergency assistance due to the fear of prosecution. A good Samaritan clause in the proposed cannabis act will help to ensure that individuals contact and co-operate with emergency services in the context of a medical emergency, knowing that they will not face prosecution for minor possession offences.

Government Orders

Third, the amendments to the Non-smokers' Health Act, provides flexibility to prohibit the smoking or vaping of tobacco or cannabis in specific outdoor areas or spaces by regulation in federal workplaces to protect people from exposure to tobacco or cannabis smoke. This aligns with the recommendation by the Canadian Cancer Society.

Fourth, courts will have the discretion of imposing a fine of up to \$200 for an accused convicted of a ticketable offence rather than imposing a fixed fine in the amount of \$200. This will ensure that the courts can consider a range of factors in setting the fine, including the ability of the accused to pay the fine.

Finally, an amendment was adopted to require a review of the proposed cannabis act three years after its coming into force and to table a report in Parliament on the results of this review.

Given the transformative nature of the proposed legislation, it is important that our government clearly communicates to Parliament and to the Canadian public the impact the legislation will have on achieving our objectives of protecting youth and reducing the role of organized crime. This will enable us as parliamentarians to determine whether future changes to the legislation are necessary to help ensure the protection of public health and safety.

I will now speak to the significant discussion that has occurred in relation to the treatment of young persons under the proposed cannabis act.

On the one hand, the Standing Committee on Health heard from witnesses, including criminal defence lawyers and the Canadian Nurses Association, who argued that youth possession of cannabis should not be subject to criminal penalties, because making it a criminal offence for a youth to possess five grams of cannabis would not deter them from possessing. It would only serve to perpetuate the disproportionate enforcement of laws on young, marginalized, and racialized members of our society.

On the other hand, others, including opposition members, have called for a zero tolerance in relation to the possession of cannabis by youth. Our government is mindful of the concerns raised in relation to the exemption of young persons from criminal prosecution for possession or sharing of up to five grams of cannabis and the suggestion that this decision is sending the wrong message to youth.

As I discussed at my appearance before the committee, our government has drafted Bill C-45 to specifically ensure that there are no legal means for a young person to purchase or acquire cannabis. Young persons should not have access to any amount of cannabis.

At the same time, criminalizing youth for possessing or sharing very small amounts of cannabis recognizes the negative impacts that exposure to the criminal justice system can have on our young people, particularly marginalized young persons.

Our focus aligns with what the majority of respondents conveyed to the task force; that criminal sanctions should be focused on adults who provide cannabis to youth, not on the youth themselves. This does not mean that our government sees youth possession or consumption of cannabis as acceptable. Our government has given

much thought as to how we will keep cannabis out of the hands of youth and discourage them from using cannabis at all.

• (1545)

Our government has been encouraging the provinces and territories to create administrative offences that would prohibit youth from possessing any amounts of cannabis without exposing them to the criminal justice system. Police would be given authority to seize cannabis from youth with small amounts. Provinces and territories use this measured approach for alcohol and tobacco possession by young persons, and it has proven to be successful. We were pleased to hear that Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta have already announced their plans to create just such prohibitions, and we expect other jurisdictions to follow suit.

This approach is complemented by the other significant protections for youth in Bill C-45. The proposed act creates new offences for those adults who either sell or distribute cannabis to youth, or who use a young person to commit a cannabis-related offence. It protects young people from promotional enticements to use cannabis, prohibits cannabis product packaging or labelling that are appealing to youth, and prohibits the sale of cannabis through self-service displays or vending machines.

In addition to these legislative mechanisms, I would also like to remind members that our government will be undertaking a broad public education campaign to inform Canadians of all ages about the proposed legislation, including penalties for providing cannabis to youth and the risks involved with consuming cannabis. This public education campaign will focus on helping young Canadians make the best choices about their future and to understand the risks and consequences of using cannabis. This public education and awareness campaign has already begun, and it will continue to be an ongoing priority. To that end, last month our government announced \$36.4 million over five years in funding for public education and awareness. This is in addition to the \$9.6 million over five years toward a comprehensive public education and awareness campaign, and surveillance activities that we announced in budget 2017.

I will now turn to the implementation and timing of Bill C-45. Much has been conveyed about the timing of the implementation of the proposed cannabis act, with the suggestion being made that provinces and territories will not be ready, or that law enforcement will not be ready. Several witnesses at committee, however, rightfully pointed out that we need to act now. The Canadian Public Health Association responded to claims that we are not ready for legalization by advising the committee of the following:

Unfortunately, we don't have the luxury of time, as Canadians are already consuming cannabis at record levels. The individual and societal harms associated with cannabis use are already being felt every day. The proposed legislation and eventual regulation is our best attempt to minimize those harms and protect the well-being of all Canadians.

Witnesses at committee further pointed out that there is always a perception that more time is needed, but that any delays would contribute to confusion among the population.

Government Orders

Our government agrees that we need to act now, and we have been working closely with provinces and territories on many fronts, including through a federal-provincial-territorial senior officials working group. The working group has been kept apprised of developments on this file over the last year through meetings via teleconference every three weeks, as well as in-person meetings. Most recently, a meeting took place here in Ottawa on October 17 and 18.

Since the introduction of Bill C-45, several federal-provincial-territorial issue-specific working groups have also been established to collaborate more closely on a range of complex issues, including drug-impaired driving, ticketable offences, taxation, and public education.

Our government recognizes that providing support to provinces and territories for this work is critical. That is why we have committed, for instance, up to \$81 million specifically to the provinces and territories to train front-line officers to recognize the signs and symptoms of impaired driving, build law enforcement capacity across the country, and provide access to drug screening devices.

Our government is encouraged by the tremendous amount of work that has already been carried out in the provinces and territories. Many jurisdictions committed to and have completed public consultations on how cannabis legalization should be implemented.

• (1550)

Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Alberta have released proposed legislation and frameworks describing how they will approach recreational cannabis, and Manitoba has enacted the Cannabis Harm Prevention Act. Clearly, many provinces are moving forward in anticipation of the July 2018 time frame.

Recognizing that some provinces and territories may not have systems in place by the summer of 2018, our government is proposing to facilitate interim access to a regulated quality controlled supply from a federally licensed producer via online ordering, with secure home delivery through mail or courier.

Our government's intention is to offset the broader costs associated with implementing this new system by collecting licensing and other fees, as well as through revenues generated through taxation, as is the case with the tobacco and alcohol industry. Discussions with provinces and territories around the proposed taxation plan have already begun and will continue. As part of our consultations on this matter, we welcome the feedback of all Canadians to ensure that we achieve the goal of keeping prices low enough to put criminals out of business while helping to offset the costs of education, administration, and enforcement.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Canada's current approach to cannabis continues to contribute to the profits of organized crime, risks to public health and safety, and exposes thousands of Canadians to criminal records for minor cannabis offences each year. Most Canadians no longer believe that simple possession of small amounts of cannabis should be subjected to harsh criminal sanctions. I would like to conclude by encouraging all members of this House to support Bill C-45, as amended by the Standing Committee on Health.

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I sit on the health committee along with a number of other wonderful people, and we do some good work. We listened to many presenters on this bill at committee, one in particular being Professor Steven Hoffman, an expert in international law who teaches at Osgoode Hall Law School. He is very concerned about Bill C-45 being passed and violating three United Nations treaties that Canada signed onto years ago. This particular bill would violate those three treaties.

How does the minister plan to deal with the United Nations and our international friends when this bill is passed?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all members of the committee for their substantive work on Bill C-45. As I have said with respect to this bill, protecting the health and safety of Canadians is a top priority of our government. That is why we are taking a careful regulatory approach to cannabis legalization.

Our officials have been very open, honest, and reflective in embracing discussions from across the country and throughout the world. We have been working actively with international experts, including the United Nations, to determine the best course forward on our international commitments. I want to remind the members of this House that eight American states, including the District of Columbia, have already decided to legalize recreational marijuana. We are committed to ensuring that we continue to work with our global partners to best promote public health and combat illicit drug trafficking.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has acknowledged from the beginning the devastating impacts that criminalization of simple cannabis possession and usage has had on Canadians. In fact, the government knows that those impacts have been particularly damaging for marginalized Canadians, such as the young, racialized, indigenous, and poor. Yet one of the ironies is that this legislation maintains that criminalized prohibitionist approach. Any Canadian caught with 31 grams of cannabis in public, who grows five plants, or is an 18-year-old in Alberta selling to a 17-year-old faces criminal prosecution, conviction, and penalties of up to 14 years in jail.

She is the Minister of Justice and knows there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who carry criminal convictions today that have devastated their lives in many respects. What plans does she have, as the Minister of Justice, for granting those Canadians pardons for engaging in activities that, come next July, will be entirely legal in this country?

Government Orders

● (1555)

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of Bill C-45, as all members of the House have heard me state before, and what we are committed to, is legalization, strict regulation, and restriction of access to cannabis to keep it out of the hands of young people, and the proceeds of its sale out of the hands of criminals. As I have stated many times, simply decriminalizing it at this point would not assist us in achieving those objectives.

What I have been doing, and what I am committed to continue to do, is to work with my colleague, the Minister of Public Safety. We have recognized that over-criminalization of the possession of small amounts of cannabis is something that needs to be addressed. We have sought to address this in Bill C-45. Again, in conversations with the Minister of Public Safety, we are considering how we can approach record suspensions.

However, our focus right now is to change the status quo to ensure that we put in place a comprehensive framework for the legalization, strict regulation, and restriction of access to cannabis by young people.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I must commend not only the lead minister but also the other departments that engaged in making this proposed legislation possible. In particular, there was a fairly lengthy process that ensured that Canadians were thoroughly consulted.

For me, representing Winnipeg North, one of the biggest benefits I see from this proposed legislation will be its impact on the criminal activities of gang members, and so forth, who go into our schools and sell cannabis to 12, 14, or 15 year olds. This proposed legislation is a step in the right direction, as it would minimize the damage caused to young people and, at the same time, literally take hundreds of millions of dollars away from criminal gangs, and so forth.

Could the minister comment either on what it took to get the legislation before us today, or on the criminal aspect?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my comments, the status quo simply is not working. Our government has been committed to the legalization, strict regulation, and restriction of access to cannabis from day one.

To the first part of the question, we have engaged in extensive consultations to ensure that we heard from Canadians right across the country. The first step we took, a vitally important step, was to engage a task force on cannabis. The task force consisted of experts in justice, public health and safety, and law enforcement. This task force was led by the hon. Anne McLellan, and it provided us with substantive recommendations. Most of those recommendations are contained in Bill C-45. The task force received 30,000 submissions from Canadians across the country.

We introduced Bill C-45 and have continued throughout to engage with provinces and territories, municipalities, and indigenous communities and indigenous governments. We will continue to do that as we move towards July 2018 to ensure that we have a substantive, comprehensive framework for the legalization of cannabis in this country.

● (1600)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been following this debate closely, and there are many things the minister has said that are simply not so. For example, she talked about record levels of marijuana use. However, from the Statistics Canada website, I have in front of me a comprehensive Canadian addiction survey that looked at drug and alcohol use. In 2004, 14.1% of Canadians reported they had used cannabis in the last year; in 2008, it was 11.4%; in 2010 it was 10.6%; and in 2011 it was 9.1%.

The Conservative approach in government was to emphasize the importance of public health information and working with all aspects of society, including law enforcement, in a way that reflects the real risk associated with marijuana, and, yes, in a way that keeps it out of the hands of children. However, letting parents with children at home grow marijuana and making it legal for one child to give marijuana to another child, rather than selling it to them, is perfectly legal under the proposed legislation. This will not keep it out of the hands of children.

The minister might disagree on certain points philosophically, but I just want to know if she acknowledges the reality of the data, namely that marijuana use has gone down significantly during the last 10 years. Does she think that is a failure?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, we are a government that bases its actions on science, evidence, and certainly, on data. The latest data available in 2015 shows the prevalence of cannabis use in the past year was one in five Canadians aged 15 to 19, and nearly one in three aged 20 to 24. The rate of cannabis use in this country, particularly among young people, is among the highest in the world.

The status quo simply is not working. We need to ensure that we put a comprehensive framework in place around the legalization, the strict regulation, and the restriction of access to young people. This is the purpose and intent of Bill C-45. This comprehensive framework would be similar to tobacco.

We will ensure we do as much as we can to keep cannabis out of the hands of kids while at the same time ensuring we invest \$40 million in the promotion of an educational campaign, a public awareness campaign, particularly among young people, about the risks of using cannabis. That is what we are committed to doing while working with other jurisdictions.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Maybe there was miscommunication. I want to clarify that what I was talking about was overall population data, which shows a decrease. The minister may be implying there was an increase by using data, particularly for teenagers, not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We are getting into a debate right now. I am sure there will be other opportunities to ask questions or enter the debate later on.

The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

Government Orders

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, throughout the debate at second reading, through committee hearings, and now finally, in the final debate, mounds and mounds of evidence have been introduced and cited, painting a grim picture of the consequences of the government's determination to legalize marijuana for recreational purposes.

Still, the Liberal government is bound and determined to ram this legislation through, so that by July 1, 2018, Canada's 151st birthday, youth as young as 18 will be able to legally purchase marijuana from government outlets, and use this drug with virtually no restrictions.

I have been allotted 20 minutes to present my objections to this harmful legislation, but would need hours to present all the evidence presented by doctors, psychiatrists, researchers, police, parents, and a host of specialists warning the government not to go down this road, and of the serious consequences if it does.

I will instead focus on a few articles and studies, and ask the members across the floor, how can they can justify their actions, having had prior knowledge to these?

I hold in my hand mandate letters from the Prime Minister to ministers on expectations and deliveries. I will be using them in my presentation to point out just how this action by the Prime Minister has been broken by his ministers.

The Prime Minister presented all ministers with these mandate letters after the last election.

The mandate letter to the Minister of Health reads:

I expect you to work closely with your Deputy Minister and his or her senior officials to ensure that the ongoing work of your department is undertaken in a professional manner and that decisions are made in the public interest.

I wonder if the minister, at that point, informed the Prime Minister about this document from her own department, modified on August 19, 2016. I am sure she was aware of it. This document, among other things, states:

Using cannabis or any cannabis product can impair your concentration, your ability to think and make decisions, and your reaction time and coordination. This can affect your motor skills, including your ability to drive. It can also increase anxiety and cause panic attacks, and in some cases cause paranoia and hallucinations.

It further states:

Cannabis should not be used if you:

are under the age of 25;

are allergic to any cannabinoid or to smoke;

have serious liver, kidney, heart or lung disease;

have a personal or family history of serious mental disorders such as schizophrenia, psychosis, depression, or bipolar disorder;

are pregnant, are planning to get pregnant, or are breast-feeding;

are a man who wishes to start a family;

have a history of alcohol or drug abuse or substance dependence.

A list of health outcomes regulated to the short and long-term use include the following:

increase the risk of triggering or aggravating psychiatric and/or mood disorders (schizophrenia, psychosis, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder);

decrease sperm count, concentration and motility, and increase abnormal sperm morphology;

negatively impact the behavioural and cognitive development of children born to mothers who used cannabis during pregnancy.

This document was available to the minister. It clearly shows that in reaction to that, she is breaking what the Prime Minister instructed her to do. I am going to read another that the Prime Minister has written:

No relationship is more important to Canada than the relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

That was to the Minister of Indigenous Services in the opening statement. Why did the minister not sound the alarm and give the Prime Minister the message that she received from President Aluki Kotierk of the Nunavut Tunngavik? She said:

The federal government needs to consult with Inuit on whether cannabis should be legalized and, if so, when, as well as plan to deal with the possible negative impacts of legalizing cannabis...

● (1605)

It goes on. Chief Gina Deer of the Mohawk Council of Kanawakee stated:

Our community has been zero tolerance for many years on drugs. Now when you tell them that we have to accept marijuana as a legal product and not as a drug, it's hard to accept, especially for elders.

The Prime Minister further stated to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations:

I expect you to re-engage in a renewed nation-to-nation process with Indigenous Peoples to make real progress on the issues most important to First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit communities—issues like housing, employment, health and mental health care...

This is what Chief Isadore Day stated in testimony at committee:

It's accurate to say that first nations are also not prepared to deal with the ramifications of Bill C-45. Does Canada even know the full impacts of cannabis yet? When the states of Colorado and Washington legalized cannabis sales in 2013, American Indian tribes were negatively impacted.

Further, Chief Day also stated at committee that despite hearing this, the Liberals continue to reaffirm that it's important that we focus on getting this job done as quickly as we are able.

The chief reiterated that one of the biggest concerns that first nations have with Bill C-45 is the health and safety of our people. He cited statistics that cannabis is the second most abused substance among indigenous people. He added that in Ontario alone, \$33 million is needed to treat first nations with drug and alcohol addictions. He concluded by stating that there appears to be more questions than answers. This leaves the first nations in a compromising state, leading to an accelerated timeline.

The Prime Minister also said to the minister:

Work with the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs to address gaps in services to Aboriginal people and those with mental illness throughout the criminal justice system.

