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Monday, January 29, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 29, 2018

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS

The House resumed from November 9, 2017, consideration of the motion.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish everyone in this place a happy new year. It is great to be back. I am happy to be here today to participate in the debate on the motion before us, introduced by the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska. It is important to begin our new year thinking about issues of health and how we can look out for one another.

The motion calls on us to do two things: equip all RCMP vehicles with automated external defibrillators, or as we call them, AEDs; and ask the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to conduct a study to determine the availability of AEDs in first responder vehicles across Canada and make recommendations to the House in that regard, while respecting the jurisdiction of other levels or orders of government.

Obviously, the intent of the motion is good. It seeks to make positive change to improve public health, and I intend to support it.

AEDs are a valuable public health tool. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada estimates that 40,000 Canadians suffer from cardiac arrest each year, one person every 13 minutes. According to the City of Toronto's website, more than 2,500 people in the city suffer cardiac arrest in that city each year. In each of these instances, early access to a defibrillator can save a life.

Early exposure to cardiopulmonary resuscitation, which includes the use of AEDs, is critical for survival. Employing these actions one to three minutes after cardiac arrest can increase the chance of survival significantly. That is why their widespread public availability is so strongly advocated, and it is why it is important that front-line responders be authorized and trained to use them to help people in cardiac arrest.

There is no question that accessibility to and use of AEDs is an important public health issue. I am pleased that the motion calls for a study of this matter. I think that the study should come first so that we can ensure that we understand how to best deploy these devices, and in collaboration with provincial, territorial, and municipal partners, make sure that they are available in the best places so that we can save people's lives.

I would like to know, if we are going to buy a whole bunch of these defibrillators, whether police vehicles are the best place to put them, or would we save more lives by putting them in public places, such as malls, office buildings, and community centres?

In the community of Toronto—Danforth, which I represent, we have defibrillators in a wide range of places. We have them in all of our subway stations and at many of our parks, such as Dieppe Park, Monarch Park, Greenwood Park, Riverdale Park, and Withrow Park. We have them in community centres, such as S.H. Armstrong, Frankland, Matty Eckler, and Jimmie Simpson. We also have them in several schools.

An article published in the *Toronto Star* about a year ago referred to research done by two U of T researchers, Timothy Chan and Christopher Sun, that identified a top-ten list of prime locations for AEDs. It was interesting, because they are not the kinds of places one might normally think of top of mind. Their list included coffee shops, ATMs, and Green P parking lots in the city of Toronto. The research considered each of these locations, mainly because of the location of cardiac arrests but also because they needed to be somewhere people could locate them and access them quickly. Where would people know where to look quickly if they were trying to find one in an emergency? Just this morning I was searching on the website trying to locate where the AEDs are in my community, and they were not that easy to find if I were in an emergency situation.

While in my community of Toronto-Danforth we seem to have defibrillators in many public locations, I am asking people around the community if they know where they are and if they know how to use them. That is another piece we need to look at. We need to know not only that they are there but how to use them.

The motion refers to training. It is important to not only have defibrillators accessible but to ensure that people know how to find them quickly and use them so that they can save lives.

Private Members' Business

We should be open to the possibility that what the study called for in part b of the motion may change the way we approach part a. It is important to consider the study and to make sure we are making the right decisions as we go forward in making sure we buy defibrillators and put them in the right places.

Let me touch briefly on the existing use and availability of defibrillators within the RCMP, as that is something that is referred to specifically in the motion. The use of AEDs is approved in several operational policing areas, including by the emergency medical response team, in the divisional fitness and lifestyle programs, and where provincial policing standards require that one be available.

With respect to their availability in RCMP vehicles, that varies by division. A few regions have equipped some of their police vehicles with AEDs, but the number generally remains in the single digits. It is a very low number. At the same time, it is important to note that all RCMP members are trained in the use of AEDs found in public areas as part of their standard first aid training, and that is something they must retake every three years.

As the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska referenced in his motion, a study on the availability of AEDs in first responder vehicles across Canada would need to be mindful of the jurisdiction of other governments. As the police service provider for all provinces and territories, other than Ontario and Quebec, as well as some 150 municipalities, the vast majority of RCMP vehicles used for contract police services are paid for in large part by contract jurisdictions. Any equipment purchased by the RCMP for operational and officer safety requirements to deliver these services or as a result of police standards set by the contract jurisdictions are cost-shared under police service agreements. Given those facts, it stands to reason that provinces, territories, and municipalities would be front and centre in the discussion on whether to procure and deploy AEDs in RCMP vehicles within their jurisdictions.

In the interest of making a well-informed decision, it would also be wise to include other sectors in our study, namely health. Equipping first responder vehicles with AEDs is primarily a public health measure, so it is important to involve health as part of this discussion. We should do our due diligence in examining the worthy public health objective the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska has in mind through inclusive and comprehensive discussions with all stakeholders.

In my opening, when I was talking about what we have in Toronto and in Toronto—Danforth, I touched on the issue of the different needs that may exist and how they might actually vary from place to place. As it stands, there is a lack of empirical evidence about potential gaps in first responder needs as they relate to AED accessibility. We know that most RCMP vehicles do not have AEDs, but we do not know whether from a public health perspective it would be more effective to put a defibrillator in every police car or to increase the number of defibrillators in Canadian communities and continue to ensure that police know where they are and how to use them.

I wholeheartedly support the second part of the motion. A thorough study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security would go a long way in informing the action proposed in Motion No. 124. It would give us a factual picture of the

AED landscape in front-line vehicles across the country and their use and effectiveness, which would be a much-needed knowledge base. With that, the Government of Canada would be much better placed to develop new policies and standards and to understand the resource implications associated with the proposal to equip all RCMP vehicles with AEDs.

In summary, we strongly support the use of AEDs as an important life-saving tool. I am in favour of the proposal in the motion and the principles, and I look forward to the study it calls for. This is a wonderful way to start our session, thinking about how we can save lives and look out for one another across all of our communities.

• (1110)

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska, who was a fellow member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security for a little while. It feels like he was first elected ages ago. We talked about the kind of public safety issue today's motion addresses. Of course I support the motion. We fully agree that RCMP vehicles need to be equipped with defibrillators. This is an important public health issue that comes up a lot.

One of the good things the previous government did was make defibrillators available in arenas across Canada. That made a big difference. People vastly underestimate the number of lives lost, the number of human beings who die of heart attacks for no good reason other than the lack of an AED. Without these life-saving devices, every passing minute reduces a heart attack victim's chance of survival by 6% to 10%. That is huge.

An hon. member talked about the importance of ensuring that these devices are available in public buildings. That is great, but the problem is that 85% of cardiac arrests happen in people's homes. I do not think anyone would suggest putting defibrillators in every home in Canada, but we can take a step in the right direction by ensuring that all first responders have them. Paramedics might be the first group that comes to mind, but according to Éric Turcotte, a paramedic from the Arthabaska RCM, the home region of the motion's sponsor, the police are usually the first to arrive on scene in an emergency, which is why it is so important that the police be equipped with these devices.

In Ontario and Quebec, which have provincial police forces, it may not be quite as important for all RCMP vehicles to be equipped with this device. In the other Canadian provinces, however, especially in rural areas where the RCMP is the only police force, this is critically important.

Private Members' Business

Although I support the substance of the motion, I am not sure what direction the study could take. I know the motion mentions respect for the jurisdiction of other levels of government, but I have some qualms about asking our committee to start evaluating the way other governments equip their police officers. For example, I do not think it is a good idea for a committee in Ottawa to look into what equipment the Sûreté du Québec, the Quebec government, or municipalities put in their vehicles.

I should make it clear that I do not mean to criticize the intent of the motion. I simply wonder how we will proceed and what kind of conclusion we will draw. This is a public safety file, and when it comes to ensuring Canadians' health and safety, it is vital to avoid disputes over jurisdiction. However, it is also important to move forward in an appropriate and intelligent manner. Again, I am not questioning the intent of the motion. I am simply wondering out loud how we will go about doing this. This is certainly something the committee can do.

However, even though the Liberals support the motion, I have some concerns about their take on it. I do not want to make this a partisan issue, but much attention has been given to the part of the motion concerning the study by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. Let us not overlook the first part of the motion, which would have the government equipping all RCMP vehicles with automated external defibrillators within 12 months of the adoption of this motion. I am trying to figure out why there seems to be a lack of willingness to move this process along more quickly, rather than having the committee study, mainly because the Minister of Public Safety himself moved a motion in 2013 that was all but identical to this one, with an even broader scope. The minister clearly recognizes the need. He himself moved a similar motion as a private member.

• (1115)

I do not understand why we should delay the implementation of this measure. If this measure has the support of the House, I do not understand why we could not move forward according to the proposed timeline.

I will give a few examples pertaining to what I said about remote areas. The importance of providing this equipment to first responders in remote areas is pretty much self-evident. They are not close to major centres and public buildings that have such equipment.

Take, for example, a major centre like Ottawa. All police vehicles have been equipped with defibrillators since 2005. In Ontario, the heart attack survival rate is less than 6%. Since this equipment was installed in Ottawa, the survival rate has increased to 12%, or double the provincial average. Of course, we have to look at the other factors that also contributed to this telling statistic. However, we should not underestimate the impact this measure could have, especially if we consider the number of heart attacks that occur in people's homes and the importance of police responses.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the member for Richmond—Arthabaska for the work he accomplished when he was mayor of Victoriaville. I believe that is what primarily drove him to move his motion today. There was a significant increase in the availability of this equipment in the city and in the region. It became quite clear that it was important to set an example.

When we debate policies at the federal level, here in Ottawa, we often criticize how a policy may not have much of an impact. In the last election campaign, for example, the NDP proposed reinstating a federal minimum wage. Some said that it would not apply to all that many people. When the federal government establishes policies, it might set an example for other levels of government, once the effectiveness of certain measures is recognized. That is exactly what is at issue today.

As I said, the RCMP has a very broad scope of operations in the provinces, particularly in remote regions where it provides police services. However, municipal and provincial police forces do not yet have this sort of equipment. If we can prove that having this equipment has a significant impact on the survival rate in the event of cardiac arrest, then I think that we will have set an important example that could lead to positive and critical public policies. That is one reason why it is essential to put this measure in place. Let us not spend too much time studying the motion, even though that is also important.

I would like to talk about a less positive aspect of this issue, and that is the increase in the use of tasers by police officers. We know that the use of tasers is not always appropriate, that there is a lack of training, and that the use of tasers often raises public health and safety issues. There has been a lot of media coverage of various tragic incidents involving tasers that resulted in the death of certain individuals. The main cause of death in those cases was cardiac arrest.

We understand that the police are trying to find equipment that limits the use of firearms and other lethal weapons. The problem is that tasers can also be dangerous. That is just one more reason to equip police vehicles with defibrillators.

We could have a debate on the use of tasers, but that is not our goal here today. Since tasers are used, we think that equipping police vehicles with the device that could save the lives of those who go into cardiac arrest would reduce the number of tragic deaths.

In closing, I would like to commend my colleague. He did a tremendous amount of work on this issue in his previous political life, and he is continuing to build on that here in the House. I am pleased to support the motion. As I said, I have some questions regarding the implementation of the study. As a member of the committee in question, I am pleased to know that I will be actively involved in planning the study.

• (1120)

In the meantime, even though the motion mentions a study, it is important for everyone to recognize that we need to focus on the next 12 months and take concrete action.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am here today to discuss a motion that asks the government to follow the example of other Canadian police services by equipping all RCMP vehicles with automated external defibrillators, and save hundreds of lives each year. As deputy shadow minister for health, I have a responsibility to ensure that the government is providing adequate health resources, and access to this medical device is imperative for the health and safety of Canadians. I would like to thank my colleague Alain Rayes for bringing this motion forward as a result of his moving incident where his friend was able to survive cardiac arrest due to an AED.

The automatic external defibrillator, also known as AED, is a device intended to restart an individual's heart in the event of cardiac arrest. Cardiac arrest is the abrupt loss of heart function due to the heart's electrical system not functioning properly. When the heart stops beating, the patient has no blood or oxygen circulating. In that instance, every second counts more than the last as the brain cannot survive long in those conditions. An AED works by sending an electrical shock to the heart in an attempt to reset it so that it will beat properly once again. They are small, portable devices that can not only provide the electric shock but analyze the person's heart rhythm, determine whether a shock is actually needed, and even provide directions to the individual administering the device on a person. These are life-saving devices.

• (1125)

[Translation]

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, there are approximately 40,000 cardiac arrests in Canada each year. Eight in ten cardiac arrests occur in public places or at home, but only one in ten people survives a cardiac arrest that happens outside of a hospital. AEDs need to be easily accessible, because the chances of surviving a cardiac arrest double when early CPR is used in combination with an AED in the first few minutes.

AEDs are easy to use, not just for first responders, but for the general public as well. They come with voice prompts and a screen to help the user monitor and administer the electrical shock. They are safe, easy to use, and fast-acting. Installing AEDs in easily accessible locations in public places will save lives.

In some situations, police have a much faster response time than paramedics. Most homes and many public places do not have AEDs. That is why we depend on our emergency services to provide them. Ideally, there would be an AED in every police car, but we can start with RCMP cars. First responders play a vital role in our society, and this initiative is a great way to help them.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, imagine this: You are up at the cottage, and a loved one goes into cardiac arrest. You call 911 to get immediate medical assistance. The first person who arrives at the door is an RCMP officer, but you find out that the officer can only perform CPR and must wait for an ambulance or the fire department to arrive to provide an AED. While you endure the very long wait for either the fire department or an ambulance to arrive at your remote location, your loved one does not make it, because a small, simple device that anyone could use was not there. Fortunately, AEDs are placed in so

many public areas, such as shopping malls, schools, and the workplace, but we also need them where it makes sense the most, in the hands of all first responders.

AEDs are normally quite small and compact. They weigh four to five pounds and are smaller than a shoebox. Fortunately, I do not know what the inside of a police car looks like, but I imagine they would be able to fit in numerous places, such as in the trunk, under the front seat, or maybe even in the glovebox or the middle console. They would essentially go unnoticed until an emergency that requires one comes up. They are purchased in bulk at approximately \$1,000 apiece, and training costs are essentially zero because cops are already trained with this device.

Dozens of Canadian police forces, including the RCMP, already equip some of their patrol vehicles with AEDs, but this coverage is not complete. Based on the successes of municipal police departments that currently equip their patrol vehicles with AEDs, equipping all RCMP patrol vehicles with AEDs would save hundreds of lives every year.

The Ottawa Police Service equips all of its vehicles with AED devices and has a survival rate for sudden cardiac arrest double that of the provincial rate. Imagine the impact we could make by putting AEDs in RCMP vehicles across the country.

AED programs are important to Canadians and the Conservative Party of Canada, which is evident in the national automated external defibrillator, AED, initiative, which we implemented while we were in government. Promoting access to AEDs was a national initiative to install AEDs and provide training to those working in arenas across Canada. Our priority was to protect the health and safety of Canadians while encouraging active and healthy lifestyles. This program has installed 3,000 AEDs and trained 23,000 Canadians in their operation.

Putting AEDs in recreational facilities across the country just made sense, because individuals are at a higher risk for cardiac arrest during intense physical activity, such as playing hockey. This is especially so for people with unknown underlying cardiovascular disease risk factors, such as high blood pressure. Putting AEDs in RCMP vehicles is another initiative that just makes sense, because the RCMP is likely to have to respond to those emergencies and needs the right tools to best manage the situation.

We have a duty as parliamentarians to help protect Canadians and support our national police service. These devices are simple to use for almost all individuals, and the training is typically part of standard first aid training. They would be used to help save 40,000 Canadians who go into cardiac arrest each year. It is essential to have these as accessible as possible, as the chance of survival drastically decreases the longer it takes to administer that life-saving shock.

AEDs are especially important in the vehicles of rural RCMP officers as they are more likely to be the first people to respond to an emergency call, and treatment for cardiac arrest cannot always wait for an ambulance to arrive. The upfront costs are negligible, and training costs are virtually zero. It is astonishing, in fact, that this is not already in place. Other police forces across the country, including right here in Ottawa, have their vehicles equipped with AEDs. We have AEDs in recreational facilities across the country, but not with all first responders.

In conclusion, I am asking for the support of all parties to adopt this motion. We have a responsibility as federal parliamentarians, not just to RCMP officers but to the Canadian public, to keep Canadians safe and our first responders prepared.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate.

There being no further debate, the hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska has up to five minutes for his right of reply.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are nearing the end of the discussion and debate on the motion I was privileged to move in the House. It is not every day that we, as members and legislators, have the opportunity to move a motion or introduce a bill in this magnificent nation-building place. Today, as I think of all the work that has been done in Canada's Parliament on this file since I was elected a year and a half ago, I feel deeply moved.

Before I conclude the debate, I would like to thank each and every person who rose in the House to debate this issue, which I feel is of vital importance. The goal is to ensure that all emergency vehicles are equipped with defibrillators to save lives. I would like to thank the members of all political parties who took the time to participate. I would also like to thank all of the members and their staff who contributed to the debate by preparing notes and doing the necessary research. I know that everyone took this very seriously. I would also like to thank the members of all parties who offered me their support and told me they would support the bill when it comes to a vote, which I hope will be completely non-partisan.

I decided to introduce this bill in the House because before becoming an MP I was a mayor and I experienced firsthand how access to a defibrillator can make a difference. It helped save the life of one of my friends. He would not be alive today if some people had not bought this small device, which is worth about \$1,000, and installed it in an arena. With this device, first aid was administered quickly and the shock revived my friend Stéphane Campagna.

After this incident, in my capacity as mayor, I decided to launch an initiative in my municipality. With the powers at my disposal and

Private Members' Business

the help of council members and my staff, we equipped all the municipality's emergency vehicles. We worked with the Quebec provincial police, the municipal police, firefighters, paramedics, and volunteers who drive emergency vehicles in order to make defibrillators available at all times and as quickly as possible and to take them directly to peoples' homes.

It is important to note that 85% of cardiac arrests happen in people's homes. Once defibrillators are available in all vehicles, whoever arrives on scene first, be it the police, firefighters, or paramedics, can provide first aid as quickly as possible.

Let us keep up the momentum. Defibrillators have been placed in government buildings, sports centres, and offices in most municipalities. The next step is to put them in all vehicles so that people in the regions and people on vacation have the same chance of survival in the unfortunate event of cardiac arrest.

The motion proposes putting a defibrillator in all RCMP vehicles, the RCMP being the federal police force. Since the RCMP is not present in every region, I added item (b), which calls on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to undertake a study to determine the availability of AEDs in first responder vehicles across Canada and ensure that the necessary measures are taken following discussions with other levels of government, the municipalities, and the organizations in question, while respecting all jurisdictions.

Naturally, respecting jurisdictions at every level is something that is very important to me. I hope the committee will embrace that. I know that some people are concerned about that. However, I think the scope of the study called for in the motion needs to go beyond RCMP vehicles.

There are an estimated 40,000 heart attacks every year. The chances of surviving a heart attack diminish by 7% to 10% with each passing minute. In other words, there is a maximum window of 10 minutes for saving a person's life. Things only get worse with every minute and the chances of regaining a normal heartbeat and not having permanent damage from a heart attack and CPR diminish. I hope that, when it comes time to vote, members will think about all their constituents, a brother, sister, father, mother or friend who might end up in this situation. I hope that we can save lives through this motion. That is what I hope from the bottom of my heart.

• (1135)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, January 31, just before the time provided for private members' business.

[English]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Now we will suspend the proceedings until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:39 a.m.)

• (1200)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.) moved that Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today and speak to Bill C-65, introduced in November 2017. Bill C-65 demonstrates our government's commitment to eliminating harassment and violence in federal workplaces. We take this action because our government recognizes that safe workplaces, free of harassment and violence, are critical to the well-being of Canadian workers and critical to our agenda of a strong middle class. We have been powerfully reminded in Canada, and indeed around the world, that harassment and violence remain a common experience for people in the workplace; and Parliament Hill, our own workplace, is especially affected.

Parliament Hill features distinct power imbalances, which perpetuates a culture where people with a lot of power and prestige can use and have used that power to victimize the people who work so hard for us. It is a culture where people who are victims of harassment or sexual violence do not feel safe to bring those complaints forward. It is a place where these types of behaviours, abusive and harmful, are accepted and minimized and ignored. In fact, it is a place where often the victimized individual is blamed for the harassment that she herself has experienced. We are all familiar with this phrase: She brought it on herself. It is like many other

workplaces across Canada, especially those that have distinct power imbalances and a lack of strong policy that protects employees from harm. As it stands right now, people who have been victims of harassment or violence do not have suitable options for having their complaints heard, nor do they have options for resolving these very serious and often traumatic events. If they do come forward, they are often unsupported to manage the complex or difficult situations that they face as a result of the harassment that they have experienced.

Time is up. Things need to change. It starts with saying emphatically that it is never okay. It is never okay for someone to take advantage of a position of power to victimize another person. It is never okay that victims—far too often women, or young workers, or people of colour, or people from the LGBTQ2 community—have been forced to stay silent and keep their trauma to themselves. This has to stop.

I have heard heart-breaking experiences from staff members in this workplace and across the federal sector who do not know where to go when they have been victimized; who, after having followed a process, have felt that they were not taken seriously; who were asked to try again with their abuser and to avoid being in a room alone with the offender. I have spoken with many who have said that, after complaining, they were shunned, that they did not feel safe setting boundaries for themselves, and that their job and their reputation were threatened by their abuser, often much older and certainly more powerful than they. I have, sadly, heard stories of significant trauma and anxiety and of people who have left workplaces—ours, in particular—because they were certain they would not have a resolution for the abuse they were experiencing.

In our workplace here on Parliament Hill, it is no coincidence that we have so many of these stories of harassment and violence. In fact, the volume of these stories is directly tied to the distinct power imbalances in our workplace, which I spoke of earlier. Therefore, it is clear that we need to create safe workplaces, including right here, so that everyone can thrive; and the first and most critical step we as a government and society must take is to support survivors. We need to believe the people who are coming forward. We need to demonstrate that we hear them, that we take them seriously, that we are their allies, and that we are committed to ending this behaviour.

The #MeToo and Time's Up movements have helped women and other survivors from around the world to bring their stories forward and shine a spotlight on harassment and sexual violence. It is our responsibility to ensure that the light does not fade. We have an opportunity to act and to end the need for women to say “me too” in the future. No woman or any person in Canada should ever have to say “me too” again. That is why we are taking action with legislation.

Government Orders

However, we also know that this problem is too large to solve with legislation alone. Creating safe workplaces, free of violence and harassment, will take all Canadians working together to ensure that we change a culture that does indeed tolerate this behaviour. To change an abusive culture, good leadership is critical. I am very proud to be part of a government that has been very clear that harassment and sexual violence will not be tolerated.

• (1205)

The Prime Minister has shown time and again that he is not afraid to take action when needed, and has clearly demonstrated that he is an ally to survivors. It is this kind of courageous leadership that sets expectations in workplaces and begins to shift power and balances. When leaders set the tone and the expectation that people are safe in their workplace, it empowers people to stand up and say that harassment and sexual violence is not okay. It empowers people to take action.

It is this kind of leadership that will break down the patriarchal culture in which we live; designed by men, for men. If we want more women to lead, to build, and to create in Canada, we have to ensure they are respected and safe. It is our job as a government to stand up for the rights of all Canadians, especially women, people of colour, and the LGBTQ2 community, often those people with the least power, so they can live and work free of harassment and violence.

It is for this reason that we introduced Bill C-65 last year, after consulting with Canadians from across the country. Canadians have told us that incidents are still vastly under-reported. They have told us that when incidents are reported, and if there is even a follow up, it is unacceptable, ineffective, and flawed. In fact, 41% of the respondents told us that no attempt was made to resolve an incident they reported.

We also consulted with members of Parliament and senators. They made it clear that we all wanted to stop harassment and sexual violence, and support survivors.

Therefore, I am hopeful we will have the support of the other parties on this very important bill.

After our consultations, it became very clear that what was in place right now to protect Canadians in federally regulated workplaces from harassment and violence and to deal with it when it did happen was simply not enough and that we needed to do better.

Parts II and III of the Canada Labour Code deal with occupational safety and health and employment standards within the federal jurisdiction. Currently no comprehensive system is in place for preventing and dealing with incidents of harassment and sexual violence. What we have instead is a patchwork of laws and policies that address these issues within the federal jurisdiction.

For example, violence is dealt with in part II of the code, which covers occupational health and safety, and applies to all federally regulated workplaces, including the public service. However, sexual harassment is dealt with in part III, or the labour standard section, of the code, which does not cover public servants, only the federally regulated private sector. On top of that, our parliamentary workplaces are not covered at all.

During our consultations, Canadians told us that we needed to treat incidents of harassment and violence as a continuum of inappropriate behaviour. This continuum should span all the way from teasing to physical abuse. Right now too many people are falling through the cracks. Too often, when they report harassment and sexual violence, nothing happens. These experiences end up serving as a deterrent for others who are considering whether they should come forward and report an incident. All employees need to be protected and every incident needs to be dealt with quickly and effectively and seen through to resolution.

Legislation will not solve this problem alone. We need a culture shift, and government plays a critical role in shifting culture. It starts with a comprehensive approach that focuses on preventing these behaviours before they happen, responding effectively when they do occur, and supporting survivors after the fact. We need a new approach to dealing with harassment and violence that will better protect employees at all federally regulated workplaces from these unacceptable behaviours.

Therefore, Bill C-65 proposes amending existing provisions in the Canada Labour Code by replacing the patchwork of law and policies that address these issues within the federal jurisdiction and putting into place one comprehensive approach that takes the full spectrum of harassment and violence into consideration. The legislation would expand these policies to cover parliamentary workplaces, such as the Senate, the Library of Parliament, the House of Commons, and political staff on Parliament Hill.

There are three main pillars of the legislation: first, to prevent incidents of harassment and violence from occurring; second, to respond effectively to these incidents when they do occur; and, third, to support victims, survivors, and employers through the process.

• (1210)

Protecting employees by preventing these incidents from occurring in the first place is the foundation of this bill. The amendments we are proposing will explicitly require employers to prevent incidents of harassment and violence, and protect employees from these behaviours. It is time to treat harassment and sexual violence in the workplace the same way we treat other occupational health and safety hazards.

On this subject, I would like to note that we are also strengthening compliance and enforcement mechanisms under the Canada Labour Code, as announced in budget 2017.

The use of monetary penalties, the authority to publicly name violators, strengthened powers for inspectors, new recourse against reprisals, and improvements to the wage recovery process are just some of the changes announced to increase workplace health and safety and better protect workers' rights.

Our second pillar is focused on effectively responding to incidents if they do occur. With these proposed amendments, employers will be required to investigate, record, and report occurrences of harassment and violence.

Government Orders

Employees who believe they have been victims of harassment or violence or have witnessed these behaviours would be able to report the incidents to their employers and try to resolve the matters through informal means. However, if the complaint could not be resolved, the employer would be obligated to appoint a competent person to undertake an investigation. Once the competent person concluded his or her investigation and issued a report, the employer would be obligated to implement any recommendations or corrective measures set out in that report.

At any point in this process, if the employee believes that the employer has contravened any parts of the code or the regulations, he or she could file a complaint with the labour program and then labour program officials would investigate and take enforcement action if they found a contravention of the code or the regulations did occur. Details regarding the investigation would be fine-tuned and set out in the regulations.

These proposed amendments will also protect the privacy of employees, encouraging those who are victimized to come forward. This is vital to the success of this bill. We know that incidents are being under-reported due to fear of reprisal and the unfair but very real stigma associated with being a victim of harassment and sexual violence.

Our third pillar would require employers to support victims who would be affected by these incidents. We would also require employers to assist those who would need help to understand the new approach. The labour program would assist with education and support for complainants.

It should be noted that the proposed legislation in no way replaces or takes precedence over the Criminal Code of Canada. Some actions and offences require law enforcement intervention, and complainants always have the right to go to the police to report incidents.

Time is up. The time for inaction is indeed over. Bill C-65 would ensure that workers in federally regulated sectors, including right here on Parliament Hill, finally have the protections they need. It would ensure that those who are in vulnerable positions have a voice. It would ensure that those who still think harassment and sexual violence are acceptable in 2018 would be held accountable.

All people deserve to work in a safe workplace and they deserve to live free from harassment or violence. I ask that all my colleagues from both sides of the aisle show their support for the bill.

•(1215)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I applaud the minister for trying to make our workplaces free from harassment. I would also like to tell her that we will support this bill at second reading so that it can be improved in committee.

The minister talked a lot about victims in her speech. According to this bill, victims must first go to their employer, but victims are sometimes afraid of going to their employer, since the employer may be involved in the harassment.

Can the minister assure me that she will allow these victims to go directly to the Department of Employment, Workforce Development

and Labour investigator? Will she allocate the financial resources needed to ensure that victims can go to the department when they do not want to go to their employer, who may be the perpetrator?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member very much for his support of the proposed legislation. It is important that we work together. It is reassuring to hear that we indeed have parliamentarians broadly in support of legislation that would protect the most vulnerable in our workplaces.

On the member's question, absolutely. First, victims always have the right to go to law enforcement should they have a serious incident from which they feel they need protection. Second, more than that, employers would also be required, with employees, to select a list of alternative people who employees can turn to if in fact the victimizer is their employer. Third, if the resolution cannot happen through the employer, the employer and employee would have a list of competent people they could choose as a third party to investigate should that employee not get a resolution in the first attempt. Finally, at any point in the process, the victim of violence or harassment can come directly to the Labour Department, and we have sufficient resources to manage those complaints.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very insightful speech.

We have been discussing this topic here in the House for several months, and I know that many will be listening closely to our discussions today.

I would like to ask my colleague whether workplaces will have access to new funds for training. Training is essential to changing a culture and creating a healthy workplace for all those who work in telecommunications, airports, and federally regulated workplaces. Will there be financial assistance set aside for training?

I think that training is the key to change. As I mentioned, it will support investigations into allegations of sexual harassment.

I would also like to know where this money will be coming from.

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her support. It is reassuring to hear that all parties recognize we need to deal with this in a more comprehensive way.

We already are working on materials for employers to help them begin the work of training, prevention, and awareness. We have resources in place to cover the costs of doing so.