She should have told him about the health report that I mentioned previously, and the concerns that his own government had with the legalization and usage of marijuana.

Health Canada stated warnings, and I have mentioned some, but it serves to mention these as well:

Cannabis contains hundreds of substances, some of which can affect the proper functioning of the brain and central nervous system. The use of this product involves risks to health, some of which may not be known or fully understood. Cannabis should not be used if you have a personal or family history of serious mental disorders such as schizophrenia...

Government Orders

The Prime Minister loves to point out to the Minister of Justice, who just spoke, his great love and respect for the charter. In his mandate to the minister he stated:

You are expected to ensure that the rights of Canadians are protected, that our work demonstrates the greatest possible commitment to respecting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

A child advocate group in New Brunswick has done an assessment of violations to the rights of the child treaty, and has a very serious concern that this legislation is going to see legal challenges. I wonder if the minister should have told the Prime Minister that a court challenge, which is what it has stated, is a good idea under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 7 states:

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

The minister should have warned him that by legalizing marijuana, a drug with psychoactive properties, the Government of Canada will encourage the sale and consumption of marijuana, thereby putting all Canadians at greater risk of encountering harm and death through impaired driving accidents and workplace accidents, smoking-related sicknesses, and other marijuana-induced injuries. For example, police chiefs across the country have expressed their concern that they will not be able to keep the public safe from drugged drivers. Thus, the proposal to legalize marijuana runs contrary to the charter provision, the right to the security of the person.

•(1610)

To the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, he wrote:

As Minister...your overarching goal will be to lead our government's work in ensuring that we are keeping Canadians safe.

Here again, I would raise the report from the health department, but I would also make mention of a report that has just come out, "The Legalization of Marijuana in Colorado: The Impact". The executive summary states, "Marijuana-related traffic deaths when a driver was positive for marijuana more than doubled from 55 deaths in 2013 to 123 deaths in 2016." This same executive summary states, "In 2009, Colorado marijuana-related traffic deaths involving drivers testing positive for marijuana represented 9 percent of the traffic deaths. By 2016, that number has more than doubled to 20 percent." It goes on, and there are statistics that talk about what happens to the youth and how youth use has risen dramatically as well.

This might be my favourite. The Prime Minister wrote to the Minister of Science, the same minister who has repeatedly, in this House, stood up and said that the current government will listen to science, because the Prime Minister told her this:

We are a government that believes in science – and a government that believes that good scientific knowledge should inform decision-making.

I wonder if that minister told the Prime Minister about the report on the legalization of marijuana in Colorado, or possibly this report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Here is a great one she should have read, from *Frontiers in Psychiatry*: "Persistence of Cannabis Use Predicts Violence following Acute Psychiatric Discharge". There is this lengthy report from the World Health

Organization: "The Health and Social Effects of Nonmedical Cannabis Use".

It goes on and on. I am sure the minister read the "Market Analysis of Plant-based Drugs C. The Cannabis Market", from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Every one of these reports points to the same conclusion: the use of cannabis is restricted for a reason. There is a reason governments have, on a continual basis, made that their practice.

I have often stated in this House that I am genuinely impressed by the Liberal caucus. It is full of doctors and lawyers and Ph.D.s and Rhodes scholars. This is not a group of people who could be excused for not having the information.

I found a great article by James Di Fiore, written in the *Huffington Post*. He wrote:

I've written about my modest contribution to the elimination of pot prohibition before. To recap, in 2011 I was hired by the Liberal Party of Canada's upper brass to pressure their delegates to vote yes on a policy initiative that would push for legalization. For three months, my team approached marijuana advocacy groups and rallied their members to bombard [all] delegates via email, tweets and Facebook messages. The plan was to put enough pressure on delegates until they voted for a Canada who would shed its draconian views on weed. When we started, just 30 per cent of delegates [30 per cent of that caucus] were in [the] camp. After the votes were tallied at the Liberals' 2012 convention, more than 75 per cent of delegates voted yes.

•(1615)

This group can make the right choice. I know that there are many in the Liberal caucus who are opposed to what the government is doing and what the Prime Minister is forcing them to do as well. Now is the time for them to stand up, make the right choice, and vote against this dangerous bill.

I might add that the Prime Minister is not leading a bold charge that will make this an example of progressive nations. Let us listen to what Prime Minister Mark Rutte, of the Netherlands, said, in a 2014 article about the use of marijuana. "People should do with their own bodies whatever they please, as long as they are well informed about what that junk does to them". The Dutch have a different approach to the whole idea of marijuana.

The article went on, "Rutte added in the same interview that cannabis legalization of the Colorado model", and I should emphasize that the Colorado model is for those 21 years old and over, "where the state taxes and regulates all levels of the supply chain, and adults 21 and over are allowed to purchase weed from state-licensed stores—was out of the question. 'If we were to do that,' he said, 'we'd be the laughing stock of Europe.'"

This not going to be a progressive move by the Prime Minister and the Liberal caucus. As a matter of fact, while the Dutch system has some major drawbacks, current UN treaties forbid countries to legalize and regulate drugs for recreational use. Specifically, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, states that member states have a general obligation "to limit exclusively to medical and scientific purposes the production, manufacture, export, import, distribution of, trade in, use and possession of drugs."

Government Orders

Piet Hein van Kempen, a professor of criminal law and criminal procedure in the Netherlands, was recently asked by the justice ministry to study whether international drug treaties offer any wiggle room to legalize, decriminalize, tolerate, or regulate cannabis in any other way for recreational use. His answer was an emphatic no. Maybe when the Prime Minister gets to meet his new best friend, Xi Jinping, he can tell him about his plans to legalize marijuana and ask for his thoughts. I am sure he would give the Prime Minister a history lesson on what took place in Chinese society.

The Liberals are on track to legalize marijuana for recreational purposes by July 1, 2018. They say they have had extensive consultations, conducted the largest online survey, and completed a report called “A Framework for the Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis in Canada”. The Liberals say they have consulted with Canadians; provincial, territorial, and municipal governments; indigenous governments; representatives of organizations; youth; parents; and experts in relevant fields. Ignoring the warnings of doctors, police chiefs, and first nations parents, they have pushed this bill rapidly through the House.

This bill would drastically change Canadian society, the full ramifications felt for years to come. They say it will protect us and take marijuana out of the hands of criminals. I suggest it would enslave our youth and make the government the new pusher on the block.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following: “Bill C-45, An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal Code and other Acts, be not now read a third time, but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Health for the purpose of reconsidering clause 226 with the view to establish a coming into force date that complies with the wishes of those provinces, territories, municipalities, law enforcement officials and first nation groups who require more time to prepare for the legalization of cannabis.”

• (1620)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The amendment seems to be in order.

Questions and comments.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the remarks made by my colleague from Chatham-Kent—Leamington, and I want to bring some clarification to one of the remarks he made. I listened very carefully, and he said that police chiefs, in the plural, but unnamed, did not support the effort or believe that we were going to bring forward adequate measures to deal with impaired driving.

I want to quote the testimony of Chief Mario Harel, the elected president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, who appeared before the justice committee on Bill C-46. He said:

We certainly commend the government for its commitment to consultation of stakeholders and the public. We commend the efforts of ministers, all parliamentarians, and public servants at Public Safety, Justice, and Health Canada who are dedicated to bringing forward the best legislation possible. All share with us the desire to do this right, knowing that the world is watching.

The government has put forward strong legislation not only focused on impairment by drugs but also addressing ongoing issues related to alcohol impairment.

He went on to say:

Steps that have been introduced to reform the entire impaired driving scheme are seen as much needed and very positive. The CACP has called for such changes in the past, specifically in support of modernizing the driving provision of the Criminal Code, supporting mandatory alcohol screening, and eliminating common loophole defences. Tough new impairment driving penalties introduced in this legislation are strongly supported by the CACP.

This, of course, includes all the chiefs in Canada. Finally, he said:

We also acknowledge funding announced recently to support law enforcement for cannabis and drug-impaired driving. The government has been listening.

In light of this testimony from the head of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, would the member like to comment on his earlier remark with respect to an unnamed chief offering some other opinion?

• (1625)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I respect the member's office, and I thank him for his service for years as a police chief. He knows that I have three sons who serve in the police department, and as such, I have had much contact with the police force.

My colleague has passed me some information. I am not going to read that. The truth of the matter is that my eyesight is not good enough.

I do know that there is not a consensus among police chiefs. When we talk about Bill C-46 being the act to strengthen the Criminal Code in respect of driving, those steps are necessary and police chiefs would certainly agree with that, but I also know that police chiefs, police officers, and those involved in law enforcement have repeatedly said that at the very least, they are not prepared for this, and they do not have the tools or what is required to enforce this new legislation.

Municipalities would need a host of new equipment and much more money. These things have not been provided. That is a small point, but the member must also acknowledge that this is not a complete picture of what the police chiefs have been saying.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify this idea of what some police chiefs may or may not believe.

I have many family members, including children, who are in law enforcement. Many people reflect a lot of the emotion that sometimes goes along with this issue. The idea of mandatory minimums and a war on drugs approach is not as effective as had been envisioned at one time. As a matter of fact, a criminal record for this non-violent offence is a social determinant of health.

I wonder if the member has had a chance to consider what the public health approach might be, because we need effective solutions moving forward.

Would the member agree that we need to have a regulated environment? Would he also agree that a public campaign should include how to keep children away from this product? What does he think would be the most effective way for us to do that as we move forward with this?

Government Orders

•(1630)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Mr. Speaker, we must not confuse Bill C-45 with the decriminalization of marijuana, although that is part of this legislation. Conservatives also agree that for minor possession that portion should be struck from the Criminal Code.

Educating children and youth from the ages of 11 to 17 is important. Those under the age of 18 will not be allowed to smoke marijuana, but allowing them to have possession of up to five joints certainly is not the type of education that we on this side of the House envision.

Sweden has spent a lot of money and has done a lot of training and as a result has seen its rate of usage drop, and that country has not legalized marijuana.

The member is correct. We should and we must educate. We should be telling people. The report that I referred to from Health Canada should be in every home and in every school. We should be warning children about the dangers. We should warn young people about what marijuana can do to them if they use it before the age of 25 and who knows what could happen after that. That should be a part of our education system.

If we put the time and energy that the Liberal government is prepared to spend on this legislation into education, we would have a whole different scenario in this country.

[Translation]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Ontario for handling this issue with the seriousness it deserves, given the disastrous consequences of the legislation proposed by the Liberals.

The minister is telling us that there is a serious drug problem and that it will only get worse, as my colleague said, with more crime and organized crime involvement, more young people taking drugs, more fatal accidents due to impaired driving, and more health problems.

My colleague has just mentioned that the police are not ready. The police said so in committee. They do not have either the training or the equipment they need. The money offered by the government is not going to speed up the process. The provinces and health services are not ready.

My question for the member is simple: apart from the people who grow marijuana, and who, strangely enough, all have links to Liberal friends or to the government, will anyone actually benefit from the bill, and how do the Liberals plan to avoid this fiasco?

[English]

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Mr. Speaker, I concur with everything my colleague said. He is absolutely right when he points out the dangers, inability, and unpreparedness of the Liberal government for this legislation. What could be done? We need to stop this. We need to stop this train because this is a wreck. This is not just bad legislation, this is horrible legislation. This would affect generations to come for years and years.

I wish I had a little more time, but we know that marijuana usage lowers the IQ of the user. Now, we talked about the Liberals on that side, and they are a bright bunch, and maybe they can lose two or three points and still get through life. However, the majority of those users of marijuana, the young men who become disenchanted, lose their jobs, drop out of school, and are now smoking dope. Now they are going to have a whole new challenge to face in life. It is these groups we should be thinking about, and it is these groups of people who will get hooked on marijuana. They are the ones who are going to suffer from this poor legislation, the ones who will die in car wrecks, and whose parents will line themselves up here and look across to the Liberals. Maybe then they can answer to them as to why they were so persistent in passing this foolish, crazy legislation.

•(1635)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, The Environment; the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, Public Safety; the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie, Taxation.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals promised Canadians cannabis legalization last election, I think that reasonable Canadians understood legalization to mean the end of criminalization, the end of stigmatization, and the end of the prohibitionist approach to cannabis. It is why I, along with millions of other Canadians, was somewhat surprised to read the fine print of Bill C-45 only to discover that it is not legalization at all, but would just make cannabis less illegal. The proposed legislation would create a litany of new cannabis-related criminal offences, most of which carry a maximum sentence of up to 14 years in prison. As renowned criminal defence attorney Michael Spratt put it:

[Bill C-45] is an unnecessarily complex piece of legislation that leaves intact the criminalization of marijuana in many circumstances.

An adult who possesses more than 30 grams of marijuana in public is a criminal. A youth who possesses more than five grams of marijuana is a criminal. An 18-year-old who passes a joint to his 17-year-old friend is a criminal. An adult who grows five marijuana plants...is a criminal...This continued criminalization is inconsistent with a rational and evidence-based criminal justice policy and will only serve to reduce...the positive effects of [the bill].

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health has claimed that these harsh penalties are reserved for some “gangster in a stairwell” selling cannabis to children, but this is exactly the sort of reefer madness rhetoric that has fuelled prohibition for nearly a century. The evidence before the health committee was directly contrary to this view. In fact, 95% of cannabis producers and consumers in this country are non-violent, law-abiding citizens who have nothing to do with organized crime whatsoever.

Government Orders

If criminalization and the threat of imprisonment prevented people from using cannabis, then Canadians would not be consuming an estimated 655 metric tons of it every year when we have full criminalization and life sentences for trafficking. Indeed, the prohibitionist approach has been repeatedly discredited by its failures throughout history. Cannabis consumption has increased steadily throughout the so-called “war on drugs”, and Canadian youth consume cannabis at some of the highest rates in the world today. Of the 4.6 million people the parliamentary budget officer projects will use cannabis at least once in 2018, nearly 1.7 million, or more than one-third, would be in the 15 to 24 age group.

For far too long, we have wasted billions of dollars in resources in the criminal justice system by criminalizing otherwise law-abiding citizens at an alarming rate for simply processing and consuming cannabis. In fact, we still are. According to Statistics Canada, in 2016, under the Liberal government after it promised Canadians legalization, the most recent year of available data, there were 55,000 offences related to cannabis reported to police, and police charged 17,733 people with pot possession. Given that cannabis possession will soon be made legal in Canada, the NDP has been clear from the outset that we should immediately decriminalize the possession of recreational cannabis for personal use pending full legalization.

Now, petty possession is a crime that the Prime Minister himself has admitted to committing while serving as an elected official. This admission of past cannabis use belies his repeated assertion that “Until we’ve changed the law, the current laws exist and apply.” I guess he meant that they apply to other people and not to him.

It is a shame and hypocrisy of the highest order that the current government continues to prosecute and convict Canadians for simple cannabis possession, which is something the government admits should be legal. The government knows full well that current cannabis laws are not applied consistently across this country. Indeed, their discriminatory impact has been well documented by Canadian researchers, like Simon Fraser University’s Dr. Neil Boyd.

• (1640)

Furthermore, given the extensive body of research on the negative impacts of carrying a criminal record, it is clear that pursuing thousands of convictions for actions that we no longer view as criminal will needlessly harm vulnerable Canadians, particularly young people, racialized communities, indigenous people, and other marginalized groups, mainly the poor.

I want to be clear that because I support genuine cannabis legalization, I acknowledge that Bill C-45 is an improvement on the status quo. That is why Canada’s New Democrats will support this legislation. This bill allows for the legal possession of up to 30 grams of cannabis, permits the legal cultivation of up to four cannabis plants per dwelling or house, and creates a framework for the development of a legal recreational cannabis industry in Canada.

I must note, however, that Bill C-45, inexplicably, allows the provinces and territories to derogate from these basic freedoms. This should be a major concern to anyone who wants genuine cannabis legalization in Canada, and those who are urging this House to rush this legislation through.

I also want the record to show that after we revealed gaping holes in the Liberal government’s cannabis legislation, the NDP worked in the best spirit of Jack Layton to reach across the aisle to give Canadians what they actually voted for, genuine cannabis legalization.

For anyone who doubts the positive role an effective opposition can play, I will point out that we were able to convince the Liberals to do the following: drop the ridiculous 100-centimetre plant height limit belied by all evidence and the experts; bring in edibles and concentrates, albeit not immediately, but within a year; and recognize the necessity of craft cannabis growers being brought into the legalized production framework.

Mark my words, these improvements would not have happened had the New Democrats not worked diligently at committee to bring forth the witnesses and evidence, and push the government to do the right thing. I will give the government credit because, unlike the previous Conservative government, which hardly ever took any suggestions from this side of the House, the Liberal government has proven able to listen to the evidence and make adjustments, albeit not as far as we would like.

In addition, at the health committee, we put forward 38 practical amendments to fully align Bill C-45 with its purposes section and the evidence we heard from expert testimony. The purposes include bringing the illicit industry into the light; making sure that Canadians have access to safe, well-regulated cannabis products; and taking the production and distribution of cannabis out of the hands of organized crime and bringing it into the regulated legal industry.

That is what the New Democrats paid attention to when we moved our amendments to make sure that this legislation aligned with those purposes. Unfortunately, the Liberal government has refused to do that in all cases, edibles being the most notable example. The government is content to leave edibles and concentrates in the hands of the black market, in the hands of organized crime, totally unregulated for up to another year and a half to two years from now. It cannot explain why.

Government Orders

Our proposed changes, besides legalizing the sale of edibles and concentrates, included providing pardons to Canadians saddled with a criminal record for offences that will no longer be offences under Bill C-45. This amendment was ruled outside the scope of Bill C-45. However, given the Prime Minister's previous statements, it is rather shocking that the Liberal government would structure a cannabis legalization bill in such a way that pardons cannot be included via an amendment, with these ruled outside the scope of the bill. When the Liberals say they have taken their time and consulted widely, maybe they could explain to Canadians how, after two years, they somehow forgot to deal with the issue of pardons for the criminal convictions that Canadians carry for cannabis possession when they Liberals know how devastating the effects are of those criminal convictions on people's economic and social lives.

We also proposed amendments to empower provincial governments to create parallel production licensing regimes to give them the flexibility to implement legalization in the manner best suited to their jurisdiction. For example, this amendment would have allowed provinces to let craft growers, small-scale producers, outdoors growers, and artisanal growers compete against large federally licensed corporate entities. That was voted down by the Liberals.

We proposed decriminalizing the penalties section in line with the Tobacco Act, proposing instead that the legalization take a regulatory approach, with significant fines for offences, rather than criminal ones. One of the purposes of Bill C-45, as laid out in section 7, is to "reduce the burden on the criminal justice system in relation to cannabis". Penalties in the bill, in the NDP's view, should be consistent with that stated intent.

• (1645)

With the Liberal government's rejection of these amendments, I am very concerned that Bill C-45 will continue to harm many Canadians after it becomes law in this country. Unconscionable prison sentences, arbitrary possession limits, and barriers to small craft and artisanal producers are just a few of the damaging provisions that need to be corrected.

However, I am heartened that this bill would at least require a mandatory review of the act's operation in the next Parliament. I view this as a tacit admission by the government that it knows that this bill contains problematic sections that will need to be fixed. In fact, it was a Liberal amendment to move the review from five years to three years. I think the Liberals know that this bill has flaws that will need to be fixed.

Truthfully, I would prefer to get it right the first time around. As it currently stands, the federal government has left the heavy lifting of legalization to the provincial, territorial, municipal, and indigenous governments. The task force on cannabis legalization was very clear in the lead up to legalization that the federal government should "Take a leadership role to ensure that capacity is developed among all levels of government prior to the start of the regulatory regime". Yet, when asked if the federal government had even been talking with first nations and indigenous governments on a nation-to-nation basis to ensure that capacity were developed, Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day told the health committee, "No, they haven't, and again, it's going to be really critical."

By freezing out stakeholders and insisting on meeting an arbitrary politically motivated deadline, the Liberal government is clearly sacrificing quality legislation for speed. This has led to the emergence of a complex patchwork of different approaches to cannabis across Canada, and will put many Canadians in the position of perhaps breaking the law unintentionally. For example, some provinces may not allow any home growing. In fact, Quebec just announced this very measure. Some provinces may choose to lower the public possession limit from 30 grams. Some provinces may forbid public consumption. Some municipalities may ban cannabis sales and consumption completely.

I want to be clear to any Canadians watching this. The Liberals put forth legislation that will allow the provinces to deviate from people being allowed to grow four plants at home and from being legally able to carry 30 grams of cannabis in public. For those who are searching for and have waited for decades and decades for cannabis legalization, they should be aware that federal leadership in a national legalized structure for cannabis is not going to be delivered by this bill. We see that already, as I have mentioned, with the Quebec example. In that province, one will not be able to grow plants at home. I do not think that is what cannabis advocates have been working for all these years.

The Liberals' recent attempt to unilaterally impose an excise tax without consulting other jurisdictions directly contradicted the recommendations of the McClellan report. The Liberals' attempt to keep half the excise tax revenues at the federal level ignores the fact that the bulk of expenses related to legalization will fall to the provincial, territorial, and municipal levels.

For our part, Canada's New Democrats will continue to reach across the aisle to help ensure that legalization is done right and on time. Ever since the Liberal government of the day ignored the recommendations of the 1971 Le Dain commission, our party has been calling on successive governments to stop saddling Canadians with criminal records for using cannabis. We strongly believe and continue to maintain that these unjustifiable arrests must end as soon as possible.

I would be remiss not to use this occasion to outline some simple truths about cannabis that I fear are far too often drowned out of the public discussion by prohibitionist fearmongering. Number one, in almost all contexts, alcohol and tobacco are far more personally and socially harmful than cannabis. Cannabis does not make people aggressive, a person cannot fatally overdose on cannabis, and cannabis is not a carcinogen. We heard this point repeated over and over again by experts at the health committee.

Government Orders

Number two, cannabis has a broad range of therapeutic benefits. It is used as an effective medicine by Canadian patients suffering from conditions ranging from epilepsy to PTSD, from cancer to arthritis. I believe if this point were properly understood by the Liberals, they would not recently have announced a plan without consulting patients to impose a new excise tax of \$1 per gram on medicinal cannabis, or 10% of the final retail price, whichever is higher.

● (1650)

At the end of 2016, there were 129,876 Canadian patients with authorizations from physicians to use medicinal cannabis, and since the first Canadian veteran was reimbursed on compassionate grounds in 2007, Veterans Affairs Canada now covers the cost of medicinal cannabis for over 3,000 Canadian veterans, yet the government wants to tax them.

Shockingly, however, the federal government does not cover medicinal cannabis for indigenous people, a discriminatory policy that puts a lie to the Prime Minister's claim that his most important relationship is with indigenous communities.

The Liberals' medicinal cannabis tax is misconceived, unfair to patients, and damaging to public health. It is simply poor public policy. The cost of medicinal cannabis is already high, given that unlike prescription drugs and medically necessary devices, it is not tax exempt under federal law. Medicinal cannabis is neither exempt from the GST nor eligible for reimbursement under nearly all public or private insurance plans, so patients are currently forced to spend hundreds, or thousands, of dollars each month to acquire a sufficient supply of medicinal cannabis, or choose a riskier option, like a prescription opioid because it is tax exempt and covered for reimbursement. That is perverse.

Medicinal cannabis should be treated like other medically prescribed therapeutic medicines. Looking forward, New Democrats will use every tool at our disposal to scrap that flawed policy decision.

Third, just yesterday, in the House, the Conservative member for Thornhill told Canadians that legal cannabis is just as dangerous as fentanyl, and home-grown cannabis is "virtually the same as putting fentanyl on a shelf within reach of kids". This is an outrageous and dangerous falsehood, and grossly insensitive to those who have lost loved ones to fentanyl overdoses. Trying to capitalize on their personal tragedy for political purposes is shameful, callous, and unsupportable. I call on the Conservative Party to correct the record and for the member to offer a sincere apology to every Canadian who has been affected by the fentanyl crisis.

That brings me to truth number four. Cannabis and cannabis concentrates have been consumed by humans for thousands of years without bringing about the alarmist predictions peddled by prohibitionists. Cannabis is not a carcinogen, there are no lethal overdoses from cannabis and cannabinoids, and cannabis can be used to reduce anxiety and enhance enjoyment of many activities. Much like unwinding with a glass of wine, millions of adult Canadians find occasional cannabis consumption a relaxing and pleasurable way to spend their free time.

Ultimately, I have come to understand that a genuinely legalized and properly regulated cannabis industry in Canada has enormous

potential in many respects. Done right, an appropriate legal approach can achieve impressive benefits economically, technologically, and medicinally. It can advance Canada's cannabis producers, retailers, and innovators on a global scale. It can generate world-leading intellectual property, innovation, and sustainable development benefits, and it can help establish an evidence-based understanding of cannabis that has been so marred by decades of misinformation and mythology.

At the very time that many other jurisdictions are also grappling with the failures of prohibition, why on earth would we preemptively cut ourselves off at the knees by legally prohibiting cannabis exports to markets where it would be legal to import it, and yet Bill C-45 explicitly prohibits all importation and exportation of recreational cannabis. The world is rapidly waking up to the potential of safe, regulated, and legal cannabis products. Countries like France, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Croatia, and Slovenia look to reexamine their approaches to cannabis, and Canada should be establishing itself as a first-to-market world leader. While the U.S. cannabis industry continues to be hindered by the Trump administration's reefer madness thinking about cannabis, Canada should be taking advantage by empowering our entrepreneurs and developing export markets all around the world.

Millions of Canadians use cannabis. They have used it in the past, they will use it today, and they will continue to use it in the years to come. They are not criminals. They are our parents, teachers, friends, colleagues, loved ones, and citizens of this great country who voted for genuine cannabis legalization in the last election. The NDP will continue to work positively and constructively to develop the smartest, safest, and most effective cannabis legislation and regulations in the world, because it is time we delivered.

● (1655)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the NDP members are going to support the legislation. The legislation was not easily achieved. There was a great deal of consultation, working with first responders, many different stakeholders, provinces, and interested groups. They had so much to say about this.

We have the best legislation that is possible at this point in advancing and doing what Canadians expect. This was a commitment by the Prime Minister in the last election. It fulfills, in a very tangible way, the election platform.

Government Orders

I listened to my colleague, as I said, I appreciate the fact that the New Democrats will be supporting the legislation. However, he seemed to emphasize the fact that we could have done so much more. He spent a lot of time talking about decriminalization and how important that was. He was somewhat critical of the government for not decriminalizing.

I know the NDP has a new leader in Jagmeet Singh, who has said that we should decriminalize all illegal drugs. Is the NDP advocating for that today?

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, the member said a lot, and I would like to start with some of his early points. I thought the purpose of members of Parliament was to make legislation better. We were sent here by constituents to do that. In fact, we have done that. When the Liberals first tabled the legislation in the House, it banned edibles. It had a 100-centimetre limit on plant growth. It does not deal at all with pardons. It was very unclear whether small craft artisanal producers would be able to participate in a legalized industry.

The NDP rolled up its sleeves and we called evidence so we could work on the government to show it that the legislation was wrong and deficient in those respects. In fact, we got the government to change its mind on those issues. There are still other flaws in the bill, however. That is why the NDP will continue to advocate positive steps.

It is a good bill. It could be better. After 100 years of criminalization of cannabis, we can spend a few months to ensure the legislation works. Again, one of the NDP's primary purposes was to make the legislation align with the purposes of the act. There are several examples where the legislation does not do that.

My hon. colleague talks about consultation. Just because they say it, does not make it true. The NDP put forth a motion at committee to hear from stakeholders that had not been heard, such as licensed producers, dispensary owners, young Canadians, yet the Liberals voted that down. They did not want us to hear from those groups.

When the member says that the Liberals consulted widely, maybe he can explain to the House and Canadians why they did not want to hear from those groups. They did not have a chance to have their perspective on the legislation heard at committee in the Liberals' rush to get the committee process done in five days.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member just said “just because they say it, does not make it true”. He is right about that.

The member told us that apparently there was no association between the use of marijuana and a more violent state. I want to read from an article entitled “Chronic toxicology of cannabis”. It is not a newspaper article. It actually appeared in *Clinical Toxicology* and was written by someone in the medical school at the University of Queensland. He wrote:

Several studies from diverse cultures have confirmed the elevated risk of psychosis and schizophreniform spectrum disorders following high levels of cannabis use, particularly when cannabis consumption has commenced at a young age.

He said later:

Although the psychoneurological effects of cannabis are usually stereotypically characterized as a depressant, both its use and the withdrawal state are accompanied frequently by psychomotor agitation, which has been implicated causally with

interpersonal violence. Interestingly, in a series of forensic examinations of suicide, cannabis use was associated with the most violent means of death, particularly severe motor vehicle accidents.

I would like to know if the member thinks the authors of this study at the medical school at the University of Queensland are falling prey to reefer madness?

• (1700)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I had the benefit of hearing over 90 witnesses at the health committee who were drawn from a wide variety of disciplines, including people from Colorado and Washington state who have experience with legalization, as well as many academics and professors. It is quite clear that the health effects of cannabis are, without any doubt whatsoever, far superior to those of tobacco and alcohol.

I have not heard any of my friends on the Conservative side of the House talk about restricting the amount of alcohol someone can purchase from the liquor store. Perhaps it is because they are afraid to take on the alcohol lobby in the country. The health committee heard some very graphic testimony. A person can walk into a liquor store and come out with a 26-ounce bottle of liquor, which has enough alcohol in that bottle to kill an adult. However, there are no limits on how many bottles of alcohol someone can purchase.

Tobacco, of course, is a carcinogen, and the Conservatives are opposed to plain packaging for tobacco, a policy I laud the Liberal government for pursuing in the House. It is long overdue. Why did the Conservatives not, throughout their 10 years, pursue plain packaging on tobacco when it is a carcinogen that is addictive and kills our children? I am not so sure why they did not do that.

In answer to the member's question, the research is overwhelming that cannabis is a relatively benign substance. It does have some health impacts that need to be studied for sure. However, in terms of what he is talking about, there is a question about causation versus correlation. If people use cannabis at a young age and develop psychosis, we do not know whether they developed psychosis as a result of cannabis use or they seek to use cannabis as a way of dealing with their psychosis. Therefore, the correlation-causation aspect does have to be researched. I look forward to the government putting a lot of money into researching the effects of cannabis in the years ahead.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague really does work hard every day for the middle class and those seeking to become part of it.

My riding of Kootenay—Columbia has a very interested clientele in the use of cannabis. This includes a long history of being involved in the industry in a number of different ways. These people were interested enough that when I held a telephone town hall, 3,300 people stayed on the phone for an hour to listen to the experts we had in place. That was followed up by a whole series of questions, which I sent to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Justice. They did provide answers, and we now have a very good report available to my constituents if they contact my office. However, some things were not answered.

Government Orders

One of the concerns of my constituents was crossing the border into the United States. I live in a riding that borders the United States and we go back and forth on a regular basis. During the testimony, did my colleague hear what the government planned to do to try to alleviate their concerns about either having to lie at the border or be refused entry into the United States and are any of the other 38 recommendations rejected by the government that he would like to highlight?

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, the NDP pointed this out early on, after hearing testimony about the difficulties some people had entering the United States when asked by border guards if they had ever used cannabis and they answered affirmatively. Even though they had used the cannabis legally in Washington state and Colorado, they were denied entry into the U.S. This led to a concern by the NDP that the government should be negotiating, or at least attempting to negotiate, with the Trump administration some form of agreement to recognize the reality that cannabis would be legal in Canada. We do not want to subject Canadians to being turned away at the border or being compelled to lie. The answer we got, unfortunately, was unsatisfactory. It appears that the government has not been entering into those negotiations. There is a real concern that after July 1, 2018, Canadians will be vulnerable in that respect.

I want to end on a positive note. Economically, Canada has a chance to be a global leader in producing safe, quality cannabis products. We are not the only country in the world that will legalize it. Other countries will do it, too. This is a classic industry that is sustainable, high tech, innovative, green. A \$5 seed can be turned into \$1,000 worth of product. Canadians are global leaders, and that is why we are so adamant that the ban on importation and exportation in Bill C-45 should be changed to give Canadian businesses a chance to tap into that market. This could provide billions and billions of dollars of economic activity once other countries do as Canada does and we abandon the old prohibitionist view of conservative parties around the world.

• (1705)

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to discuss this government's plan to legalize and strictly regulate cannabis in Canada.

Bill C-45, the cannabis act, was put forward by this government to confront and address the realities of cannabis use in our country. It happens that Canadians are some of the most avid users of cannabis in the entire world.

In 2015, 21% of those aged 15 to 19 used cannabis regularly. The number was 30% for those aged 20 to 24. It is accessible to our children, it is available in schools, and it funds major organized crime to the tune of billions of dollars per year. Clearly the current approach is outdated, archaic, and just does not work.

Over the years, the Government of Canada's approach to cannabis use devolved into harsh mandatory minimums and unfair criminal justice practices. The reality we have found ourselves in does not match the policies that previous governments have enacted.

I am proud to rise to share with my hon. colleagues in the House and my constituents of Vaudreuil—Soulanges why the cannabis act is the plan we need now to build a safer and better Canada.

We need a new approach, one that takes care of our children and punishes organized criminals rather than everyday Canadians. The cannabis act would revamp the Government of Canada's policies in three key ways, to legalize and strictly regulate cannabis use in Canada.

First, we will prioritize working with the territories and provinces as equal partners to reforming the current cannabis regime in Canada. This work is well under way and it has been for quite some time now.

Second, we will address the simple fact that cannabis is accessible to Canadian teenagers, whether we like it or not.

Third, we will take billions of dollars out of the pockets of organized criminals and gangs.

Each of these pillars is critical for my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges where thousands of new families settle each year, making it one of the fastest-growing ridings in the country. However, they also apply from coast to coast to coast, and work to address challenges we face with our provincial and territorial partners.