As I mentioned in my speech, through budget 2017, we have significantly added to our ability to investigate and follow up on complaints made to my department. We are very confident we have the resources we need to move forward on the legislation.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know every person deserves to be in a workplace where he or she is free from harassment and sexual violence. As leaders and a federal government, we need to be the ones who lead the way and take the first steps.

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As we know, every woman who comes forward is displaying tremendous courage. It is not an easy thing to do. For that woman, perhaps a young woman at the beginning of her career, how will the legislation make it easier for her to come forward, then actually see action from the fact she has had the tremendous courage to speak up?

• (1220)

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raises a very important point. Oftentimes those who are victimized are the ones who have the least experience, are the most vulnerable in a workplace, and who have the least security and power. That is exactly what the legislation is meant to address.

First, it sets a framework that focuses on prevention so all people know what their rights are in a workplace and that there is a strong policy in every federally regulated workplace that gives a clear framework for employees and employers about what the code of conduct is and how to prevent this.

Second, it would ensure there would be alternative mechanisms for a person to come forward with his or her complaint, maybe not the employer if the employer is the perpetrator. We have thoughtfully included that. We know that oftentimes, especially in small workplaces, it very well might be the employer who is the perpetrator. Building the obligation of the employer to have a list of alternate people is a critical component in ensuring people come forward.

Finally, the attention we have paid to ensuring privacy is protected is another really important piece of the legislation, one that is worthy of a mention. Many times we have heard that people come forward and they are shamed and stigmatized for their experiences. They are discouraged from moving forward in their career, or may be held back or there may be significant financial consequences. Having a process that ensures privacy of the victim is critically important.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like many in the House, I have been very concerned and upset by a number of the issues that have happened over the last number of months and, to be quite frank, over the last number of years.

I listened to the minister's speech, and she was right. Both systemic and cultural change will be important. I look forward to the bill going to committee to see how we can even make it better.

One thing concerns me, because we are looking at a continuum. We know the RCMP is available, but we have legislation by our former interim leader, which has sat in the Senate for months, on judges and their training. Ultimately, people who go through the process need to have confidence they will be heard through the justice system.

Would the member offer any encouragement for the Senate to move forward on that legislation? This is another piece of this important issue.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raises an important point. People have to have confidence in the system that is put in place to protect them, and of course, the Senate has its own process and its own timelines.

We believe that education and awareness is a critical component of that, and that includes the people who are doing the investigating and the deciding on cases of harassment and sexual violence. That is why we have focused so much in our legislation on education, on ensuring that there is strong policy, that employers know their obligations, and that employees know their rights.

We look forward to working with the member and hearing her thoughts through the committee process.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is such an important day for all of us, to be coming onto the same page at this moment in time, in our country and across the world. It is critical that we put our partisan hats to the side and do the very hard work that is necessary to ensure that this workplace is zero tolerance going forward. I applaud everyone who is getting up today to be a part of this debate. It is critical.

There are many tools that are needed in order to see this legislation go forward, but certainly even beyond that, I would like the minister to consider adopting 10-day paid leave for anyone who has been a victim of any type of harassment in their workplace. It is very important that they are able to have that time to deal with the fallout they are facing. We see women across our country being victimized all over again by social media and by people. We really need to advocate for them to have that time to be able to heal.

The other piece that is very important, and we will be bringing it forward, is a clear definition. This is the basis of all of the work we are doing. I implore the minister to adopt a clear definition in the legislation so that we will know exactly what we are facing going forward.

My question is about that definition. I hope the minister will entertain the amendments that will come forward about that.

• (1225)

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to those amendments, and of course we will consider them very closely. As I have said, I am open to considering any amendment that makes the legislation stronger, because, at the end of the day, I agree with my colleague. This is about setting a zero tolerance culture for harassment and violence.

In terms of why there is not a definition of harassment in the legislation, we felt it was critically important to include that in the regulations so that as we move forward with different forms of harassment, we can address those quickly and rapidly without having to turn to yet another debate about what harassment is. That is the intent. It was not in any way an attempt to limit the scope of harassment. As I said in my speech, it is the full scope, from bullying all to the way to physical violence or sexual violence.

I will briefly say that with the advent of new forms of social media, such as Snapchat, all kinds of things arise in an employee-employer situation, and we want the flexibility to be able to quickly add other forms of harassment as technology and our culture changes.

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Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what happens when power collides with sex? The government's response to this question and to more sexual harassment and assault allegations against politically powerful people coming to light was to schedule Bill C-65 for debate this week. The bill seeks to impose a new framework on Canadian employers, including members of Parliament, to prevent sexual harassment and assault. I suspect the bill will garner a large amount of support in the House. Its measures are laudable and it is a positive step in the right direction.

My colleagues in this place today will likely bring up aspects of the bill that they hope to see clarified and improved upon when the bill moves to the committee stage. That said, this measure, in and of itself, will not correct all the issues associated with the current state of affairs of sexual harassment and sexism on the Hill. This is not meant to be a knock against the legislation, but rather a call to action to have a more honest look at our current state of affairs on the Hill and to place an onus on all of us to do more to change the culture that allows sexual harassment to occur.

Let me set the scene. In Ottawa, in the sense of it being a nexus of power in Canada, it is an intense place. Leaders in all three branches of government, senior public servants, military leaders, the diplomatic corps, the Parliamentary Press Gallery, highly paid lobbyists, smart political staff, civil society, and business leaders all converge in one tightly confined space. They are all trying to accomplish big things. Many are assertive and ambitious. Many are highly skilled at their crafts. Many hold privileged positions of influence, and many think very highly of themselves. It is a highly tribal environment where information is a commodity and blind partisanship, conformity, loyalty, and acquiescence are often traits significantly valued above judgment, compassion, or acting with dignity.

When this context is taken and combined with prolonged or frequent absence from spouses, young guns who are both naive to the context and hungry to advance a career or a cause, jourmos that are chasing a scoop, people who just want to work and be left alone, and a whole bunch of workaholics who are single, or well on their way to getting there, the issue of what constitutes appropriate sexual behaviour becomes critical. Then, mix in alcohol. It is used to cope, to fit in, and as an excuse.

Further, all of us here are in precarious positions. Every time there is an election or a cabinet shuffle, everyone, all the people here, change. More importantly, this precariousness is rooted in the fact that we exist at the pleasure of our bosses, outside of the Canada Labour Code. At any moment, everyone here weighs the opportunity cost of making a complaint or committing a non-acquiescent action with the threat of quiet dismissal, being overlooked for a promotion, being shuffled out of a spot, having a nomination candidate quietly run against us, or not having our nomination papers signed at all. This is not unique to any political party, nor is the press corps immune to this either.

To say that there is a power imbalance here is an understatement. Further, for all the talk of feminism and pursuit of women's rights, there is not gender equality in the broader context of Parliament Hill. Women are still used as photo-op props, included for quotas or optics without having the authority of real decision-making

automatically attached to their perceived utility. For that, women have to fight, and fight hard, and put up with being accused of not being a team player, or being an "insert choice of gender expletive here" when they do. That is only for those of us who are lucky enough to have built a platform and a profile that allows us to do that without those in the top tiers of power having to take a bit of damage in order to suppress our voices.

Women are still touched. Our hair is still stroked. Our shoulders are still rubbed. We are still given hugs and cheek kisses that linger a bit too long. To fit in, we still laugh at the lewd jokes, and maybe even tell one ourselves to be considered safe to socialize with and to be considered "one of the boys".

Further, those who dare to raise issues of harassment are labelled as man-haters. Their sexual proclivities are questioned. Speculation abounds as to whether their sexual proclivities were even the cause of their experience. They are re-victimized over and over again. These things are used to control us, to demean us, and to silence us.

Then there are those who say, "Why don't you just stand up for yourself?" This morning, my former colleague, Megan Leslie recounted a story to me about being at an event where a senior male pulled her close to him and told a story to a group while holding her around the waist. She was asked by a reporter how she could have let this happen. She responded by saying, "There were four other men there. Why did they stay silent?" That is the problem. So many of us are bystanders to harassment, leaving a woman to, in Megan's words, "extract yourself with a laugh and some good-natured ribbing, then silently cry to yourself on your way home".

● (1230)

This takes me to what we need to do to change and move forward.

First, we cannot be bystanders any longer. All of us should demand that Parliament adopt a clear definition of sexual harassment, what the workplace extends to, and what consent means in the context of our workplace. Then all of us, interns, volunteers, MPs, ministers, staff, everyone, should be required to take mandatory training on how to prevent sexual harassment and also education on what sexual consent means. This training should be required to be completed on an ongoing annual basis, at a minimum.

Women here need to stand together regardless of political stripe, support each other as these claims occur, and demand that our leadership take action when they occur. Men need to call out their peers when harassment happens. MPs need to let their staff know that they have voices and that they should use them.

Using the whisper network, the gossip chain that we use to tell each other when we see something or hear something, can no longer be seen as the main way to manage incidents of harassment. It is a privileged system that does nothing to protect victims, nothing to empower them to come forward to report abuse, nothing to prevent violence, and nothing to prevent vexatious complaints from being made.

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Second, we need to dispel the myths of what consensual sex means in this environment. Is it possible for a drunk staffer to give consent for sex to a senior male within their workplace organization who aggressively propositions that staffer? Within any standard workplace code of conduct, the answer to that should be unequivocally no.

Today there was a report that at one critical point within my party this was a topic for debate, and that is disgusting. In that incident, media reports say that people sat around a very senior table and argued semantics around whether action in our workplace should be taken because criminal charges were not proceeded with. Those people should be ashamed of themselves and they should have no role or influence in this or in any political party, which brings me to the next point.

For the woman at the centre of this issue there was no process for anyone to file a “formal” complaint. Think about her decision-making process for a minute, weighing job security in the context of making a complaint in an ill-defined process against someone in an environment with high media scrutiny. A raised complaint like this should have been enough to effect some sort of change.

The trend in most of the allegations that have surfaced recently is that of older men preying on younger women. Age and level of experience works as another dynamic of power that is often at play. I would ask members to try to put themselves in their shoes for a moment. A person thinks she has finally gotten her foot in the door of what she hopes to be her new career only to be met with decisions she never thought she would have to make. Does she keep quiet to save her job? Will this hurt or help her career? If she tells someone, will she ever get to work in politics again? On and on it goes. It is an impossible choice that no one should have to make.

In these terrible situations we should be managing to justice, safety, and dignity, not to successful political issues management. This is why we need to build awareness of the new support system that has been put in place to allow Hill employees who experience harassment to report and seek some form of justice without fear of reprisal.

The aim here is to afford all parties involved in these incidents due process and to drive toward an end solution that appropriately responds with censure to any incident. This system should be reviewed for efficacy and improved over time. In doing so, it should be monitored to ensure that it stays arm's length from any political party influence, remains impartial, and is transparently scoped in its operation and desired outcome.

While it is very laudable, I do not think that this system will be enough. Political parties should also adopt formal codes of conduct and reporting processes regarding what they deem appropriate behaviour when it comes to sex, sexual harassment, and consent. All candidates and political staffers should be required to sign off and adhere to this code prior to being allowed to run or work for a party.

There should be consequences for breaking this code. I would go as far as saying that this should not be voluntary, that a political party should not be recognized with official party status unless it has one of these codes on its books. Having a system like this within each political party, in addition to the process that exists on the Hill,

would serve as a check and balance to ensure high standards are set and followed. It would probably be helpful if the Parliamentary Press Gallery did the same thing before credentialing its reporters.

Reporting systems and codes of conduct should enable people to know that, regardless of any other factor, they have the right to speak up for themselves and to call out harassment in the moment. We should all be able to walk confident in the fact that, if that is not possible, systems exist so that we can report concerns and get assistance in dealing with those concerns without fear of reprisal.

● (1235)

In the development of these codes of conduct, political actors should ensure that they do not shy away from stripping the taboo from the following questions, and should force a non-dogmatic conversation on the same: Can a direct report employee or an employee writ large truly give consent to a sexual act to their boss or to someone of a higher power influence? It is the same question, but for a reporter to a source, a lobbyist to a client or a minister, or a diplomat to a deputy minister: Should sexual relations be permissible in these situations at all? How can someone tell when a person of influence is using sexual advances or innuendo to silence or demean them as opposed to when someone legitimately wants to explore the possibility of an intimate liaison? Is there a difference, and should we even be having this conversation to begin with?

Third, we need to stop making incidents of sexism and harassment partisan question period fodder. Every time a woman gets up and pretends that her party is more virtuous than the other we set the bar back. We all need to use some judgment to create a culture that would eventually render the necessity of such a system moot.

This is where the electorate comes in. We need to collectively value guiding principles when it comes to sex and power, and ensure that the people we elect reflect the same. The electorate needs to have a zero tolerance policy as well for these types of incidents.

These principles include a recognition that we all have the right to our own sexual agency. In Canada, we have the legal right to control how and when we express our sexuality, and with whom. However, this does not mean acting in a way that removes someone else's dignity, or failing to obtain consent. Rather, it is understanding that consent can be withdrawn at any point, and that at no point is non-consensual activity legal nor is assault legal. While a certain sexual encounter might not be illegal, it does not make it right in the context of a workplace.

In practice, this means adhering to codes of conduct. It means constantly asking oneself about whether it is right to proposition someone, and question the appropriateness of the method by which it is done prior to doing so. It means seeking consent for this type of attention in and of itself. It means accepting rebukes with grace, deep respect, and love. It means accepting rebukes not with a way of seeing it as a challenge to try again.

Government Orders

Conversely, we need to show an understanding that consensual sexual activity does not absolve us of the societal, emotional, physical health, or financial consequences that might occur when engaging in consensual sexual behaviour. Regret for a consensual sexual liaison that occurs within the boundaries of legality and established codes of conduct does not constitute harassment or assault, and should not be used to make vexatious complaints that diminish the legitimacy of other survivors, backlog complaint systems, and unduly destroy the reputation of others.

This is yet another point that underscores the need to have functional codes of conduct with clear definitions of harassment and consent, clear reporting systems that undertake due process free of partisanship, with clear and measurable consequences that fit the severity of the incident. There are many models of best practice for these types of codes of practice in corporate Canada and in civil society. The fact that we are only starting to implement them shows how deeply entrenched the power imbalance on the Hill has been.

I cannot believe that we are having this conversation; I really cannot. Given the number of times in my career in the last six years that the number one media request in my inbox has been about someone committing some sort of indecency, or somebody trying to get a partisan comment on which party is more virtuous in terms of this, or how I feel about sexism, I am starting to say, why does just my voice have to be used on this? Why all of a sudden am I the key issue bearer? Why does every single one of my colleagues and the minister of labour have to stand up and talk about this when there are so many other issues? This should be common sense decency that we treat each other with.

We are spending the first day back on this issue. It is an important debate and I am not trying to diminish it; however, that we have to legislate this behaviour actually takes my voice away. It takes away my ability to talk about the economy or foreign affairs, or any other issue today.

The fact that there are people who feel it is within their purview to act badly, to use their power imbalance to silence and demean others is disgusting. The fact that there are people today who still look at women and the first thing they think of is political issues management is disgusting.

● (1240)

I do not want to make this a gender or heterosexual conversation because that would be completely misconstruing the context here. The fact that people feel they cannot report abuse or that they have to work and live with abuse says that we have not achieved gender equality, that we have not achieved some sort of utopia on feminism. Worst of all, we are sitting here with the privilege of having certain rights that other people in the world do not. I cannot imagine some woman, for example, a Yazidi sex slave survivor, watching this debate and saying, “Oh my God, are they really talking about this?”

This bill is not enough. It is a good step in the right direction, but we cannot legislate against bad behaviour. We cannot legislate against someone choosing to use their influence or power imbalance to diminish someone else. At the end of the day, we probably have to have more severe codes of conduct. It cannot just be within political parties here either. We all know that the #MeToo movement is going to head up to the press gallery, the lobbyist community, and the

diplomatic corps. We have all sat here and watched these things happen. If we do not have that more difficult conversation, if we do not strip away the taboo from doing this, we are not going to fix this problem and we will be here for more years talking about what else needs to change, and I am tired of it. I do not want to sit in this place and have this conversation again. I do not want another woman coming into my office on this. This needs to stop and it needs to stop now. It is the job of every person here and every person who is listening to take on that personal responsibility of putting dignity and human rights ahead of abuse or sexual desire.

Returning to Bill C-65, the Conservative Party supports this bill and will commit to carefully analyzing it in order to provide suggestions on areas where there needs to be improvement. Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment have no place in Canadian society, especially within our political system. As Conservatives, we want to ensure that the government focuses on supporting victims, as it has pledged to do. For example, there is a concern about the option of mediation as an avenue to solve harassment complaints. The government needs to be clear about the implications of the bill in such areas of concern. We want the government to be clear on questions of funding. For example, what will the budget be on the government's campaign to raise awareness on sexual harassment? We want an effective awareness campaign and we need to know how much and where we will spend this money.

I am sure this bill will be vigorously debated at committee. I am sure many experts will come forward to talk about why this bill is important or how it does not address all the gaps. But at the end of the day, what is not going to be discussed at committee, and I am sure we will talk about this again, is the individual responsibility of all us to stop being bystanders, to stop the whisper network, to be accountable for our actions, and when we see our colleagues or someone else behaving badly, to intervene. It means that we empower our staff, that we have their backs, that they do not have to put up with this garbage anymore. It means fundamentally changing the culture on the Hill. It means the organizers of Politics and the Pen, the parliamentary press gallery dinner, and the cocktail circuit all understand that this is the breeding ground for where this stuff happens and we need to rip the band-aid off of it. We need to stop pretending that somehow this legislation is going to magically fix bad behaviour.

Government Orders

•(1245)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by applauding my colleague. I find it tremendously sad that we have to stand here and have this debate in 2018, trying to turn it in a different way. It needed to happen. It should have happened many, many years ago. We should not have to have an open discussion in the House of Commons, but the reality is it is necessary to have the conversation or nothing is going to change. It is about changing a culture. It is about letting all of Canada know that none of us will stand by and allow someone else to be abused or mistreated without saying something. If we are going to make a cultural change, it means each and every one of us has to do that. Otherwise, 10 years from now, my daughter and others may be standing here having the same conversation. I do not want to see that happen.

I applaud your comments and recommendations that you put forward in such a constructive way, because it is not about partisan politics. This is about changing a behaviour and making this place safer for men and women. We are focused very much on sexual harassment of women, but let us be clear that there is a lot of harassment that goes on in a variety of workplaces, this one being no different. I did two years of work on sexual harassment in the RCMP and that was not only about women, it was also about lots of men.

I assume that my colleague is going to encourage all of her colleagues to take the training to make sure that all our colleagues are made aware that they have an obligation to stand up and protect others who are being intimidated. I would like to hear her comments on that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would like to remind hon. members to address their comments and questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her career on the Hill and for being a woman who has carved a path for many of us. She has probably had to deal with much of this throughout her career as well.

I do not know of a workplace nowadays where people do not have to take some sort of sexual harassment training. It is about how we perceive sex and sexual consent in a pluralistic society and there is a wide array of how people view that. At the end of the day there is only one acceptable course of action, to normalize and define what we mean by harassment. In preparing for this speech, I found that the Ontario government has a policy on this. Many workplaces have very clear and defined policies. There is no reason that we cannot adopt that.

We talk about harassment, but we also need to talk about what consent is. I remember giving a speech on the bill that dealt with the changes in prostitution laws. My whole thesis was that we fundamentally do not understand what sexual consent is in a cohesive way in this country. I remember a journalist tweeted asking me if what I wanted was a confetti cannon. No, and that is the point. There is such a limited understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and when we are confronted with something that is inappropriate, I go back to what Megan said, that the onus is on us to laugh it off or extract ourselves from the situation. There should be

frameworks and behavioural codes of conduct that prevent the person who is being abused from having to defend themselves. That behaviour should not have happened to begin with and we have a broader societal obligation to prevent it from happening. That means bosses, co-workers, friends, family, everyone, and this will not change, nothing will change, until we as a society embrace that principle writ large.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very insightful speech.

We have heard a lot about training. Many members of Parliament have to take training, and I would like my colleague to make suggestions. How do we get men and women involved in changing the culture? I am not talking about ministers or parliamentary secretaries; I am talking about all of us. After all, we are all people. We get training and we can make amendments, but what are practical things we should be doing? We agree that psychological, physical, or sexual harassment, and bullying are unacceptable.

What else should we be doing, as a group, to ensure, first, that this does not happen again here, on the Hill, to our employees, and then in every federally regulated workplace?

•(1250)

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying, and I have made the case, that this bill and the framework it presents are a step in the right direction.

In the context of the Hill, I presented a concrete example. All of our political parties here should have a formal code of conduct on the books that anybody interacting with the parties is required to be trained on and to sign off on before being able to carry the flag or do any work under our parties. That would prevent any ambiguity as to whether there was consent, or whether anything wrong actually happened.

There should be higher standards of behaviour. I look at this more from the perspective that we all know when something is wrong, like the guy who is rubbing his secretary's shoulders every day or the hug that lingers too long. We all know the hugger or the cheek kisser. We know when someone is saying something to our colleague or to us, such as, "Your hairstyle is making you look less attractive", or about our choice of clothing, this and that. I am now at a point in this career where people get the look and they know to back off. However, I am saying that from a position of power and influence. A 22-year-old staffer who comes here does not have that power and influence; he or she needs to learn it. Frankly, I do not like spending my day giving the finger and the death glare.

My colleague's question is good, but people should use their noodle and not be jerks. They should not get hammered with a bunch of junior staffers and get in a cab with one of them and go home. That is a basic understanding of the operating principles here.

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Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister brought up the fact that there needs to be a cultural shift in the whole country of Canada. To that point, I had introduced Motion No. 47, looking at the impacts of online sexual violence. A recent study showed that all of the top 88 videos viewed on the Internet over the last 10 years contained explicit sexual content and violence. Other studies show that 80% of the population is consuming this kind of content, and to some degree that will be lived out in real life. I was hoping to ask the minister directly what the government is going to do about that.

In a recent report from the committee on women's affairs, recommendation 5 states:

That the Government of Canada examine E-safety models or increased controls to prevent violent and degrading sexually explicit material from being accessed by youth under the age of majority and examine how violent and degrading sexually explicit material distorts young people's ideas of consent, gender equality and healthy relationships.

I was wondering if my colleague had any comments on that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I could have devoted a whole section of my speech to what the commodification of sex has done to this bad behaviour symptom, such as picking up the phone and swiping left. That is where a lot of us value sex today. In this context, we have to avoid moralizing about sexual behaviour in terms of how we deal with its appropriateness. This is the reason I said in my speech that we all have a right to our own sexual agency in this country.

To my colleague's point about the commodification of sex, we cannot ignore the fact that it has spread a bit of an environment where people think that bad behaviour is acceptable, that it is no longer as socially taboo to do some of the things that we have heard have happened. Sometimes I worry that a woman's sexual agency is being used as an excuse, such as, "She had the right to do it, and she wanted it." Therefore, I think my colleague's question is very relevant. A lot of these issues tie into the same sphere. However, we have to stop being so prudish and so quiet about how we talk about sex, and get real about how it affects our workplace.

• (1255)

[Translation]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-65 to prevent harassment and violence in the workplace was introduced for first reading on November 7, 2017.

This is an extremely important piece of legislation, and we see this as a step in the right direction with respect to these crucial issues. As the new labour critic for the NDP, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-65 to address harassment and violence in the workplace.

This bill was developed in response to the many highly publicized cases of sexual assault that have occurred around the world. In the present context and in the wake of the global #MeToo and Time's Up movements, now more than ever, Canada must be a champion and a leader in ensuring that our workplaces are safe and free from harassment and violence.

Canada already has some of the best legislation in the world against sexual violence. Still, comprehensive legislation is needed to

further enhance protections for workers against physical, sexual, and psychological violence in the workplace.

Psychological harassment deserves special attention. According to the International Labour Organization, psychological harassment is an increasingly common form of workplace violence. Universities and unions such as Teamsters have also spoken out against it.

Just three months ago in my riding in the Saguenay, a scandal broke at the Centre de formation professionnelle de Jonquière. Six instructors and former instructors spoke to the media about how the work environment at that teaching institution had been intolerable for over a decade. Cases of harassment and exclusion are no longer rare; they are becoming more and more common.

We know this is due to profound changes in how we organize work, in working conditions, and in management styles in recent decades. The rules governing a labour market that is now more demanding in terms of flexibility and productivity make workers more vulnerable and, in recent years, have helped enable cases of psychological harassment.

Unfortunately, Machiavelli's famous maxim "divide and conquer" seems to be the order of the day in a context where professional burnout and workplace stress and hardship have been normalized. Asking for respect and dignity at work is not a luxury, it is a fundamental right.

In addition to psychological harassment, workplace violence and harassment also merit our attention. According to the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, workplace violence and harassment, whether psychological, physical, or sexual, have become an epidemic and the impact on the daily lives and mental health of workers across the country is quite clear.

An Abacus Data survey released in November shows that close to half of Canadian women say they have experienced some form of sexual harassment at work. One in ten Canadians report that this type of harassment is quite common at their workplace and nearly half of them say they have been harassed by a person in a position of authority. Not surprisingly, low-income workers in precarious jobs, as well as racialized and queer women are more likely to be harassed at work.

• (1300)

Still today, those who engage in workplace harassment rarely suffer the consequences of their behaviour. For example, the director of the women's department at Unifor, Lisa Kelly, recently indicated that all too often those who point out problems and seek help continue to suffer reprisals.

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That is unacceptable. Sexual, physical, psychological, or emotional harassment or violence in the workplace must not be tolerated. Our leader, Jagmeet Singh, took the same firm stand on this issue a few weeks ago when he announced his zero tolerance policy for such behaviour.

The NDP wants all working men and women in Canada to feel safe and protected from sexual, physical, and psychological violence or harassment in their workplace. That is why we support the global initiative to enhance protections against harassment and violence in the workplace. That is also why we are working with women's rights and social justice organizations to ensure that the policies that are put in place have a real impact and make the safety of all workers a priority.

Bill C-65 seeks to establish an investigative process that would allow workers and employers to better address allegations of bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment. The bill sets out two similar approaches for parliamentary and government workplaces. Once passed, this bill will apply to all federally regulated workplaces, including the banking, telecommunications, and transport sectors, which account for nearly 8% of the Canadian workforce. Whereas the Canada Labour Code currently provides for separate frameworks for dealing with workplace violence and sexual harassment, Bill C-65 would merge those labour standards. Bill C-65 would also implement strict rules to protect the privacy of victims of harassment or violence. These rules would also apply to parliamentarians, their employees, and other staff on Parliament Hill.

The NDP has always fought for better protections for workers. That is why we strongly support expanding legal provisions to reduce workplace violence and harassment, which should not be tolerated under any circumstances. Although we agree with the intent of Bill C-65, we feel it has some flaws and does not go far enough. It would require many amendments to achieve the desired results and offer the kind of protection that Canadian workers expect.

We still do not know exactly how this bill will improve the process for reporting harassment, how it will minimize harm, how it will interact with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, or how it will protect the anonymity of victims of workplace harassment or violence.

It is also unclear how the implementation of Bill C-65 will be properly funded. That is why some of the bill's provisions should be studied further.

First of all, even though this bill claims to tackle harassment and violence, those terms are not defined anywhere in Bill C-65, the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, or the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1. Only sexual harassment is defined in the Canada Labour Code.

• (1305)

A long list of steps and processes to combat certain inappropriate behaviours is being put forward. However, there is no definition of this behaviour anywhere, which does not bode well for the government's objective of creating a model policy to deal with sexual harassment.

If the government really wants to eradicate violence and harassment, why would it rely on the regulatory process to produce these definitions instead of introducing a clear bill?

What hope does the government have of eliminating harassment and violence from the workplace if it does not clearly define the behaviour to be eliminated?

By not providing an explicit definition, the government is asking us to blindly vote for an important and yet extremely vague bill that could be subsequently amended without consultation. That is not what we want. These terms must be clearly defined for both the employer and the employees to ensure that these measures can be implemented effectively.

Sure, definitions in bills narrow the interpretations of a particular word or anticipate potential interpretations. Sure, if we add definitions, this means that other potential or future circumstances may not be included in the bill. However, though it may be wise, in some circumstances, not to provide too many definitions, in this case, it is not legally binding if we leave the definitions of harassment and violence up to the regulations. These definitions would ultimately be set through jurisprudence or, in some cases, by tribunals responsible for workplaces under the Canada Labour Code.

I want to bring up a second major problem. In the past, the federal government has missed—and yes, I said “missed”—opportunities to ensure that victims of physical, sexual, or psychological violence have access to leave after the incident.

Why does the government not create a 10-day paid leave for victims of workplace harassment? The government should take this opportunity to integrate a 10-day paid leave into the bill, as suggested by the majority of organizations working to end gender-based violence.

Also, will there be the necessary personnel and training to go along with the legislation?

Ten days of paid leave is not very much. Anyone who is the victim of psychological harassment, violence, or sexual harassment is affected for life. The bill should include leave for victims in order to help them in the immediate aftermath of the incident.

I would also like to add that if workplace inspectors are called upon in the process, we need to ensure that enough inspectors are available and that they receive the specialized training needed to enforce the new measures. Since they would have to lead investigations, it is important that these individuals be properly trained and capable of leading them. Since many of these cases involve prejudice, people who are not properly trained could negatively affect the investigation and cause long-term harmful effects for the victims.

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Details are also needed regarding the availability and source of new funding in order to ensure that workplaces have the resources they need to provide the necessary support and investigate all allegations of sexual harassment.

• (1310)

Without that, the bill's effectiveness could be seriously undermined. Declaring new rights without providing resources to enforce them does absolutely nothing to enhance the protection of workers and ensure safe workplaces. The government therefore still needs to tell us how much money will be allocated to implementing these measures, especially since they will be combined with an extensive awareness campaign to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes.

Harassment and violence in the workplace must never be tolerated, but when it does occur, the process must be transparent for all parties and recourse must be clear. The legislation must give everyone involved the right to be informed of the status of their complaint. In addition, the individuals involved must be given sufficient representation, as noted by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada.

The current bill does not elaborate on any of that, which leaves us with some questions. What real recourse does Bill C-65 offer to victims of harassment or assault? Will workers have the right to access information about their complaint? As the national vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada said in November, in the context of allegations of sexual harassment in Hollywood and around the world, it is disappointing to see a bill on sexual harassment and violence which fails to provide a remedy for victims.

It is also not clear to us how the government plans to implement strict privacy rules while also allowing federally regulated workplaces, including Parliament, to rely on qualified persons from the same work environment to help resolve the situation. It seems obvious that the privacy of the complainant cannot be guaranteed if the so-called qualified person selected to play the role of mediator can be a colleague.

The final concern I want to raise is about how this legislation will affect the role of the Canadian Human Rights Commission with respect to the solutions it provides and the resolution of complaints that are not covered under the Canada Labour Code but are dealt with by the commission or in collective agreements. How will Bill C-65 interact with the Canadian Human Rights Act or existing collective agreement provisions such as those relating to third-party arbitration? Bill C-65 would have more teeth if it guaranteed all workers in this country the same level of protection.

I have much more to say about Bill C-65, but I see that I am running out of time. Considering everything members said at second reading, I would like to conclude by saying that, despite the many recent global initiatives encouraging people to come forward about sexual harassment, some women and men still find it difficult to speak up. The words seem to get stuck in their throats, something prevents them from reporting what they have buried so deeply inside themselves. Words, deeds, emotions, held captive. Why do so many hold back? Lack of faith in our legal system and confusion about how various types of harassment are defined have a lot to do with it.

If this bill is to succeed at curbing these behaviours, it is crucial, as I said, that we define them.

• (1315)

It is up to the government to answer all of these questions quickly and find real solutions so that all Canadians can finally get the safe work environment they deserve and are entitled to.

[*English*]

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful way to start off the new year. We have members from all political parties talking about what is a very important issue to all Canadians. In listening to the many comments made so far this morning and this afternoon, there seems to be a great willingness to see that positive debate continue here and also at the committee stage.

My question for my colleague would be on why it is so important that when we have this debate, it is not about one party winning over another party or anything of this nature. It is looking at an issue we all hold very close to our hearts. We understand the importance of it to all Canadians.

Could the member provide her thoughts on some of the discussion, questions and answers, and speeches that have been made, where we have seen a good, healthy discussion on a very important issue to all Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. It is important to have non-partisan debate in the House. Throughout this debate, I have been thinking only of the victims, because they are the people we represent. It may be 2018, but we still need to address this issue, which remains relevant as other major allegations have recently emerged.

Parliament represents all Canadians, not just those in a particular riding. We need to lead by example. We are here to amend laws and make changes. If we are the first to break the law, what kind of example are we setting for the public?

It is important to have this debate here, because that is the whole reason we are here. We need to discuss the bill, but most of all, we need to move on and take action in a non-partisan way. All the men and women who work on or off Parliament Hill need to pledge to file a report anytime they witness wrongdoing. We need to take this training in order to change the culture and stop this kind of thing from happening again.

Changing the culture is important and is something we still need to work on in 2018, since there are still tons of examples in the news. It is vital for all men and all women to work together and commit to contributing to and participating in changing the culture.

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Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her articulate speech. She is very well suited to address this topic. She is well versed in labour relations and she is a woman. Every member of the House can be proud of the tone of this debate.

Obviously, everyone supports good initiatives. Fortunately, my colleague took the time to conclude her speech by acknowledging the need to help people talk about this subject. She then immediately switched to the need for more definitions in the bill. I think about the #EtMaintenant movement. My own daughter has been handing out yellow hearts in bars to raise men's awareness of the situation. My colleague also touched on awareness raising in her speech. However, the definitions are crucial because without them there can be no awareness raising.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on that.

• (1320)

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I will use the opportunity given to me today to commend the Et Maintenant movement.

It is a very good initiative. People are asked to wear a yellow heart as a reminder of what needs to change and what we need to do. It is a good way to break the ice and engage in the conversation. The drive and enthusiasm of these women and their initiative reflect the desire to see a cultural shift and to prevent further complaints and court appearances. I am talking about men and women because men are also victims of psychological and sexual violence. It is important to make that clear. The Et Maintenant movement is for everyone and is a good way to initiate a change in culture.

Whenever someone wears a yellow heart, it might remind people to pay attention, to be aware, and to abide by the saying that you must know where you are coming from to know where you are going. That is also an important element of the yellow heart, which I believe is a good symbol. I hope that the movement will grow right across Canada. This is just the beginning.

With regard to Bill C-65, I want to stress that training is crucial. We must provide the information, but also train employers and employees. By talking and working together we will really make this culture shift happen.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate all members who are giving non-partisan speeches today. This is a matter that affects everyone, both men and women. First and foremost it affects human beings.

In this place, we are politicians and we work on legislation. However, we must not speak just to politicians, but also to ordinary people, the men and women who work for us, of course, and those who work in the public, parapublic, and private sectors. We must change the mentality. I want to congratulate my NDP colleague for her excellent speech.

I have read the bill and I completely agree that it needs to be discussed. However, we need to take action now. This bill is a good start, but now we need to beef it up in order to make it more substantial and ensure everyone can support it.

One thing bothered me, and I am wondering if it bothered you as well. Should exemptions be defined in the bill? I think that exemptions cause a lot of confusion, and this could mean losing the bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I remind members that they must address their questions or comments to the Chair and not directly to members.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mr. Speaker, sometimes these discussions can make us feel as though we are chatting in the lobby.

I thank my colleague for her very insightful comments. It bothers me as well, and I think this will have to be discussed in committee. The NDP has a number of amendments to make to Bill C-65. This is not about scoring points. This is about teamwork and commitments. I urge the government to work together to ensure that the NDP's proposed amendments are recognized and accepted. Often, committee members want to make amendments and work, in good faith, as a team. However, this is not what happens.

Today's discussion is quite passionate. Everyone has good intentions, but this needs to carry over into committee so that we can actually get things done. Members are talking about making commitments. I think this will be the right approach. Once again, I urge the government to consider the amendments that the NDP is going to propose, to work as a team, and then to take action.

• (1325)

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

I am very honoured to have the opportunity to talk today about Bill C-65. Our government ran on a commitment to take action on workplace harassment and violence, and I am extremely proud of this first step we are taking in the House today.

All of us here in the House, no matter our political allegiances, have a unique opportunity. Today we can join forces and take a stand together. We can send a strong message to all Canadians that workplace harassment and sexual violence is unacceptable, period, and that it will not be tolerated any longer.

Sexual harassment and violence in the workplace is nothing new. Certainly in my career I have experienced sexual harassment and bullying. I think it would be difficult to find a woman who has not, to one degree or another.

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I am particularly pleased that this proposed legislation would also include MP staff, which is a group I feel is particularly vulnerable because of the nature of their work on the Hill. I certainly experienced it. My first job after university was right here in this place working for a true gentleman, London West MP John Burghardt. I recall one incident in particular when, after an evening reception, a male MP made completely inappropriate sexual advances toward me. I walked out and never told anyone, including my boss, because I was fearful of the consequences to my career and to my reputation.

Sadly, little has changed since the early 1980s. The power dynamic that exists on the Hill makes it a workplace that is a perfect storm for harassment and bullying. I worry about our staff, in particular our female staff, and I echo the comments made by my colleague from Milton. If staff members have an issue, regardless of party, they should not hesitate to come to me to talk about it.

High-profile cases are dominating the headlines day after day. The problem is both pervasive and far-reaching. In fact, just more than one in 10 Canadians say that sexual harassment is “really quite common” in their workplace. Another 44% say that, while it is infrequent, it does happen. I suspect those statistics are quite low.

The hashtag movements, #MeToo, #AfterMeToo, and Time’s Up, are the result of people, women and men, who thought it was important to show the world how pervasive and common harassment and sexual violence are in our lives, and they found the courage and strength to speak up.

Make no mistake; workplace harassment and sexual violence exist not only in high-profile professions but everywhere around us. The reality is that it has always been everywhere. We just ignored it or simply looked the other way, because of fear of reprisals or being labelled a troublemaker, or because norms in the industry made us feel we had no choice.

We know that harassers and abusers have used their power and influence to indulge in behaviours that were not only thinly veiled but generally accepted by their colleagues. The difference now is that not only are survivors speaking up but we are opening our eyes and paying attention. We are talking about just how pervasive harassment and sexual violence really is, and how important it is that we do everything we can to eliminate it.

There is momentum right now, and we must take advantage of it because it gives us a unique opportunity. Our government is taking action to do just that. In November, our government released a report on what we heard during consultations on workplace harassment and sexual violence. With Bill C-65, we would take strong action to ensure that federal workplaces are free from these unacceptable behaviours.

Our government is seeking unanimous consent on this bill, and I am hopeful that this proposed legislation will be endorsed by all members. I am also hopeful that we can join forces to send a clear message to Canadians that harassment and sexual violence in the workplace or anywhere are intolerable and unacceptable. This message should come not from one political party but from all parties. We can show Canadians that we are united in our intention to put a stop to workplace harassment and violence.

When people come forward, they need to know that they will be protected and supported through strong measures and that their careers will not suffer as a result. It is our responsibility as parliamentarians to put these measures in place. Canadians need to feel safe at work, regardless of where they work and for whom they work, and that applies to employers and workplaces across Canada, including the federal public service and right here on Parliament Hill.

Recently I had the privilege of visiting five corrections facilities in Edmonton and speaking with the dedicated staff who work there. The situation at Edmonton Institution for men was a cesspool of bullying, violence, and sexual harassment—an environment so toxic that the independent report said that there would be great challenges in changing the culture there. Significant steps have been taken, but the road to recovery will be challenging.

• (1330)

I had the opportunity to speak to some of those who had worked throughout the years in this toxic workplace. When I asked one female parole officer if she had hope that the situation would improve, she looked at me and said that I was it. As federal corrections officers, these staff would be covered by Bill C-65, and they deserve our support. We owe it to them and to employees across Canada to ensure they can go to work every day and know they will be safe from a culture of bullying and sexual harassment.

Bill C-65 would give employers the tools they need to adequately address and deal with harassment and violence, including sexual violence, in the workplace. We are also strengthening compliance and enforcement mechanisms under the Canada Labour Code in order to increase workplace health and safety, and better protect workers' rights. The use of monetary penalties and the authority to publicly name violators are just some of the changes announced to make workplaces healthy, safe, and productive places.

Bill C-65 is based on our research, on our consultation, and on what Canadians have said they need when it comes to preventing and dealing with harassment and sexual violence in the workplace.

Last year, we released the report “Harassment and Sexual Violence: What We Heard”, which summarizes a series of engagement activities we undertook with the Canadian public, unions, employers, non-governmental organizations, academics, and other experts. We made sure that a wide range of voices were heard to support evidence-based policy development and implementation, and held online public consultations as well as a series of round tables with stakeholders and experts.

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Some of the findings were striking. Of the more than 1,300 people who responded to our online survey, a full 60% reported having experienced harassment, 30% said they experienced sexual harassment, 21% reported experiencing violence, and three per cent said they had experienced sexual violence. Incidents are under-reported, often due to fear of retaliation. When they are reported, incidents are not dealt with effectively. Some 41% of survey respondents stated that no attempt was made to resolve an incident they reported. Women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment, and people with disabilities and members of visible minority groups are more likely to experience harassment than other groups.

It comes down to this: workplace harassment and sexual violence are unacceptable behaviours that have been going on for too long. Canadians want and need their government to do something about it and to lead the way. That is exactly what we are doing in Bill C-65. I am asking each of the members of Parliament in this place to rise to the occasion being presented to us today. Take a stand and show constituents that we care about making workplaces safer for everyone.

While this issue continues to make headlines, we must ensure it is not a popular movement that will fade away before any real changes are made. We need to do something now to correct the course we have been on for too long. I recently read a comment by former journalist Jennifer Mossop who stated that it is time. It is time for mutual respect and genuine and sincere public discourse to take us to the next level.

This needs to end now. Bill C-65 is going to help make that happen. Let us all support it together. It is time.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that earlier the minister talked about changing the culture, and not only changing the culture in this place but changing it across Canada, in all corners. I know I introduced that, and I also introduced Motion No. 147 for the health committee to do a study on online sexual violence and how that affects men, women, and children. To her credit, the status of women committee has recently put out a report. Recommendation 5 from that report states:

That the Government of Canada examine E-safety models or increased controls to prevent violent and degrading sexually explicit material from being accessed by youth under the age of majority and examine how violent and degrading sexually explicit material distorts young people's ideas of consent, gender equality and healthy relationships.

Does the member have an idea of what the government plans to do with this recommendation?

• (1335)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. We did a lot of work studying violence against young women and girls. Certainly cyber-violence was a large part of that, and the fact that young women and girls are subjected to unprecedented violence online. We mistakenly often call it cyber-bullying, and we need to call it out for what it really is, which is cyber-violence.

We looked at a number of models. He is correct: that model was one we recommended. The government, as part of a broader package of looking at gender-based violence in general, is taking online violence very seriously, and certainly so is the Minister of Public Safety. I cannot speak on behalf of the government, as a backbench member of Parliament, but I know it is something I have had

discussions with various departments about, and it continues to be a top priority for them.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to recognize that the national government has a leadership role to play that goes even beyond the areas we regulate. Taking initiatives of this nature result in positive spinoffs in other jurisdictions.

One thing I have taken from this debate, and I commented on it earlier, is the support we are receiving. There has been all-party support for this initiative.

Could she provide her comments on that?

Ms. Pam Damoff: The member is absolutely correct, Mr. Speaker. I am heartened when I come into this place, listen to the debate, and recognize that all parties, regardless of the differences we may hold on other policies, are united on this item in particular.

This reverberates far beyond the walls of the House. When members of Parliament talk about bringing forward legislation on harassment and bullying, we are sending a message to all Canadians, to all businesses, to all workplaces that it is simply unacceptable and the culture needs to change.

By having these conversations, we will start to move the needle. It will not be easy and it will not be this one conversation that will make change. This needs to continue beyond Bill C-65. It needs to continue with respect to how we conduct ourselves both in public and with our staff. It needs to be top of mind in our conversations with constituents. We can have a strong leadership role to play across the country.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am immensely pleased and honoured to rise today, and, since this is the first time I am speaking in 2018, I would like to extend greetings to my hon. colleagues who are now back in the House.

I am very enthusiastic about speaking today in support of Bill C-65.

I am deeply convinced that all Canadians breathed a sigh of relief when they learned that this bill was being introduced. Clearly, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace must end now.

Today, our government is taking the necessary steps to do just that by setting an example. I would also like to point out that all parties support this bill. There is no room for partisanship when it comes to Canadians' fundamental rights.

In my humble opinion, this is an historic moment for Parliament. Not only will this bill govern these matters for workers under federal jurisdiction, but, more importantly, it will also send a clear message throughout the country that there is no place for such behaviour in Canada. End of story. The time has come to speak strongly and clearly, and to take action. In this respect, Bill C-65 is clearly a big step in the right direction.

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The news stories of the past few weeks are a stark reminder that workplaces are still not free from sexual harassment and violence. Social media has given us a clearer idea of the scope of the problem. It is high time that we introduced legislation that will protect federal workers. The bill is intended for workers in banks, communications companies, and the air, rail and marine transportation sectors, as well as federal government employees, of course.

Studies by Abacus Data revealed that more than one in 10 Canadians say that sexual harassment in the workplace is quite common, while 44% of Canadians report it does happen, although infrequently.

Our government pledged to solve the problem, and we are now fulfilling our promise. Bill C-65 allows us to send a clear and strong message as members of Parliament.

It enables us to take a stand and say that this has to stop. Employers must clearly understand their responsibilities and take the necessary measures to eliminate this scourge on society. Sexual harassment and violence in the workplace hinder economic development and affect Canadians who are trying to join the middle class.

Although women are more likely than men to be victimized by such behaviour, visible minorities, low-income individuals, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community are also targeted and remain more vulnerable.

Victims and their families suffer major repercussions, but so do their employers. Victims can experience stress, depression, or anxiety, and employers must manage this situation in their place of business, a situation that leads to absences, sick leave, decreased motivation, and high employee turnover. Our country really has no room for this type of behaviour. Our economy and our international reputation would gain considerably from the enactment of this bill. It is time that we took a stand once and for all.

We all know someone who has been the victim of sexual harassment or violence at work. It could be a sister, a brother, a co-worker, or a friend. It is our responsibility to take the necessary measures to eliminate this problem. Bill C-65 is certainly a key measure. It will bring about a radical change in the way we perceive employer-employee relations. I therefore ask all of my hon. colleagues to support this bill, which will usher in a new era of labour relations in Canada, and even here in Parliament.

By amending the Canada Labour Code and the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, we will be joining forces to prevent harassment and violence, respond more effectively to complaints, and provide better support for victims and employers.

● (1340)

In conclusion, not only is this bill a good thing for society, it is indispensable.

Everyone wins with this bill, including victims, families, co-workers, and, of course, employers.

As I mentioned earlier, this bill is a huge step forward for the cause, and we may soon see a truly equitable working environment for all Canadians.

This is a necessary change in culture, and I am proud to be supporting this bill today.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think all parties in the House share a commitment to doing everything we can to end the kinds of problems about which the member has spoken. We in the official opposition are supportive of the bill. We want to see it move forward and we want to take a constructive approach. We want to look for ways to potentially improve the bill and strengthen it, if we hear of those opportunities at committee.

Does the member have any initial thoughts on possible amendments she thinks might strengthen the bill. Has she given any thought to changes that could be made, should be made to the text and the provisions themselves?

● (1345)

[Translation]

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

With regard to any amendments that might be made, I have to say that I am not on the committee that will be studying this bill. However, it would be advisable to pass this bill.

It is unacceptable that people are being victimized. Obviously, victims of harassment in the workplace have higher absenteeism rates and are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression. This is a situation that must absolutely be prevented.

We cannot afford to lose employees in today's job market. The unemployment rate is so low. More than 700,000 new jobs have been created in Canada in the past two years. We must make sure that all workers without exception have access to a healthy work environment. This will ensure productivity for both employees and employers.

[English]

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all our colleagues today for the very moving speeches about this very important topic. I know our staff members are very busy, but I hope they are able to hear what has been said in debate so they can see how important this is and know that harassment in this workplace, in any form, is unacceptable.

I remember when I was a young woman just getting into journalism. Back 45 years ago, we were told that if we wanted to work in a man's world we had to put up with almost everything. We did, and it was wrong. It was wrong in so many ways. We all have stories over the years of things we have had to put up with, but as the saying goes, "time is up" and we must move forward.

Government Orders

We cannot wait for the bill to go through. We must act now. Does the member have any advice as to what we can do now in our workplaces to ensure our employees feel safe?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her question.

My hon. colleague is from the world of journalism. I am also from a traditionally male-dominated field. I was the only woman who owned a grocery store or supermarket, so I was an easy target. I, too, probably put up with comments that I should not have tolerated.

I am thinking about my daughters. We need a change in culture, whether it is for my daughters or for our female co-workers. We cannot afford to lose anyone who is involved in our society's economic development. We cannot. All of these people must be active and find their own way. The culture needs to change.

If we as women hear unacceptable comments, we must say so and report them right away, both for ourselves and for our employees.

With respect to the date when the measures will be implemented, I would like to point out that the bill is in its second reading. The sooner we pass the bill, the clearer our message will be. We will then be able to effect change more quickly. It is very important for everyone here, but also for everyone who is watching us, everyone who works with us, and everyone who works under federal jurisdiction. We must send a clear message: these things are unacceptable and they must be reported. We must not put up with these comments.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

It is with mixed feelings that I stand to speak in the House today. On the one hand, I am deeply grieved that we even have to have this conversation right now with regard to this topic of sexual harassment. On the other hand, I am glad that we are having this conversation to bring attention to a very important matter, and my hope is that we are able to do something about it going forward.

All parties in this place agree that there is zero tolerance for sexual harassment, but if we were to pick up a newspaper or watch the newscasts at night, or if we were to read through the comments staffers from the Hill have posted to social media, we would see that there are far too many stories with regard to sexual harassment taking place in the workplace.

The issue before the House is not a partisan issue, and we must begin by agreeing not to make it so. This is an issue of power and the balance of power between an employee and an employer.

When it comes time to hire or fire, members of Parliament have complete control over this process and the staff in their offices. For every paid staffer, it is important to understand that there are a dozen interns hoping to take that job. This places employees in an extremely precarious position and makes them very vulnerable. Add to this the lack of an independent process for handling harassment allegations and it is no wonder employees can quickly find themselves in a position where they feel that they have no option

but to keep silent and hope not to rock the boat. For those reasons, I welcome the initiative of the government to implement a more formal structure for preventing and responding to sexual harassment in the public workplace.

I believe it is very important for this bill to make it to committee as soon as possible, where it can be further assessed. At that stage, legislators would have the opportunity to examine it closely and make the necessary changes to strengthen it going forward.

To serve all employees and all employers well, sexual harassment must be clearly defined. That said, we must discuss whether it is better to define sexual harassment through legislation or to allow cabinet to define it through what is called regulation. Traditionally, sexual harassment has been defined in part III of the Canada Labour Code. However, clause 16 of the bill before this House would delete the legislated definition of sexual harassment from the code. In its place, the Liberals would give authority to cabinet members to define sexual harassment through part II of the Labour Code. This means that the government of the day would be empowered to define what sexual harassment is in both the House of Commons and all federally regulated workplaces, with zero input from this place, Parliament.

As a general principle, important changes like this should be enshrined within legislation.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1350)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I hate to interrupt, but I just want to remind the hon. members that debate is taking place, and I am kind of having a hard time. Maybe it is my age. My hearing is not as good as it used to be. I am having a hard time hearing the hon. member for Lethbridge.

The hon. member for Lethbridge. The rest of the members could maybe whisper a bit more softly or take the discussion into the lobby.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, as a general principle, important changes like this should be enshrined in legislation. Now, it stands to reason that most Canadians, including the employers bound by the Canada Labour Code, believe that the definition of sexual harassment is something worth preserving in law and that it is the process we should be going through.

The second thing that will need to be examined by the committee is how we ensure that all employees, including those who work for government members, enjoy the full protection of this legislation.

The House of Commons is not like other federal government workplaces. This place, by design, is meant to be partisan. Democracy is best served by the official opposition skilfully testing the government's policies and bringing them to the Canadian public's attention. The ability of the opposition to do its job without fear of reprisal or retribution by the Prime Minister, or any member on that side of the House, is foundational to our democracy, which is why I am a little concerned about how this legislation would actually be applied to the House of Commons.

Government Orders

The bill before us would bring members of Parliament and their staff under the authority of part II of the Canada Labour Code. It is important, then, to understand how this code uniquely empowers the Liberal Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour to personally initiate investigations and make compliance orders under the act.

Upon receiving a complaint from an employee or employer, it is the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour who would be authorized to conduct an investigation. Once an investigation was conducted, it would also be the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour who was authorized to issue compliance orders. This would be done, of course, through the member of Parliament who was brought forward through a complaint.

The minister also has the power to issue emergency directives to an employer and to make those orders public. We can see how devastating this could potentially be to a member's career if, in fact, a complaint was found not to hold water.

For those watching from their homes and workplaces today, let me take a moment to quickly outline the implications. An employee would have the opportunity to make a complaint directly to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour. At this point, the minister could decide not to investigate if she felt that the complaint was vexatious or made in bad faith. Right away, this should raise some red flags, given the circumstances.

The question we must ask is whether Canadians can have complete confidence that the minister, behind closed doors, would impartially judge complaints when she had the power to protect her Liberal colleagues from allegations that could potentially end their careers.

What also worries me is that there would be no appeal process. Once the minister made her ruling, the complaint would simply go away. On the other hand, if the minister decided to launch an investigation, she would then have the power to enter the workplace to compel the production of documents and to force testimony from staff.

Let me be clear on this point. This legislation, as it is worded now, would grant a Liberal minister the legal right to enter an opposition MP's office to compel the office to turn over any record she deemed necessary for the investigation. This could include emails, private or personal calendar pages, social media accounts, text messages, etcetera.

The minister and her staff could be entitled to snoop through the member's data and records, which would then give them access to a ton of politically sensitive information, information that may or may not find its way into the hands of, let us say, a journalist. I am sure all members are able to see how this could be used for partisan gain. Of course, we hope not, but nevertheless, I must highlight the potential.

Even if the minister delegated the initial decision to investigate and also delegated the actual investigation, the minister would still need to sign off at the end. There would be no way for the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour to completely excuse herself from the process. The question then becomes this:

Could Canadians rightfully expect that the Liberal minister would treat a Conservative MP and a Liberal MP the exact same way?

Furthermore, the minister would also determine whether an order had been complied with. If, in the minister's opinion, an order was not observed, a subjective determination, I might add, she would have the power to table the order in Parliament publicly, thus shaming the member.

Finally, the minister would have the authority at any point after a complaint was made to issue an emergency compliance directive if she believed that the health of an employee was at risk. Emergency orders would be immediately tabled in the House of Commons, and made publicly known, announcing that an investigation was under way, before any facts of the situation had actually been determined.

It is hard to imagine that the minister would not be tempted to perhaps use this provision by announcing an investigation into an opposition MP, perhaps as soon as possible or when it seemed necessary or to the advantage of the party in power.

● (1355)

If we are serious about providing equal protection for employees of members of the government and members of the opposition and about ensuring the non-partisan application of this law, then we need to ensure that there is an arm's-length, neutral, third-party regulator put in place who will make decisions about whether a complaint is valid and about how to conduct the investigation.

One may think that no one would seriously consider using something such as sexual harassment as a tool for political advantage. I would certainly hope not, but I believe we must do everything in our power to ensure the safety of employees without risking the potential of partisan gamesmanship.

We owe it to every current and future employee of this House to get this right, including the staff of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, who, let us be really honest, is quite unlikely to investigate and prosecute herself should a complaint be made. This begs the question: Where do her employees go?

I urge my hon. colleagues to send this bill to committee, where its members can work with expert advisers to figure out how to ensure that the integrity and impartiality of this process is upheld. We owe it to the staff of the House of Commons. We owe it to the members in this place. We must address this issue with regard to sexual harassment and create a safe and secure work environment for all.

The Speaker: There will be five minutes for questions and comments when the House next addresses this topic.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this being the first member's statement of 2018, I would like to take the opportunity to commend all survivors of sexual harassment and assault, including those who have spoken out about it, for their courage.

Such behaviour, such crimes, have no place in Parliament or anywhere else. We support the victims who have the strength to continue to hold their heads high in the face of denigration, humiliation, and violence, but what is the next step?

Each and every one of us has a duty to ensure that our work environments are healthy and safe. We have a collective responsibility to watch over our family, friends, and colleagues to ensure that no one else has to suffer. There is a world of difference between a compliment and harassment, between seduction and abuse. Most of us understand and sense that. To those who choose not to understand, your time is up.

* * *

• (1400)

[English]

AWARD-WINNING VOLUNTEERISM

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Italian Canadians have always contributed to the building and betterment of Canada. On behalf of all Canadians I want to thank the community for all it has done and continues to do. Specifically, I want to pay tribute to Lucia Paterra Catania, who for decades has led by example and worked hard to put others first. A talented artist and an active member of various Italian and arts communities in Toronto, Lucia is the president of the Golden Age Academy, a non-profit organization that encourages individuals to use their skills, knowledge, and experience as a contribution to their community.

Lucia's work does not stop there. Lucia also runs an arts and crafts drop-in program for seniors at the Carmine Stefano Community Centre in my riding of Humber River—Black Creek. Lucia is always available for people in the community who need assistance, driving seniors to doctor's appointments or grocery shopping. She always goes above and beyond the call of duty for others in need.

A Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal recipient, a Humber River—Black Creek volunteer award winner, and an Emery Village BIA award winner are some of the many examples of Lucia's past accomplishments.

I congratulate Lucia.

* * *

TOWN OF PENHOLD

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Friday my family and I attended the inauguration of the chain of command for the Town of Penhold, where a magnificent ceremonial chain and pendants were presented to Mayor Michael

Statements by Members

Yargeau and his council by Her Honour Lieutenant Governor Lois Mitchell and benefactor Stewart Ford. Her Honour and Mr. Ford then participated in the presentation of the Ford Family Scholarship endowment to Penhold Crossing Secondary School.

These generous gifts add to a long list of benevolent acts that Stewart and Eileen Ford have bestowed upon their beloved Penhold. In his humble address, Stewart said, "Eileen and I believe there is no finer investment for any community than putting knowledge into the minds of scholars. For Penhold Crossing Secondary School students, we have enlarged the means for them to do so." He closed his address by quoting Sir Winston Churchill, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

I thank Stewart and Eileen for all that they give.

* * *

[Translation]

CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am thrilled to speak about an initiative that celebrates the heritage of Châteauguay—Lacolle in a beautiful way.

[English]

Last fall, the students of St. Willibrord Elementary School of Châteauguay created and performed the brilliant musical video *Dreamchild*, a song that has already gone viral with 221,000 views on Facebook and 20,000 on YouTube. Sung in English, French, and Mohawk, this beautiful song is representative of all its students from across Châteauguay and Kahnawake, and speaks admirably to the sharing of dreams while celebrating differences.

[Translation]

Is it not fantastic that Châteauguay—Lacolle has what it takes to inspire the world? I am proud to represent a community where everyone has a chance to reach their full potential. That is why, on January 18, I was proud to present the 10 singers with a certificate signed by the Prime Minister himself.

* * *

[English]

TOMMY BANKS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wish, on behalf of my constituents, all Edmontonians, and the Canadian music community, to share the sad news of the passing last week of Senator Tommy Banks. Tommy was so beloved that a street in Edmonton Strathcona was named Tommy Banks Way, recognizing his efforts to found Edmonton's long-standing jazz club, the Yardbird Suite.

Statements by Members

He hosted The Tommy Banks Show, performed throughout North America, and guest conducted numerous symphony orchestras. However, Tommy was not only renowned in Edmonton. He performed worldwide and received a Juno and a Gemini. He was a founding chair of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and chair of the Edmonton Concert Hall Foundation and the music program at Grant MacEwan. He was made an officer of the Order of Canada, recognizing his long-standing accomplishments as a musician and his dedicated service to the development of Canadian arts. He served as music director for the 1978 Commonwealth Games, Expo 86, the World University Games, and the 1988 Olympics, and as a member of the Canada Council. Tommy Banks served in the Senate from 2000 to 2011.

As Edmonton's Winspear Centre has shared, Banks “changed the landscape of the Edmonton music scene and will be forever remembered for his incredible talent & passion”. He will be missed, but his musical legacy will live on.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ROYAL GALIPEAU

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to mark the passing of my predecessor, Royal Galipeau, the former member of Parliament for Orléans. Although Royal and I were rivals in the last election, I cannot say enough about his professionalism, his dedication to this country, and his honourable reputation as a parliamentarian.