Our aim is to set a framework that the provinces and the territories can expand on in ways that best suit them. Our plan will succeed because the cannabis act works with our partners while safeguarding the underlying principles protecting our youth and keeping money out of the hands of criminals.

Working with our provincial partners and, in particular, my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, and the Government of Quebec is the cornerstone of this new approach. Last week, the Quebec government's cannabis legislation was tabled in the national assembly. Its legislation is complementary to the partnership we have established to ensure safety and security for our young people and for our communities.

In Quebec, the government will be creating the société québécoise du cannabis, a parallel body to the Société des alcools du Québec. This model has worked in Quebec to support alcohol regulation and I am confident our partners will get the needs of Quebecers right in cannabis legalization as well.

Government Orders

The strict regulation of cannabis under the cannabis act is designed, first and foremost, to protect Canada's young people. This is particularly important to me as parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister for youth, and also as a father of two young children. It is also a priority for the young families that choose to call my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges home. I am sure all members in the House will agree that we owe it to them to get this right, and the cannabis act does not compromise on keeping Canadians safe, particularly young Canadians.

We are setting a national benchmark for a legal age to purchase and consume cannabis at 18 years of age. The Government of Quebec set the same age with its legislation last week.

We will not be punishing our teenagers for possessing up to five grams of cannabis. Instead, we are setting harsher penalties of up to 14 years in jail for selling or giving cannabis to youth or using young people to commit cannabis-related crimes.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

This government believes that the abuse of youth by illegal drug trafficking networks is a real crime. I think that my colleagues on both sides of the House and in the provinces and territories share this belief.

We must ensure that young Canadians understand the dangers and potential consequences of using cannabis. In October, we announced an investment of \$46 million over five years to raise awareness among Canadian youth of the realities of cannabis use.

By supporting large-scale campaigns to inform and educate Canadians, we are creating widespread awareness of the risks of cannabis consumption. As part of our plan, 114,000 brochures entitled “Cannabis Talk” have already been distributed in partnership with Drug Free Kids Canada.

On November 10, Health Canada hosted a partnership symposium on cannabis public education and awareness. Stakeholders from all sectors gathered in Ottawa to better identify possible actions.

These concrete measures are proof of our commitment to prioritizing health and safety risks based on facts, not on fear or disinformation. This includes prohibiting the use of attractive packaging and labelling in advertising and any other attempt to encourage young Canadians to consume cannabis.

The bill currently before the House would impose fines of up to \$5 million, imprisonment for up to three years, or both for distributors who do not comply with the regulations. By setting national standards to meet the challenges associated with the widespread use of cannabis in Canada, we are taking fair action to protect young Canadians without punishing the one-third of adults who use cannabis recreationally.

Our government wants to protect our youth by instead focusing our efforts on organized crime and people who give cannabis to children despite the health risks associated with cannabis use at a young age.

By setting very strict penalties for selling cannabis to young people, our government is sending a clear message about our

unwavering commitment to protecting the health and safety of young people first and foremost, in my riding of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, across Quebec, and across the country. This is something that all Canadians can get behind.

Canadians also know that we need to do whatever it takes to keep money out of the hands of criminals and organized crime. The cannabis act will make our streets safer by creating a legal, regulated, and safe supply of cannabis that will be available to all Canadians who have reached the age of majority.

Bill C-45 establishes a framework for purchasing product online or in person and allows Canadians to have access to cannabis outside the black market. The bill also enables the government to set reasonable prices that would be directly competitive with current prices on the black market.

We are also ensuring that those who wish to continue selling cannabis outside of regulated markets will be subject to penalties. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, they will face fines and up to 14 years in prison. This approach will allow the government to remain flexible while also going after the worst offenders.

The cannabis act will keep our young people safe and keep money out of the hands of criminals, thanks to a strictly regulated sales system for this country.

Our government is establishing a framework for our provincial and territorial partners so that the work reflects the will and concerns of the people.

● (1715)

I am proud to contribute to a plan that is built on fact-based decisions and reflects the reality we are currently facing in Vaudreuil—Soulanges, in Quebec, and of course in Canada.

[*English*]

I am proud to be part of a government that is taking action to address a problem that has existed for far too long. It is a problem that has existed for decades, and yet previous governments just made the decision to continue with the status quo. We knew full well the rates were high. In some cases, depending on the age group, rates were going up, but previous governments did nothing. We knew that those who were smoking marijuana, almost one-third in some cases or even more than one-third in certain age groups, were getting a product from organized criminals and drug dealers.

People had no idea what the product had been laced with. It was a product that people knew could have been laced with something that was more detrimental to their health, and yet they had no other option because governments turned a blind eye to the realities of a failing system. We knew the system that existed for the last 10 years and even for decades was putting billions of dollars into the pockets of organized crime.

Government Orders

I can say with a good amount of authority, and I speak on behalf of my caucus members from Quebec, that this had a serious impact on violence and violent crime in my home province of Quebec. Those people who are from Quebec, and who have been following incidents of violent crime related to organized criminal activities in Quebec know there have been significant rises and falls in crime relating to biker gangs, and that the primary source of revenue for these gangs was the illicit sale of drugs. Yet, federal governments did absolutely nothing.

Governments still tried to convince Canadians they were spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a system that was working when we knew full well it was not working. We could have done better, and we should have done better, but it required courage to do so. It requires looking back as to why we are all here as members of Parliament.

We are here to put in place systems that work, and to use taxpayers' money effectively. Yet, for decades, we have not been doing that. We have been trying to convince Canadians we had the best possible plan in place, and their hundreds of millions of dollars were being spent properly. We knew full well that was not the case.

Therefore, this is what we did. We first started off by being honest and open with Canadians that this is what we would do if we were elected. Once we were elected, we followed through on that promise and started with national consultations, including committees that met and brought in experts on all sides to talk about how we can best do this. We studied other jurisdictions in the United States and around the world who have seen better success rates in the systems that they had in place. I and other members of Parliament from all sides of this House went across the country, hosting town halls and asking for feedback from our fellow constituents. We worked hard over the last two years to reach out to Canadians and to experts in various fields to make sure we were getting the information to get this right.

Second, we looked at all the data that was in place. There have been many studies that have been put forward talking about health benefits and about other systems that worked better. Because of the data, and because other jurisdictions had the courage to try something new, we were able to look at those jurisdictions, and see that they have reduced rates of cannabis use among their youth. They had reduced violent crime related to organized criminals and street gangs, and they had ensured that money was longer going into the pockets of organized criminals. They managed to do those things because they were brave enough to try something new. Because they tried something new, we are able to look at those jurisdictions and say, "What could possibly work in a Canadian context?"

• (1720)

Third, we have been working with our provincial and territorial counterparts to make sure there is a robust dialogue with them. Now, more than ever, we are also having a dialogue and working with our municipal counterparts to make sure that this is, at all levels of government, something we will succeed in doing, because we are working at it together.

The hope is that we would reduce the rate of consumption and use of cannabis by our youth. For those who do use cannabis regularly, they would get a regulated product that is safer for them to consume,

and we would be ensuring we take money out of the hands of organized crime.

Fourth, we would ensure we provide funding where it is necessary, with over \$40 million for an educational campaign at the federal level to ensure we are educating young Canadians on the negative effects of cannabis use. This would not be a law that looks to encourage young people to start smoking cannabis. This proposed law, that we are putting forward, is in the hope of reducing use among youth.

Part of that is a \$40 million-plus educational campaign to make sure we are doing everything we can to educate young Canadians about the fact that cannabis is not something they should be using, and that there are health effects which could be particularly negative for youth as their brains are still developing. Therefore, we are putting our money where our mouth is, because we know it is a necessary step in putting this proposed law forward.

We would also put forward over \$80 million to provide support to law enforcement agencies across the country to give them the tools to better understand how to detect those driving under the influence of cannabis, which is incredibly important. Whether or not we want to admit it in this House, there are already people who are driving under the influence of cannabis, and yet very little has been done, particularly by the previous government, which did very little but turn a blind eye and leave it up to law enforcement to try and figure it out on its own.

The previous government knew full well that the problem already existed, and that those law enforcement agencies could have used additional funding to better train law enforcement officials, and to put in place better systems to find out who was driving under the influence and take appropriate action. Therefore, this money would also go toward providing the tools necessary to test individuals for driving under the influence.

I did not come to this House to do easy work, and I know I speak for many of us who were elected in the election of October 2015. I came here to solve problems, particularly ones that have been plaguing Canada and Canadians for far too long. I say with all sincerity, and I know I share this with young fathers and mothers in this House, and those who have older children, that we need to make decisions now that are going to positively affect our youth later on. We should not leave it up to the next government, regardless of how difficult those decisions are. Instead, we need to make those tough decisions now.

My hope is that when my three-year-old son, Anderson, and my one-year-old daughter, Ellie, are at the age when they are going to high school, that they have a harder time accessing cannabis, that they have an educational system and a campaign in place at all levels of government that does not turn a blind eye to the fact that it is easier to get marijuana on a high school campus than it is to get cigarettes, and that we are actually taking action.

This is the kind of legacy I want to leave for my kids, and that is the kind of legacy that I want to leave for future generations of young Canadians. With that, I encourage all members of this House, regardless of which aisle they sit on, to vote in favour of Bill C-45. Let us take the next necessary steps in protecting our young people.

Private Members' Business

● (1725)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke about giving law enforcement the tools with which to work. He also spoke about impaired driving. I would like to give the member a little statistical data.

The Minister of Justice spoke earlier about using scientific data. I wonder if anyone from the Liberal Party decided to phone the state police in Colorado or Washington, because Washington has 33,000 cases of drug driving evidence that it is trying to analyze. They cannot analyze it. It costs \$175 per analysis, which is \$6 million U.S. The U.S. sheriffs are telling their deputies not to lay charges, because they cannot afford it.

Did the Liberals talk to any law enforcement agencies in some of the states that have legalized marijuana?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Mr. Speaker, did my hon. colleague speak to any law enforcement officials here in Canada?

Had he done that, he would have seen that this is not a new problem that would be created by Bill C-45. Right now, there are Canadians who are driving under the influence of cannabis, and nothing was done by the previous government to address that issue.

Here we are. Bill C-45 is on the table. Now it has suddenly become an issue for Conservatives. They suddenly see it as a problem for Canadians. The former Conservative government could have looked at it and said that driving under the influence of cannabis is an issue in this country, and that it was going to work with our law enforcement officials, listen to them, and give them the funding necessary to empower them to do their jobs.

Conservatives have finally woken up and realized that this is an issue. Now, after we have announced over \$80 million to provide law enforcement officials with the support they have been asking for for a long time, the previous government has decided to wake up.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague previously said, we will be supporting this bill.

However, we are concerned about a number of matters that are not being addressed. One of the matters that really troubles me, that I have become aware of, is that the government is refusing to call the opioid tragedy a national emergency. It is now saying that it wants to take measures to try to address opioids, and perhaps limit doctors' prescribing.

The government has decided that Canadians cannot get drug coverage for marijuana, a less harmful medicine than opioids. Can the member please explain why on Earth there has been all of this work, to legalize the use of marijuana, including medicinal, to encourage the marijuana industry to establish, and yet the government is not allowing people, for example, those who are suffering from nausea due to cancer, to choose to have marijuana prescribed as they would for an opioid, and have it covered through a drug program?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Mr. Speaker, I am very thankful that my hon. colleague and her party will be supporting Bill C-45 as a measure that will help protect our young people and ensure that they have less access to cannabis.

We are taking action on all fronts. We are looking at the opioid crisis, taking concrete action and have been doing so since we took office. I will say that that is actually something that has been supported by all sides of this House, because I think we all realize it is an urgent crisis that needs to be addressed. We are addressing it on multiple levels.

Specifically in relation in the question about cannabis, this is something we promised Canadians we would do, something that we realized needed to be addressed for a very long time. We had a failed system in place. We are no longer going to turn a blind eye to it. We are no longer going to look Canadians straight in the face and say that we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a system that is working, because it is not working.

The statistics I mentioned, and that the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada mentioned in her speech, show one in five youth, and one in three aged 20 to 24, are smoking marijuana. That has been ongoing for a while. We are taking action. It is something we promised Canadians we would do. That is exactly what we are doing.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1730)

[Translation]

NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY ACT

The House resumed from November 20 consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill S-211, under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1810)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 400)***YEAS**

Members

Aboulttaif
Albrecht
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arnold
Arya
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barlow
Baylis
Bennett
Benzen
Berthold
Bittle
Blair
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)

Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Angus
Arseneault
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Benson
Bernier
Bezan
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block

Private Members' Business

Boissonnault	Bossio	Nicholson	Nuttall
Boucher	Boulerice	Obhrai	O'Connell
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard	Oliphant	Oliver
Bratina	Breton	O'Regan	O'Toole
Brosseau	Brown	Ouellette	Paradis
Caesar-Chavannes	Calkins	Paul-Hus	Paupé
Cannings	Caron	Peschisolido	Peterson
Carr	Carrie	Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Chagger	Champagne	Picard	Plamondon
Chen	Chong	Poissant	Quach
Choquette	Christopherson	Qualtrough	Rankin
Clarke	Clement	Rayes	Reid
Cooper	Comier	Rempel	Richards
Cullen	Cuzner	Rioux	Robillard
Dabrusin	Damoff	Rodriguez	Romanado
Davies	DeCoursey	Rota	Ruimy
Deltell	Dhaliwal	Rusnak	Saini
Dhillon	Di Iorio	Sajjan	Samson
Diotte	Donnelly	Sangha	Sansoucy
Dreeschen	Drouin	Sarai	Saroya
Dubé	Dubourg	Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Schmale	Schulte
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault	Sgro	Shanahan
Duvall	Easter	Sheehan	Shipley
Eglinski	Ehsassi	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
El-Khoury	Ellis	Sikand	Simms
Erskine-Smith	Eyking	Sohi	Sorbara
Eyolfson	Falk	Sorenson	Spengemann
Fast	Fergus	Stanton	Stetski
Fillmore	Finley	Strahl	Stubbs
Finnigan	Fisher	Sweet	Tabbara
Fonseca	Fortier	Tan	Tassi
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Thériault	Tootoo
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)	Trost	Trudel
Freeland	Fuhr	Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Gallant	Garneau	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Garrison	Généreux	Viersen	Virani
Genois	Gerretsen	Wagantall	Warawa
Godin	Goldsmith-Jones	Warkentin	Waugh
Goodale	Gould	Webber	Whalen
Gourde	Graham	Wilkinson	Wilson-Raybould
Grewal	Hajdu	Wong	Wrzesnewskyj
Hardcastle	Harder	Young	Yurdiga
Hardie	Harvey	Zahid	Zimmer— 286
Hébert	Hehr		
Hoback	Housefather		
Hughes	Hussen		
Hutchings	Iacono		
Jeneroux	Johns	Nil	
Joly	Jordan		
Jowhari	Julian		
Kelly	Kent		
Khalid	Khera		
Kitchen	Kmiec		
Kusie	Kwan		
Lake	Lambropoulos		
Lametti	Lamoureux		
Lapointe	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)		
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Laverdière		
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier		
Lefebvre	Leitch		
Levitt	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lockhart		
Long	Longfield		
Ludwig	Lukiwski		
MacGregor	MacKenzie		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Malcolmson	Maloney		
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)			
Mathysen			
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanech—Gulf Islands)		
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman		
McCrimmon	McDonald		
McGuinty	McKay		
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)		
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)		
Mendès	Mihychuk		
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)			
Monsef			
Moore	Moreneau		
Morrissey	Motz		
Mulcair	Murray		
Nassif	Nater		
Nault	Ng		

NAYS

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Before we begin tonight, the Chair would like to take a moment to provide some information to the House regarding the management of private members' business.

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

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, following the October 23, 2017 replenishment of the order of precedence with 15 new items, I wish to inform the House that there are two bills that give the Chair some concern as to the spending provisions they contemplate. They are:

Bill C-364, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to make a consequential amendment to another act (political financing) standing in the name of the member for Terrebonne.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

Bill C-374, an act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board) standing in the name of the member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

I would encourage hon. members who would like to make arguments regarding the need for royal recommendations to accompany these bills or any of the other bills now on the order of precedence to do so at an early opportunity.

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

It being 6:14 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

●(1815)

BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize the contributions made by the over 100,000 British Home Children to Canadian society, their service to our armed forces throughout the twentieth century, the hardships and stigmas that many of them endured, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon the story of the British Home Children for future generations by declaring September 28 of every year, British Home Child Day in Canada.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely honoured today to rise to speak about my private member's motion, Motion No. 133, to establish a British home child day in Canada, which would be recognized on September 28 of every year. Despite writing a vital chapter in the story of Canada, many Canadians have never heard a whisper of these children's stories. It is my hope that with this motion, this can change.