• (1405)

[*English*]

Proudly calling himself “the servant for Orléans in the House of Commons”, Royal was an advocate for francophone Ontarians and cleaning up the Ottawa River, and was passionately involved in preserving and honouring our local and national heritage.

[*Translation*]

I offer my sincerest condolences to his wife, Anne, and his family. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time.

Royal, thank you for your service to your country and to the riding of Orléans.

* * *

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of the House the recent rise in human rights abuses perpetrated against minority groups in Pakistan.

The Baloch Human Rights Organization reports that this past August alone, 91 people were extrajudicially executed and 138 individuals have disappeared. Women and children are the primary victims of these violations. Just days before Christmas, on December 17, at least nine members of the Christian community lost their lives in a terrorist attack at a Methodist church in Balochistan's capital.

The Muhajir people have also been regular victims of these increasing violent attacks. On January 14, Hassan Zafar Arif, a

professor of philosophy, was abducted by law enforcement agents, brutally tortured, and killed on the basis of his criticism of the political and economic system in Pakistan, as well as his well-known allegiance to the Muttahida Quami Movement, or the MQM.

Today, I ask that all members join me in condemning these violations of human rights in Pakistan and recognize Canada's duty to work toward the elimination of sectarian and ethnic violence.

* * *

LONG RANGE MOUNTAINS

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the middle of our usual winter wonderland in the Long Range Mountains, Mother Nature had a change of plans and overnight, on January 12, we saw temperatures rise and wind and heavy rain hit with a vengeance. Saturday, state of emergencies were declared in the city of Corner Brook and numerous communities along the south side of the Bay of Islands and the south side of Bonne Bay, all the way to Trout River. Roads were washed out, even a section of the highway, isolating many communities. Severe infrastructure damage was everywhere, homes and businesses flooded, and many folks evacuated.

I would like to thank all the dedicated workers who strived so hard around the clock to get communities connected and folks out of harm's way. The first responders were on the spot in record time. Neighbours and volunteers were helping everywhere. Thanks to the Canadian Coast Guard for having the MV *Larsen* on standby to deliver needed supplies and get residents out to medical appointments. The following Saturday, the west coast welcomed Ron MacLean, Don Cherry, and other hockey celebrities for Scotiabank's Hockey Day in Canada. I thank all of the volunteers who put this incredible event together.

Folks in the Long Range Mountains know how to rebound for sure, on and off the ice.

* * *

GRAMMY AWARD-WINNER

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hometown of Brampton is increasingly being recognized for the magnitude of talent it has produced over the years.

From actor Michael Cera to comedian Russell Peters, restaurateur Rick Matharu, writer Rupri Kaur, basketball greats Anthony Bennett, Tristan Thompson and the Tatham sisters, Olympian Kadeisha Buchanan, and TFC's Jay Chapman, the list goes on and on. Brampton is home to big dreamers.

Today I want to talk about a young lady who no longer needs to pretend she is winning a Grammy in her shower. Last night, Brampton-raised Alessia Cara became the first Canadian-born winner of the Best New Artist Grammy. Alessia took the industry by storm with her debut single *Here* and followed it up with some of my personal favourites, *Wild Things* and *Stay*.

I congratulate Alessia and have no doubt we will be hearing many more great things from her.

*Statements by Members***SASKATCHEWAN PARTY LEADERSHIP**

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the next premier of Saskatchewan and new Saskatchewan Party leader, Scott Moe.

I grew up with Scott back in Saskatchewan. He is a hard-working, honest, common-sense person, and while he has big shoes to fill, Saskatchewanians are united behind Scott and his leadership.

Premier designate Moe will pick up right where Premier Wall left off, defending Saskatchewan against a federal government that does not understand our way of life and how policies made in Ottawa affect rural communities. He understands that terrible policies like the Prime Minister's carbon tax are just not in the best interest of Saskatchewan's families and economy.

On behalf of my colleagues in our Saskatchewan caucus and our Conservative Party, I congratulate premier designate Moe and look forward to working with him as we continue to represent the hard-working people of Saskatchewan here in Ottawa.

* * *

• (1410)

TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Mark Holland (Ajax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe that in 1983, the Tamil community in the GTA was less than 150 people. Today, not only in the GTA but across Canada, it is not only one of the most populous communities but one of the most vibrant, and one that gives back so much to the Canadian community.

As we celebrate Tamil Heritage Month, I say to every Tamil Canadian that we thank them for their remarkable contribution. I want to thank the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park for his initiative to ensure that every year Tamil Heritage Month is recognized across Canada. I was particularly proud to celebrate Tamil Heritage Month with him and with the Prime Minister. Their rich culture and heritage makes our country great and I will continue to fight every day to make sure that we also see truth and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

* * *

CENTRE CULTUREL ISLAMIQUE DE QUÉBEC

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks one year to the day when six men were killed at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec. The men were in a mosque praying. They were killed for that reason alone.

This act of terror was not simply an Islamophobic attack on Muslim worshippers. It was an attack on all places of worship and on the values we hold dear as Canadians: tolerance, equality, freedom of worship, and respect for diversity.

[Translation]

We need to come together once again. Sadly, one year later, we are witnessing a surge in support for the actions and rhetoric of those who seek to divide, rather than unite. This should serve as a reminder that we must continue to vigilantly defend Canada's multicultural, multi-faith and diverse society.

Today, I call on each and every one of my fellow parliamentarians to make their voices heard and proclaim, loud and clear, that hatred and intolerance have no place in our country.

* * *

[English]

VICTIMS OF ANTI-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, continuing in the same spirit as the last statement, one year ago today, six Muslims were murdered and 19 more were wounded while at prayer in Quebec City. I believe the best way to honour the martyrs of January 29 is to mark the anniversary of this tragedy by commemorating the victims of all such acts of bigotry and violence, regardless of the faiths of the individuals so victimized.

Last year's shooting was not the bloodiest attack in Canadian history targeting victims based on their religion. That sad honour falls to the 1985 Air India bombing, but it is so terrible an act and is so raw a wound that I can think of no better date than January 29 on which to annually reaffirm Canada's solidarity with the victims of anti-religious bigotry and violence.

That is why I introduced Motion No. 153 last year, to declare January 29 Canada's national day of solidarity with all such victims. Later this afternoon, I will be asking the House for unanimous consent to this motion.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday was International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a sombre anniversary when we remember the murder of over six million Jewish men, women, and children during the Second World War.

It is also a day when we recognize and remember the invincible spirit of those who survived this evil, among them the thousands of Holocaust survivors who built new lives for themselves and their families in my riding of York Centre and across Canada. Their enduring legacy of courage and triumph of spirit must continue to inspire us to combat anti-Semitism and all forms of systemic racism in our communities and around the world.

We must guard against a resurgence of anti-Semitism and xenophobia and ensure that we never forget our obligation to stand up and speak out against hatred and prejudice wherever they may rear their ugly heads.

We remember.

Routine Proceedings

●(1415)

RORY MCIVOR

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my home town of Penticton, B.C. lost one of its biggest supporters last November 18.

Rory McIvor was director of the Penticton library for 27 years, totally modernizing the library in that time. However, that was just one of his contributions.

He was president of the B.C. library directors, a governor of Okanagan College, a justice of the peace, president of the Rotary Club, chair of the Okanagan Summer School of the Arts, director of the Chamber of Commerce, and chair of the Okanagan Community Futures Association.

Rory was a school trustee for 11 years and chair of the school board for six of those years. He served two terms on Penticton city council and was instrumental in the formation of the local community foundation.

Rory loved Penticton and always went to work with a smile on his face. Penticton loved him back. He was named man of the year in both 1990 and 1999.

To Rory's wife Anna and his family and friends, I can truly say, "he will be missed."

* * *

[Translation]

ROYAL GALIPEAU

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise on behalf of our caucus and our entire Conservative family to mourn the loss of our friend, Royal Galipeau, who passed away this weekend at the age of 71.

[English]

Royal was an incredible parliamentarian. Rarely missing a vote, even in the midst of his battle with cancer, he saw himself as a servant of the people, one with a duty to leave our institutions better than he found them.

His contributions included serving as city councillor and a leader with the Ottawa Library Board.

I was proud to have personally witnessed his wonderful parliamentary mind at work when we served together as deputy speakers.

[Translation]

He rarely let party politics stand in the way of what he cared about most. We will all remember Royal as a staunch defender of official languages in Canada, his lifelong passion, regardless of his political affiliation. The thoughts and prayers of everyone in our caucus are with Royal's wife, Anne, and their children as they mourn the loss of a beloved member of their family.

[English]

We thank his family for sharing Royal with us and with the people of Ottawa-Orléans.

[Translation]

CENTRE CULTUREL ISLAMIQUE DE QUÉBEC

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, January 29, 2017, was a black day in Quebec City. One man perpetrated senseless, unspeakable violence against worshippers at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec. Why? Because members of that faith community were peacefully practising their religion inside their mosque.

Canada and Quebec welcome newcomers. They are open to the world. They value tolerance and freedom. Such deeds do not define us; they represent what we, as a society, reject. Every one of us has a duty to remember these hateful, violent deeds and work together to fight intolerance and racism.

To Abdelkrim Hassane, Azzedine Soufiane, Aboubaker Thabti, Mamadou Tanou Barry, Ibrahima Barry, and Khaled Belkacemi, we remember. To all of those wounded in the shooting, we remember. To the family and friends of the victims, we remember.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[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 Mrs. Rosemarie Falk, member for the electoral district of Battlefords—Lloydminster.

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NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk, member for the electoral district of Battlefords—Lloydminster, introduced by the Hon. Andrew Scheer and Mr. Randy Hoback.

* * *

●(1420)

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. Gordie Hogg, member for the electoral district of South Surrey—White Rock.

* * *

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Gordie Hogg, member for the electoral district of South Surrey—White Rock, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau and the Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan.

* * *

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. Churence Rogers, member for the electoral district of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Churence Rogers, member for the electoral district of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau and the Hon. Seamus O'Regan.

* * *

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 Ms. Jean Yip, member for the electoral district of Scarborough—Agincourt.

* * *

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Ms. Jean Yip, member for the electoral district of Scarborough—Agincourt, introduced by the Right Hon. Justin Trudeau and the Hon. Ahmed Hussen.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1425)

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Papineau has earned the distinction of being the first Canadian leader to break our ethics laws. In response to the Ethics Commissioner's report, he failed to accept full responsibility for his actions. He even implied that she made a mistake.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he fully accepts the commissioner's report regarding his illegal conduct?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immediately after the report was released, I took responsibility, as any leader should do, and I accepted all of the commissioner's conclusions. I have taken measures to ensure that, moving forward, all of my family vacations will be approved in advance by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, and I will continue to follow all advice and recommendations from the commissioner regarding how to deal with my family friendship with the Aga Khan.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he should not have had to wait for the Ethics Commissioner's report. The Conflict of Interest Act states that the Prime Minister is responsible for "arrang[ing] his or her private affairs in a manner that will prevent [him] from being in a conflict of interest".

Therefore, does the Prime Minister agree with the Ethics Commissioner that he failed to meet these standards as required by law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immediately after the report was released I took responsibility. I accepted the full recommendations of the commissioner and will be moving forward in a such a way that any personal

Oral Questions

vacations or family travel gets approved in advance by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister received multiple briefings on dealings between his government and the Aga Khan, whom he describes as a close family friend. The Prime Minister should have been aware of his responsibilities under the Conflict of Interest Act, especially when it comes to mixing government business and friendship.

Why did he do nothing to ensure that he was not in a conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the commissioner concluded, I did not take part in any decisions regarding the Aga Khan or the Aga Khan Foundation.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, his lawyers argued that when he took office, the Prime Minister had no foreseeable business with the Aga Khan. This is despite the Aga Khan's frequent dealings with the previous government and ongoing projects, all of which the Prime Minister was briefed on.

Does the Prime Minister really expect us to believe that it was impossible to anticipate any conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the commissioner put out her report, we accepted it immediately, and I took responsibility for my actions. At the same time, moving forward, as is important and as Canadians expect, we will ensure that we work with the conflict of interest commissioner on any personal family vacation or any personal travel the Prime Minister undertakes in the future.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2016, the Aga Khan's representatives asked to meet with the Prime Minister to discuss ongoing business with his government. Now, that meeting request, which was accepted, was made just two days before the Prime Minister took one of his vacations to the Aga Khan's private island.

Accepting a meeting with lobbyists representing the man whose generous hospitality he was about to enjoy, how could the Prime Minister not realize that was a conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I accept the full recommendations and conclusions of the commissioner.

I think it is important that the commissioner and that we recognize a more stringent set of rules for what constitutes a friendship. These are the kinds of things we fully accept and fully understand. We will move forward in a way that Canadians can be sure that any family travel or personal travel by the Prime Minister, by myself, will be verified and worked through with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Oral Questions

●(1430)

TAXATION

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, increasingly Canada is divided into two worlds, the wealthy and the struggling. By January 2, Canada's top-paid CEOs had already earned what the average Canadian earned in a year.

In 2017, the wages of CEOs increased 16 times faster than those of most Canadians, but the Prime Minister is showing he does not get it. He allows CEOs to keep their lucrative stock option loophole, while telling Sears workers to suck it up and be happy with EI rather than their own pensions that they paid into.

When will he get to work for these people rather than his CEO friends?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, especially because the member opposite voted against it, the very first thing we did was lower taxes for the middle class and raise them on the wealthiest 1%. We then delivered a Canada child benefit that gives more money to nine out of 10 Canadian families by not sending child benefit cheques to millionaire families. On top of that, we have invested close to \$1 billion on tax avoidance and tax evasion to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes.

We are going to continue to make sure that our system is fairer and that we support the middle class and people working hard to join it.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is certainly poor comfort to those Sears workers.

[Translation]

According to Oxfam, 82% of global wealth created in 2017 went to the richest 1%. The 1% are the people that the Prime Minister wooed in Davos, Switzerland. The 1% are people like Stephen Bronfman and the Aga Khan, who are personal friends of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister lets CEOs keep their generous tax deductions for stock options while asking Sears employees to settle for employment insurance instead of the pensions they poured their own money into.

When will he finally fight for all Canadians instead of just the 1%?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, the first thing this government did was lower taxes for the middle class and increase them for the wealthy. Next, we created the Canada child benefit, which gives more tax-free money every month to nine out of 10 families. We can do that because we stopped sending cheques to millionaire families. We will continue to invest in the middle class and all those working hard to join it. That is our priority. That is what we have been working on for the past two years and will continue to work on for the next two years.

[English]

LABOUR

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have all been shaken by the allegations that have come to light over the past few months and days. I want to take the opportunity to tell those who have come forward that we support them, we believe them, we hear them, and we will do absolutely everything we can to change the culture here on Parliament Hill.

I want to assure the Prime Minister that the NDP is fully committed to working with the government and all parties here in this House to make sure that we move in the right direction on this issue.

What actions can parliamentarians take to help shift the culture here on Parliament Hill?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her question, her statement, and her hard work on this file.

It is important that women and men break the taboo of silence and become allies and supporters in standing up against gender violence, standing up against sexual harassment and sexual assault in workplaces, in homes, and in communities right across this country.

This is a problem that has gone on for far too long, and it is time we dealt with it, particularly here in Parliament, where we set an example for the rest of the country. That is why, with Bill C-65, we are committed to taking an important step towards improving workplaces in federally regulated industries and on Parliament Hill. I look forward to working with members of all parties on improving this legislation and ensuring that it moves forward.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to hear that, but we still have some solutions and suggestions to offer.

It is no secret that one way to change the culture on the Hill is to get more women elected to the House. The Prime Minister has often spoken about how important it is to get more women elected, but he rejected the member for Burnaby South's proposal to promote gender parity in electoral candidates. The Prime Minister has also rejected the NDP's proposals on electoral reform. Just 26% of members here in the House are women.

How does the Prime Minister plan to get more women elected to the House?

●(1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree that we need more women in politics. This will change our country's politics as well as its corporate culture. This will change the conversation in our communities across the country. This is essential. That is why I was proud to be one of the first leaders in the world to choose a gender-balanced cabinet. This is an important step. We have a lot of work to do to get more women elected to the House of Commons, and we will continue to work on this every day until the next election.

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Despite the Prime Minister's response, the Ethics Commissioner indicated in her report that there was official business between the Prime Minister and the Aga Khan.

Does the Prime Minister acknowledge the commissioner's findings?

[English]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as was clearly said by the Prime Minister, immediately after the report was released the Prime Minister took responsibility, as a leader should, and accepted the findings of the commissioner.

The Prime Minister has taken steps to ensure that all future family vacations are cleared ahead of time with the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. The Prime Minister will continue to follow any advice and recommendations the commissioner has.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister asked for more than one personal luxury vacation from someone his government was doing business with. He should have known this was wrong, but he did it anyway. The Prime Minister accepted a private helicopter ride. He should have known that this was wrong, too, but he did it anyway. The result is that he is now the first Prime Minister to break Canada's federal ethics laws.

Why does the Prime Minister think that this is okay?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House time and again, this government respects the officers of Parliament and the work they do. Immediately after the report was released, the Prime Minister took responsibility, as a leader should, and accepted the findings of the commissioner.

The Prime Minister has taken steps to ensure that all future family vacations are cleared ahead of time with the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. The Prime Minister will continue to follow any advice and recommendations the commissioner has.

[Translation]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister went to Bell Island on vacation, he chose to accept a private helicopter ride, even though he knew it was in direct violation of the Conflict of Interest Act.

Why did he think he could take that helicopter ride?

[English]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has answered these questions on numerous occasions. Once again, as was clearly said, immediately after the report was released, the Prime Minister took responsibility, as a leader should, and accepted the findings of the commissioner.

The Prime Minister has taken steps to ensure that all future family vacations are cleared ahead of time with the Conflict of Interest and

Oral Questions

Ethics Commissioner. The Prime Minister will continue to follow any advice and recommendations that are given.

[Translation]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when he appeared before the Ethics Commissioner, the Prime Minister indicated that he did not consider the meetings to be business meetings.

Does the Prime Minister still maintain that a meeting with him has nothing to do with the affairs of the Government of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing that is clear in regard to this government, which the previous government did not do, is that we are committed to engaging and having conversations with Canadians, whether those are tough conversations or feedback as to how we can respond to the very real challenges they are facing.

In regard to the report, immediately after it was released, the Prime Minister took responsibility, as a leader should, and accepted the findings of the commissioner. We have been in our constituencies for several weeks. The Prime Minister has been available at town halls. Numerous questions have been posed directly to him, and he has been available to answer them.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. Members seem to have forgotten that one side speaks, then the other side speaks, and the rest of us listen. It has been a long break. Apparently, members have forgotten some things, perhaps, but I know they can bring it back to mind.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to the Ethics Commissioner's report, the Prime Minister thinks that his meetings with international leaders, including the Aga Khan, are purely ceremonial in nature.

If the Prime Minister thinks that his role in these meetings is just ceremonial, then who is doing the actual work that his job requires?

• (1440)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the work that this Prime Minister and this government do. If we want to look at the work this government is doing, let us look at the economy, with 750,000 jobs created by Canadians for Canadians. It is the highest growth in any G7 country.

There is more confidence in this government and in Canadians today than there was three years ago, when the previous government was here. This government will continue to work on behalf of Canadians to respond to the very real challenges they are facing.

I am proud to serve alongside this Prime Minister.

Oral Questions

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was this Prime Minister who tried to hide from Canadians the details about his unethical vacations. He did not want anyone to know where he was or whom he was with. He did not start coming clean with Canadians until after he was caught. Even then, it took a year-long investigation for any details to come to light.

If the Prime Minister did not think that there was anything wrong with these trips, why did he go to such lengths to hide it?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this issue, we have been clear from the very beginning. We have said that we will work with the commissioner and answer any questions the commissioner has. We have done exactly that.

We respect the officers of Parliament. We know they are here to do important work, and we will encourage them to do that important work on behalf of Canadians.

* * *

PENSIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is out of touch with the everyday lives of working Canadians. Last week, he actually suggested that Sears Canada workers, who face losing pensions and health care benefits, could simply rely on EI and CPP. Talk about a backup plan.

There is something simple this government can do: support measures in my bill that help workers like those at Sears Canada and prevent them from ever again being faced with losing their pension benefits. Instead of “monitoring the situation”, when will the government break from tradition and get to work to protect our workers?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his hard work and advocacy on this issue, and I understand the challenges that many workers, families, and communities face across this country. My heart goes out to all those who are affected.

As the member well knows, Service Canada, for example, has been meeting with representatives. It has had over 282 sessions across the country to assist employees and their families. I understand that Sears Canada's pension funds are held in trust and must be used for the benefit of the pensioners. This is really important to know. When it comes to this situation, the member knows full well that we are willing to engage with him to assess all our options.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister was hanging out with his billionaire friends at Davos, he made very clear his indifference to the corporate pension robbery at Sears. Those retirees have no friends in this government. Let us look at the finance minister. His family business, Morneau Shepell, had the contract to roll up the Sears pension fund. He has told the investors about the opportunities of going after defined plans, and he has brought in the legislation, Bill C-27, to make it possible.

At the very least, will the finance minister withdraw Bill C-27 and recuse himself from any discussions about the Sears workers?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should know full well that when it comes to the Sears employees, we have been engaging with them and working with them, because we know the challenges they are going through. We know the impact this has on many different communities. We are looking at all the different options. We are willing to work with the members opposite. We have been very clear that we are committed to jobs and growth. Since we formed the government, there have been over 700,000 jobs created in the Canadian economy. We will continue to do more to assist members of the Sears community and the families that are impacted in communities across the country.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister is the first Canadian prime minister to break our ethics laws. He billed taxpayers over \$200,000 by accepting more than one luxury vacation. Taxpayers should not have to pay for the Prime Minister's illegal actions.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and reimburse taxpayers for his trips to Bell Island?

[English]

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the report has been released. The Prime Minister has responded and has accepted all the findings, as a leader should. Steps have been taken to ensure that all future family vacations are cleared ahead of time with the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. It was this government, actually, that put measures in place when it comes to travel. We will continue to do the important work that Canadians expect us to do.

• (1445)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister went to Expedia to book a private island vacation like the ones he accepted, he would be paying tens of thousands of dollars per night. In addition to that, the Prime Minister billed taxpayers \$200,000 in travel and staff expenses for his illegal vacation.

We now know that it was wrong for the Prime Minister to accept these luxury vacations, so I am asking the Prime Minister if he is going to take responsibility. He can answer. Will he pay taxpayers back for the costs he left them?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when prime ministers travel, we know there are certain things that need to take place. Every single time a prime minister travels, he or she is provided with the resources needed to ensure that the prime minister is able to carry out the functions that a prime minister has.

When it comes to the report the commissioner has released, the Prime Minister has accepted those findings. We will continue to work on behalf of Canadians.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did business with the Aga Khan, and we know that the Prime Minister asked the Aga Khan for access to his private island to use for his personal vacations. We know that the Prime Minister accepted a private helicopter ride during at least one of these vacations. These actions by the Prime Minister were not just wrong; they were illegal.

Now, part of saying sorry is making amends. If the Prime Minister is truly sorry and truly takes responsibility, will he do the right thing and pay taxpayers back?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been the case with previous prime ministers, and as the former commissioner herself stated, security costs are incurred wherever the Prime Minister travels. This government will continue to work with commissioners, with officers of parliament, to do the important work that we are here to do.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Yes, Mr. Speaker, taxpayers do support the Prime Minister when he travels, but they should not be expected to support his costs when he is breaking the law. The Prime Minister would have us believe that it was okay because he thought the Aga Khan was a close family friend, but the Ethics Commissioner revealed that the Prime Minister had not actually spoken to this close friend in over 30 years.

The Prime Minister broke the law by accepting these trips. Will he do the right thing and pay taxpayers back?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been said, the report was released and the Prime Minister accepted those recommendations. The commissioner also found that the Prime Minister did not participate in or make any decisions relating to the Aga Khan or his institutions as has sometimes been implied by the opposite side, which is unfortunate. This government is here to work on behalf of Canadians to respond to the very real challenges that they are facing. We will continue to work on behalf of Canadians.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week after media reports, the Liberals finally admitted that they have signed on to the CPTPP, not only blinding stakeholders on the ground working on NAFTA but ignoring consultations where 95% of Canadians rejected the old TPP. Experts are saying Canada stands to lose 58,000 jobs, but the government is still moving full steam ahead. It is unacceptable that Canadians do not know what their government has

committed them to when other countries, like New Zealand, are being transparent. What is in the CPTPP is anyone's guess. When will the Liberals release the text and come clean with Canadians?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to talk about the consultation work that was done on CPTPP. Our government engaged in two years of robust consultation, including 41,000 letters, over 800 stakeholder meetings, and on top of that, 400 witnesses at the international trade committee of which my colleague is a strong member. If there is one thing that was clear in all those submissions, it is that this is a great deal for our economy, a great deal for Canada's workers, and this is a better deal for Canadians because of Canadians.

[Translation]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, whether we are talking about NAFTA or the trans-Pacific partnership, this government has not shown Canadians the transparency they deserve. As we saw with the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, the Liberals are prepared to jeopardize our supply management system to quickly conclude a free trade agreement.

When will the government be transparent? When will it protect the jobs of Quebeckers and Canadians?

• (1450)

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's concern, but I am sure she is fully aware that this deal creates a great opportunity for our farmers and ranchers right across this country. Also, we understand very well the importance of supply management. This is the party that fought to implement it and this is the government that will defend it. We will sit down with the supply-management sector and discuss how we are going to move forward.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's prosperity depends on young Canadians to get the education and experience they need to prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Last summer, thanks to Canada's summer jobs program, more students in my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets had summer employment. They earned money, made friends, and had experiences that they will always remember. As students and parents prepare for another summer, can the minister give this House an update on the Canada summer jobs program for 2018?

Oral Questions

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, I am very proud that our government has nearly doubled the number of summer jobs for young students all across this country. We have given more young people meaningful work experiences and the chance to enhance their resumé, contribute to their communities, and earn that money they need going forward into their next year of study. The deadline for employers to apply for the next Canada summer jobs period is February 2 and I encourage all employers, especially small businesses, to apply.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister refused to appear before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to explain his actions concerning his two trips to a private island.

Why does the Prime Minister think there is no need for him to appear before the committee and explain to all Canadians why taxpayers should pay for his illegal vacations?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immediately after the report was released, the Prime Minister took responsibility, as any leader should. He accepted the commissioner's findings. The Prime Minister has taken steps to ensure that all future family vacations are cleared ahead of time with the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the report by the former commissioner of conflict of interest and ethics was very clear: the Prime Minister violated the Conflict of Interest Act twice. He violated amendments to the act that he himself introduced in the House. It would be totally irresponsible to ignore the Prime Minister's inappropriate conduct.

Does the government believe taxpayers want to aid and abet the Prime Minister in his inappropriate conduct?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, immediately after the report was released, the Prime Minister took responsibility, as any leader should. He accepted the commissioner's findings.

[English]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner released "The Trudeau Report" a week after the House rose in December, finding that he broke the—

An hon. member: Is that the name of the report?

The Speaker: Order. I think in this case it is inappropriate and I would ask the member to refer to it as the Ethics Commissioner's report perhaps.

Hon. Peter Kent: Mr. Speaker, it is an official document, but I will respect your guidance.

The Prime Minister has made a public statement saying that he will not discuss these findings or the wider revelations raised in the

commissioner's 66-page report with the House standing committee on ethics. Does the Prime Minister consider himself above the protocols and practices of this House and his accountability as a member, let alone the Prime Minister, to his fellow MPs?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, immediately after the report was released, the Prime Minister took responsibility, as a leader should, and accepted the findings of the commissioner.

When the report was released, the Prime Minister immediately addressed Canadians, accepted the commissioner's finding, and took responsibility. Since the new year, the Prime Minister has taken part in a number of town halls across the country with more to come, has answered unscripted questions directly from Canadians, and has answered over 1,400 questions from members of Parliament in this House since the election.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been no answers to questions coming out of the Ethics Commissioner's report.

The commissioner found that among the laws the Prime Minister broke, the Prime Minister received an illegal gift. The taxpayers are also on the hook for the Prime Minister's decision to receive this illegal gift. Will the Prime Minister repay the almost quarter of a million dollars in security, staffing support, per diems, and technology generated by a holiday trip he should never have taken at the taxpayers' expense?

● (1455)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been the case for this Prime Minister and previous prime ministers, there are certain resources that travel with the Prime Minister. The commissioner also found that the Prime Minister did not participate in or make any decisions relating to the Aga Khan or his institutions.

The Prime Minister and this government will continue to work with officers of Parliament so that they can do the important work that they do.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec and in the Maritimes, seasonal workers have been joining forces for some time to denounce this government's failure to take action on the EI spring gap problem. The Liberals promised to help those workers by resolving the issue. After more than two years, nothing has been done. In just a few weeks' time, many families will be without an income. It is appalling.

After so many appeals for help, why are seasonal workers still waiting?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to indicate once again how crucial it is to recognize the importance of employment insurance in supporting our workers in precarious situations, as well as their communities and the employers that need their efforts to continue to develop their communities. This is especially true in seasonal employment situations, which, as we know, are so difficult in eastern Quebec and the Maritimes. We have introduced important measures over the past few months to strengthen the employment insurance system and we will continue to do so, as promised.

* * *

[English]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister was in Davos lecturing about inequality, people in regions like mine are hurting because of job-killing trade deals, privatization, and foreign takeovers.

The privatized port of Churchill has shut down. We are losing hundreds of resource jobs. There is up to 90% unemployment in indigenous communities.

When will the Prime Minister admit that growing inequality and the loss of good jobs is because of decades of Liberal and Conservative policies that are hurting Canadians?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear about our support for Churchill. I have personally had the opportunity to visit Churchill, to make investments there to promote economic development.

Since we formed government, there have been over 700,000 jobs created by Canadians. This has led to the lowest unemployment rate in the last 40 years, at 5.7%. We will continue to work hard on behalf of Canadians. We are going to focus on growth and jobs. We are going to continue to assist individuals and families in Churchill.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite being forced to settle a constitutional court case regarding Canada's summer jobs last year, the Liberals are attacking the very people they claim to help.