Over 100,000 children, from infancy to 18 years of age, were sent to Canada from Great Britain, England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales between 1869 and 1948 as home children. Most of these children were needed as farm labourers and domestic workers in homes across Canada. They were part of the child emigration movement. A large majority of these children were from orphanages and institutions, while others were children from streets of the cities in Great Britain. They were the British home children.

Until recent years, very few Canadians knew about the British home children. Their stories of hardship, courage, determination, and perseverance were not part of Canadian history books, nor were they mentioned by most of Canada's home children. Of special note, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies was established as a direct result of the British home child migration scheme.

While the industrial revolution created many positive outcomes for Great Britain, it did create massive pressure on the social networks of the larger cities. Many families found themselves destitute, with thousands of children falling through the cracks. Many children began living on the streets, while others were placed in orphanages. For every child, there was a different circumstance that put him or her in need of care and support.

With so many children living on the streets or in orphanages, a movement emerged in which individuals, philanthropists, faith-

based groups, and charitable organizations sought to care for these unfortunate children. For the most part, these people and organizations, often referred to as "child savers", felt they were doing a good and noble thing for the children. Maria Rye brought the first group of British children to Canada in 1869, housing the children in a refurbished jail in Niagara-on-the-Lake until she was able to find families that would take them in.

Following Maria Rye's lead, approximately 50 individuals or organizations over the next eight decades brought or sent children to Canada. They believed these children had a better chance for a healthy, moral life in the vastness of rural Canada, where food, fresh air, land, and opportunities flourished. It is also common knowledge that healthy, strong children could be of great benefit as labourers in a very young and expanding country.

With everything they owned packed in small boxes, trunks, or bags, these children started their new lives in Canada. Canada was seen as the country of milk and honey and a new life seemed like a huge adventure to many of these children. Upon arrival from Great Britain by ship, these children were then put on trains and sent to communities that had receiving and distribution homes. Children stayed in these homes until they were distributed out to families that had applied for them. A contract or indenture would be drawn up for a set number of years between the organization and the applicant.

Often the children went to rural areas, where they were seen by many as cheap labour, working from before sunrise to after sunset. Although many of the home children were treated very poorly, neglected, and mentally and physically abused, many others did experience better lives. Some were welcomed as one of the family, loved and nurtured. Most of these children drew on their outstanding courage, strength, and perseverance and went on to lead healthy and productive lives. They contributed to the growth and development of this wonderful country called Canada, with many British home children enlisting in World War I and World War II.

Why are we just learning about them now? Many British home children carried a stigma of neglect, abuse, torment, and isolation that endured until adulthood. This weighed heavy on their hearts and souls, and they did not wish to talk about their early lives and, therefore, a piece of our country's history was buried.

●(1820)

In recent years, many descendants believed that these children had nothing to be ashamed of and should not have to hide the truth about their childhoods. They also believed that the British home children deserved to have their stories collected, preserved, and told. One of these descendants is Dave Lorente, son of Joseph Arthur Lorente.

Private Members' Business

Following his father's death, he spent countless hours at the Library and Archives Canada searching through ships' records for his father's arrival in Canada. He discovered that he was an orphan and that he was a British home child. Dave and Kay Lorente founded Home Child Canada in 1991, assisting descendants with research and understanding their heritage. In 1998, they were invited by the British House of Commons to address its all-party committee looking into the welfare of former child migrants. In 2011, Jim Brownell, the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry in the legislature of Ontario, presented a private member's bill to have September 28 declared as British Home Child Day in Ontario, with the bill co-sponsored by MPP Cheri DiNovo and Steve Clark. It passed unanimously and received royal assent on June 1, 2011. Since 2010, the Year of the British Home Child in Canada, thousands of Canadians have discovered that they are among the estimated 12% to 14% of Canadians who are descendants of British home children.

I would like to share a few local stories that illustrate the rich history of this chapter of Canada's story that is currently missing from many history books. The first is a story by Ron Baker, a constituent of mine from Cornwall. He said:

For decades, I and my brothers and sisters believed that our father Edwin was an American born in Boston, USA....

That all changed on August 15, 2008, when I came across an old torn envelope addressed to my late father at the Gibbs Home in Sherbrooke, Que, sent from India. I googled 'Gibbs Home' and a couple of emails later, I discovered a whole new chapter of my father's life that was previously unknown to me and to the rest of my family.

Yes, my father was born in Boston, but it was actually the Boston in Lincolnshire, on the east coast of England.

What I discovered was the quintessential story of the British home child. At the age of ten his mother, Rebecca, died in a Workhouse, probably of tuberculosis, according to a file sent to me from the Church of England Children's Society, formerly Waifs and Strays. My father was placed into care by his grandfather Charles, aged 60.

At the age of almost 15, my father was given the choice of coming to Canada or going to Australia. He chose Canada because some of his friends were going there. After farming training at Stonegate Farm School he was sent to Canada on the SS DORIC along with 32 other boys. He arrived at Quebec City on July 7 1928 and from there went to the Gibbs Home in Sherbrooke, under the watchful eye of Thomas Keeley. He worked at several Quebec farms in Bulwer, Eaton, Ayerscliff, Bromptonville and Lennoxville.

My father, like many of the Home Children, did everything they could to distance themselves from their past to eliminate the bullying. They disposed of their trunks and their English accents....

After marrying and serving in the military, my father worked at a munitions factory in Valleyfield before moving to Deep River to work at the newly established Atomic Energy plant, where he worked in the Chemical Extraction Division.

My father successfully shed his English accent and never spoke of his native country, even in spite of the fact that we had English neighbours in Deep River. It amazes me to this day that there were no slip-ups when speaking with the neighbours.

I would also like to share a few other brief stories from my riding that also highlight the story and accomplishments of British home children. There is the story of Charles Conroy, who was the grandfather of a local constituent and friend of mine, Carolyn Goddard. He was born in London, England in 1889 to Robert and Julia Conroy, who lived in St. George Hanover Square. After the death of his parents, he and his siblings lived in a workhouse. It was from there that Charles was sent to Canada by the Catholic Emigration Society in 1905, arriving in Quebec before being sent to St. George's Home in Ottawa, where he was indentured to a farmer near Stittsville, Ontario. He later worked as a chef at Boston Lunch

in Ottawa and was conscripted during World War I. Conroy had three children, two of which, June and William, lived to adulthood.

• (1825)

Carol also shared with me another story, about Claude Nunney. Claude was born in Hastings, England, and came under the care of the Catholic emigration service, which sent him to Canada as a British home child in 1905. He spent some time at St. George's Home in Ottawa before being sent to Glengarry County, in Ontario, where he worked on farms before enlisting in World War I and serving with the 38th Battalion, CEF. Nunney died as a result of wounds on September 18, 1918. During his wartime service, he received the Victoria Cross, the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and the Military Medal. At the legion in Lancaster, Ontario, there is an Ontario historic sites plaque, and earlier in 2017, a blue plaque was unveiled at his childhood home in Hastings, U.K. I thank Carol for those two stories.

To help illustrate the passion and dedication many of my constituents have for the need to enshrine the stories of the British home children as part of the national story, I would like to speak a little about a brother and sister who have dedicated countless hours to this cause, Jim Brownell and Judy Neville. I mentioned earlier that Jim was a former MPP from my riding. His sister, Judy, shared the following story with me. In 2010, she found out that her grandmother was an orphan from Scotland who became a British home child. Her name was Mary Scott Pearson.

On May 19, 2011, I, along with many people from eastern Ontario, boarded chartered buses and travelled to Toronto to witness the second and third reading of Bill 185 in the legislature of Ontario and to see it sent to the Lieutenant-Governor's office for royal assent. This private member's bill was initiated by then MPP Jim Brownell, of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry. I would like to thank Judy and Jim.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the recent work of Eleanor McGrath, whose documentary focusing on the story of British home children, entitled *Forgotten*, has travelled worldwide to film festivals and has received several awards.

I would like to end with a personal connection to the British home children. Sophia Titterington came to Canada aboard the SS *Corinthian* in July 1905, when she was nine years old. I know this because she was a neighbour of mine when I was just a child. She came with her sister Sarah, who was only seven years old. The year before, her brother John had made the crossing and had been sent out to western Canada to work, and unfortunately, he was never seen again.

Upon arrival, they were sent to a receiving home, in Brockville, known as Fairknowe, where the sisters were split up. The younger Sarah was sent to the farming community of Finch, in my riding, where she worked as a domestic. Years later, she made her way to Trenton, where she died at the young age of 23.

Private Members' Business

Sophia was sent out as a domestic to Belleville and later married William Pelkey, at the age of 21. They relocated to Cornwall and had seven children. Sophia never revealed to her children or grandchildren her past as a home child. Sophia, like so many of the home children, was shamed into staying silent due to social stigma.

Sophia lived to be 74 years old, before passing in Cornwall. It was much later on, around 2001, when my sister Claire and her husband, Bill Pelkey, who was Sophia's grandson, began looking into the family history and the information emerged about her true past.

This story is similar to those of tens of thousands of other British home children, throughout the country, who kept their stories buried deep inside. That is the reason I urge each of my colleagues in this chamber, from both sides of the House, to lend their support to my motion to ensure that the stories and names of the British home children are forever ingrained in the history and story of Canada.

• (1830)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry for allowing me to be the seconder of this motion, and I am looking forward to speaking more fully on it in a few minutes.

The motion specifically mentions the wartime contributions of the British home children. Information I have here, and again, I think this information changes as more information becomes available, is that 689 British home children died in 1917 at the Battle of Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, and the Battle of Hill 70. Even though there was a stigma attached to these individuals who came here with nothing, and were often mistreated, they saw fit to support our country in World War I and World War II.

I wonder if the member can add to that.

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right. I can only imagine how frightening it must have been for 12-year-olds, 11-year-olds, or even 15-year-olds to leave their homes, their country, to go to a completely new country. In some cases, they were mistreated on arrival and lived through that horror that sometimes happened, then they were called up to war.

The bravery of these men and women who came, and beyond that, went to war for this country they emigrated to, is beyond belief. I mentioned Claude Nunney, who received the Victoria Cross and died in 1918. This is the kind of people we got.

Between four million and five million Canadians are direct descendants of these wonderful people who came. That is why this country is such a wonderful country. That is why our military is so great even today.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry for bringing this motion forward. I just want to ask the member what he thought of the unanimous consent motion here a few months ago, when the House of Commons apologized to the British home children and their descendants. It was a unanimous consent motion at the end of question period. A lot of people probably did not even know what was being put forward.

What does the member think of the idea of having a real, formal apology to the 100,000 Canadians who came here? Their childhoods

were taken from them. What if we had a real, formal apology from the Prime Minister, with the families invited to attend? Does the member think that would be an appropriate action?

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, I want September 28 to be a special day. Once we accomplish that, we could go on and do other things, as appropriate.

The truth of the matter is that we have to somehow make sure that these people are forever respected and remembered. As I said, between four million and five million Canadians living in our country right now, between 12% and 14% of Canadians, are direct descendants of these wonderful people. We have to memorialize them on September 28, each and every year.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry for giving us this opportunity to reflect on our history.

As I learn more and read more about the British home children, it comes to mind that many of them were also suffering in their home country. It certainly was not with malice that religious organizations and orphanages tried to help the children by sending them to Canada. Of course, the story is both inspirational and tragic. I understand that 10% of our population are descendants of the British home children.

Could the member speak a little more to the inspirational stories of the children who came over and maybe how Canada was the right or good fit for them?

• (1835)

Mr. Guy Lauzon: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is correct. These people are truly inspiring.

The organizations, up to 50 organizations and individuals, helped these people. That was their only hope for these poor children. They were derelict in their country. Canada was an opportunity, and in many cases, it worked out quite well. In the majority of cases, it did work well.

Some people suffered some hardships, but the truth of the matter is that they came here and gave their all. Is that not wonderful that 12-year-olds, 14-year-olds, and 16-year-olds led the way at that very trying time?

As the member said, the more I hear about the British home children, the more respect and admiration I have for these wonderful people.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, may I begin by complimenting my colleague from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and thanking him very sincerely for the time and effort he has put into his motion. I am very hopeful that we will have unanimous consent at some point in the future to be able to celebrate September 28 as a day of recognition.

Private Members' Business

I have spoken several times on this British home children issue. I have read several books on it, especially ones published recently. There is no way one can read about the lives of some of these children without being reduced to tears. They tell stories of so many children suffering. Although some were successful, and some placed in homes with people who treated them as an additional member of the family, some of the children were in homes where they were simply day labourers, abused, and not treated the way the program had intended. However, I will elaborate a bit further as I go forward.

I am honoured to be able to stand here today to acknowledge this little-known chapter in Canadian history and to recognize the contributions of the British home children and their descendants. I hope that this is the beginning of many debates and discussions that we will have in this House, as we move forward with this particular item that many of us care about.

Though the child migration scheme was touted as a golden opportunity for children facing extreme poverty in Great Britain, it has since become clear that many of the program's participants were subjected to great abuse and severe hardship. We can only imagine that when the scheme was thought up, the children were already suffering immensely and living on the streets. The idea was to find a home for them. I think the intentions were good, but the oversight and assistance that should have been there were lacking.

In Canada, children were rarely adopted in the modern sense. More often, they were taken on as indentured labourers and cheap domestic help.

Though each story we hear is different, whether of a male or female, the separation of so many families was predominant. We now know that the scheme regularly amounted to nothing short of a betrayal, such as when temporary dislocation for a child became permanent, when children were separated, and ultimately when families were torn apart.

More than 100,000 unaccompanied children made the journey to Canada in the hopes of a better life. Though it remains difficult to fathom the courage that the children must have had, today we can salute them for what they endured on our behalf, both as they grew in a strange new land, and later as they fought in the two world wars on our behalf.

As a former minister of immigration, I had the pleasure and challenge of overseeing the government department responsible not only for immigration, but also for refugees and citizenship. People from all over the world journey to our shores. It strikes me that the diverse stories of the British home children are as relevant today as they were then.

In a rapidly changing world, they remind us that we are all, in our own ways, newcomers. As such, we remained united by the Canadian promise of safety and prosperity, and mindful that the wealth of our country derives in part from the diversity and tenacity of the citizens, like the British home children who travelled from afar seeking home, a safe place to live, food every day, and most importantly, an opportunity to grow.

Today, we have a long overdue opportunity to acknowledge the critical role these children played in the early stage of Canada's

development as a nation. We owe it to these children and their families to tell their stories.

● (1840)

When we look at the farm fields all across Canada, we need to think of those children that were paid next to nothing to till those farms, and how much they contributed to our economic growth and our prosperity.

Not only did they help to build this land, they helped defend our country's freedom. It is estimated that 10,000 of these children fought for Canada in the first world war. In reading some of the books that have been written and elaborated on, some of them made the decision to go to war, for it was a better alternative than the way they were living on farms, and how they were treated as nothing short of slave labourers. For some of them, going to war was a better option.

I ask members to think of that, and how those children must have suffered, but they put on the uniform, and fought for us. They defended our country, and for that we should always be grateful. Many also fought in the second world war, along with descendants of those who arrived in the early years of the immigration schemes, and yet, so many Canadians are unaware of this history.

One of my staff members is a descendant of the British home children. That is how I was introduced to this issue. I did not know about this. I did not learn about this in history class. It was here on Parliament Hill when one of my assistants talked about British home children, and she shared that story with me.

Once we learn about it, there is no way we cannot care about it, and deny it. I am very happy to see that we passed a motion some time last year, which did not get enough attention, as my colleague mentioned earlier. Today, trying to move my hon. colleague's motion forward is a fabulous move to name September 28 as a day that we would all get united, and a day of recognition. We need to learn from the mistakes of the past, because no one knows what is coming tomorrow. We should try our best to learn that.

Canada designated 2010 as the Year of the British Home Child in Canada to ensure Canadians would be better informed about this chapter in our history, and by commemorating a yearly day that our government would ensure it would continue to raise awareness of the history and experiences of British home children and their descendants.

Canada has supported a number of outreach commemorative and educational initiatives to recognize the experience of the home children, including the designation of a national historic event and the establishment of a commemorative plaque. We will continue to support former British home children and their descendants, and to raise awareness about their experience.

Somehow no matter what we do, it never feels like it is enough. How do we say we are sorry? How do we say we had the best intentions as a country? We can never say sorry enough, and there are never enough ways to make up for the damage that was done to many of these children.

Private Members' Business

I salute my colleague and thank him for bringing this forward. I look forward to standing in the House to support the September 28 day. Again, I congratulate and thank him for the opportunity to speak to this motion.

● (1845)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Motion No. 133. I thank the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry for bringing it forward. I will be supporting the motion.

The motion asks the government to recognize the contributions of over 100,000 British home children to Canada, the hardships and stigmas that many endured, and the importance of reflecting on their stories, by declaring September 28 of every year British home child day in Canada.

I would like to thank my friend Art Joyce, whose grandfather was a British home child, and who has written a book on these Canadians and their experiences. Much of the information and many of the words I used to prepare this speech came directly from Mr. Joyce.