By forcing groups to sign the Prime Minister's values test, the government is denying help to groups that provide aid to refugees, run day camp programs for kids with disabilities, and help at-risk youth. On behalf of these organizations from across Canada, will the Liberals finally remove this values test from the Canada summer jobs application?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that funding should never go to pay for work that seeks to actively undermine Canadians' rights.

Unlike the Harper Conservatives who had no problem funding groups like the Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, who put kids to work

distributing flyers featuring graphic images of aborted fetuses, we are committed to protecting Canadians' rights. What is relevant is ensuring that taxpayers' dollars do not go to these activities. Is the member opposite saying that she is opposed to reproductive freedom?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, order. The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would not take that values test either.

The government claims it has issued a clarification about its intentions, but it still has not changed the attestation it demands applicants to sign. Many of the not-for-profit organizations whose mandate is simply to help vulnerable Canadians will not check the box, because a clarification by the government does not change the wording that is plainly in this attestation.

Will the government take the logical next step, remove the values test attestation, and extend the deadline so that groups previously excluded will have time to apply?

● (1500)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite says that she would not attest to supporting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and a woman's reproductive right to choose, we know that government funding should never go to undermine Canadians' hard-won rights and freedoms—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Members on both sides will have very strong views on this subject. We have to try to manage that so that we restrain ourselves. In spite of strong views and strong feelings on things, it is important that we allow each side to be heard.

The hon. Minister of Employment has the floor.

Hon. Patty Hajdu: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has stated that she would not tick the box to attest to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and a woman's right to reproductive rights; however, we know that government funding should never go to actively undermine Canadians' rights. That is why we know, unlike the Conservatives, that organizations like the Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform should not be entitled to use jobs for kids money to support their activities which—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the ability of an individual or a group to provide essential services does not depend on who they are or their personal beliefs.

Oral Questions

The government recently acknowledged that by apologizing to the LGBTQ community, several members of which were removed from the public service.

Why then, in the case of summer jobs funding, does the government find it acceptable to impose a personal values test as a way of deciding who gets government funding?

[*English*]

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Harper Conservative ideology is still alive and well under members opposite. We know that government funding should never go to undermining Canadian's rights and freedoms. While the Conservative leader's campaign manager was arranging internships for organizations that oppose women's rights, the Government of Canada will not be funding them.

Canadians expect that their government will stand up for the rights of women and the LGBTQ2 community, and we will uphold them all the way. That is exactly what this government is doing.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I met with St'at'imc Chiefs Council in Lillooet late last year, with one of the most pressing issues raised being the need for increased federal support for the community's tribal police service.

Could the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness please update the House on what he is doing to ensure that first nation and Inuit communities are receiving the necessary funding to properly serve and protect their communities?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to report that we recently announced Canada's largest investment in indigenous policing since 1991. Funding of over \$290 million will mean better equipment and wages for more than 1,300 police officers and the addition of 110 new officer positions in indigenous communities. The funding is also ongoing and indexed, so indigenous communities can rely on it for the long term.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where was, is, or will be the Minister of Agriculture? It seems that dairy, egg, and poultry producers have once again been overlooked by the Liberal government in the trans-Pacific partnership.

Producers are paying the price for the arrogance of the Prime Minister, who skipped an important meeting last November. As a result, the same concessions were made even though the U.S. was not part of the equation, at a time when NAFTA negotiations are at a critical stage.

Will the government today commit to providing compensation for producers, as the previous Conservative government had committed to provide?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that this government has supported and will continue to support the supply management system. As I said many times in this House, it is a symbol for the world.

I indicated before and I want to indicate again that we are the party that fought to implement supply management, and I can assure my hon. colleague that we are the government that is going to defend supply management.

* * *

• (1505)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in November in committee the Minister of National Defence promised to look at Phoenix pay issues from three DND civilian employees in my riding and fix them before Christmas. They came to Ottawa to represent more than 1,000 federal employees in my riding alone with serious pay issues, including a single parent who has been underpaid by more than \$20,000. Two months later, the three who received the minister's personal assurances have not even been contacted, let alone had their pay problems fixed.

When will the minister take action to make sure that all of his employees are properly paid so they can get on with their work, which is so important to the defence of Canada?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, fixing the Phoenix pay problem remains my top priority. I can assure the member and all members that we are leaving no stone unturned as we work tirelessly to resolve this issue for Canada's public servants. Our public servants will fix this on behalf of Canadians.

Let me assure the member opposite that I will look into his three cases immediately.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian organic industry is one of the fastest-growing agricultural sectors in Canada. We have our farmers and organic food processors to thank for that. They are highly regarded throughout the world. With more than \$5 billion in retail sales in 2017, there has been tremendous growth in the organic sector, including in the riding of Pontiac.

Can the Minister of Agriculture tell the House what our government is doing to help our organic farmers?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Pontiac for his hard work on the Canadian organic sector.

Last Friday in Guelph, I was proud to announce federal funding in support of Canadian organic standards. This funding will help our organic industry remain competitive at home and around the world.

Working together with our world-class organic producers, we will reach our government's \$75 billion of agriculture and exports by 2025, grow our economy, and increase the middle class.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when asked why he met with Joshua Boyle, the Prime Minister said that he meets with people who have been freed after overseas ordeals. "I always try to defer to meeting with more people rather than fewer people.... I think that's something that's important to do."

However, Emad Mishko Tamo, a Yazidi boy who was held captive for three years by ISIS, who arrived in Canada only after months of political pressure, has asked for a meeting with the Prime Minister. Why did the PM rush to meet with Joshua Boyle but has yet to meet with Emad?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no government mission has made us prouder than the mission to rescue, resettle, and provide safety for survivors of Daesh, mainly Yazidi women and girls. We have resettled more than 1,000 Yazidi women and girls in Canada. We are on track to resettle the remaining 100. We are proud of that commitment. We will continue to expedite those cases as part of the privately sponsored refugee program. We made a commitment to the House, and we are proud to deliver on that commitment.

* * *

*[Translation]***MARIJUANA**

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when Quebec asked for more time to provide for the legalization of pot, Ottawa said no. Now we know why the Liberals were in such a hurry. The cannabis industry is a Liberal industry, and is the new private preserve of the Liberal Party of Canada. Anyone who works for the Liberals will have a job waiting for them in the pot economy.

When will the Liberals stop working on behalf of their friends and start working for all Canadians?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protecting the health and safety of Canadians is a priority for our government. The current approach to cannabis is not working. It lets criminals profit and has not kept cannabis out of the hands of children.

The cannabis bill will provide a strict legal framework that will control the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis in Canada.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the members opposite do not understand. Rich, anonymous investors from tax havens have invested no less than \$165 million in pot production in Canada. Anonymous investors, or maybe even members of organized crime, have bankrolled the legalization of Liberal cannabis.

Will the government ensure that the list of investors is made public? Canadians are entitled to that information and we are demanding it.

● (1510)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protecting Canadians and their health and safety is a priority for our government. The black market is currently under the complete control of criminals. The cannabis being sold today is unregulated, untested, and often very unsafe.

Bill C-45 creates a responsible, well-regulated legal market for adults. We are taking the time to do things right, but this delay will benefit organized crime and present an ongoing risk for our young people.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if I say "Cayman Islands", "Barbados", or "Bermuda", you will likely think that I am talking about future branches of Morneau Shepell, when I am actually talking about where the money to produce Canadian marijuana is coming from. The Liberals who are running pot companies funded by tax havens are supposedly there to fight organized crime. That pretty much sums up the Prime Minister's big plan.

Will the Prime Minister ensure that there is complete transparency when it comes to the ownership of marijuana companies and the source of their funding?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, our priority is to protect the health and safety of Canadians. That is why Bill C-45 is a priority.

The current approach is not working. It has allowed criminals to profit and has not kept cannabis out of the hands of children.

The cannabis bill will create a strict legal framework to control the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis in Canada.

The Speaker: There have been discussions among representatives of all the parties in the House, and I understand that there is consent to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the attack at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec.

I invite hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

*Routine Proceedings***BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY**

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that Ms. Brosseau, member for the electoral district of Berthier—Maskinongé, has been appointed member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of Mr. Julian, member for the electoral district of New Westminster—Burnaby, for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the parliamentary budget officer entitled “PBO and Finance Canada Long-term Projection Comparison”.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to section 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the parliamentary budget officer entitled “Economic and Fiscal Monitor - January 2018”.

* * *

[*English*]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICS COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 28 of the conflict of interest code for members of the House of Commons, it is my duty to present to the House the report of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on an inquiry in relation to the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

* * *

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 present, in both official languages, the government's response to 107 petitions.

* * *

• (1515)

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in a moment, I will ask for the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion.

First, I would like to say how proud I am to rise in the House as member of Parliament for Berthier—Maskinongé and as NDP House leader.

This is my first day in this new role, and it is even more meaningful because the House leaders of all of the recognized parties are currently women. This is a historic moment, and I really look forward to working with my colleagues.

[*English*]

Of course, we know that today there remains still much to be done for the fight for equality, the fight against gender-based violence, and the fight for a workplace that is free from harassment and violence, in all its forms.

Today we are debating a bill that addresses harassment in our own workplace here in the House of Commons, which is in acute need of a culture overhaul from all sides. It is clear that all parties agree that the bill is a positive step in the right direction.

The motion I would like to move would send the bill directly to committee at the conclusion of today's debate. Following conversations I have had with my counterparts from all parties in the House, I believe, Mr. Speaker, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

[*Translation*]

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when no Member rises to speak on the second reading motion of Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, or at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders today, whichever comes earlier, the Bill be deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

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

Some hon. members: Yes.

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

Some hon. members: Yes.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I hope you will find the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion that the House recognize that acts of violence and bigotry directed against religious believers, such as the June 23, 1985, bombing of Air India flights 182 and 301; the September 15, 2001, firebombing of the Hindu Samaj Temple and the Hamilton Mountain Mosque; the April 5, 2004, firebombing of Montreal's United Talmud Torah Jewish school; and the January 29, 2017, murder of Muslims at the Quebec City Islamic cultural centre, are inimical to a free, peaceful, and plural society, and declare January 29 of every year as a national day of solidarity with victims of anti-religious bigotry and violence.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

CENTRE CULTUREL ISLAMIQUE DE QUÉBEC

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this day one year ago, the great mosque of Quebec City was the target of an act of terror. On this day one year ago, children, spouses, friends and neighbours lost people they loved. On this day one year ago, Canada mourned its own: Khaled Belkacemi, Azzedine Soufiane, Abdelkrim Hassane, Aboubaker Thabti, Mamadou Tanou Barry and Ibrahima Barry.

Today, we know that these six people were gunned down by ignorance and hatred, fuelled by Islamophobia and racism, which will never have a place in our society. This act of violence was both inexcusable and unacceptable.

Over the days and weeks that followed the tragedy, Canadians came together, finding strength in their differences and taking pride in the diversity that has enriched their country. Together, we chose love over hate, compassion over violence, solidarity over division. Together, we showed that we are capable of living up to the values at the core of the Canadian identity. We showed that we shine brightest in darkness.

On this day one year ago, we honoured the memory of those who left us too soon. We stood in solidarity with the Muslim community, which is too often targeted by hate.

● (1520)

[English]

As we mark this sombre anniversary and remember the extraordinary courage of ordinary people, I believe we must ask ourselves if we have done right by the men who lost their lives on this day one year ago. When the dust began to settle and it began to be business as usual once again, did we stand with neighbours and strangers who were targeted by hate? I ask not only the members of this House but all Canadians. Have we regularly condemned everyday acts of racism like we so forcefully did just one year ago? Have we defended the freedom of others, whether it be to pray, to love, or to simply be, as we would our own?

These attacks sought to divide this country and its citizens, drive wedges between neighbours, and make enemies of strangers. Sadly, the same can be said of hate crimes and other isolated incidents of discrimination that far too often go unnoticed or unreported. Things like graffiti and slurs have become commonplace, normalized, and even tolerated. The loss of life should not and cannot be a necessary condition for acts of hatred to merit our attention. Tragedy should not and cannot become a prerequisite for us to have important conversations in our homes and in our schools.

It should never have come to this point for attitudes to be changed and for changes to be made. We cannot bring back those who perished, but we owe it to them to fight the very sentiments that led to their loss. We owe it to them to speak up and to stand tall and explicitly against Islamophobia and discrimination in all its forms.

[Translation]

Every day, we can and must honour those who left us too soon and honour their values. In the face of ignorance, let us choose compassion. In the face of hate, let us choose love. Together, let us

take a stand against Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination. We must not let fear into our hearts. We must not let racism take root in our society. Together, we must continue to find strength in our diversity and take pride in our differences. Every day, let us pay tribute to Khaled Belkacemi, Azzedine Soufiane, Abdelkrim Hassane, Aboubaker Thabti, Mamadou Tanou Barry and Ibrahima Barry. Let us show that Canadians will not be intimidated by violence or hatred, not today, not tomorrow, not ever.

● (1525)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I want to join the Prime Minister and all of my colleagues in the House in remembering the victims of the shooting at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec on January 29, 2017. This shooting was an act of terror that shook the region, the province, and the entire country. It shook a city that is proud of its warmth and hospitality, particularly at this time of year when it welcomes people from around the world to its winter carnival.

[English]

Quebec City was home to the victims of the attack. It was where they lived with their families, worked, and prayed. It was for that last act, for practising their faith freely, as they must be able to do in Canada, that they were murdered in cold blood. They were fathers and sons, brothers and husbands. They went to pray and never returned home.

[Translation]

This should not happen in Canada. Our country has always welcomed those seeking freedom and a better life. It must always be a place where believers of all faiths feel safe and secure in their worship. An attack like this one is an attack on those very principles, which have stood the test of time and for which we have fought around the world. As always, we must do our part to defend those freedoms here in Canada.

[English]

All Canadians must feel secure in their communities. They must feel safe living freely and practising their faiths. An attack on Canadians in their place of worship is an attack on the religious freedoms that should be enjoyed by all of us. Sadly, there always will be people who seek to harm others because of the fanatical, violent ideologies they espouse.

[Translation]

We must remain alert to these dangers. We must not be afraid, but we must be ready to defend our society, its tolerance, and its freedoms from those who seek to undermine them.

[English]

We must also recognize and appreciate Canada's Muslim community, an integral part of our country. It has made an immeasurable contribution to our free, prosperous, and pluralistic society. Canadian Muslims must know that they will always have a home here, one where they can live in peace and liberty.

[Translation]

Last year's attack was a hate crime that took six innocent lives.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

It was a strike against Canada's Muslim community and against the freedom of religion that we must always defend in Canada.

[Translation]

Today, we remember the victims. We offer our condolences to their families and friends.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, 17 children are orphans. Because of hate, 17 children are now orphans. They are orphans because their fathers were killed simply for being Muslim. On January 29, 2017, Khaled, Azzedine, Aboubaker, Mamadou, Ibrahima, Abdelkrim, and dozens of others made their way to the Grande mosquée de Québec. It was a winter night like any other. Peaceful. However, that night, an act of terrorism changed their lives, and ours, forever.

[English]

A year ago, Islamophobia changed lives forever in Quebec, in Quebec City, and across Canada.

[Translation]

The tragedy at the great mosque in Quebec City, the Grande mosquée de Québec, is the worst terrorist attack in Quebec since the shooting at the École polytechnique in Montreal in 1989, which killed 14 women and injured 14 others. They were targeted simply because they were women. There was a “before” and “after” the Polytechnique. There is now a “before” and “after” the great mosque of Quebec City. Over the past year, a lot has been said and a lot has been written about the attack. The dead have been mourned, and their lives have been honoured. We honour them again today.

However, it is not enough to honour them. We must commit to fight Islamophobia in order to deprive hate of future victims. Today, on this day of commemoration, we must ask ourselves whether lessons have been learned, whether the tone of the discussion has changed, whether it has worsened. The truth is that hateful acts have not diminished, especially not online, on social media.

Harassment in the street continues, especially for Muslim women, and acts of violence are still all too common. Let us not forget that last summer, a car belonging to the president of the Centre culturel islamique de Québec was set ablaze in front of his home. The intimidation of young Muslims also continues. How will they navigate this environment of constant suspicion that surrounds them? These youth live in the real world, where they cannot close their eyes and pretend there is no racism directed towards them.

Le Devoir announced this week that in Montreal alone, almost 250 hate crimes were reported in 2017. That is almost one every day, just in Montreal. Furthermore, we know that a large number of hate crimes go unreported.

- (1530)

[English]

Silence is a common refuge for those who are tired of hate. Because hate is becoming so prevalent in our society, too many are tuning out, but this is how hate prevails and why we, as parliamentarians, have a special responsibility to speak out.

[Translation]

Hate has always found a target. In the past, it was the Irish, Jews or Italians; today, it is Muslims or Arabs. Who knows which group will be targeted tomorrow? History is watching us.

[English]

I am a white man, and as a white man I do not know what it is like to face racism. I will never be the victim of xenophobic acts, but some of my neighbours, friends, constituents, fellow MPs, and staff will be. Some members of my own family have faced racism. We need to stand up and say that we will not get used to this and we will not turn a blind eye to this hate. We will confront it, we will denounce it, and we will work to end hate.

[Translation]

What we need is education. Racism does not simply materialize out of thin air. It takes root in the space our society allots, and some people feed it. We need the right tools to rid our society of it. That will not happen from one day to the next, for racism is tenacious, as we all know. It is our responsibility as elected representatives to be aware of the impact of words, of our own words, of the messages we send and how they are interpreted and reinterpreted.

The day after the shooting at the Quebec City mosque, 6,000 people in Quebec City and 15,000 people in Montreal joined thousands more in communities across Canada to stand in solidarity with the families of the victims. They gathered to not only mark the tragedy, but to condemn racism, Islamophobia, and populist hate. Candles in hand, thousands enduring freezing temperatures, showing us that the best response to those who would tear us apart is solidarity and that openness and acceptance trump suspicion based on nothing but ignorance.

Tonight, similar gatherings are planned for Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Guelph, Kitchener, Hamilton, Toronto, St. Catharines, London, Yarmouth, Halifax, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, Vancouver, Surrey, and Victoria.

[English]

People are gathering, shoulder to shoulder, to remember, to share the same pain, and to share the same hope for a brighter future. To quote NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, “We’re all in this together”, no matter the colour of our skin, our beliefs, our gender identity, our place of birth, or the clothes we wear.

[Translation]

Dignity does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, or gender. Human dignity knows no borders. Today, 17 children are orphans because of hate. The survivors must hold their heads high. As a society we must be united in our determination to combat hate. Together, let us pass on a peaceful world to the next generation, a world where everyone knows that they belong. Together, we will work to end the inequality that divides us. Together, we will douse the flames of intolerance, because everyone deserves to live in peace, because everyone deserves to see their children laugh, run, and discover everything life has to offer as they grow up.

Routine Proceedings

[*English*]

Today we are reminded why it is so important that we stand united against all forms of hate. As our leader Jagmeet Singh has said, “We need to champion the politics of love to fight the growing politics of hate, the politics of courage to fight the politics of fear.”

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères to add his remarks? Agreed.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one year ago, six people lost their lives at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec. We Quebeckers lost six of our sons. Each and every one of us remembers the moment we heard about what happened in Sainte-Foy on January 29, 2017. We will never forget how we felt then.

Ibrahima Barry, Mamadou Tanou Barry, Khaled Belkacemi, Abdelkrim Hassane, Azzedine Soufiane, and Aboubaker Thabti were all fathers, brothers, friends, colleagues, and members of our community. They all chose Quebec and made it their home and their society; above all, they chose us, Quebeckers.

These six individuals chose us because, in Quebec, everyone, without exception, has the right to freedom, the right to security, and the freedom to practice their religion.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to pay tribute to their memory and offer my support to their families and loved ones. I also want to acknowledge the courage and resilience of the eight people who were injured in the shooting. On this, the anniversary of the Quebec City mosque shooting, we have a responsibility to respond to hate with love, to bigotry with solidarity, to violence with fellowship. We share the pain felt by the victims' families and friends. We are all in this together, and we will all listen together.

In memory of Ibrahima, Mamadou, Khaled, Abdelkrim, Azzedine, and Aboubaker, today we celebrate the fellowship that unites us and the solidarity that brings us together.

Let us learn from this appalling tragedy and not let these terrible losses be in vain. Let us be more attentive and more loving towards one another and never let the tragedy of January 29 ever happen again.

The Speaker: I believe there is unanimous consent for the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands to add her comments.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank you and my colleagues. As my colleague from the Bloc Québécois said, we are in this together. We must never forget this dark episode in our history, when six Canadians were gunned down and 19 others were injured. I want to express my love and solidarity for our Muslim brothers and sisters across the country.

[*English*]

We are together today as we were last year. On a personal note, I want to extend my thanks to the right hon. Prime Minister for taking on the airplane representatives, leaders of the other parties: our dear friend, who is not here now, Rona Ambrose, and the previous leader, the member for Outremont. We were together, standing on that cold

night, with our candles, with thousands and thousands of Quebeckers holding their small children, with blankets and toques, and children coming home from their hockey games standing along the snowbanks to watch us, lit by candlelight, in our grief and solidarity.

There is only one thing I would want to add to what we have already said. I want to thank the Prime Minister again for making it possible for representatives of all parties to travel together again today to Quebec City to stand in solidarity with the extraordinarily generous and open-hearted people of Quebec, who were also victims of having such a terrible crime committed in their most beautiful city. That is another atrocity, because it attaches to an open-hearted and wonderful city a crime that broke our hearts.

It is appropriate that we heed the call of the National Council of Canadian Muslims that we make a permanent decision to create a day of remembrance on January 29, but another action we can take to show our deep commitment is to recognize the heroism of Aymen Derbali.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Derbali remains seriously injured.

[*English*]

He will never be able to walk again. He is a father of three, originally from Tunisia. When the gunman opened fire, he stood to attract attention and take more shots to try to protect other people. He has earned two MBAs at Laval since coming to this country. He must be an extraordinary human being, and I would hope that we can find a way, perhaps not as Parliament but as individuals, to contribute to the fund to ensure that he has housing that is accessible, because he will be in a wheelchair, and his current housing will not work for that.

I will not go on. I am sure we all feel in our hearts how much we could do to say to our Muslim brothers and sisters across this country our deep commitment that this never happen again.

[*Member spoke in Arabic*]

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I thank all of the members who shared their eloquent remarks today.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 49th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House.

If the House gives its consent, I would like to move concurrence at this time.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

I move:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of any Standing Order, for the duration of 2018, when a recorded division is to be held on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, except recorded divisions deferred to the conclusion of Oral Questions, the bells to call in the Members shall be sounded for not more than 30 minutes.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FINANCE

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

I move:

That the Standing Committee on Finance be the committee designated for the purposes of section 72 of the Proceeds of Crime and Terrorist Financing Act.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

• (1545)

PETITIONS

MISSING PERSONS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by many across Canada, a petition that, if acted upon, would help tens of thousands of families. I would first like to thank my new friends who are visiting me in Ottawa today, two of them from my riding and many others from across the greater Toronto area, for giving me a

better understanding of the challenges, hurdles, and hardships those living with the disappearance of a loved one face.

As such, I would like to present this petition. Residents of Canada are calling upon the House to declare and create a national missing persons day during which communities across the country could gather in remembrance of their missing loved ones and advocate for measures to reduce the frequency of disappearances and support those left behind.

[Translation]

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the representative for the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot in the municipalities united against domestic violence campaign, I am tabling a petition signed by hundreds of residents from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and Montérégie. I am still collecting signatures.

The petitioners call on the government to combat violence against women. They urge the government to take swift, meaningful action to put an end to domestic violence.

[English]

ABORTION

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first is from a number of Canadians asking the Parliament of Canada to consider the availability of the abortion pill, Mifegymiso. This particular medication is available but at a horrendous cost. It is \$450 for a treatment, which makes it exorbitantly expensive, and therefore, unavailable. The petitioners ask that the Parliament of Canada converse with the provinces and territories to ensure that the cost is acceptable, that the government promptly implement universal cost coverage for this drug, that programs be put in place, and that the pharmaceutical be rolled out in the most timely and inclusive way possible.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is with regard to the Thames River. As we will recall, the Conservative government stopped environmental protection of this river by changing regulations in connection with the navigable waters protection act. The petitioners are asking that the current government renew all protections and make sure that this river is protected by supporting my bill, Bill C-355, which would commit the government to do so.

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members that the presenting of petitions is not the time for debate or presenting an argument. It is the time to simply present a petition and the essence of what it is about.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know how much Canadians love our Canadian health care system. The petitioners are asking that we look at the importance of incorporating the cost of medicines. Often people go to a hospital and get free medications and leave the hospital and do not have the finances to get the medications they require to stay out of the hospital. The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to look at incorporating pharmacare costs into the Canada Health Act and beyond.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: question 1314, question 1320, question 1321, question 1324, question 1326, question 1328, question 1330, question 1333, question 1334, question 1337, question 1351, question 1355, question 1360 to question 1362, question 1373, question 1377, question 1382 to question 1385, question 1388, question 1389, question 1393, question 1394, question 1401, question 1409, question 1411, question 1422, and question 1425.

[Text]

Question No. 1314—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to the statement by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons on November 2, 2017, that “Never before in the history of Canada have we seen a redistribution of Canada’s wealth to the middle class and those aspiring to become a part of it”: does the government consider this statement to be accurate and, if so, what specific information does the government have to back up this statement?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the comments by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons were in reference to the government’s efforts to support Canada’s middle class and those working hard to join it and to ensure the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes. Since coming to office, the government has helped middle-class Canadians by reducing the rate on the second personal income tax bracket from 22% to 20.5%, while asking the wealthiest Canadians to pay a bit more through the introduction of a new top income bracket of 33%. The government has also introduced the Canada child benefit, which is providing increased benefits to nine out of 10 families with children, and which is better targeted to those who need it most compared to the previous system of child benefits. In addition, the government is taking steps to address tax advantages that disproportionately benefit the wealthy.

The government is also taking steps to expand opportunities for individuals seeking to join the middle class. Investments in areas such as early learning, child care, and affordable housing will provide a foundation for upward mobility to those who are currently struggling with these needs, while investments in skills training will provide greater opportunities for workers to upgrade their skills and attain better-paying jobs.

Moreover, the government is taking actions to strengthen the position of middle-class workers in the workplace. The government

Routine Proceedings

has introduced legislation to restore a fair and balanced approach to organized labour and is working on further legislative changes and other policy options to address emerging issues in the labour market, such as unpaid internships and a fair wages policy for businesses that have dealings with the federal government.

The government supports Canada’s middle class and is working to deliver a more balanced and fair economy where growth is shared by all Canadians and does not just benefit the wealthy.

Question No. 1320—**Mr. Len Webber:**

With regard to the seven Books of Remembrance that lie in the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill: (a) what is the government going to do to ensure uninterrupted public access to the Books during renovations on the Centre Block; (b) when will these changes take place; and (c) until what date will the alternate arrangements be in place?

Hon. Seamus O’Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the Books of Remembrance commemorate the lives of more than 118,000 Canadians who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving Canada in uniform. During the renovation of the Centre Block, the Books of Remembrance will be located in phase one of the Visitor Welcome Centre in a suitably designed space where public viewing and the daily page-turning ceremony will continue.

It is currently unknown how long the Books of Remembrance will remain in phase one of the Visitor Welcome Centre as the Centre Block renovation is in the early stages of its execution and a schedule is still in development.

Question No. 1321—**Mr. Len Webber:**

With regard to the Peace Tower Carillon on Parliament Hill: (a) what is going to be done to ensure the weekday noon-time concert will continue to play while renovations on the Centre Block take place; (b) when will any changes take effect; and (c) until what date will the alternate arrangements be in place?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Parliament Buildings belong to all Canadians. Part of our responsibility is to engage them on the projects taking place here on Parliament Hill.

The government is considering several ways to ensure a positive visitor experience on Parliament Hill during this time.

Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, is working with the House of Commons to ensure live performances by the Dominion Carillonneur continue for as long as possible during the renovation of the Peace Tower. The project is still in the early stages. PSPC is currently carrying out a detailed investigation that is critical to defining the scope, budget, and schedule of the renovations. At this point, no determination has been made about the timing of any potential impacts on the carillon or on alternative arrangements.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1324— Mr. Robert Aubin:**

With regard to the statement by the Minister of Transport in the House of Commons on October 30, 2017, that “We are not getting rid of the function of checking the check pilots of the airlines”: (a) on what evidence or documents is the Minister’s statement based; (b) what are the details of the evidence or documents in (a); (c) has the Minister read the document entitled “Risk Assessment—Oversight of the ACP/AQP Evaluator Programs (Ottawa, ON; 6-10 February 2017) Conventional Tool”; (d) if the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, when did the Minister read this document; (e) did the Minister approve the policy as described in the document in (c); (f) does the Minister intend to overturn the decision made by the Civil Aviation Directorate and National Operations at Transport Canada to delegate responsibility for the evaluation of company check pilots to the airlines as of April 1, 2018; (g) when was the Minister informed that Transport Canada had decided to delegate responsibility for the evaluation of company check pilots to the airlines; (h) did the Minister speak to the Director of National Operations at Transport Canada about this statement; (i) if the answer to (h) is affirmative, what are the details of this conversation; (j) what other member countries of the International Civil Aviation Organization have transferred responsibility for evaluating company check pilots to the airlines; (k) has Transport Canada assessed the internal need for aviation safety inspectors; (l) if the answer to (k) is affirmative, what is the result of the department’s assessment; and (m) what is the impact of this need in terms of inspectors on the new policy adopted by Transport Canada?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the safety and security of Canadians is a top priority for the Government of Canada.

With respect to the statement by the Minister of Transport in the House of Commons on October 30, 2017, that, “We are not getting rid of the function of checking the check pilots of the airlines”, and with regard to parts (a) to (i), Transport Canada has a rigorous regulatory program in place and conducts oversight activities to verify industry compliance. Under the Canadian Aviation Regulations, it is industry’s responsibility to comply with all safety regulations and to operate safely.

On behalf of the minister, Transport Canada delegates the responsibility of conducting pilot proficiency checks of industry ? pilots by experienced and qualified pilots. For over 25 years, delegates have been monitoring industry pilots. Similar to our oversight regime, the department inspects based on a series of risk criteria. If a risk is identified with the company’s approved check pilots or with the company’s compliance with any regulations, the department will not hesitate to take action in the interest of aviation safety.

With regard to parts (j) to (m), the program is in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, standards and aligns with other civil aviation authorities such as the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, whose delegates are known as “check airmen”. The department’s use of ministerial delegates is also well established for aircraft certification, pilot testing of various licences, and pilot written exams.

Transport Canada requires that professional pilots receive a pilot proficiency check, PPC, to confirm and test skills and proficiency in dealing with aircraft standard operations and emergency procedures. The requirements and standards for these check rides meet or exceed ICAO requirements.

A pilot proficiency check is conducted every six months, year, or two years depending on the type of operation, size, and complexity of aircraft.

The department is aware that the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority has extended similar privileges to its senior examiners.

Transport Canada continually analyzes its workforce, and focuses on recruitment and retention of staff to ensure it has the necessary number of oversight personnel with the required skills and competencies to plan and conduct oversight activities. As in any workplace, total workforce can fluctuate at any given time due to changing demographics, promotions, retirements, and other factors.

The new policy will not impact inspectors. The department is focusing surveillance on areas of greater risk based on data. When an area is deemed a low risk, resources are reallocated to areas identified as higher risk.

Question No. 1326— Ms. Elizabeth May:

With regard to the drafting of Bill C-45, the Cannabis Act: (a) did the government study the environmental impacts of the Canadian cannabis industry and consider this in the drafting of legislation; (b) if the answer in (a) is negative, why not; and (c) if the answer in (a) is affirmative, what are the details of any correspondence, reports, or documents related to the subject of the sustainability of the legislation contained in Bill C-45, including (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipients, (iv) title, (v) summary of contents?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, prior to the introduction of Bill C-45, Health Canada carried out the mandatory assessment of environmental impacts, strategic environmental analysis, in the context of developing a federal legal framework to legalize, strictly regulate, and restrict cannabis.

Under the proposed framework, licence-holders would be subject to federal and provincial/territorial statutes and regulations with respect to environmental protection. These laws and regulations establish clear rules to limit potential negative environmental impacts due to commercial cultivation and manufacturing, such as poor air quality, harmful effects of unauthorized pesticide use, water contamination, and improper use and disposal of harmful substances.

A key objective of the framework set out in Bill C-45 is to displace the illegal market. The current illicit cannabis market relies on unregulated cultivation and manufacturing practices, for example, potential mishandling of chemicals, including unauthorized pesticide use, or improper disposal and release of harmful substances, which may have detrimental effects on the environment. Reducing illegal cannabis production can be expected to lead to a decrease in negative environmental impacts due to these unregulated practices.

Consideration of environmental impacts will form a part of the regulatory impact analysis statement that will be required prior to the publication of federal regulations, subject to parliamentary approval of Bill C-45 by Parliament.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1328— Mr. Mark Warawa:**

With regard to the so-called “Mandate Letter Tracker” on the Privy Council Office website: (a) is any third-party non-government analysis conducted to ensure that the claims made on the website are not Liberal Party propaganda; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details of any such contracts, including (i) person who conducted the analysis, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) date and duration of contract, (v) file number; (c) what are the costs associated with setting up the website, broken down by individual item; and (d) what are the anticipated ongoing costs of maintaining the website, broken down by individual item?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the so-called “mandate letter tracker” on the Privy Council Office, PCO, website, the response from PCO is as follows:

In response to (a), no. The Mandate Letter Tracker was produced by the results and delivery unit, RDU, in PCO with support from all federal government departments.

In response to (b), this is not applicable.

In response to (c), the development of the website was completed with existing Government of Canada financial resources. Ongoing maintenance of the website will also rely on existing financial resources. The tracking of mandate letter commitments and priorities is one of many roles and responsibilities of the results and delivery unit in PCO. These roles also encompass efforts to monitor delivery, address implementation obstacles to key priorities, and report on progress to the Prime Minister. The unit also facilitates the work of the government by developing tools, guidance, and learning activities on implementing an outcome-focused approach.

Question No. 1330— Mr. Mark Warawa :

With regard to the Fall Economic Statement tabled by the Finance Minister on October 24, 2017: for each investment horizon in chart 3.8 (10 years, 20 years, 30 years), how much total tax would be paid in a personal savings account, versus in a private corporation, for the entire life cycle of the investment, including taxes paid on the final distribution to the corporate owner of all funds?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as chart 3.8 of the 2017 fall economic statement illustrates, a high-income individual can realize significant tax advantages from holding passive investments in his or her corporation. By benefiting from a lower rate of tax on business income, the amount of after-tax income that can be invested passively in a private corporation is larger than what can be invested had the income been distributed as salary or dividends. As shown in the example, a corporate owner is able to earn after-tax interest income that is about 1.8 times more than he or she could realize at the personal level after 10 years, after distribution. After 30 years, the additional after-tax interest income from saving in a corporation is more than double what they could have obtained by saving at the personal level. This implies that investments made inside a private corporation are effectively subject to a lower implicit tax rate than investments made inside personal savings accounts.

Question No. 1333—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to Canada’s participation in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and testimony at the Standing Committee on Finance on November 7, 2017, by the Director, International Finance and Development Division, International Trade and Finance Branch, of the Department of Finance: (a) on how many of the AIIB’s 21 approved projects (Philippines: Metro Manila Flood Management Project, Asia: IFC Emerging Asia Fund, India: Transmission System Strengthening Project, Gujarat Rural Roads Project, India Infrastructure Fund and Andhra Pradesh 24x7—Power For All, Egypt: Round II Solar PV Feed-in Tariffs Program, Tajikistan: Nurek

Hydropower Rehabilitation Project—Phase I and Dushanbe-Uzbekistan Border Road Improvement Project, Georgia: Batumi Bypass Road Project, Bangladesh: Natural Gas Infrastructure and Efficiency Improvement Project and Distribution System Upgrade and Expansion Project, Indonesia: Dam Operational Improvement and Safety Project Phase II, Regional Infrastructure Development Fund Project and National Slum Upgrading Project, Azerbaijan: Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project to be co-financed with the World Bank, Oman: Duqm Port Commercial Terminal and Operational Zone Development Project and Railway System Preparation Project, Myanmar: Myingyan Power Plant Project, Pakistan: Tarbela 5 Hydropower Extension Project and National Motorway M-4 Project) as of November 9, 2017, did the government conduct its own environmental and human rights review as part of its project assessment; (b) on how many of the AIIB’s nine proposed projects (China: Beijing Air Quality Improvement and Coal Replacement Project, Oman: Broadband Infrastructure Project, Sri Lanka: Climate Resilience Improvement Project—Phase II, India: Bangalore Metro Rail Project—Line R6, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, Madhya Pradesh Rural Connectivity Project, Amaravati Sustainable Capital City Development Project and Mumbai Metro Line 4 Project, Georgia: 280 MW Nenskra Hydropower Plant) as of November 9, 2017, did the government conduct its own environmental and human rights review as part of its project assessment; (c) broken down by individual project (i) what were the outcomes and findings of all the environmental and human rights reviews for all of the AIIB projects that the government conducted, (ii) when was each review completed; and (d) what was the criteria considered within the environmental and human rights reviews by the government when it conducted assessments of all of AIIB’s projects?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 6, 2017, Department of Finance officials testified at the Standing Committee on Finance on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, AIIB. In the testimony, officials explained that the Government of Canada conducts assessments of projects being considered by multilateral development banks of which Canada is a member. As Canada is not yet a member of the AIIB, the government is not yet undertaking assessments of AIIB projects.

Question No. 1334— Mr. Alupa A. Clarke:

With regard to the appointment process of the Commissioner of Official Languages in the most recent selection process with a cut-off date of September 12, 2017: (a) what was the total number of applicants; (b) what was the number of applicants who submitted applications after the initial cut-off date; (c) what was the number of candidates who passed the initial or preliminary round of screening; (d) what are the details of the steps in the selection process, including (i) number and types of exams given, (ii) number of interviews, (iii) other steps, including a description of each step; and (e) what was the intended date of announcement of the selected candidate for Commissioner of Official Languages?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the appointment process of the Commissioner of Official Languages in the most recent selection process with a cut-off date of September 12, 2017, the response from the Privy Council Office is as follows:

In response to (a), 67 applications were submitted.

In response to (b), 24 applications were submitted after September 12, 2017.

Routine Proceedings

In response to (c), the number of candidates who passed the initial or preliminary round of screening has been withheld to prevent direct or residual disclosure of identifiable data.

In response to (d), candidates are assessed through a variety of means at various points in a selection process, e.g., the screening of applications against the education and experience criteria set in the notice of appointment opportunity for the position. The selection committee interviewed a short list of qualified candidates and checked their references. As the position requires proficiency in both official languages as set out in the Language Skills Act, candidates were also asked to undergo a language skills evaluation. Shortlisted candidates also underwent psychometric assessments to assist in determining their personal suitability for the position.

In response to (e), the government is committed to carrying out selection processes as quickly as possible. At the same time, the government is committed to identifying the most qualified candidates through open, transparent, and merit-based processes, and will take as long as is required to find the right person for such an important leadership position. The appointment of Raymond Th  berge as the new Commissioner of Official Languages was announced on December 14, 2017.

Question No. 1337— Ms. Irene Mathysen:

With regard to claims for disability benefits processed by the Department of Veterans Affairs and to the entire process required to treat those claims, including, but not limited to, receipt of claims, assessment of claims, investigation of claims and gathering of evidence, denial of claims, appeals processes, court appearances, and dealing with complaints, broken down by year since 2012: (a) how much money has been spent by the Department processing claims that have been denied, including (i) staff hours, (ii) court time, (iii) costs for experts, (iv) administration fees, (v) all other relevant expenses; (b) what is the number of claims that were denied and the proportion of total claims it represents; and (c) what is the average length of time for applications to be processed before being denied?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), Veterans Affairs is unable to provide a breakdown of expenditures related to the processing of claims by approved claims versus denied claims as its financial system does not track expenditures in this manner. However, the overall administrative cost of the adjudication process within Veterans Affairs since 2012 is broken down as follows: 2011-12: \$17.7M (Salary \$16.7M / Operating \$1.0M); 2012-13: \$19.2M (Salary \$17.8M / Operating \$1.5M); 2013-14: \$19.1M (Salary \$16.9M / Operating \$2.2M); 2014-15: \$19.6M (Salary \$16.5M / Operating \$3.2M); 2015-16: \$23.3M (Salary \$19.8M / Operating \$3.6M); 2016-17: \$25.3M (Salary \$22.1M / Operating \$3.2M)

Figures have been rounded.

These expenditures are for the centralized operations division, which is responsible for the adjudication of most of Veterans Affairs Canada's programs and benefits, such as disability awards and pensions, critical injury benefit, earnings loss, retirement income security benefit, and career impact allowance. These expenditures capture the administrative cost, salary and non-salary, of preparing, processing, and adjudicating benefit applications. However, there are other areas of VAC that also contribute to the adjudication process, including but not limited to the following: health professionals, e.g., doctors and nurses; bureau of pensions advocates, e.g., lawyers; and program management and field operations, e.g., case managers and

veteran service agents. Expenditures for these areas are not included above.

In response to (b), from January 1, 2012 to November 21, 2017, there were 178,667 conditions ruled on by Veterans Affairs Canada. Of those, 60,293, or 33.7%, were denied. This is not representative of the number of veterans who have been denied disability benefits, as a veteran may receive rulings for multiple conditions.

In response to (c), for those denied, the average turnaround time was 126 days.

Veterans Affairs Canada is working hard to provide veterans and their families with the care and support they need when and where they need it. It is looking at the entire disability application process from intake to decisions to expedite decisions and respond to veterans' needs more quickly.

Veterans Affairs Canada receives a significant number of applications that often require additional information from veterans. This process takes time to complete to ensure the correct information is gathered to make an informed disability benefit decision. This has affected its service standards for applications.

Although Veterans Affairs Canada has hired additional resources, it recognizes that the adjudication process needs to be streamlined even further and additional adjudicators hired to make application decisions in a more effective and timely manner.

Veterans Affairs Canada is working to implement further measures to reduce the backlog and improve program success by continuing to hire more front-line staff, simplifying the decision-making process for some medical conditions, and working with partners to speed up access to service health records.

The number of disability benefits claims submitted to Veterans Affairs Canada has increased by 20% in 2015-16, as compared to the previous fiscal year.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1351— Mr. Dave MacKenzie:**

With regard to the November 24, 2017, claim of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport in the House of Commons that Canadians expect a government to come out with legislation that is multi-jurisdictional: (a) does the Attorney General concur with the Parliamentary Secretary's assertion; (b) is it the government's position that the laws passed by the Parliament of Canada are not limited to the constitutional jurisdiction of Parliament; (c) has the present government proposed bills which would legislate beyond the constitutional jurisdiction of Parliament; and (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, which bills are they and what are their extra-jurisdictional provisions?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 24, 2017, the parliamentary secretary made reference to Bill C-64, the wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels act, in the House of Commons, and in so doing, referred to the multi-jurisdictional aspects of the bill. In this regard, Bill C-64 includes provisions to enable multi-jurisdictional collaboration, such as delegation of authority and information-sharing provisions, as a result of consultations with indigenous groups, provincial-territorial representatives, port authorities, and other stakeholders. Bill C-64 also includes interdepartmental coordination provisions between the Department of Transport and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, with each having their respective areas of jurisdiction under the proposed bill. The proposed legislation enables collaboration and coordination while falling clearly under federal jurisdiction as it deals with matters pertaining to shipping and navigation.

The government introduced Bill C-64 following consultations with indigenous groups, provincial-territorial representatives, port authorities, and other stakeholders. The purpose of the proposed legislation is to help prevent future occurrences of abandoned and wrecked vessels and reduce the impact of those that do occur. By doing so, the proposed legislation would protect coastal and shoreline communities, the environment, and infrastructure. It also aims to reduce the burden on taxpayers. To date, governments have borne many of the costs to remove and dispose of problem vessels. This legislation is a core element of the national strategy on abandoned and wrecked vessels that was announced as part of the oceans protection plan in November 2016.

Question No. 1355—Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the meeting between the Chief Administrative Officer of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District and the Policy Advisor and Special Assistant for Western Canada and the Territories to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, on June 1, 2017: what are the titles of all briefing notes provided by the government to the Policy Advisor and Special Assistant between May 1, 2017, and June 8, 2017?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between May 1, 2017, and June 8, 2017, Infrastructure Canada did not provide briefing notes to the policy adviser and special assistant for western Canada and the territories to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities with regard to his meeting with the chief administrative officer of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District on June 1, 2017.

Question No. 1360—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act: (a) did the Minister of Finance sign the proposal to have Cabinet adopt this legislative proposal as its policy; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, on what date did he sign it; (c) on what date was the legislative proposal adopted as the policy of Cabinet; (d) on what date was it decided to propose that the amendments in clause 1 of the Bill would have effect for the 2016 tax year; (e) on what date was the drafting of Ways and Means

Motion No. 1 completed; (f) on what date was the drafting of the Bill completed; (g) on what date did the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons hold the Bill review meeting; (h) was the Minister of Finance in attendance at the meeting referred to in (g); and (i) on what date was it decided to schedule the tabling of Ways and Means Motion No. 1 for December 7, 2015?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as publicly stated by the government House leader on November 4, 2015 as the reason to call back the House in December 2015, the Government of Canada took the first step to fulfill one of its key mandate commitments on December 7, 2015, which was to give middle-class Canadians a tax break.

On that date, the Minister of Finance tabled in the House of Commons a notice of ways and means motion to reduce the 22% personal income tax rate to 20.5%. To help pay for this middle-class tax cut, the government asked the wealthiest one per cent of Canadians to contribute a little more. Therefore, the motion also included provisions to create a new top personal income tax rate of 33% for individual taxable incomes in excess of \$200,000 and provisions to return the tax-free savings account annual contribution limit to \$5,500 from \$10,000.

These measures were included in Bill C-2, which was tabled in the House of Commons on December 9, 2015, and received royal assent on December 15, 2016. By proposing that these tax changes take effect as of January 1, 2016, the government was able to offer immediate help to nearly nine million Canadians, while laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth.

The government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act in processing parliamentary returns. Information related to cabinet deliberations and decision-making has been withheld on those grounds.

Question No. 1361— Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the climate change report prepared by Abacus Data and presented at the meeting of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment on Friday November 3, 2017, in Vancouver, British Columbia: (a) when was the tendering process for this study released; (b) how many firms replied to the tender; (c) who was questioned for the data that was used for the report; (d) what are the details of the contract with Abacus Data related to the report, including (i) contract amount, (ii) date, (iii) duration, (iv) description of goods or services provided, (v) file number; and (e) what are the details of all meetings between the Chairman of Abacus Data and Environment and Climate Change Canada or the Privy Council Office, including (i) date, (ii) ministers and exempt staff in attendance as well as any other attendees, (iii) agenda items, (iv) location?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Environment and Climate Change Canada has no contract recorded in relation to Question No. 1361.

Question No. 1362—Mr. Louis Plamondon:

With regard to the Office of the Governor General, for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017: how many people did it employ, including (i) the list of all employees, by position, with job descriptions, including the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General (OSGG), (ii) the total of all salaries, including benefits, of the management positions for the OSGG?

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Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Office of the Governor General, for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017, the response from the Office of the Governor General is as follows: The office of the secretary to the Governor General is headed by the secretary who serves as a senior adviser to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor of the Canadian Heraldic Authority.

As of March 31, 2015: Salaries: \$11.62M Benefits: \$1.89M As of March 31, 2016: Salaries: \$11.94M Benefits: \$1.87M As of March 31, 2017: Salaries: \$11.71M Benefits: \$1.80M.

With regard to policy, program and protocol, this branch plans and implements the Governor General's program domestically and abroad, including over 500 events yearly; administers visitor and interpretation services—over 300,000 visitors last year—at both official residences, Rideau Hall and the Citadelle; provides editorial and public affairs services, and is responsible for providing overall support to the viceregal family.

The number of FTEs, which includes the secretary's office, is as follows: As of March 31, 2015: 83 As of March 31, 2016: 92 As of March 31, 2017: 95.

The Chancellery of Honours With regard to the chancellery of honours, the chancellery branch administers all aspects of the Canadian honours system including the Order of Canada, the bravery decorations, the meritorious service decorations and the sovereign's medal for volunteers; and the Canadian heraldic authority which creates and records armorial bearings.

The number of FTEs is as follows: As of March 31, 2015: 28 As of March 31, 2016: 36 (additional funds allocated following the honours review: <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2015/docs/plan/ch4-2-eng.html>). As of March 31, 2017: 39.

Corporate Services With regard to corporate services, the corporate services branch supports internal services and implements central agency policies and guidelines that apply across the organization. This branch is divided into two components. One component encompasses financial and materiel management, information technology, information resources, and mail management. The other component encompasses people management, i.e., human resources; workplace management, i.e., accommodations, security, and transportation services, as well as strategic planning and internal communications.

The number of FTEs is as follows: As of March 31, 2015: 49 As of March 31, 2016: 46 As of March 31, 2017: 39.

Question No. 1373— **Mr. Jamie Schmale:**

With regard to directives and instructions provided by the Privy Council Office (PCO) to any department or agency since November 4, 2015, and excluding any instructions provided by the Legislation and House Planning section of PCO: what are the details of all directives and instructions including (i) sender, (ii) recipients, (iii) date, (iv) directive or instruction provided?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Privy Council Office does not track all directives and instructions provided to other departments or agencies. Attempting to address this inquiry within

the allotted time frame could lead to the disclosure of incomplete or misleading information.

Question No. 1377— **Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the statement by the Minister of Finance in the House of Commons on November 30, 2017, that “No one outside the closed circle within the Department of Finance and those who needed to know within our government would have known about our actions in advance of that date”, in reference to the tabling of the Notice of Ways and Means Motion to amend the Income Tax Act: what are the titles of all individuals who knew about the actions prior to December 7, 2015, and when did they know?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance Canada's responsibilities include the development and evaluation of federal taxation policies and legislation. Accordingly, the department supported the Minister of Finance in developing the notice of ways and means motion tabled in Parliament on December 7, 2015, as well as the implementing legislation, which was introduced in Parliament as Bill C-2 on December 9, 2015. The department also worked on preparing communications material to support the December 7, 2015, announcement, including a news release and a backgrounder.

Question No. 1382— **Mr. Phil McColeman:**

With regard to the statement by the Minister of National Revenue in the House of Commons on November 6, 2017, that “Over the past two years, we have invested nearly \$1 billion to combat tax havens. This investment has helped our efforts to recover nearly \$25 billion”: (a) how much of the nearly \$25 billion has been recovered from tax havens; and (b) what is the breakdown of the \$25 billion by country or continent where the tax haven is located?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): : Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question, here is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA. In terms of part (a), fiscal impact is the traditional measure used for the CRA's departmental performance report to report on the audit assessment and examination results from compliance activities. More specifically, it consists of federal and provincial taxes assessed, tax refunds reduced, interest and penalties, and the present value of future federal tax assessable arising from compliance actions. It excludes amounts reversed on appeal and uncollectable amounts.

Over the past two fiscal years, the CRA identified \$25 billion in fiscal impact from audit activities: \$12.7 billion in 2015-16 and \$12.5 billion in 2016-17. Some of the CRA's audit functions focus on large business and aggressive tax planning by high net-worth individuals. Audits in these areas have yielded approximately two-thirds of this fiscal impact, \$15.9 billion. A large part of these adjustments for large businesses, by value, are based on CRA reassessments of intra-company transfer prices on payments made to related companies in low-tax jurisdictions.

Routine Proceedings

Taxpayers, especially those with complex tax structures, may have many transactions, both domestic and international, that lead to a specific account balance requiring payment. The complexity of the calculations for payments on taxes owed and the attribution of them to audits versus other sources of debt in a given year is very difficult to do accurately. Audit assessments, particularly those involving large amounts or related to aggressive tax planning, are frequently appealed and then litigated, and as a result, it can be several years before there is judicial confirmation of the amount owed. In addition, there can be issues securing payment from taxpayers and bankruptcies can also occur. As such, the CRA cannot provide a specific number in the manner requested.

However, the CRA can confirm that in fiscal year 2016-17, the CRA resolved \$52.1 billion in outstanding tax debt from all revenue lines, most notably individual tax, corporate tax, GST/HST, and payroll deductions, which were payable for current and previous years.

In terms of part (b), as noted, the CRA does not track fiscal impact in the manner requested.

Question No. 1383— Mr. Alain Rayes:

With regard to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017: what was the total remuneration paid by the Corporation, including all bonuses, the overtime buyout, the celebrity premium, the clothing allowance and all other premiums, for each (i) male host of a French-language television news program, (ii) female host of a French-language television news program?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. The requested information has been withheld on the grounds that it constitutes competitive as well as personal information.

Question No. 1384— Ms. Lisa Raitt:

With regard to the Disability Tax Credit and individuals who self-identify with type 1 Diabetes: (a) what percentage of individuals with type 1 Diabetes were (i) approved, (ii) rejected, for the Disability Tax Credit during the 2015-16 fiscal year; and (b) what percentage of individuals with type 1 Diabetes were (i) approved, (ii) rejected, for the Disability Tax Credit between May 2, 2017, and December 5, 2017?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question, here is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA. In terms of parts (a) and (b), to be eligible for the disability tax credit, an individual must have a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions, as defined in the Income Tax Act and as certified by a medical practitioner. Eligibility is not based on a diagnosis, but rather on the effects of the impairment on their ability to perform the basic activities of daily living. Eligibility determinations are not made, or tracked, based on diagnosis. Therefore, the CRA is unable to respond in the manner requested as the data is not available.

Question No. 1385— Ms. Lisa Raitt:

With regard to the Privy Council Office's "Mandate Letter Tracker" and the 13 commitments listed as "underway with challenges", as of December 5, 2017: (a) what specifically are the challenges, broken down by commitment; (b) what specific actions is the government planning in order to overcome the challenges, broken down by commitment; and (c) for each of the 13 commitments, does the government plan on keeping its commitment or not?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a),

transparency and accountability are central themes of the Government of Canada's mandate, as illustrated by the November 2015 public release of ministerial mandate letters. The Canada.ca/results website creates a central, accessible space anyone can go to, to monitor the progress against the government's commitments to Canadians as outlined in the ministerial mandate letters. The website includes not only an overall status of progress for all commitments, but also a paragraph with more information on the status of implementation. For those commitments that are "under way with challenges", more information on the specific challenges can be found in that paragraph.

With regard to (b), an "underway with challenges" status means progress toward completing this commitment is going more slowly than expected or that the commitment is complex by its very nature. The government is working with departments to overcome the challenges identified. While the 13 commitments that are "under way with challenges" can be found across a variety of the government priorities, four are under the indigenous priority, and progress requires longer-term, transformative changes that are part of reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Some of the other commitments are taking longer to implement than anticipated. More specific context is given in the text associated with the 13 commitments classified as "under way with challenges", as well as a link to additional information as appropriate.

With regard to (c), as of December 5, 2017, the government is planning on keeping all the 13 commitments that are "under way with challenges". Updates to the status of commitments will be reflected in future updates of the mandate letter tracker.

Question No. 1388— Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to the \$576,500 paid to Vox Pop Labs Incorporated for Project Tessera: (a) what goods or services did the government receive as a result of the payment prior to project's originally scheduled end date of September 30, 2017; (b) did Vox Pop Labs Incorporated fulfill the conditions of its applications; (c) how did Vox Pop Labs specifically fulfill "Justification 6" of its application where it stated "the project will be created and launched in a timely fashion, resulting in a significant impact during the celebratory period in 2017"; (d) how did Vox Pop Labs specifically fulfill "Justification 7" on its application, where it was projected that the project would reach in excess of 1,000,000 individuals; and (e) how many individuals have viewed Project Tessera, since January 1, 2017, broken down by month, or what is the best estimate, if exact figures are not available?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Vox Pop Labs Incorporated—Vox Pop—originally received a contribution from the Canada 150 Fund of \$576,500 for Project Tessera, a Canada 150 signature project. Vox Pop subsequently received a supplement of \$228,782, bringing the total contribution to \$805,282.

The Government of Canada supported Project Tessera under the Canada 150 fund through a contribution and not a contract. Therefore, the Government of Canada is not procuring goods or services. Project Tessera is not a Government of Canada project; Project Tessera belongs to Vox Pop Labs Incorporated.

Vox Pop Labs Incorporated has changed the name of their project from Project Tessera to Echoes.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (b), Vox Pop is fulfilling its obligations as per the contribution agreement with the Canada 150 fund. The key activities for the project as outlined in the original contribution agreement are as follow: create a digital quiz that will survey users on themes such as culture, values, symbols, and belonging to Canada, and encourage participants to learn about their own national identities and cultures and explore the commonalities they have with other people across the country; generate a unique data set on public perceptions about Canada and what it means to be Canadian in 2017; and ensure the findings of the survey, including all relevant data, are placed in the public domain and freely accessible to Canadians by December 31, 2017. The survey results will serve as a legacy of Canada 150 for future generations.

The “digital quiz” now called Echoes was launched on Monday, December 4, 2017. Echoes will generate a unique dataset on public perceptions about Canada and what it means to be Canadians in 2017.

With regard to (c), the launch of the project was originally scheduled to coincide with the Canada Day celebrations; however, after completing the analysis of their panel studies, Vox Pop Labs determined that their design did not sufficiently capture a user’s sense of collective and individual belonging to the Canadian cultural mosaic as per the goals of the project specified in the contribution agreement. Vox Pop Labs chose to delay the launch so the survey could be improved.

With regard to (d) and (e), the Echoes survey was launched on Monday, December 4, 2017. It is too early to say how many individuals will participate.

Question No. 1389—Mr. Wayne Easter:

With regard to the contract that was signed between Transport Canada and the City of Charlottetown and any of its agencies pertaining to the Charlottetown Port Authority: (a) what are the guidelines or conditions of use; and (b) do these include a provision for industrial use?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), Transport Canada transferred the port of Charlottetown under the port divestiture program on April 21, 2005, to the Charlottetown Harbour Authority Inc.

The operating agreement between Transport Canada and the Charlottetown Harbour Authority Inc. dictated conditions of use for the first four years of operations. The agreement expired on April 21, 2009.

After this date, the Charlottetown Harbour Authority Inc. is free to use the facility as it wishes, provided it follows all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws.

With regard to (b), there are no specific provisions on the industrial use of lands in any of the agreements. As mentioned, any and all use of the property must follow all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws pertaining to that specific use.

Question No. 1393—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to the November 21, 2017 news release titled “Government of Canada provides financial support to Ontario college students affected by labour dispute”: (a) what are the details of the financial support, excluding any support students would have normally received had a labour dispute not occurred, including (i) how many students received payments, (ii) what was the average amount received

by a student, (iii) what percentage of the payments required repayment, such as loans; (b) broken down by type of financial assistance received, as referenced in (a), what criteria was used to determine if an applicant would receive financial assistance; (c) how many students applied for the financial support referred to in (a); and (d) how many of the students referred to in (c) were granted financial assistance?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, Canada’s prosperity depends on young Canadians getting the education and the experience they need to prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

With regard to (a), affected students will be eligible to receive additional financial assistance for the weeks added to their school terms.

With regard to (a)(i), nearly 140,000 Canada student loans and grants recipients were affected by the strike. Where extensions to school terms occur, the associated assessments for additional financial assistance will take place until the spring of 2018. As a result, final statistics on additional payments due to the strike will only be available approximately six months after the conclusion of the academic year.

With regard to (a)(ii), the amount each student receives will depend on their individual eligibility for Canada Student Loans and Grants, and on the time period by which their individual programs are extended.

With regard to (a)(iii), final statistics on additional payments due to the strike will only be available approximately six months after the conclusion of the academic year.

With regard to (b), criteria to determine a student’s eligibility for financial assistance due to the strike do not change from the regular assessment process. Affected students who received the Canada student grant for full-time students will receive an additional amount of grant based on their family income and extended weeks of study; Canada student loan recipients may be eligible for up to an extra \$210 per week, depending on individual needs—that is, additional cost of living and available resources.

With regard to (c), nearly 140,000 students affected by the strike could qualify for additional financial support. Students from Ontario will not be required to reapply, as data on extended sessions will be available to assess their additional needs. Students from other provinces studying at Ontario colleges will need to reapply; however, data will only be available approximately six months after the conclusion of the academic year.

With regard to (d), final statistics on additional payments due to the strike will only be available approximately six months after the conclusion of the academic year.