My predecessor in this place, Alex Atamanenko, tabled a motion in the previous Parliament asking for an apology from the Canadian government to British home children and their descendants. I was happy to table the same motion in this Parliament.

On February 16, 2017, the House of Commons unanimously passed a very similar motion from the member for Montcalm asking that the House recognize the injustice, abuse, and suffering endured by the British home children, as well as the efforts, participation, and contribution of these children and their descendants within our communities, and to offer its sincere apology to the British home children and their descendants.

Who were the British home children? They were children from poor families in the United Kingdom who were taken from their families, orphanages, and state workhouses, and sent to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Canada received the vast majority of these children. Those countries assisted with transportation and immigration costs, because these children were seen as a virtually free source of labour on newly developing farms and homesteads.

British parish priests were given the authority to take children into care as wards of the state if it was determined that the family was too poor to support them, a practice called philanthropic abductions. Poor parents, unwilling to give up their children, had little choice. Once taken from their families, children were essentially branded orphans, regardless of whether their parents survived or not. Although parents could occasionally visit their children in the orphanages, some were shocked to discover that what they had considered a temporary placement had become permanent, or worse, that they had been shipped overseas. Most of these parents would never see their children again.

This practice began in 1869, and continued in Canada until the last shipment of boys and girls arrived on Vancouver Island at the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School, near Duncan, in 1948. During its heyday, single shipments of children sent by steamboat across the Atlantic could reach as many as 200 boys and girls, some as young as five, during the earlier phase of the program.

There were more than 100,000 boys and girls sent to Canada during this time, and Statistics Canada has estimated that about four million Canadians are descendants of these children, about one in eight Canadians. If this is a truly representative chamber, that means that more than 40 of us here in the House of Commons are descended from one of the home children.

The organizations that sent the children to Canada said they would have better lives, but in fact, they were required to sign indenture contracts as labourers, and were only allowed to leave service upon reaching legal age. Although the contract stipulated a modest income, most were never paid. The contracts typically required that children be given food, shelter, adequate clothing, as well as regular access to school and church.

Often, many of these basic provisions were not met, with children being made to sleep in barns or unheated attics, or to endure Canadian winters without proper winter clothing. Contracts were seldom enforced, as neither the charities nor governments involved had enough staff assigned to do this. Most home children never finished school, as they were required for work. Beatings for the boys and sexual abuse for the girls was not uncommon, and very few were adopted by their host families. “We were here to work”, one adult home child recalled.

British home children made up a substantial portion of volunteers in both world wars, up to 10,000 serving in World War I alone.

● (1850)

Art Joyce's grandfather, Cyril William Joyce, was sent to Canada in 1926 as a boy of 16. His father George was a travelling salesman, and the family lived in the east end of London, the epicentre of poverty in that city. Cyril spent several years working as an indentured farm labourer in northern Alberta until reaching legal age.

He never spoke of it much with his wife and children, and spoke even less of his family in England. His mother had signed the emigration papers, and he never spoke of her again. Cyril was unable to loosen the bonds on these painful memories, and took his family secrets to the grave. That shame, that unwillingness to speak of his past, is a common theme with British home children.

Descendants of home children are left with a huge hole in their lives, not knowing their family history, not knowing the true experiences of their parents and grandparents.

Despite the fact that our governments paid to bring 100,000 of these boys and girls here, then abandoned them to their fates on isolated farms, most Canadians know nothing about this dark chapter in our history.

Private Members' Business

Art Joyce points out that, “not once in all my years of public schooling did I learn about Canada's home children.” I can say the same thing. He felt compelled to research his grandfather's history, and the stories of other British home children in a book called *Laying the Children's Ghosts to Rest: Canada's Home Children in the West*.

What have other countries done to recognize the British Home Children? Australia's former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd invited British home children and their descendants to Parliament House in Canberra for a public apology on November 16, 2009. Many of those in the crowd were in tears.

On February 24, 2010, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown publicly apologized to the families of the approximately 130,000 children who were sent away from Britain.

For the elderly survivors and their descendants, numbering now into the millions in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, it was a long-awaited moment, one some thought might never arrive.

As Art's uncle Rob Joyce wrote upon hearing of Brown's apology:

It is a great day, I wish we could be reading this with Dad now; that would have made it even better. I understand Dad better now than I ever did, and why he was sad at times for reasons I never knew. An understanding that, like the British Government's apology, has come much too late.

On the subject of apologies, I would only add that while this House did issue a unanimous apology a few months ago, that apology was made unannounced. To my knowledge no one from the British home children community was present in the House to hear the member for Montcalm put forward his motion.

It would be very meaningful to these families if the government would issue a formal apology, given by the Prime Minister, with family members invited to be present, as we have done for so many other government apologies. The British home children who were taken from their families, lost their childhood to hard labour, and lived with the shame for the rest of their lives deserve no less.

Having a British home child day in Canada would be one more positive step on the road to healing those families. The day chosen, September 28, is coincidentally Art Joyce's birthday.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today on behalf of the people of Chilliwack—Hope.

Today, I am also rising on behalf of my grandmother, Carol Bateman, and my great-grandfather, Sheriff Atcheson Thompson, who was a British home child. Therefore, I am one of the four million to five million descendants of British home children, something I have only discovered thanks to the work of my grandmother in the last few years.

It was an honour to be part of the group of members of Parliament who sponsored the motion from the member for Montcalm on February 16, which states:

That the House recognize the injustice, abuse and suffering endured by the British Home Children as well as the efforts, participation and contribution of these children and their descendants within our communities; and offer its sincere apology to the former British Home Children who are still living and to the descendants of these 100,000 individuals who were shipped from Great Britain to Canada between 1869 and 1948, and torn from their families to serve mainly as cheap labour once they arrived in Canada.

Today, in honour of my great-grandfather, my grandmother has penned some words about her father, which I will try to get through.

She says:

I write today of my father who suffered the stigma that came with being a British Home Child in Canada. He lived his whole life with the torture of silence and shame forced on him by the very people who were to look out for him. A child of 12 when he came to Canada.

Dad, Sheriff Atcheson Thompson was one of 120,000 children shipped to Canada through a cleansing scheme developed in Britain and one which Canada signed onto in ridding England of her over abundance of children who were either living in the streets or in orphanages.

Homes for these children sprung up everywhere as there was money to be made by shipping this merchandise to the different British colonies.

Philanthropists opened Homes for these children giving them training in farming and as domestics. Bernardos was one of the largest homes, Fegans was a smaller home and this is where my Aunts placed my dad following the death of both his parents. His mother died in 1908 and his father in 1910 leaving three little boys. Henry 7, Sheriff 5 and Richard 3, and so began their journey as “home children”

My father Sheriff Atcheson Thompson was placed in Fegans by his Aunt and Uncle at the age of 7 to learn farming skills and be sent to Canada. He spent 5 years in Fegans 4 of those years he was with his brothers but when his brothers were sent to Canada in 1914 he was left behind as he had scarlet fever. He was sent with a group of boys in April 1915. Arrived in St. John New Brunswick and taken to 295 George St, in Toronto, a distributing home for Fegans. He was there for a few days before he was picked up by Mr. Kirby a farmer from Port Perry, Ontario. Dad was to spend the next 5 years as a farm hand. for Mr and Mrs. Kirby and their family. Shortly after dad arrived at Kirby's he took ill Mr. Kirby took him back to George St. and he was diagnosed with a burst appendix. Fegans distributing home offered Mr. Kirby another boy but Mr. Kirby said he liked this boy and would wait.

Part of the boys training in Fegans Ramsgate Orphanage was to be obedient and humble and to always appreciate the situation, never show a negative side or cry. Be Grateful. However, Mr. Kirby saying he wanted this boy did make dad feel wanted and the Kirby's were a good family. Dad was not included in the family but was treated well.

Part of the agreement Canada signed was to have agents check on these boys and to see they were fed, clothed and were given schooling until they were 14. Dad was fed and clothed and he was schooled in the evening after chores at the kitchen table where Mrs. Kirby would teach him the lessons her son had learned in school that day. Dad knew how to read and write and do basic math, but never attended school. If he talked about the Kirby years at all he said they did the best they could.

Dad told Mr. Kirby about his brothers and Mr Kirby found Richard living in Janetsville, just 18 miles away. Uncle Dick would cry when telling his daughter the story of how they had time off work every Sunday afternoons and would walk 9 miles and meet for a short visit and then walk back to their farm in time for the evening meal....

My Aunt...told me another story along this same line. Dad was at church with the Kirby's one Sunday morning when someone from the back started calling his name. dad turned to see...a friend from Fegans who had traveled to Canada on the same ship. The two boys climbed over the pews to reach each other...The loneliness was so profound.

Private Members' Business

● (1855)

I did ask dad about his mom and dad when I was about 12 years old. He was not open to talking about this part of his life and told me that he had letters in his bible that I could read. I tried reading these letter a few times but they were difficult to read and even more difficult to understand. I had a happy childhood and so did not pursue the issue. These letters it turns out were in answer to my dads request in 1935 for information on his family and life in England and how he ended up in Canada. I have read them now and find them very cold and unfeeling, all 6 foolscap...pages. However, they do give the details of his mother and fathers death and they try to justify why they put them into the orphanage.

Dad married in 1935 and that was part of the reason for wanting his family history. They planned a family in the future and it became more important....

Mom and Dad left Ontario in 1945, escaping the stigma that still remained there and moved West where the air was clear and there was never any talk of "home children". They never mentioned going back East. They lived and died in BC Dad never mention his family or his time as a home child or the stigma and of course lived with the shame in silence.

My sister and I shared a happy home life with our parents. Our father was a warm and caring father who as you might guess was happy and proud to have a family of his own, a place where he belonged and was loved. His legacy is in his family, his descendants are five generations 60 strong and still growing. All proud Canadian citizens.

The scheme that he became part of was not in any way in support of these children. In some documentation they were referred to as merchandise. They were bought and aid for by Canada per head and were indentured for 5 years or until they were 18. The government agents who were to check on the children, often just had a visit with the farmer and left. My Uncle Henry was one of the children who was not placed on a good farm. He slept in the barn, ate in the barn, was beaten and whipped, but it took a year before the agent moved him to a better farm where he stayed until he was 18. I have seen the scars on my Uncles back when he came for a visit in 1958. I stared in disbelief that one human being could do this to another but the scars were there and that I could not ignore. He was not alone in this type of treatment and my heart goes out to others who suffered like him or worse. This in part is a reason these living children are silent today. They still live with the shame bestowed on them and the pain of remembering.

My issue today is the fact that they were totally left out of Canada's history. This part of our immigration history is not required teaching in the classrooms. They worked along side the pioneers of our country and yet are not included, the stigma exists today even though they loved Canada enough to fight and die in both world wars. Were decorated heroes, and still? Where are you Canada. Why are you hiding this part of our history? Step up do right by these children and their descendants. Let us show the pride we have in them and finally include them as the important part of Canada they are.

I think that this motion will go a long way to providing some of that for British home children, their descendants, and even my grandmother. This is not something that she has spent her whole life knowing. This is awareness that she has shared with our family just in the last number of years as she has traced back her family history. She is fiercely proud of her family, and fiercely proud of her father and all that he accomplished. He came from nothing, and was treated as worse than nothing when he arrived, just as an indentured farm servant. Now, 60 family members are his descendants. What a legacy.

So many British home children have that legacy, as has been said. It is a legacy that has helped build this country, and the least we can do is support this motion and remember them every September 28 so that more and more Canadians can learn about this, not a proud part of our history, but proud people who are still having an impact through their descendants on this great country.

● (1900)

[Translation]

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have a chance to take part in this debate. The motion before us today calls on the government to pay tribute to the British

home children and commemorate their story by creating a British home child day in Canada. I want to thank my colleague, the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, for bringing this motion forward.

Motion M-133 proposes that the government recognize the contributions made by the over 100,000 British home children to Canadian society, their service to our armed forces throughout the 20th century, the hardships and stigmas that many of them endured, and the importance of educating and reflecting upon the story of the British home children for future generations. The motion also proposes that we recognize their contributions by declaring September 28 of every year British home child day in Canada.

The story of the British home children is an important chapter in Canada's immigration history. Unfortunately, too many Canadians are ignorant of the tragic, yet inspiring, story of the British home children, even though over 10% of Canadians living today are descended from British home children.

Over the course of nearly eight decades, spanning the late 1860s to the end of the 1940s, roughly 100,000 British children, most of them under the age of 14, were sent to Canada by British philanthropic and religious organizations. Another 50,000 children were sent to other parts of the British empire.

Under this so-called "child migration scheme", British boys came to Canada to work on farms, and British girls came to work as domestics. The children often worked without supervision and in execrable conditions, which left them vulnerable to neglect, exploitation, and mistreatment.

● (1905)

Immigration has made an immeasurable contribution to shaping Canada's economy, society, and history. Immigration has mainly been a positive force. It has helped make Canada more prosperous and diverse. Families have been reunited, and protection has been offered to generations of people from around the world fleeing persecution.

That being said, we must also recognize that there are some dark chapters in the history of immigration, and that some policies and practices caused a lot of pain and upheaval in the lives of many people. We must always remember those dark chapters in order to learn from our mistakes and collectively commit to never repeat them.

Private Members' Business

[English]

That is why the motion we are debating today is so important. Many British home children demonstrated great bravery and perseverance and went on to overcome the great adversity they faced to build productive lives for themselves and their descendants here in Canada. For example, 10,000 former British home children fought for Canada a century ago, during the First World War. These included Claude Joseph Patrick Nunney, who received the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the Military Medal, and the Victoria Cross for his service in battle. As I mentioned, millions of Canadians today can trace their ancestries back to the former home children, so their imprint on the history of our country and on Canada today is immense.

This government recognizes the great sacrifices that were made by the home children and the great courage that many of them displayed to overcome their horrific experiences. Some of the stories we heard today are incredibly moving.

As we should, Canadians have undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years to recognize the experiences of various groups, and we should do no less now with the home children, to help ensure their memory is kept alive for Canadians today and for the future. These initiatives include online history exhibitions and information at national historic sites across the country, as well as films, books, websites, and genealogical databases.

I think all of my hon. colleagues will agree that the motion we are debating today proposes another significant initiative that would be in the spirit of honouring this important part of Canadian history.

[Translation]

The contribution of the British home children deserves to be acknowledged and recognized by Canadians.

[English]

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House today, and to have the opportunity to speak to my colleague's private member's motion that was brought forward.

September 28 seems like a good day, and to now have the opportunity to further commemorate it sounds like a good opportunity for Canadians. I have a number of family members who have that as their birthday. The issue with regard to the British home children certainly does need to be in the forefront of the minds of Canadians.

It is something that needs to be brought into the classroom, so that children are made aware of what happened. It is certainly a very important part of our history here in Canada. With that, I will take a moment to discuss why I believe it is so important.

When we think about childhood, we often talk about the innocence of a child. We often talk about the innocence of a child in our western context. We talk about a child being able to grow up and play on a playground down the street, or being able to go to school and access an education from K to 12 and hopefully beyond. We talk about children being able to dream about their future, about their endeavours, about what they want to become when they grow up. That is a common question we ask children.

In our society here in Canada, it is a luxury to be able to ask those questions, and to have access to education and health care. It is a luxury to grow up in a home with heating, a bed, a dining room table, and food in the fridge. These are things that are a part of Canadian childhood today.

However, the reality is that these things were not the norm in the U.K. in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In fact, we are looking at a society where there was great depravity. There was great sickness that came out of that, and parents whose lives were taken. As a result, there was this cohort of children, approximately 100,000 of them, who were then brought over to Canada in order to escape their reality in the U.K., and to start a new life here in Canada. At least that is what was proposed to them in many cases. I am sure there were others who maybe did not fully understand what they were getting into, or the world that they were coming to, because they were too young.

Nevertheless, it held a promise of a different future. It held the promise of their hopes and dreams, and being able to go into a vibrant and prosperous future. More than that, to start off with, it was a form of care. It was making sure that the next meal was on the table in front of them, that there were shoes on their feet, and clothes on their back.

When these 100,000 children came to Canada, they were used as indentured farm workers for the most part. These farmers were told that the children were orphans. That was only true for about 2% of them. The remainder had a parent back in Europe, in the U.K., or a loved one who was looking after them, but perhaps could not because there was not the monetary amount there to do so adequately, or perhaps because of a sickness in the family.

These children then came here and worked on these farms. Many of them came, meaning for it to be a temporary solution only. It was not meant to be permanent. Of course, as we know, for the most part, it did end up being a permanent move for these individuals who came in this way.

For some of them, they had a very positive experience. They were taken into homes, into families on farms, and were given a positive experience or encounter with Canadian society. They were well looked after. They were given the food they needed, and the clothing they needed. They were given a bedroom with a bed, et cetera. They were given the necessities of life, and were treated very well.

There were others who were actually not treated with the necessary care, love, and concern that they should have been given. Unfortunately, they were exploited, taken advantage of, used as nothing more than cheap labour, which is unfortunate, and a very sad part of our country's history.

That said, all of the children who came over to Canada as British home children came with determination and tenacity. All of them overcame adversity, whether that adversity was simply overcoming loneliness, being away from friends, family and familiarity, or if that adversity was overcoming sickness, or if that adversity was overcoming a vision and a hope that had to be put on hold for awhile, or perhaps even altogether.

Routine Proceedings

•(1910)

Another form of adversity was for those who went into a place where they needed to perform hard labour or where they were maybe taken advantage of in some cases.

•(1915)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Lethbridge will have five minutes remaining in the time for her comments on the motion when the House next resumes debate on this question.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(2), the motion to concur in the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, recommendation not to proceed further with Bill C-240, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit — first aid), presented on Thursday, February 23, 2017, is deemed moved.

[*English*]

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today it is my pleasure to rise and speak to my private member's bill, an act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a non-refundable tax credit for those who take a first aid course, Bill C-240. The bill has been returned from the finance committee to the House with the recommendation that it proceed no further.

I am thankful for the review by and insight of the finance committee of Bill C-240. The expertise the witnesses provided helps to clarify what the bill means. There is a growing need for basic preparedness in Canada. In Canada, there is a heart attack every 12 minutes, but people have a dramatically better chance of survival if a trained bystander is present. Unfortunately, in far too many cases, no one with this lifesaving knowledge is nearby. Right now, more than half of adult Canadians live in a household in which no one has up-to-date first aid or CPR certification. It is this issue that motivated my tabling of Bill C-240.

When someone undertakes first aid training, what they are ultimately doing is gaining skills and knowledge to serve their community. Perhaps even more important than the skills they are learning is the confidence they are gaining. In a situation where every second counts, that confidence can be the difference between life and death.

I am pleased that Bill C-240 was well received. I had letters of support from diverse groups, far too many to list here, but they include organizations as diverse as Heart and Stroke Canada and the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs. I am glad that so many came together to discuss this issue to create awareness and to improve emergency preparedness and public safety for all Canadians.

I have also had conversations with individual supporters, including local organizations that provide this key training, like the Canadian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance, which are always working to reduce barriers to getting first aid training in the hands of all Canadians.

I want to recognize that Bill C-240, like all private members' bills, has limitations. The major concern raised by the finance committee was this: Does Bill C-240 achieve its objectives inexpensively compared to the alternatives? This question is essentially the cost of forgone revenue versus the advantages of having additional people with first aid training. It is about the efficiency of the lost revenue.

The discussion at the finance committee presented evidence that there may be more efficient ways of accomplishing Bill C-240's goals. There may be additional options to explore for public safety education and for the health minister's involvement in encouraging more Canadians to seek out this training.

I have been clear about my goal from the very beginning. It is to make people in this country safer by better preparing Canadians to take action in emergencies. I believe that strong work is happening in this area and a promising dialogue on what we can do for emergency preparedness.

I am pleased with the conversations I have had with each of my colleagues, the finance minister, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Public Safety, and I am confident that these conversations will continue after my advocacy in the House.

I am aware of how strong an incentive it takes to create a widespread behavioural change and of the inherent limits of a relatively small tax credit. The NDP members, in particular, spoke to another limitation of the bill in their remarks at second reading and it is worth noting here. Because of the limitations on private members' bills that prevent them from calling for direct expenditures, there is an equity issue with a non-refundable tax credit. For those Canadians whose income may be low enough, they do not pay income tax and would not be eligible for a tax credit under Bill C-240. I regret that private members' business cannot address this issue. There are options available outside the PMB process for good ideas like Bill C-240, and I would be pleased to work with this government to pursue avenues for change.

•(1920)

I have acknowledged these limitations, both of Bill C-240, and in fact, of all private members' bills. Given that understanding, I have continued to advocate for other ways in which to improve the adoption of first aid training for Canadians.

The purpose of this PMB for me is about protecting more Canadians, not about the specifics of the bill. That is why I am happy to be working with the ministers involved with this portfolio in introducing innovative ways to move forward.

Routine Proceedings

The PMB was drafted in the early days of Parliament, around two years ago. I was getting my office set up, hiring staff, and we were already putting together the pieces of Bill C-240. One of the things I realized at that time was that no particular department actually owns the topic of first aid exclusively. It is a topic that stretches across emergency preparedness, health, finance, and public service and labour. I would argue, in fact, that no ministry is completely untouched by the need for first aid training.

I want to talk about the things the government is doing in response to my advocacy on this issue. The number of votes in the House from all sides really helped to paint a picture of how important this issue is to Canadians. I have had substantive conversations with the public safety minister about the need for first aid to play a bigger role in Canadians' understanding of emergency preparedness. I am proud to say that changes are being made with a number of different projects to help promote first aid in response to Bill C-240 and my advocacy on this issue.

Everyone in the House, and many Canadians, are familiar with the get prepared campaign and its approach to emergency preparedness. Public safety, currently, has a get prepared campaign that consists of three parts: know the risks, make a plan, and get a kit.

I am pleased to say that a fourth element to this campaign will be added with the focus on getting Canadians first aid training. I will be working with the ministry on building resources like videos and information to help support this fourth area of focus. This represents a significant update to the get prepared campaign that helps drive home the point that preparations must be taken early and proactively, including first aid training.

I am also pleased to be working with the ministers involved with this topic on public safety week, which brings awareness to public safety in Canada. I will keep working on these projects, and others, to ensure Canadians are better protected and better prepared.

I have been asking for support for increased awareness around first aid training for the last two years, and today, I ask for support to continue the research and the conversation.

I would like to thank all of my colleagues, and all of the stakeholders across the country for their support on Bill C-240. The House has the opportunity to safeguard the lives of Canadians, and I am proud of the actions our government is taking to more directly address this issue. I want to thank all members who supported me in bringing this bill to the forefront.

• (1925)

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sadly, I am standing here tonight to speak to this motion. I would have been much more pleased to be standing to speak to third reading of this particular piece of legislation. This is a motion I am going to dub “the Liberal government's cowardly motion”.

A hard-working member of Parliament did a lot of work and research putting together the bill, and he showed that emotion here tonight in his speech. He was almost apologetic, because he almost felt like he did not do enough work on this particular legislation.

This is not a case of a member of Parliament not doing his homework. This is a case of the Liberal government, the front bench,

stabbing a member of its own caucus in the back and not having the courage to tell that particular member, when we had the discussion at second reading, that those members would not support the bill. They did not do that. Instead, they went ahead and allowed a so-called free vote. We in the opposition supported the bill. A number of Liberal members supported the bill, but the front bench did not.

The bill went to second reading. Let me give the House the dates. The bill was introduced by the member for Cambridge on February 25, 2016. It finally passed second reading on October 26, 2016. There were 227 votes in favour and 81 votes against. If we count the number of cabinet ministers, and those hoping to join cabinet, that is the 81.

Let me read the Standing Order in respect of when a bill is referred to committee:

A standing...committee to which a Private Member's...bill has been referred shall in every case, within sixty sitting days from the date of the bill's reference to the committee, either report the bill to the House with or without amendment or present to the House a report containing a recommendation not to proceed further with the bill and giving the reasons therefor...

I happened to be on the finance committee, and so was the member in the House tonight from Vaughan—Woodbridge. There were days when the finance committee did not sit, because we had no business to deal with. We in the opposition tried to bring the member's bill forward to be studied at committee and were consistently refused by the Liberal members on that committee. Shame on them.

After 48 sitting days, the bill finally came forward to committee. We spent two hours. We had some finance officials telling us why it could not be done, and we had the member for Cambridge come forward, make a very passionate plea, similar to what he has done in the House tonight, to have the bill go back to the House for third reading and approval. Let me give members the circumstances that happened.

At about the end of the two-hour period at finance committee, the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge was handed a piece of paper from behind, which we could see across the room had PMO written across it. Let me read what it said. If the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge wants to disagree with me, he should get in his seat and stand up and deny that this is what happened in that committee, but he is not—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would just remind the hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill that there was an earlier reference to this, and I let that pass, but members are really prohibited from making reference to either the presence or absence of members in the House. I would remind him of that.

I invite him to carry on with his remarks.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I would challenge the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge, who may or may not be in the House, to stand in his place after I am done, to justify why this bill is not coming back for third reading.

Adjournment Proceedings

Let me read the motion from the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge, written on a piece of paper that had PMO written right across it:

WHEREAS the Committee is generally supportive of the intent of Bill C-240 there are questions that arise: which Canadians would receive the benefit of the measures, as the tax credit is non-refundable and this can only be claimed if you have income;

We could probably get some witnesses before the standing committee that could answer that question.

the cost to federal, provincial and territorial governments to administer the proposed changes to the Income Tax Act;

We could probably get some answers to that question as well.

the extent to which federal, provincial and territorial tax revenues would be affected by the proposed measure;

I will not read the entire motion because it is before the House. The motion from the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge then said:

Therefore, in light of the above noted details of the proposal in Bill C-240, be it resolved that this Committee...recommends that the House of Commons do not proceed further with Bill C-240.

An hon. member: Sunny ways.

Mr. Ron Liepert: Yes, sunny ways.

I looked up the meaning of the word “coward”. It says it is the lack of courage to do unpleasant things. The PMO did not have the courage to tell the member for Cambridge that we are not going to support his bill. Despite all of the support of government members, it did not have the courage. The PMO is a coward by not telling him to his face. It made that member go to committee, waste everybody's time, and then handed the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge this piece of paper. The member for Vaughan—Woodbridge dutifully did his job by reading the motion, and here we have it before us tonight.

Because the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge, on behalf of the PMO, would like a number of these questions answered, and so do we, I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after “that” and substituting the following:

That the 13th Report of the Standing Committee on Finance (recommendation not to proceed further with Bill C-240, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit — first aid)), presented to the House on Thursday, February 23, 2017, be not now concurred in but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Finance with the instruction to hear from further witnesses on the Bill.

I would encourage all members on that side of the House to support the amendment.

• (1930)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from across the floor for caring about Canadians and encouraging first aid. I put a motion forward about a year ago on behalf of a grade 11 student from my riding, from Mount Baker Secondary School in Cranbrook, looking to have first aid become part of the grade 11 curriculum in all schools across Canada as one of the ways of dealing with first aid. Education being provincial of course, I just left it as a motion.

However, I would like to read this concerning Bill C-240. In accordance with its order of reference on Wednesday, October 26, 2016, the Standing Committee on Finance considered Bill C-240, An

Act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit — first aid), and agreed on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 to report the following:

Whereas the Committee is generally supportive of the intent of Bill C-240 and feels that efforts to encourage individuals to complete first aid courses should be commended there are questions that arise about which Canadians would receive the benefit of the measures, as the tax credit is non-refundable and this can only be claimed if you have income; the cost to federal, provincial and territorial governments to administer the proposed changes to the Income Tax Act; the extent to which federal, provincial and territorial tax revenues would be affected by the proposed measure; the extent to which this type of measure should be designed only following extensive consultation with tax experts, first aid providers as well as federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments; whether these measures would realize the proposed aim of increasing first aid training participation when 67% of Canadians have already taken a first aid course (Red Cross, Ipsos Reid, 2012); the fact that existing policies mandate knowledge of first aid in the workforce, and all provinces and territories have legislated workplace requirements for employee training in first aid;

Therefore...this Committee, pursuant to Standing Order 97.1 recommends that the House of Commons do not proceed further with Bill C-240, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (tax credit — first aid).

• (1935)

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(2), the division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 29, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise tonight in adjournment proceedings to pursue a question I asked in the House on June 14 of this year. Adjournment proceedings is what we colloquially call within the House of Commons “late show”. The purpose of adjournment proceedings is to pursue an answer we received in question period that did not completely answer the question.

Adjournment Proceedings

One of the difficulties with this process is that quite often by the time we get a chance to pursue the answer a great deal of time has passed. I asked this question on June 14, and the Prime Minister's answer was not in any way evasive, but it did not fully respond to what I hoped to hear. Of course, that is not uncommon. However, I now address the question many months later and much has changed.

Let me first review the question I asked June 14, which was in relation to the upcoming G20 summit. There were a number of stories, particularly in the German press, that Canada was backing off full commitment to reference to the Paris accord in the communiqué, which was to be hosted by Chancellor Merkel. The speculation in the German press was that Canada was doing this to appease the U.S. administration. I was entirely pleased that the Prime Minister refuted these claims in the German press and that, in fact, the G20 summit communiqué was strongly in favour of commitment to the Paris accord, even though the U.S. made it clear that at least the executive of the U.S. government did not want to abide by the Paris accord, although it has not legally withdrawn and neither has it withdrawn from the United Nations framework convention on climate change.

Much has changed since then. I have just returned from COP23. The 23rd conference of the parties, in Bonn, took place over two weeks and ended in the wee hours this last Saturday at 7 a.m. As ever, climate negotiations are difficult. However, the negotiations in Bonn were hosted by the government of Fiji, an unusual proceeding, but it was the first time a low-lying island state from the Pacific could actually host a climate negotiation. This round of negotiations, despite the novelty of Fiji and the chair and the efforts by the Fijian presidency to raise the issues of the immediate, existential threats to low-lying island states, were fairly described as minimalistic, workmanlike, and achieved the bare minimum of what had to be done.

Right now, Canada is poised on the eve of taking the chairmanship of the G7. This is an amazing opportunity for Canada at this time, and I will set out why. I am particularly pleased that Government of Canada and the Prime Minister have said that three themes will emerge for Canada's presidency of the G7 and that one of them will be climate. This is also encouraging.

What is not encouraging at this point is the lack of progress and leadership since Paris. I am not pointing fingers at any one government, but there is clearly a lack of leadership globally. Chancellor Merkel has been very damaged by the last election in Germany. I know I speak for many who hope she will succeed in putting together a coalition government to avoid holding yet another election so soon in Germany, particularly in light of the frightening rise of the far right and anti-immigration, in fact, pretty close to Nazi party. We are looking at a situation where obviously the U.S. is not in leadership.

The world actually needs Canada to step up and show real leadership, which means not just saying we are leaders. It means updating our nationally determined contribution, pledging to deeper cuts in carbon, and pledging to better financing. This is the challenge we face tonight.

● (1940)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member mentioned, the original question actually related to the G20 and the G20 declaration. As she also mentioned, I am proud to note that Canada worked hard with its G20 partners to reaffirm the irreversibility of the Paris agreement and its strong commitment to take action. A number of concrete measures were outlined in the G20 communiqué relating to that.

Canada remains fully committed to playing a significant leadership role on the international stage with respect to addressing the incredibly important issue of climate change. On an international basis, the One Planet Summit coming up in France will be an opportunity for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada to once again demonstrate Canada's commitment to moving this issue forward on an international basis.

Domestically, Canada has developed, with the provinces and territories, the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, which provides a path through which we intend to meet or exceed the targets to which we have committed under the Paris agreement.

As we have said a number of times, the focus for us, unlike previous governments, is on ensuring we meet the targets to which we have committed and to the extent that we are able to make progress more rapidly, we will ratchet up our level of ambition.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, we have the report now from the Commissioner of the Environment within the Office of the Auditor General. The report makes it clear that at this point, Canada has not been developing plans to meet the 2020 Copenhagen target, and that on current projections, it is very difficult to see how we would meet our target.

Our target is actually too weak to be called a Paris target. It is the same target put forward by the previous government of Stephen Harper. This is not to blame anyone here. There is a global problem, in that if the totality of targets committed to by all governments were fully achieved at the moment, we would still not achieve the Paris target of not going above a 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature increase. We are looking at catastrophic levels of warming, two to three times more than our pledges.

We cannot wait to take the decision to increase the target and develop the plans to meet it.

● (1945)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows very well, the focus of the government is the 2030 target.

The government was elected in late 2015, and through the course of 2016, it developed, in co-operation with the provinces and territories, the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change. The focus of that document is on achieving the 2030 target. We will be taking concrete measures to ensure that we meet or exceed that goal.

Adjournment Proceedings

The hon. member is very familiar with the fact that many of the measures contained in the pan-Canadian framework relate to changes in the way that Canadians actually do things, which will require time and thought. If we are going to electrify significant portions of the transportation network, it will take time and infrastructure. If we are going to work towards accelerating the phase-out of coal, it will take time and thought and planning as to how we are going to replace that power.

The government is taking thoughtful and concrete steps to ensure that we are addressing climate change domestically, and we are playing a significant role to push forward the climate agenda internationally.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week it was revealed that the Liberals know that people who have fought for ISIS have returned to Canada. The first response from the Liberals about this was that they were going to provide “reintegration support” for these people. When asked about what this meant, the Prime Minister said that he was working to “ensure that resources are in place to facilitate disengagement from violent ideologies”, and that he was there to “help them disengage from this terrorist ideology.”

The problem with this response is that it fails to recognize that these people left Canada to fight for a terrorist death cult and have perpetrated terrorist attacks around the world, and claimed responsibility for attacks such as the one in Edmonton where a U-Haul van was used to brutalize Canadian citizens; sold Yazidi women as slaves on open markets, with thousands of these women still being held in captivity; perpetrated genocide; burnt people in cages; fought against members of the Canadian military; fought against members of our allies; and regularly and actively threaten and call for violence against Canadian citizens.

The first response of the government should not be figuring out how it will provide “reintegration support” for these people. Its response should be to figure out how it will surveil and contain them to ensure that they do not harm more people and, indeed, bring the full force of Canadian justice against them for fighting for a terrorist organization.

In 2013, our former Conservative government introduced legislation whereby an individual could be charged with leaving or attempting to leave the country with the intent of committing an act of terrorism. Today, the Liberals know there are people who have undertaken this very activity in Canada, and they are failing Canadians, first of all, by prioritizing reintegration support for these criminals and, second, refusing to send a message to the world that if a Canadian goes to fight for ISIS, Canada will punish them. This can be the only response to the Yazidis who have survived genocide at the hands of these people. This can be the only response to our American allies who are eyeing their northern border and wondering why we would do anything other than this. This can be the only response to Canadians who are watching this and wondering why the government is not doing more to keep them safe. This can be the only response to the men and women in Canada's military who have fought to contain this threat. This can be the only response to people and their families who have faced U-Haul vans, suicide bombs, a shooting in their place of work and of their family. This can be the

only response to millions of people whose lives have been impacted and uprooted by the vile acts of these people. Any other response is an injustice and cowardice that puts the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of victims and the safety of Canadians. That is wrong.

Therefore, I asked why the Prime Minister is promising reintegration support for these people instead of directing these resources to the victims of ISIS, to our military, and to efforts to surveil and bring these people to justice. Why has the Prime Minister provided two-year old data to Parliament regarding how many ISIS fighters are in the country? Why are the Liberals hiding this information? Why will the Prime Minister not provide more information on why the government is cancelling and revoking passports for people who are travelling?

We should not be sitting here talking about reintegration support, but about how we are making every effort to make Canada and Canadians safe, and to bring these people to justice.

• (1950)

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise to speak to this issue today.

Prior to being elected to become a member of this House, I had the privilege of serving as the chair of the national security committee. I also served on the national executive committee of the Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada. I have been very much involved in the combined effort the security services of this country have made, which has been a significant, and I think extraordinary, effort to maintain the safety of all our communities, so I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this. In particular, I am pleased to have the opportunity to reassure all Canadians.

The phenomenon of Canadians participating in terrorist activities overseas and then potentially returning to Canada remains a key priority for our government, and most importantly, for those who have been tasked with keeping us safe. Our highly skilled and professional security and intelligence agencies, which of course include the RCMP, CSIS, and many others across the country, are constantly working to identify, investigate, and respond to any potential threats. They respond using the full toolkit of measures, including the ability to conduct surveillance and lay criminal charges.

I would like to discuss some of those measures, but I would also like to remind this House that when we took office as the government in 2015, 60 Canadians had been identified who had returned from engaging in suspected terrorist activities overseas. Not one of those individuals had been charged during the term of that government. In fact, the previous government cut over a billion dollars from Canadian security services during its last term of office. Therefore, while I am willing to discuss the many ways we must deal with these returning extremist travellers, I would respectfully invite my colleagues from across the House to temper their indignation, in light of those facts.

Adjournment Proceedings

Among the ways in which security agencies deal with this phenomenon, the RCMP's National Security Joint Operations Centre coordinates with other relevant departments and agencies to ensure a robust response to high-risk travellers. Our National Police Services and other partner agencies pursue ongoing active investigations and do the difficult work of collecting the evidence necessary to bring criminal charges where that evidence exists.

We also have the passenger protection program, under which people who pose a threat can be denied boarding. As well, the Minister of Public Safety has the authority to cancel, revoke, and refuse Canadian passports on national security grounds. In addition, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service is mandated to identify, investigate, and provide advice to the government on the threats posed by returnees.

It would be entirely inappropriate to speak in this House in a public way about the specific operational details of precisely who is being monitored and how that is being conducted. To do so, in my opinion, would undermine these operations and thwart the very important efforts of our security services to keep us safe.

The hon. member and all Canadians should be confident that the agencies have the experience and skill required to deal with this situation. Their expertise is sought out and respected around the world, and it is put to great use here at home to keep all Canadians safe. I would encourage the hon. member to recognize the effectiveness of our security and intelligence services and their expertise in identifying, monitoring, and responding to threats. I encourage her, this House, and all Canadians to put their trust in the professionalism and good judgment of those who are tasked with keeping us safe.

While we do not anticipate a high influx of Canadians who have engaged in terrorism-related activity abroad returning to Canada, this is nevertheless a threat we take very seriously. I am confident that the RCMP, CSIS, and the CBSA also take this responsibility very seriously, as well as all the agencies and law enforcement partners they work with to keep us safe. They are taking the measures they need to take to address any potential threats and to keep Canadians safe.

I wish to assure all Canadians that they have some of the finest and most dedicated professionals looking out for their safety.

● (1955)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, it was the former Conservative government that put in place legislation to allow criminal charges against people who left the country to commit terrorist acts. It was our government that put in place stronger legislation to prevent terrorist acts from happening here in Canada. It is the Liberal government that is now watering down this legislation. Furthermore, it was our former Conservative government that invested heavily in a new national security framework and the Canadian military, and it is the Liberal government that is doing things like cutting benefits for people serving in Canada's armed forces.

What Canadians want to hear tonight is that the government is going to call it what it is. These people are terrorists. They need to be surveilled. They need to have the full force of the law thrown against them.

The numbers these people are citing are wrong. They are two years old. Tonight, in a Postmedia article, the author said that when he asked for those numbers, the government was referencing two-year-old data. This speaks to the fact that the Liberal government is not taking this threat seriously and is not calling them what they are.

My colleague, who used to be a former police chief, has said nothing about bringing these people to justice. It is all talking points and bafflelegab. Why? This government is weak and soft on protecting Canadians from threats of terror.

Mr. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, I might simply remind the member opposite that I have been involved in investigations that locked people up. I was responsible for the Toronto Police Service's involvement in the Toronto 18 investigation.

That said, I want to remind the House that addressing security threats requires a whole-of-government effort. Canada's national security agencies have the capacity for a robust and coordinated response, including preventing extremist travel and managing the risk posed by returnees. Our law enforcement and national security departments and agencies work very collaboratively together and with our global partners to address any threat posed to the security of Canada by any individual.

We are also monitoring broader trends in extremist travel to ensure that Canada's approach responds to current and emerging trends. While we recognize that preventing individuals from becoming radicalized in the first place must be a key part of our defence against terrorism and extremist ideologies, we remain committed to ensuring that our law enforcement and security agencies have the resources they need. Tough talk is not what keeps Canadians safe. It is effective and concerted actions by those who are tasked with security. We are making sure that the RCMP, CBSA, CSIS, and all of their partners have the resources and authority they require to keep us safe.

Talking tough and putting labels on this is not the most effective response. The most effective response is an intelligent approach to preventing these types of offences from taking place, and ensuring that in response to individuals who are identified as risks, we take all steps, not just the enforcement of the law, to prevent them from being a threat to our society.

TAXATION

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government was elected on a promise to grow the middle class and to help grow small business. Instead, Canadians have been left with massive deficits and ever-increasing debt, and a plan that only helps the government's rich Liberal cronies.

Adjournment Proceedings

Once in office, the Liberals cancelled the planned small business tax reductions and EI tax reductions. They increased payroll taxes and introduced a federal carbon tax. They cut tax-free savings account contributions in half, ended the public transit tax credit, added a new tax on Uber, and raised taxes on beer, wine, and spirits. Then they tried to tax employee discounts and health and dental benefits. They have even raised taxes on Canadians with diabetes and disabilities. In short, Canadians have been bamboozled.

However, it does not stop there. The Liberals then dropped their hot mess of a tax planning proposal that would raise taxes on job creators and entrepreneurs, in a blatant attack on small business owners.

We have heard from the finance minister that hard-working Canadians have to pay their so-called fair share, while well-connected Liberals continue to protect their millions. As it turns out, the personal fortunes of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are safe from these new tax proposals. They, along with their well-connected cronies, are not going to pay a cent more in taxes.

This is what the Liberals are trying to pass off as fair. I suppose this should not come as a surprise, as the Prime Minister infamously insulted hard-working small business owners during the election by saying that he knows “that a large percentage of small businesses are actually just ways for wealthier Canadians to save on their taxes...”.

On top of all of this, the Liberals have decided that the real problem, the real tax evaders, are hard-working small business owners, whose businesses are actually considered to be too small to be classified as small business. How does that make any sense? We are not talking about millionaire crony, Stephen Bronfman, the Prime Minister's personal friend and the Liberals' chief fundraiser, who was alleged in the paradise papers to be evading taxes. No, the Liberals are targeting small business owners for being too small. I wish I were exaggerating, because it sounds like a comedy of errors.

The Liberals claim they have not changed the active versus passive income rules, but they have issued a new interpretation of these rules that will adversely affect many small businesses, such as campgrounds, by arbitrarily assigning their income as passive income, when the amount of work involved is anything but passive. Many campgrounds and other small businesses are now receiving huge new tax bills, more than three times the rate of other small businesses, simply because they do not have five full-time, year-round employees to qualify for the small business tax rate. Again, the Liberals are trying to tell them that somehow they are too small to be a small business.

These tax bills will put many of these small businesses right out of business. A business that is considered too small should not be a reason to exclude anyone from this tax rate, especially when entrepreneurs are often a part of the daily operations of their small businesses.

Does the minister really have the gall to stand in this place while there is an ongoing investigation by the Ethics Commissioner and to call hard-working mom and pop shops, like campgrounds, tax evaders?

● (2000)

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that our government recognizes the major role of small businesses in job creation and economic development and in growing our middle class. Let me be clear, it is our government that is committed to reducing taxes on small businesses starting next year.

It would seem that my colleague on the other side has some confusion about the rules on how small business deduction applies to campgrounds and I am pleased to have this opportunity to clarify our government's position on this matter.

The hon. member opposite seems to be suggesting that this government has altered the rules. Let me be absolutely clear, the rules remain unchanged.

The small business deduction is a long-standing provision of the Canadian tax system. Generally, eligible businesses can claim the small business deduction on their first \$500,000 of active business income. The intention is to provide these businesses with more after-tax income so they can reinvest in their businesses and contribute to Canada's economic growth and job creation.

I would like to remind my hon. colleague across the floor that when his party was in power, consultations with stakeholder partners were held on this specific matter and his government chose not to propose any changes. If the member opposite has a problem with the law, perhaps he should ask his colleagues why they chose not to change it when they had the chance.

As the minister clearly demonstrated the facts on this file in her response to the member opposite's written question, of the over 20,000 small and medium-sized enterprises reviewed by the CRA last year, fewer than 20 businesses classified as recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps were denied the deduction.

Furthermore, the taxpayers who disagree with their tax assessments have recourse. They can file an objection, a process which is described on the Canada Revenue Agency's website. Perhaps the fewer than 20 businesses that were denied the deduction may want to go down that route.

We remain committed to making sure that small businesses have all the necessary information to determine whether they are eligible for the deduction. On its website, the agency provides information about the small business deduction including information specific to campground owners.

Adjournment Proceedings

Allow me to briefly outline the long-standing rules that apply to campgrounds so that everyone here may understand them more clearly. There are a number of conditions and corresponding requirements under the Income Tax Act that determine a business's eligibility for the small business deduction.

If the business's principal purpose is to earn income from renting out real estate, it is generally not eligible for the small business deduction unless it meets certain conditions. One of the conditions is that the business employs more than five full-time employees throughout the year. Again, I encourage people to visit the Canada Revenue Agency's website where these unchanged rules are explained in more detail.

I want to be absolutely clear that our government is strongly committed to supporting small businesses as we know that they create jobs and help strengthen the economy. Tax fairness for all Canadians is a priority for us.

• (2005)

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, more of the same bogus talking points I keep receiving over and over again, while what the member should probably do is go back to whoever wrote those talking points for her and let them know that actually, yes, it has changed. The reason we know that is because businesses are suddenly receiving huge new tax bills going back a number of tax years. She cannot stand here and say that things have not changed because those campground owners certainly are not going to believe that.

In terms of the consultations, in the last budget that we put out as the Conservative government, we did initiate consultations. Almost unanimously those consultations indicated there needed to be something fixed in this situation. Then the Liberal government came into power and in their first budget they cancelled those consultations without fixing the problem.

Now let us go back to those bogus talking points again because even the member's own colleagues do not believe those shameful excuses of talking points. The 2017 all-party pre-budget report from

the Standing Committee on Finance recommended that rules that target small businesses for being too small should be changed. The recommendation reads, "That the Government of Canada recognize the income earned by campgrounds and storage facilities as 'active business income' for the purpose of determining eligibility for the small business deduction."

Even the member's colleague, the Minister of Fisheries, knows the rules are unfair when he wrote to the Minister of National Revenue in June 2016 and asked that "the tax treatment of campgrounds be reviewed taking into account their specific circumstances".

Is the member opposite really going to stand here and say that somehow it is fair to tax campgrounds out of business simply for being too small, while the rich Liberal cronies reap all the benefits of their tax evasion?

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member did not hear me. Again, our government recognizes the major role of small businesses in job creation, economic development, and in growing our middle class. I would like to emphasize once again that we have not changed the rules surrounding the small business deduction and the same provisions still apply.

I would remind my hon. colleague that of the over 20,000 small and medium-sized businesses reviewed by CRA, less than 20 businesses classified as recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps were denied the deduction.

Again, we continue to work with Canadians and businesses so they receive the benefits and credits to which they are entitled.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:08 p.m.)

Canada Revenue Agency	
Mr. Dusseault	15428
Mrs. Lebouthillier	15428
Mr. Cullen	15428
Mrs. Lebouthillier	15428
Natural Resources	
Mr. Bagnell	15428
Mr. Carr	15428
Public Safety	
Mr. Paul-Hus	15428
Mr. Goodale	15429
Mr. Paul-Hus	15429
Mr. Goodale	15429
Mr. Motz	15429
Mr. Goodale	15429
Mr. Bezan	15429
Mr. Sajjan	15429
Indigenous Affairs	
Ms. Malcolmson	15429
Ms. Bennett	15429
Taxation	
Ms. Hardcastle	15430
Mrs. Lebouthillier	15430
Mr. Kelly	15430
Mrs. Lebouthillier	15430
Mr. Bernier	15430
Mrs. Lebouthillier	15430
International Trade	
Mr. O'Toole	15430
Ms. Freeland	15430
Infrastructure	
Ms. Tassi	15430
Mr. Sohi	15431
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Anderson	15431
Ms. Freeland	15431
The Environment	
Mr. Johns	15431
Ms. McKenna	15431
Rail Transportation	
Mr. Iacono	15431
Mr. Garneau	15431
Justice	
Mr. Lloyd	15431
Mr. Goodale	15431
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Boudrias	15432
Ms. Qualtrough	15432
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	15432
Point of Order	
Ethics	
Mr. Thériault	15432

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lamoureux	15433
Interparliamentary Delegations	
Ms. Alleslev	15433
Committees of the House	
Public Accounts	
Mr. Sorenson	15433
Finance	
Mr. Easter	15433
Foreign Affairs and International Development	
Mr. Nault	15433
2017 Special Olympics Winter Games Athletes	
Mr. Lamoureux	15433
Motion	15433
(Motion agreed to)	15434
Petitions	
Taxation	
Mrs. Gallant	15434
Religious Freedom	
Mr. Stetski	15434
Veterans	
Mr. Fillmore	15434
The Environment	
Mr. Genuis	15434
Religious Freedom	
Mr. Kmiec	15434
The Environment	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	15434
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	15434
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lamoureux	15434

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Cannabis Act	
Ms. Wilson-Raybould	15435
Bill C-45. Third reading	15435
Mr. Webber	15437
Mr. Davies	15437
Mr. Lamoureux	15438
Mr. Genuis	15438
Mr. Van Kesteren	15439
Amendment	15441
Mr. Blair	15441
Ms. Hardcastle	15441
Mr. Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	15442
Mr. Davies	15442
Mr. Lamoureux	15445
Mr. Genuis	15446
Mr. Stetski	15446
Mr. Schiefke	15447
Mr. Eglinski	15450
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	15450

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Sickle Cell Awareness Day Act

Bill S-211, Third reading	15450
Motion agreed to	15451

British Home Child Day

Mr. Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	15452
Motion	15452
Mr. Strahl	15454
Mr. Cannings	15454
Mr. Whalen	15454
Ms. Sgro	15454
Mr. Cannings	15456
Mr. Strahl	15457
Mr. Whalen	15458
Ms. Harder	15459

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Finance

Motion for concurrence	15460
------------------------------	-------

Mr. May (Cambridge)	15460
Mr. Liepert	15461
Amendment	15462
Mr. Stetski	15462
Division on amendment deferred	15462

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Environment

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	15462
Mr. Wilkinson	15463

Public Safety

Ms. Rempel	15464
Mr. Blair	15464

Taxation

Mr. Richards	15465
Ms. Khera	15466

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