Question No. 1394—Mr. Todd Doherty:

With regard to homeowners whose property was burned as a result of the wildfires in British Columbia: are they required to declare timber salvaged from their property as a capital gain?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the determination of how income from the sale of trees on a woodlot would be taxed under the Income Tax Act is a question that would require a review of the facts and circumstances of the particular situation.

“Woodlot” is used in a broad sense to mean land covered with trees. A woodlot includes treed land held primarily as a source of fuel, posts, logs or trees, whether the trees are grown with or without human intervention. The term also includes treed land that is part of a cottage property and a farmer’s wooded land.

Generally, where a woodlot is a non-commercial woodlot and money or other valuable consideration is received for the sale of timber or the right to cut timber, the sale proceeds are subject to tax on capital account, as a capital gain, generally as a disposition of personal-use property. Generally, a loss on the sale of personal-use property is not deductible.

A capital gain is generally calculated as the proceeds of disposition on the sale of property minus the adjusted cost of the property and related selling expenses. Depending on the situation, capital gains could result from the sale of salvageable lumber.

For more information on capital gains, members may refer to “T4037 Capital Gains 2016” on www.Canada.ca.

The CRA recognizes the difficulties faced by Canadians affected by wildfires in British Columbia and understands that natural disasters may cause hardship for taxpayers whose primary concerns during this time are their families, homes, and communities.

The Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, administers legislation that gives the Minister of National Revenue discretion to grant relief from penalty or interest when the following types of situations prevent a taxpayer from meeting their tax obligations: extraordinary circumstances, actions of the CRA, inability to pay or financial hardship, or other circumstances. For more information about the circumstances that may warrant relief from penalties or interest, members may refer to “Cancel or waive penalties or interest” on www.Canada.ca.

Question No. 1401— Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs Program for the Summer of 2017: (a) which organizations received funding; and (b) how much funding did each organization receive?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the list of organizations funded through the Canada summer jobs program for the summer of 2017, including the amount paid, will be made public on the program website. It will be available at www.canada.ca/canada-summertime-jobs.

Question No. 1409—Ms. Candice Bergen:

With regard to Ministers who are responsible for various regional development agencies: (a) between January 1, 2017 and December 8, 2017, how many days did the Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency spend in (i) Nova Scotia, (ii) New Brunswick, (iii) Prince Edward Island, (iv) Newfoundland and Labrador; (b) between January 1, 2017, and December 8, 2017 how many days did the Minister responsible for Western Economic Diversification spend in (i) British Columbia, (ii) Alberta, (iii) Saskatchewan, (iv) Manitoba; (c) between January 1, 2017 and December 8, 2017, how many days did the Minister responsible for the Canada Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec spend in

Quebec; (d) between January 1, 2017 and December 8, 2017, how many days did the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario spend in Northern Ontario; and (e) between January 1, 2017 and December 8, 2017, how many days did the Minister responsible for the the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario spend in Southern Ontario?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the information requested on travel by the minister responsible for the regional development agencies, please refer to the proactive disclosure on travel for the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development at the following link: <https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/ic/trvlHsptltyDsclsr/pblc/indx.do?lang=eng>.

In addition to travelling to various cities across Canada, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and his staff meet with stakeholders from all regions of the country to discuss regional and local issues on a regular and ongoing basis.

Question No. 1411— Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to Bill C-27, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985: (a) did the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons convene a bill review meeting prior to the Bill's introduction; and (b) did the Minister of Finance attend the bill review meeting?

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

Mr. Speaker, the details of a bill review process, including individual ministers’ involvement in the process, are considered a cabinet confidence.

Question No. 1422— Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to revenue which will be received by government as a result of the sale of marijuana after July 1, 2018: (a) what is the projected annual revenue generated from taxation on marijuana; and (b) what percentage of the revenue referred to in (a) will be given to (i) provinces, (ii) municipalities, (iii) First Nations, Inuit, and Metis organizations, (iv) other organizations, broken down by recipient?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 10, 2017, the

Department of Finance Canada published for consultation a proposed excise duty framework for cannabis products. The proposed framework will support our twin goals of keeping cannabis out of the hands of youth, and profits from its sale out of the hands of criminals as we work to legalize and strictly regulate access to cannabis. The public consultation period closed on December 7, 2017.

Finance Canada is still assessing the potential size of the legal cannabis market, which will be a key factor in determining how much revenue will ultimately be collected under the proposed excise duty framework. In the short term, the size of the legal market will depend on a number of factors, including the supply of legal product, and the distribution and retail systems developed by provinces and territories, the details of which are still being assessed.

Routine Proceedings

At the finance ministers' meeting on December 11, 2017, ministers agreed that for an initial two-year period following the legalization of non-medical cannabis, taxation revenues will be shared on the basis of 75 per cent for provincial and territorial governments and 25 per cent for the federal government. Provinces and territories will work with municipalities according to shared responsibilities towards legalization. From 2018-19 to 2019-20, the federal portion of cannabis excise tax revenue will be capped at \$100 million annually. Any federal revenue in excess of \$100 million during this time will be provided to provinces and territories.

The department will report on its fiscal projections at a future date.

Question No. 1425—**Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to responses provided by the government to questions on the Order Paper, since November 4, 2015, where the government cited the principles of the Access to Information or Privacy Act as a justification for not providing the requested information: for each response that has such a citation, or any similar type of citation, what are the specific principles used to justify withholding the information, broken down by response and by question?

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

Mr. Speaker, Parliament adopted the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act in 1983. Since then, successive governments have provided information in parliamentary returns in a manner that respects the principles governing the disclosure of government information contained in these acts.

Since parliamentary returns are not formally processed under these acts, specific sections are not quoted to justify non-disclosure. However, parliamentary returns officers consult officials responsible for access to information and privacy to ensure that the Privacy Act and the principles governing exclusions, exemptions, and prohibitions contained in the Access to Information Act are applied to proposed responses to parliamentary returns.

* * *

●(1550)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

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

Mr. Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 1353 originally tabled on December 13, 2017, and the government's response to Questions Nos. 1307 to question 1309, question 1311, question 1313, question 1315, question 1319, question 1322, question 1323, question 1325, question 1327, question 1329, question 1331, question 1332, question 1335, question 1336, question 1338 to question 1344, question 1347 to question 1350, question 1352, question 1354, question 1356, question 1357 to question 1359, question 1363 to question 1372, question 1374 to question 1376, question 1378 to question 1381, question 1386, question 1387, question 1390 to question 1392, question 1395 to question 1400, question 1402 to question 1408, question 1410, question 1412 to question 1421, question 1423, question 1424, question 1426 to question 1429, as well as the Starred Questions Nos. 1316 to question 1318 and question 1345, could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Before I pose the question, I wonder if it might be possible for representatives of the parties to discuss at the table whether it is possible to do this without saying the word question so many times. Maybe there is a way to overcome that.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the aforementioned questions be made orders for return?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1353—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to Fogo Island in March, 2017: (a) what are the details of each expenditure including (i) flights, (ii) vehicle rentals, (iii) accommodations, (iv) meals and per diems, (v) other transportation costs, (vi) other expenses, (vii) security; and (b) of the expenses incurred in (a), which expenses were incurred by the following groups of individuals (i) the Prime Minister and his family, (ii) ministerial exempt staff, including staff in the Office of the Prime Minister, (iii) departmental staff, (iv) Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other security?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): (Return tabled)

Question No. 1307—**Mr. Ted Falk:**

With regard to all government funding to the province of Manitoba: (a) which grant allocations, programs, projects, and all other means of disbursing government funds, have been cancelled since November 17, 2016; (b) what was the rationale provided for the cancellation of each item in (a); (c) what amount of funding had been dispensed to each item in (a) at the time of cancellation; (d) what was the estimated value of each item in (a) prior to cancellation; and (e) what consultations, if any, took place in relation to the items in (a) prior to their approval?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1308—**Mr. Ted Falk:**

With regard to information related to the applications submitted to the National Energy Board by TransCanada for its Energy East Pipeline and Eastern Mainline projects and the subsequent withdrawal of their applications, since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of any consultations or meetings which have been held with the Minister of Natural Resources, his officials, or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and stakeholders, including (i) date, (ii) locations, (iii) attendees; (b) have there been any briefing notes or documents for the Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary; (c) if the answer in (b) is affirmative, what were the (i) dates, (ii) titles, (iii) subject matter and content; (d) have there been any meetings between the Minister and (i) the Parliamentary Secretary, (ii) the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, (iii) the Associate Deputy Minister of Natural Resources; and (e) if the answer in (d) is affirmative, what are the details of all meetings, discussions, and other documentation regarding the status of the projects?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1309—**Mr. Ted Falk:**

With regard to the Generation Energy forum held in Winnipeg on October 11 and 12, 2017: (a) what are all the expenditures related to the forum, including travel costs; (b) what is the detailed, itemized breakdown of all expenditures in (a), including for each the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) description, (iv) vendor; (c) who were the Members of Parliament and the government staff in attendance, broken down by (i) Members of Parliament, (ii) staff from the Office of the Prime Minister, (iii) staff of Members of Parliament, (iv) other government staff; and (d) what were the total costs for those listed in (c), broken down by (i) airfare, (ii) hotel accommodations, (iii) vehicle rentals, (iv) taxi or Uber rides, (v) limousine services, (vi) per diems, (vii) other meal costs?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1311—Mr. Alexander Nuttall:**

With regard to applications for the Disability Tax credit by persons with mental illnesses or mental health conditions: (a) for each month since October 2012, what was the percentage of approvals, disapprovals, and incomplete applications returned to applicants respectively; (b) with respect to rejections of applications in (a), what percentage of rejected applicants appealed the rejection decision; (c) with respect to rejections of applications in (a), what percentage of appeals were granted or declined respectively; (d) with respect to rejections of applications in (a), has any part of the government withdrawn or withheld funds, bonds, and grants from the Registered Disability Savings Plans of any applicants; (e) with respect to withdrawals or withholdings in (d), how many applicants who were previously approved for the Disability Tax Credit have had withdrawals or withholdings made from their Registered Disability Savings Plan accounts since May 2017; and (f) with respect to withdrawals or withholdings in (d), what is the total value of funds withdrawn or withheld from Registered Disability Savings Plan accounts since May 2017?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1313— Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to the statement by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on November 1, 2017, that “We are investing \$5 billion to ensure mental health supports for over 500,000 Canadians under the age of 25”: (a) what is the detailed breakdown of the \$5 billion investment, including (i) amount, (ii) recipient, (iii) program title, (iv) program description, (v) date of expenditure, (vi) fund from which expenditure was made; and (b) what is the total of all expenditures in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1315—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to Chart 2.1 on Page 27 of the Fall Economic Statement 2017 and specifically the chart titled “Nearly 300,000 Children Lifted Out of Poverty”: (a) what income level was used as the poverty line for the chart; (b) if the income level used in (a) differentiates between regions, what are the various income poverty lines used for the chart, broken down by region; (c) does the government consider families who’s income is slightly higher than the poverty line to be “middle-class”; (d) is there a classification for income levels which is between “poverty” and “middle-class” and, if so, what is that classification known as and what is the associated income level; (e) of the “nearly 300,000”, what is the breakdown by (i) province, (ii) municipality; (f) as of what date are the figures referred to in (e) representative of; (g) what was the start date to which the figures in (e) were compared to in order to make the 300,000 claim; and (h) what is the government’s definition of poverty and what official measure is used to track it?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1319— Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to employment in departments, Crown corporations, agencies and other government entities: (a) what are the complete job titles for every employee whose job title includes the words “tax”, “taxes”, “taxation”, “taxing”, “taxable”, “revenue”, “revenues”, “duty”, “duties”, “dutiabale”, “fee”, “fees”, “levy”, “levies”, “tariff”, “tariffs”, “toll”, “tolls”, “charge”, “charges”, “rate”, “rates”, “excise”, “customs”, “impost”, or “imposts”; (b) how many employees have job titles listed in (a), broken down by job title; and (c) for the employees with job titles listed in (a), what is (i) the aggregate of salaries paid in the 2016-17 fiscal year, (ii) the aggregate value of benefits, expense claims, and other employment costs paid in the 2016-17 fiscal year, (iii) the aggregate of salaries forecasted to be paid in the 2017-18 fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1322— Mr. Robert Aubin:

With respect to rail safety: (a) what is the current number of rail safety inspectors; (b) how many rail safety inspectors were there in (i) 2010–11, (ii) 2011–12, (iii) 2012–13, (iv) 2013–14, (v) 2014–15, (vi) 2015–16, (vii) 2016–17; (c) what is the training budget for rail safety inspectors, broken down by each year listed in (b); (d) how many hours were allocated to rail safety inspector training, broken down by each year listed in (b); (e) how many railway safety inspectors are anticipated for (i) 2017–18, (ii) 2018–19, (iii) 2019–20; (f) what are the document numbers for the training manuals for rail safety inspectors; (g) what updates have been made to the manuals in (f) since November 2015; (h) when does Transport Canada plan to complete its review of the fatigue risk management systems implemented by railway

companies; (i) what are the findings to date of the review in (h); (j) in detailed terms, what steps has Transport Canada taken since November 2015 to mitigate the risk of fatigue among crew members on freight trains; (k) how many preventive inspections has Transport Canada conducted since November 2015, broken down by year; (l) how many reactive inspections has Transport Canada conducted since November 2015, broken down by year; (m) what is the total number of violations of laws and regulations committed by rail companies since November 2015; (n) how many monetary penalties has Transport Canada imposed on rail companies since November 2015; (o) in detailed terms, what is the budget for the 2017–18 Railway Safety Act Review Committee; (p) what consultations have been conducted to date by the review committee in (o); (q) what organizations have been consulted to date by the review committee in (o); (r) does the review committee in (o) contract out to fulfil its mandate; (s) if the answer to (r) is affirmative, what are the sole source contracts; and (t) what is the anticipated total remuneration for the members of the review committee in (o)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1323— Mr. Robert Aubin:

With regard to aviation safety: (a) what was the annual failure rate from 2005 to 2016 for the Pilot Proficiency Check (PPC) conducted by Transport Canada inspectors for pilots working for 705 operators under the Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs); (b) what was the annual failure rate from 2005 to 2016 for the PPC in cases where industry-approved check pilots conducted the PPC for pilots working for Subpart 705 operators; (c) how many annual verification inspections did Transport Canada inspectors conduct between 2007 and 2016; (d) how many annual Safety Management System assessments, program validation inspections and process inspections of 705, 704, 703 and 702 operators were conducted between 2008 and 2016; (e) how many annual inspections and audits of 705, 704, 703 and 702 system operators were carried out pursuant to Transport Canada manual TP8606 between 2008 and 2016; (f) how many aircraft operator group inspectors did Transport Canada have from 2011 to 2017; (g) what discrepancies has Transport Canada identified between its pilot qualification policies and the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) since 2005; (h) what are the ICAO requirements for pilot proficiency checks and what are the Canadian PPC requirements for subparts 705, 704, 703 and 604 of CARs; (i) does Transport Canada plan to hire new inspectors and, if so, what target has it set for hiring new inspectors; (j) what is the current number of air safety inspectors; (k) how many air safety inspectors were there in (i) 2010-11, (ii) 2011-12, (iii) 2012-13, (iv) 2013-14, (v) 2014-15, (vi) 2015-16, (vii) 2016-17; (l) what is the training budget for air safety inspectors broken down by each year listed in (k); (m) how many hours were allocated to air safety inspector training, broken down by each year listed in (k); and (n) how many air safety inspectors are anticipated for (i) 2017-18, (ii) 2018-19, (iii) 2019-20?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1325— Ms. Elizabeth May:

With regard to the figure of 15,000 jobs related to the Trans Mountain project cited by the government, what are the details of: (a) any correspondence, reports, or documents prepared to brief the Minister of Natural Resources’ office; (b) any correspondence, reports or documents prepared to brief the Office of the Prime Minister; and (c) any correspondence, reports, or documents that relate or support this figure of 15,000 jobs including (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipients, (iv) title?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1327— Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy (FTCS), in the fiscal year 2015-16: (a) what was the budget for the FTCS; (b) how much of that budget was spent within the fiscal year; (c) how much was spent on each of the following components of the FTCS (i) mass media, (ii) policy and regulatory development, (iii) research, (iv) surveillance, (v) enforcement, (vi) grants and contributions, (vii) programs for Indigenous Canadians; (d) were any other activities not listed in (c) funded by the FTCS and, if so, how much was spent on each of these activities; and (e) was part of the budget reallocated for purposes other than tobacco control and, if so, how much was reallocated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1329— Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to the new policy to cut the monthly allowances of Canadian Armed Forces members who cannot return to active service after more than 180 days: (a) how many Canadian Armed Forces members are expected to have their monthly allowance cut as a result of the policy; and (b) how much does the government expect to save as a result of the new policy for the fiscal years (i) 2017-18, (ii) 2018-19, (iii) 2019-20?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1331— Mr. Mark Warawa:

With regard to wrapping expenditures for the exteriors of government buildings since November 4, 2015: (a) what is the total amount spent on wrapping, broken down by individual building; (b) what are the details of all wrapping expenditures for the building located at 59 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario, including (i) vendor, (ii) scope or description of services or goods provided, (iii) date, (iv) amount, (v) file number; and (c) what are the details of all wrapping, tarp, or similar type expenditures for any other buildings, broken down by individual building, including (i) vendor, (ii) scope or description of services or goods provided, (iii) date, (iv) amount, (v) file number, (vi) address of building?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1332— Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to paragraph 43(a) of the Conflict of Interest Act: (aa) has the Prime Minister received from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner advice with respect to the application of the Act to an individual (i) minister or minister of state, (ii) parliamentary secretary, (iii) member of ministerial staff; and (b) has the Prime Minister requested from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner advice with respect to the application of the Act to an individual (i) minister or minister of state, (ii) parliamentary secretary, (iii) member of ministerial staff?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1335— Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion (OHRFI) and the situation of the Tamil community and other minority communities in Sri Lanka: (a) what projects have been undertaken, or what work has been done, on this subject by the OHRFI since December 1, 2015, and for each project or work item, (i) what was the project or item name, (ii) what was the project description, (iii) what funds were allocated, (iv) what was the timeline, (v) what local consultations were conducted, (vi) what recipient organizations or individuals were involved, (vii) how much funding did each recipient receive, (viii) what report or result was accomplished; and (b) what other projects or work have been proposed or considered by the OHRFI on said subject but not undertaken, including proposals received from third parties or potential partner organizations but not proceeded with, and for each project or item, (i) what was the project or item name, (ii) what was the project description, (iii) what were the projected costs, (iv) what was the proposed timeline, (v) what local consultations were projected, (vi) who were the proposed recipient organizations or individuals, (vii) what funding for each recipient was proposed, (viii) what reports or results were prescribed in the proposal, (ix) for what detailed reasons was the proposed project or work item rejected?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1336— Mr. Ed Fast:

With regard to the negative economic impacts of government regulations and the decision to impose a carbon tax between 2016 and 2026: (a) according to government projections, what are the ten industries most likely to be negatively impacted by a \$50 per tonne price on carbon; (b) for each of the industries in (a), what are the details of the projected negative impacts, broken down by year, beginning in 2016, including (i) projected job losses, (ii) projected number of business bankruptcies, (iii) projected number of personal bankruptcies, (iv) lost federal revenue as a result of the job losses and bankruptcies; (c) what is the average age of the employees who will lose their jobs as a result of the government's decision to impose a carbon tax; (d) according to government projections, what are the ten industries most likely to be negatively impacted by the proposed regulatory steps under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change; (e) for each of the industries in (d) what are the details of the projected negative impacts, broken down by year, beginning in 2016, including (i) projected job losses, (ii) projected number of business bankruptcies, (iii) projected number of personal bankruptcies, (iv) lost federal revenue as a result of the job losses and bankruptcies; and (f) what is the average age of the employees who will lose their jobs as a result of the proposed regulatory steps under the Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1338— Ms. Irene Mathysen:

With regard to claims for pensions for disabilities under the Pension Act processed by the Department of Veterans Affairs since January 1, 1997, broken down by year: (a) how many people have received pensions for disabilities; and (b) how much money has been spent in total on pensions for disabilities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1339— Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:

With regard to the conference on tax gap estimation, held jointly by the Canada Revenue Agency and the Canadian Tax Foundation on June 6, 2017, in Ottawa: (a) who were the event sponsors; (b) who were the event speakers; (c) who were the experts invited to appear at this event; (d) who participated in this event; and (e) what corporations carried out promotional activities either at or near this event, including (i) distributing promotional materials, (ii) having an information booth, (iii) hosting social activities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1340— Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to Section 2.33 of the Fall 2017 Report of the Auditor General of Canada which states in reference to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) that "They gave us wrong information almost 30 per cent of the time": (a) what specific recourse is available to taxpayers who received the wrong information; (b) how is the CRA notifying taxpayers who received the wrong information about their recourse options; (c) how many taxpayers who received the wrong information have been proactively contacted by the CRA to correct the wrong information, since January 1, 2016; (d) what specific action has been taken against the CRA employees who provided the wrong information; and (e) how many CRA employees have faced disciplinary action as a result of providing the wrong information to taxpayers, since January 1, 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1341— Ms. Karine Trudel:

With regard to the Phoenix pay system: how many public servants were affected financially by the Phoenix pay system between December 1, 2015, and November 21, 2017, both in total and broken down by (i) city, (ii) constituency, (iii) place of employment?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1342—Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to Article 1103 of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and Article 809 of the Agreement on Internal Trade: (a) what are the details of each meeting of the Working Group on Alcoholic Beverages since July 1, 2017, including (i) date, (ii) list of attendees, (iii) agenda items, (iv) decisions and agreements reached; (b) what are the details of each meeting of the Working Group on Party-Specific Exceptions since July 1, 2017, including (i) date, (ii) list of attendees, (iii) agenda items, (iv) decisions and agreements reached; and (c) what are the details of each meeting of the Working Group on Party-Specific Exceptions since November 4, 2015, including (i) date, (ii) list of attendees, (iii) agenda items, (iv) decisions and agreements reached?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1343—Mr. Wayne Stetski:

With respect to the consumer price of gasoline in Canada: (a) what action is the government taking to monitor the price of gas; (b) what action will the government take to control the price of gas; (c) how does the government ensure that gas prices are the result of free competition and not collusion between producers and retailers; (d) what impact does the current high price of gas have on the Canadian economy; and (e) will the government enact a plan for a gas price monitoring agency to ensure the market remains fair and competitive?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1344—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the Canada child benefit, since January 1, 2016: (a) how many mothers have applied for the benefit; (b) of the applications in (a), how many were rejected; (c) what were the reasons for rejection, including the number of mothers' applications rejected for each reason; (d) how many mothers who applied for the benefit, but were subsequently rejected, were required to reimburse the government the amounts received in relation to the benefit; (e) what is the total amount recovered as a result of the reimbursements in (d); (f) how many mothers have had their marital status changed by the Canada Revenue Agency for taxation purposes following a rejection of benefits in (b); and (g) for the mothers in (f), what was the number of each type of status change, such as single to common-law, married to single and any other status changes, broken down by status change?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1347—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With respect to the Immigration Information Sharing Treaty: (a) what departments and agencies send information to the United States; (b) what departments and agencies receive information from the United States; (c) what Memorandums of Understanding or procedures exist to share data received from the United States with other government departments; (d) what are the data retention and deletion policies for information received from the United States; (e) what databases contain information received from the United States; and (f) if a decision has been rendered on a matter requiring the receipt of data from the United States prior to its receipt, how is the data handled?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1348—Mr. Blake Richards:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trips to the Lac-Saint-Jean constituency in Quebec and to Edmonton, Alberta, and surrounding areas, in October 2017: (a) what are the costs associated with (i) the flights, broken down by individual expense, (ii) other transportation costs, (iii) accommodation costs, (iv) food and beverage costs, (v) other expenses, broken down by individual type of expense; (b) what specific government events did the Prime Minister attend while on the trip; (c) what were the dates, times, and locations of all events in (b); (d) how many employees of the Privy Council Office (PCO) traveled with the Prime Minister on either the entire trip, or a portion of the trip; (e) what public business did PCO employees, including the technical employees, conduct for this travel; (f) was any of the work conducted by PCO employees partisan or to the benefit of the Liberal Party of Canada or a local Liberal campaign and, if so, was the government reimbursed; (g) did any PCO employees provide assistance, including technical set-up or assistance, related to any by-election related campaigns or events by the Prime Minister and, if so, (i) what assistance was provided, (ii) what are the details of any invoice submitted to the campaign, or to the Liberal Party of Canada resulting from such assistance; and (h) was any government property used for partisan purposes during the Prime Minister's

trip and, if so, what amount was the government reimbursed by the Liberal Party of Canada or a local Liberal by-election campaign?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1349—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the government expenditures on and policy towards sharing economy products, including Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb, since November 4, 2015, and broken down by department and agency: (a) what is each department and agency's policy regarding employees using such products or services while on government business; (b) what are the total expenditures, broken down by month, on (i) Uber, (ii) Lyft, (iii) Airbnb, for government employees; (c) what are the total expenditures, including a monthly breakdown, for ministers, parliamentary secretaries and ministerial exempt staff on (i) Uber, (ii) Lyft, (iii) Airbnb; and (d) what is the total amount spent by government employees, broken down by month, on (i) taxis, (ii) hotels?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1350—Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion: (a) what is the current annual budget for the Office; (b) how much of the budget referred to in (a) is earmarked for (i) human rights and indigenous affairs, (ii) inclusion and religious freedoms, (iii) democracy, (iv) other expenses; (c) what is the number of full-time equivalents, along with the associated Treasury Board classification, employed in the Office; (d) what are the current Treasury Board salary ranges associated with the classifications referred to in (c); (e) what is the number of full-time equivalents, along with the associated Treasury Board classification assigned to (i) human rights and indigenous affairs, (ii) inclusion and religious freedoms, (iii) democracy, (iv) other; (f) as of November 27, 2017, what projects receive funding through the Office, broken down by (i) organization, (ii) location of project, (iii) project description; (g) what is the breakdown of projects referred to in (f), broken down by (i) human rights and indigenous affairs, (ii) inclusion and religious freedoms, (iii) democracy, (iv) other expenses; and (h) what evaluations or criteria are used to determine if an organization has their project approved or reapproved for funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1352—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to Compensation Advisors in all departments and agencies, since November 5, 2015, to present: (a) how many job postings have been posted for the position of Compensation Advisor, broken down by department, date of posting, and geographic location; (b) how many applications have been received for the position of Compensation Advisor, broken down by date of receipt, department, and geographic location; (c) of the applications received in (b), how many applications were from (i) jobs.gc.ca, (ii) direct applications to each respective department and agency, (iii) internal applications; and (d) how many Compensation Advisors have been hired, broken down by date of hire, department, and geographic location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1354—Mr. Blake Richards:

With regard to the Skills Link Program under the government's Youth Employment Strategy: (a) what is the total amount of funding provided to date; (b) what is the total amount of funding provided to each (i) project, (ii) group or recipient; (c) what is the breakdown of projects or recipients by federal riding; (d) what is the description and purpose of each project; (e) what specific criteria were used in the selection of each project and recipient; (f) what are the review outcomes for all (i) projects, (ii) recipients, (iii) applications; (g) what was the processing time for each project from application to announcement; (h) for the projects that were rejected, what was the processing time from application to when proponents were informed of the rejection; (i) which projects have been announced to date; and (j) what is the amount of funding still outstanding?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1356—Mr. Jim Eglinski:**

With regard to the Alberta Pine Beetle infestation and the \$87,000,000 invested by the government in scientific infrastructure upgrades: (a) what specific steps has the government taken to stop the infestation; (b) what are the details of the investment including (i) recipient, (ii) project description, (iii) amount, (iv) date, (v) link to media release and background information on project, if applicable; (c) what is the most recent update on the severity of the infestation; (d) what is the most recent outlook for each of the next five years in regard to the infestation; (e) why has the current approach been unsuccessful in stopping the infestation; (f) has the government considered culling or burning in order to stop the infestation and, if so, why have those strategies not been applied; (g) what funding has been delivered, since January 1, 2017, including the (i) recipient, (ii) project description, (iii) amount, (iv) date; and (h) is any further funding currently planned to address the infestation and, if so, when and to whom will the funding be provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1357—Mr. Ed Fast:

With regard to expenditures on electric vehicle charging stations on government property since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all expenditures, including for each the (i) amount, (ii) vendor, (iii) date, (iv) location of charging station, (v) description of expense; (b) what is the total amount of expenditures in (a); (c) for each charging station, what is the average time, broken down by month, in which the charging station has been charging a vehicle; (d) what are the locations of all such charging stations; and (e) how many charging stations are scheduled to be installed before December 31, 2018, and what is the proposed location of each such station?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1358—Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to the ministerial working group to address Phoenix pay issues announced on April 27, 2017: (a) what are the dates of all meetings of the group; (b) for each meeting referred to in (a), was it an (i) in person meeting, (ii) teleconference; and (c) what are the details of all expenses related to the group or its meetings, including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of goods or services provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1359—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to the response by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to Q-1211, in which she stated that “the departmental financial system does not have specific line object coding to track costs related to bottled water”: (a) what is the complete list of specific line object codes which are utilized by the departmental financial system; and (b) what are the details of all expenditures under the object code which includes bottled water expenditures, since November 4, 2015, including for each expenditure the (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of product or service, (v) location, (vi) file number, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1363—Mr. Louis Plamondon:

With regard to employees who worked for the Governor General in 2015, 2016 and 2017: how many employees worked for the Governor General, broken down by function, with a description of duties and the total of all salaries, including all benefits and management positions, broken down by department including the Office of the Governor General, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, National Defence, Public Services and Procurement Canada, Global Affairs Canada and Canadian Heritage?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1364—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the Prime Minister’s official residence: (a) since the appointment of the Chef, how many meals have been prepared at the Prime Minister’s official residence for the Prime Minister, his family and guests; (b) for each meal listed in (a), what are the details per meal item, including drinks, broken down by (i) food group, according to Canada’s Food Guide, (ii) source of food by country of origin, (iii) estimated cost per meal; (c) what is the residence’s policy for food that is prepared

but not consumed; (d) what is the residence’s annual budget allocation for food and beverage purchases; and (e) how much of that annual budget has been spent to date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1365—Mr. Deepak Obhrai:

With regard to materials prepared for Associate Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers from September 19, 2016 to present: for every briefing document prepared, what is the (i) date on the document, (ii) title or subject matter of the document, (iii) department’s internal tracking number, (iv) title of individual for whom the material was prepared, (v) sender?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1366—Mr. Deepak Obhrai:

With regard to materials prepared for Deputy Ministers from June 15, 2016, to present: for every briefing document prepared, what is the (i) date on the document, (ii) title or subject matter of the document, (iii) department’s internal tracking number, (iv) sender?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1367—Mr. Bernard Généreux:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Environment and Climate Change Canada since September 16, 2016: what are the (i) vendors’ names, (ii) contracts’ reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the products or services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts’ values, (vii) final contracts’ values, if different from the original contracts’ values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1368—Mr. Bernard Généreux:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Global Affairs Canada since December 6, 2016: what are the (i) vendors’ names, (ii) contracts’ reference numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts’ values, (vii) final contracts’ values, if different from the original contracts’ value?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1369—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by the Privy Council Office since September 16, 2016: what are the (i) vendors’ names, (ii) contracts’ reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts’ values, (vii) final contracts’ values if different from the original contracts’ values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1370—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to contracts under \$10 000 granted by Health Canada since September 16, 2016: what are the (i) vendors’ names, (ii) contracts’ reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) description of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts’ values, (vii) final contracts’ values if different from the original contracts’ values?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1371— Ms. Michelle Rempel:**

With regard to the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign on the Status of Women Canada's website: (a) what are all expenditures related to the website campaign, including (i) amount spent on website development and graphic design, (ii) promotion and advertising, (iii) other expenses; (b) what are the details of all expenditures referred to in (a), broken down by item including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) description of product or service provided, (iv) date, (v) file number; (c) what is the total of all expenditures referred to in (a); (d) does the "Take the pledge" link on the website allow for the same IP address to take the pledge multiple times or is there a limit on the number of times the same IP address may take the pledge; and (e) does Status of Women Canada, or any server operated by, or on behalf of Status of Women Canada track the IP addresses of computers which click on the "Take the pledge" link and, if so, what are the details related to how they are tracked?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1372— Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to materials prepared for Ministers from January 1, 2017, to present: for every briefing document prepared, (i) what is the date on the document, (ii) what is the title or subject matter of the document, (iii) what is the department's internal tracking number, (iv) who was the sender?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1374— Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: (a) what specific instructions has the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs provided to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada regarding how it should support the inquiry; and (b) what was the date of each instruction referenced in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1375— Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to the purchase of promotional products for handouts or giveaways at trade shows, conferences and other events, broken down by department, agency, or Crown corporation, since September 19, 2016: (a) what products were purchased; (b) what quantity of each product was purchased; (c) how much was spent on each product; (d) at what events, or type of events, were the products distributed; (e) in which country was each product manufactured; and (f) what is the relevant file number for each purchase?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1376— Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the threat of a missile attack from North Korea: will the government join the Ballistic Missile Defense System and, if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1378— Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Canadian Heritage since September 16, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1379— Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to videos developed for or by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of expenses related to the videos, broken down by individual video, including (i) graphics, (ii) production, (iii) human resources, (iv) editing, (v) total amount spent, (vi) platforms for which the video was used, both traditional and social media; and (b) what are the details of any contracts, for which the goods or services were used, either in whole or in part, in relation to the videos, including for each contract the (i) amount, (ii) vendor, (iii) date, (iv) description of goods or services provided, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1380— Mr. Martin Shields:

With regard to the ice rink on Parliament Hill and the original budget of \$5,600,000: (a) what is the revised budget estimate after the decision to keep the rink open past the end of December; and (b) what is the new itemized breakdown of the budget?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1381— Mr. Steven Blaney:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Employment and Social Development Canada since September 16, 2016: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the products or services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1386— Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to Service Canada's national in-person service delivery network, for each Service Canada Centre: (a) how many full-time employees (FTEs) were there on December 1, 2016; (b) how many FTEs were there on December 1, 2017; and (c) which offices have changed their hours of service, and for each office that has changed its hours of service, what are the new hours?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1387— Mr. Earl Dreeshen:

With regard to all expenditures on Management Consulting (Treasury Board Object Codes 048 and 0491) by Employment and Social Development Canada, since January 1, 2017: what are the details of all expenditures including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date of expenditure, (iv) start and end date of contract, (v) description of goods or services provided, (vi) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1390— Mr. Gérard Deltell:

With regard to Policy 1.1.16: Opening and Closing Procedures for all CBC/Radio-Canada stations: (a) is it still in effect; and (b) if it is no longer in effect, (i) why was it rescinded, (ii) what was the date on which it was rescinded, for both English-language and French-language networks, and for both radio and television stations?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1391— Mr. Louis Plamondon:

With regard to the Christmas celebrations on Parliament Hill for the period from 2013 to 2017: (a) what is the cost of the Christmas preparations and decorations, including the trees and lights, for each building on Parliament Hill; (b) what is the cost of the Christmas trees that adorn Parliament Hill; (c) what is the total cost of the Christmas Lights Across Canada display for the winter season since the first year of the display; and (d) what is the cost of the Canada 150 rink and the adjacent facilities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1392— Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to all expenditures on hospitality (Treasury Board Object Code 0822), since January 1, 2017, and broken down by department or agency: what are the details of all expenditures including (i) vendor, (ii) amount, (iii) date of expenditure, (iv) start and end date of contract, (v) description of goods or services provided, (vi) file number?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1395— Mr. Ed Fast:**

With regard to Canada's conservation objectives and federally protected terrestrial and marine spaces: (a) which terrestrial and marine spaces does the government intend to protect to meet Canada's Aichi Targets by 2020; and (b) what are the details of all areas referred to in (a), including (i) the geographical size and location of each space, (ii) the scientific rationale for protecting each proposed site, (iii) the forecasted costs associated with the protection of each space broken down by type, (iv) the economic impact for each proposed protected site, (v) all community stakeholders consulted for each project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1396—Ms. Michelle Rempel:

With regard to government procurement since July 1, 2016: what are the details of all contracts awarded to bidders who were federal public servants who received a lump sum payment pursuant to the terms of a work force reduction program, including (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the products or services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1397—Mr. Gérard Deltell:

With regard to the meeting held on August 31, 2016, between the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and stakeholders regarding the Pont de Québec bridge: (a) what is the complete list of government representatives at the meeting, including all Ministerial Exempt Staff; (b) what is the complete list of stakeholders at the meeting; (c) what decisions were made at the meeting; (d) when were the decisions referred to in (c) made public, and how were they made public; and (e) how did the government determine who would qualify as a "stakeholder" for the meeting?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1398— Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to government expenditures in relation to the Canada 2020 event on September 29, 2017, with former United States President Barack Obama: (a) how many tickets were purchased; and (b) what was the total amount spent on tickets, broken down by department, agency, or Crown Corporation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1399— Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Natural Resources Canada, since January 1, 2017: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1400— Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, since January 1, 2017: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1402— Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to all government contracts awarded for public relation services, since January 1, 2017, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: what are the details of these contracts, including (i) date of contract, (ii) value of contract, (iii) vendor name, (iv) file number, (v) description of services provided, (vi) start and end dates of services provided, (vii) total value of all contracts?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1403— Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Public Works and Government Services Canada, since January 1, 2017: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1404— Mr. Ron Liepert:

With regard to Access to Information Requests filed between January 1, 2017, and November 1, 2017, broken down by department, agency, Crown Corporation or other government entity: (a) how many requests were received; (b) of those requests in (a), in how many cases were the documents produced within the statutory thirty-day time limit; and (c) in how many cases was there an extension?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1405—Mr. Peter Kent:

With regard to the backdrops and podiums used by the government for the announcements since January 1, 2017, for each backdrop purchased and for each podium purchased or rented: (a) what was the date of purchase or rental; (b) when was the tender issued for the backdrop or podium; (c) when was the contract signed; (d) when was the backdrop or podium delivered; (e) what was the cost of the backdrop or podium; (f) was there an announcement for which the backdrop or podium was used and, if so, for which ones; (g) which department paid for the backdrop or podium; and (h) when were the backdrops or podiums used, broken down by event and date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1406— Mr. Peter Kent:

With regard to contracts under \$10,000 granted by Transport Canada, since January 1, 2017: what are the (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values if different from the original contracts' values?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1407— Mr. Chris Warkentin:

With regard to government expenditures on sporting event tickets, since December 1, 2016: what was the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) ticket cost, (iv) title of persons using the tickets, (v) name or title of event for tickets purchased by, or billed to, any department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entity?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1408—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to fees collected by government departments and agencies, since December 1, 2016: (a) what is the total amount collected by the government; (b) what is the monthly breakdown of fees collected, broken down by department or agency; and (c) what is the monthly breakdown of fees collected by specific fee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1410—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to negotiations related to NAFTA, since January 1, 2017: (a) how many times has the Prime Minister met with Canada's chief negotiator; (b) what are the dates of all such meetings; and (c) what form did each meeting take (phone, in person, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1412—Mr. Dean Allison:**

With regard to the consumption of alcohol on flights taken on government-owned Airbus and Challenger aircraft, since December 1, 2016: (a) on which flights was alcohol consumed; and (b) for each flight where alcohol was consumed, (i) what is the value of alcohol consumed, (ii) what was the origin and destination of the flight, (iii) what was the flight date, (iv) what is breakdown of alcohol beverages consumed by specific beverage and quantity, (v) how many passengers were on each flight?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1413—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to statements made by the Minister of Veterans Affairs on Thursday, November 30, 2017, during the Standing Committee of Veterans Affairs' meeting on Supplementary Estimates (B) 2017-18, where the Minister, in his statement, made claims that funding to Veterans Affairs had been diminished before the current government was elected: (a) what were the announced budgeted spending amounts for the Department of Veterans Affairs each year in Budgets tabled from 1999 to 2017; (b) what was the change in funding, by percentage, for Budgets announced from 1999 to 2017; (c) within the Department of Veterans Affairs, what were the amounts budgeted, since 1999 for (i) benefits, (ii) administration of Veterans Affairs Canada, (iii) Military Resource Family Resource Centres, (iv) Veterans Affairs Service Centres, (v) the Ministry of Veterans Affairs; and (d) what were the staffing levels in Veterans Affairs Canada since 2010 in (i) Veterans Affairs Service centres, (ii) Benefits Administration, (iii) the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, (iv) program administration?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1414—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to untendered, sole-sourced contracts over \$50,000 by the Department of Public Works and Government Services: what are the details of each such contract signed since December 1, 2016, including: (i) vendors' names, (ii) contracts' reference and file numbers, (iii) dates of the contracts, (iv) descriptions of the products or services provided, (v) delivery dates, (vi) original contracts' values, (vii) final contracts' values, if different from the original contracts' values, (viii) rationale for not conducting an open tender for the contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1415—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to capacity assessments done for major projects by Public Services and Procurement Canada: (a) when was the department made aware of all workplace adjustment notices for compensation advisors in Public Services and Procurement Canada; (b) was a capacity assessment done for staff capability prior to the Phoenix Pay System roll-out in February, 2016, and, if so, what were the results of the assessment; (c) were the staff reductions for workplace adjustment notices accounted for in the capacity assessment done by Public Services and Procurement Canada; (d) if the answer to (c) is no, why were these staffing changes not included in the capacity assessment; and (e) what factors were taken into account in developing the assessment, and what were the outcomes and findings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1416—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the court cases *Ahousaht Indian Band and Nation v. Canada* (Attorney General), 2008 BCSC 1494; *Ahousaht Indian Band and Nation v. Canada* (Attorney General), 2011 BCCA 237; *Ahousaht Indian Band and Nation v. Canada* (Attorney General), (29 March 2012) SCC File No. 34387; *Ahousaht Indian Band and Nation v. Canada* (Attorney General), 2013 BCCA 300; *Ahousaht Indian Band and Nation v. Canada* (Attorney General), (30 January 2012) SCC File No. 34387; *Ahousaht Indian Band and Nation v. Canada* (Attorney General Trial decision (Garson J.))—2009 BCSC 1494; BC Supreme Court Docket No. S033335; BC Court of Appeal Docket Number CA037707; the Supreme Court of Canada's file number 34387; and all related cases: what are, including information from the Attorney General and the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, and Environment, for each case, the (i) total cumulative dollar amount spent by the Crown between January 1, 2006, and October 15, 2017, (ii) total dollar amount, adjusted for inflation, (iii) total dollar amount spent by the Crown by category (travel, salary, supplies, etc.), (iv) total dollar amount spent in each fiscal year from 2005 to 2017 (up to December 10, 2017), (v) total payment that has been, or is projected to be, paid by the Crown, and an explanation as to how this

figure was calculated, (vi) date by which it will be, or is projected to be, paid by the Crown?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1417—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the use of taxi cabs and Uber by the government, broken down by department, agency, and Crown corporation, since December 1, 2016: (a) how much has been spent on taxi cabs for government employees; (b) how much has been spent on Uber or other ride sharing companies for government employees; (c) how much has been spent on public transportation for government employees; (d) broken down by ministerial office, including the Office of the Prime Minister, how much has the government spent on taxi cabs for ministerial exempt staff; (e) how much has the government spent on Uber or other ride sharing companies for ministerial exempt staff; and (f) how much has the government spent on public transportation for ministerial exempt staff since December 1, 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1418—Mr. Robert Sopuck:

With regard to raw sewage since October 1, 2016: (a) how much raw sewage has been dumped in Canadian waters, broken down by river, lake, ocean, and other body of water in which the sewage was dumped; (b) of the sewage dumps in (a), which were approved after October 1, 2016, what was the date on which the Minister of Environment and Climate Change approved the sewage dump; (c) what studies, if any, have been done or are ongoing regarding the impact of dumping raw sewage; (d) what were the conclusions of any such studies, completed since October 1, 2016; (e) what are the dates, titles, subject matter, and file numbers of any memos or documents related to the dumping of raw sewage; and (f) what are the dates, titles, subject matter and file numbers of any correspondence between the federal government and provincial governments or municipalities concerning raw sewage?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1419—Mr. Robert Sopuck:

With regard to Canada's delegation at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP22): (a) what are the first and last names of each delegate; (b) which organization did each delegate represent; (c) what is the total cost for using government aircraft to transport delegates to and from Marrakech; (d) broken down by each delegate who stayed in Marrakech, how many days and on which dates did the government cover the costs; (e) what were the total costs for the delegation, broken down by (i) cumulative total, (ii) air transportation, (iii) accommodation, (iv) food and per diems, (v) other transportation, (vi) carbon offsets, (vii) other expenses broken down by type; and (f) what is the estimated size of the carbon footprint as a result of the delegation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1420—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to expenditures made by the government since June 12, 2017, under government-wide object code 3259 (Miscellaneous expenditures not Elsewhere Classified): what are the details of each expenditure, including (i) vendor name, (ii) amount, (iii) date, (iv) description of goods or services provided, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1421—Mr. Mel Arnold:

With regard to government telecommunications: what is the total amount of late payment charges incurred in each month, since and including September 2016, for cellular telephone services and services for all other wireless devices other than cellular telephones, broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) service provider, (iii) month, (iv) reason for late payment?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1423—Mr. Martin Shields:**

With regard to government expenditures and communication with CRRC Corporation Limited (CRRC) of Beijing, China, broken down by department and agency, and since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all expenditures including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) description of goods or services provided, (iv) file number; (b) what are the details of all communication between the government and CRRC, including communication by ministerial exempt staff and Staff of the Office of the Prime Minister, including (i) date, (ii) individuals involved in the communication, (iii) type of communication, (iv) title or subject matter; and (c) what role did CRRC have in the development of any of the 29 points in the Memorandum of Understanding between Canada and China which was announced by the Prime Minister on September 23, 2016?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1424—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to all contracts awarded by the government, since January 1, 2017, broken down by department or agency: (a) how many contracts have been awarded to a foreign firm, individual, business, or other entity with a mailing address outside of Canada; (b) for each contract in (a), what is the (i) name of vendor, (ii) date of contract, (iii) summary or description of goods or services provided, (iv) file or tracking number, (v) amount; (c) for each contract in (a), was the contract awarded competitively or was it sole-sourced; and (d) what is the total value of all contracts in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1426—Ms. Michelle Rempel:

With regard to Citizenship and Immigration Canada's (CIC) decision to accept bids for an outside contract to "develop a pool of (400) multiple choice official questions, a test blueprint, and 15 versions of the Canadian citizenship knowledge test": (a) is it the government's position that CIC does not have the employees or the means required to develop a citizenship test without spending money on an outside contract; and (b) how many employees are there currently in the government who develop tests as part of their jobs, broken down by department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1427—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trips to the riding of Saint-Laurent in February, March, and April of 2017: (a) what are the amounts and details of all expenses related to the trips; (b) what are the details of all official government business conducted on the trip; (c) what amount has been received by the Receiver General from the (i) Liberal Party of Canada, (ii) Official Agent for the Liberal Party of Canada by-election campaign in Saint-Laurent, (iii) Official Agent for the Liberal Party of Canada by-election campaign in Saint-Laurent for re-imbursment related to the Prime Minister's trips; and (d) what are the details of any payment received in (c), including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) description of expenses for which taxpayers were reimbursed, (iv) sender?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1428—Mr. Bob Saroya:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trips to the riding of Markham—Thornhill in February, March, and April of 2017: (a) what are the amounts and details of all expenses related to the trips; (b) what are the details of all official government business conducted on the trip; (c) what amount has been received by the Receiver General from the (i) Liberal Party of Canada, (ii) Official Agent for the Liberal Party of Canada by-election campaign in Markham—Thornhill, (iii) Official Agent for the Liberal Party of Canada by-election campaign in Markham—Thornhill for re-imbursment related to the Prime Minister's trips; and (d) what are the details of any payment received in (c), including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) description of expenses for which taxpayers were reimbursed, (iv) sender?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1429—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With respect to Health Canada's Drinking Water Safety Program, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) capital expenditures on drinking water and wastewater infrastructure on reserve, and INAC expenditures on maintenance and

operations for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure on reserve: (a) what amount has been allocated, broken down by program and by year (and, where applicable, by region), over the last ten years; (b) what amount has been spent, broken down by program and by year (and, where applicable, by region), over the last ten years; and (c) why, in applicable instances, were allocated funds left unspent or transferred away from the originally-intended line item?

(Return tabled)

***Question No. 1316—Ms. Lisa Raitt:**

With regard to the tweet by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change on November 7, 2017, which stated that "Canada salutes Nicaragua and Syria for joining on to the Paris Agreement!": what are the titles of all individuals who approved the tweet?

(Return tabled)

***Question No. 1317—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With respect to programs delivering mental health services to Indigenous children, programs delivering health services to Indigenous children, and the implementation of Jordan's Principle: (a) how much has been allocated over the last five years, broken down by program and by year; (b) how much has been spent over the last five years, broken down by program and by year; (c) how much has been allocated through the Non-Insured Health Benefits program on hospital beds over the last five years; (d) how much was spent on hospital beds over the last five years; and (e) how many individual hospital beds were purchased and acquired and then distributed to recipient individuals or institutions over the last five years?

(Return tabled)

***Question No. 1318—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With respect to the Child and Family Services program, the Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve and other programs offered by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Health Canada for the purposes of early child development and early childhood education for Indigenous peoples, the Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program and other programs offered by INAC and Health Canada for the purposes of diagnosing and treating addictions and other mental health and wellness issues, including suicide prevention initiatives, and the Mental Health Continuum Framework: (a) what, if any, concerns, vulnerabilities, gaps, shortfalls and other lacunae in funding, program design and delivery were identified by the two respective departments, broken down by program; (b) what steps, if any, have been taken to rectify the concerns, vulnerabilities, gaps, shortfalls and other lacunae mentioned in (b), broken down by program; and (c) how much has been allocated and spent for each of these programs, in aggregate and broken down by region, for each year between 2009 and 2017?

(Return tabled)

***Question No. 1345—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:**

With regard to terminology used on the government's Mandate Letter Tracker: what is the difference between a "commitment not being pursued" and a broken promise?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I liked your comment in regard to the word "question".

I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

CANADA SUMMER JOBS APPLICATION

The Speaker: I have notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to seek leave for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing an important matter requiring urgent consideration pursuant to Standing Order 52.

The issue in question is the 2018 Canada summer jobs application and the new attestation that is required to be signed by applicants in order for their application to be accepted by the standards laid out by the government.

The attestation in question reads:

...both the job and the organization's core mandate respect individual human rights in Canada, including the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

I have heard from many organizations and individuals from across the country, and more specific at least 40 within Elgin—Middlesex—London. They believe that the specific requirements of this attestation constitute an overreach on behalf of the government. These employers believe they cannot sign such an attestation in good faith due to the implicit requirement that they agree with the government on contentious social issues.

Many groups that still desire the funding that is usually available to them through the Canada summer jobs program have indicated they will fill out an application without signing the attestation or amending it themselves before they sign. Unfortunately, the government has expressed that such modifications are unacceptable, will result in an application being deemed incomplete, and will not even move forward for the consideration of funding.

I am sure you are aware, Mr. Speaker, that section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms identifies, among other things, freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, and freedom of belief as fundamental freedoms. Every government has a duty to uphold these fundamental freedoms and defend the rights of all Canadians, regardless of whether they agree with the specific views held by individuals.

Brian Bird from McGill University wrote:

The idea that certain groups in Canada should not receive public funds is often voiced by individuals who simply reject the views of the group that seeks funding. This attitude fails to recognize that this funding is not a pot of money that the governing political party brought to Ottawa when it assumed power. These funds come from taxes that all Canadians, with our range of views and beliefs, have paid. That these funds might at times be given to groups with which we disagree is part of the price of living in a truly inclusive and diverse society.

The notion that people who disagree with the government on controversial moral issues...must either adopt the government's view or be excluded is acceptable in totalitarian regimes. It is not acceptable in Canada — a country that strives, in the words of the Charter, to be a "free and democratic society."

Although the government has issued a set of retroactive definitions in order to attempt to appease groups that feel threatened, this has left many people more confused than reassured. Many of these employers still express a clear objection to the attestation and

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refuse to sign it, even if they might meet the government's clarified criteria.

For example, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops said that it was "seriously concerned", and that "The attestation and examples still amount to the government's coercion on matters of conscience and religious belief..." "They foreclose the possibility of wide-ranging views and even healthy disagreement. The attestation remains unacceptable."

The deadline for applications is this Friday, February 2 and, unfortunately because of the attestation, many groups will be excluded from this year's round of funding. These are groups that provide employment opportunities for Canadian youth, offering them life-long, transferrable skills that will improve our workforce over the long term. Additionally, many groups use funding through Canada summer jobs to improve Canadian society as a whole by providing aid to refugees, running day camps for those with disabilities, and encouraging at-risk youth to make good choices. Ultimately, the denial of this funding will be a loss to Canada as a whole.

In light of the concerns I have paired with the fact that the deadline for applications is nearly upon us and the reality that there has been no opportunity for Parliament to debate this issue, which will affect every riding throughout Canada, I believe an emergency debate on the attestation would meet the urgency requirements laid out in the Standing Order.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time and your consideration on this very important issue.

● (1555)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: First, I want to remind members that their representations in relation to a request for emergency debate are to be quite brief. I thank the hon. member for raising her request for emergency debate, however, I find that it does not meet the exigencies of the standing order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, because of the ministerial statements, government orders will be extended by 22 minutes.

[English]

Before question period, the hon. member for Lethbridge gave her speech and now we have a five-minute period for questions and comments.

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The hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I spoke earlier this afternoon, I was quite hopeful this debate would continue to be a non-partisan. We heard amazing speeches this morning from the minister, the member for Jonquière, and the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. The member for Calgary Nose Hill gave a powerful speech this morning. Earlier we had a question for the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, which received a standing ovation from all hon. members. Thus, I am really disappointed the member for Lethbridge chose this opportunity to turn her intervention in the House into a partisan speech.

Would she clarify that a survivor coming forward has an ability to appeal to the minister who in turn can appoint the deputy minister to respond? If the employee is not satisfied, he or she can appeal to the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board. The board can rule or turn it over to the Speaker who can intervene.

Would the hon. member clarify the record on the actual process that can take place?

• (1600)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a little confused by the hon. member's question because she has swung the accusation that I am turning this into a partisan debate, when that is not at all what I did. I clearly acknowledged that this was a non-partisan issue. This is why I am raising before the House the process that the minister for labour has proposed, which is that any concern that a staff member has within the Parliament would go forward to the minister of labour. It would be up to the minister to look at that concern and decide whether to investigate it.

I do not believe that process serves the staff members of the House very well. If a staff member of the minister has a concern or a complaint to be made because of something that was done, then he or she needs a mechanism to bring his or her concern forward without fear of the minister getting involved and trying to scapegoat.

I am sorry but that question was absolutely inappropriate and based on a false premise.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to press the member across, it was an absolutely legitimate question. She implied there was no appeal process. Clearly, there is an appeal process. Would she like to correct the record?

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, I still contend that the process being put forward by the minister in Bill C-65 by which a staff member within this place would bring forward a concern or a complaint, does not protect that staff member to bring his or her concern forward and know that it will be heard. That process needs to be put in the hands of a third party, arm's-length individual, who is non-partisan in nature.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member showed what a great chair of the Status of Women Committee she would have made in her thoughtful remarks. I do not think it is partisan at all for the member, in supporting a piece of government legislation, to demonstrate that she has read the detail of the bill and has presented thoughtful, original criticisms and suggestions for how to improve it.

Does the member think, in light of the response to her comments, that the government is willing to hear constructive amendments at committee? I hope it will take our support, our good faith, and our desire to be constructive in the tone it should be received and work with us to make the bill as good as possible.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question and for being able to see through some of the mudslinging that is actually happening from my colleagues across the aisle.

At the end of the day, I stood in this place and said that this is a discussion that needs to be had. I am standing on this side of the House in support of the government's initiative.

My only concern is this. Right now, when a staff member who works for a member of Parliament brings forward a concern or a complaint, an allegation, it will be going to the minister. I do not believe that serves our staff members the way it should. In addition to that, it is up to the minister, who is a Liberal minister, to determine whether or not the allegation is true or false.

I cannot help but believe that there is potential for that minister to engage in gamesmanship, in terms of perhaps showing favouritism to Liberal members but then going hard after a Conservative member or an NDP member or a Green Party member or a Bloc member.

What I am saying is simple. The individual who oversees this appeals process needs to be a third-party, non-partisan, neutral individual, full stop.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are debating an important bill at a very seminal moment. The #MeToo movement, inviting women to bring light to instances of previously undiscussed sexual harassment and assault, until this weekend, had not had such a powerful impact on Canadian politics. This is certainly a difficult subject to discuss as parliamentarians because the victims and alleged perpetrators are, in many cases, people we know. We are leaders and policy-makers who are also personally close to these issues.

In that light, as we reflect on the events of the weekend, I want to commend and express my admiration for all the people in the Ontario PC Party who took a strong stand against this behaviour, even when it was not in their political or personal interest to do so. It is easy to call out this behaviour across the aisle, but women came forward to express concerns about the leader of their own party, and others in the party stood with them. In other places, we have seen political parties close ranks around their candidate, even in the face of credible and repeated allegations of such wrongdoing. The human instinct to be loyal to the tribe, even in the face of higher principle, is very strong, but Ontario PCs did not dismiss or obfuscate; they responded.

I also want to commend the women who have come forward to speak about the alleged behaviour of the former minister of sport and persons with disabilities, one of whom has received repeated death threats, including a note shoved under her door. This is something we should take very seriously, and I hope that the member for Calgary Centre will take the opportunity to condemn these threats.

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In these types of cases, legitimate and important discussions are happening about the presumption of innocence and the need for due process. The presumption of innocence is central in criminal law, but I would also submit that people have to make judgments about their political leaders and their suitability for leadership all the time in the absence of absolute certainty: Is such and such a person a good leader, a good fiscal manager, able to confront a particular sort of foreign policy crisis? These sorts of questions are fundamental to determinations about whether a person is suitable for leadership, and yet they have to be made in the absence of anything like proof. The same is true for judgments about a person's conduct or character. Voters and political parties must make judgments about a person's character despite the absence of certainty. There may be some unfairness to that, but that is an unavoidable reality.

Some have wondered, then, if any man in a position of power and authority is now suddenly vulnerable to being felled by unproven accusations. Throughout legal history, there is no doubt that there have been cases where individuals have been falsely accused of bad behaviour. What is called for in the social discourse around these issues is the use of reasonable judgment, not presumption either way, and it is reasonable to decide, even in the absence of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, that the allegations are strong enough, such that a person is ill-suited to high office. It may also be reasonable to decide that a person has engaged in conduct unbecoming of a leader, even if that conduct has not crossed the line of criminality.

Recognizing that, men in positions of leadership should be clear in conducting their lives in ways that are completely above reproach. It is not good enough to play within the presumed line of criminal law while still behaving in a way that is exploitative and objectifies others. Such a pattern of behaviour may protect one from criminal prosecution, but it may also lead to justly deserved reputational damage. Men's behaviour toward women ought to be guided by more than just a set of lines and rules, but rather, by an ethos that affirms the full and equal dignity and personhood of every person. This is the alternative to objectification.

Objectification treats persons as objects for use instead of as persons. It sees people as means, as opposed to ends. Immanuel Kant formulated this ethos in the formula of humanity. He said, "So act that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." Kant acknowledges that people can be helpful in the facilitation of the realization of some other end, but argues that it must never be lost, in the course of an interaction with another person, that the person is also an end, not merely a means.

In my view, one of the weaknesses of Kant's philosophy is that it presumes, but does not fully engage with, its own spiritual heritage. It is difficult now, outside of the umbrella of that spiritual heritage, to justify this principle in terms that are broadly accepted. We are a society now too deeply influenced by materialism, by the idea that all that is and all that matters is the material. Materialism is not compatible with a doctrine like Kant's, which says that people ought to be treated as ends, not merely as means.

Certainly the grave problem of exploitative behaviour that we are confronting in this debate can be traced back to a philosophical core, which is the deviation from Kant's formula of humanity. People have been treated by men in powerful positions as mere means to their

own gratification as opposed to ends in themselves with their own intrinsic worth and value. Women are now standing up against this, demanding to be recognized for who they are: persons, not tools.

• (1605)

We should note that there is a great deal of this treating people as means as opposed to ends in politics in general. It is when staff members are used for their work but not valued as people; it is when relationships are cultivated on a purely transactional basis; it is when communities of support are cultivated for the votes they bring, but not out of genuine respect for their perspective, experience, and values.

I do not want to conflate these issues with the one that we are confronting today, but simply to make the point that there is a continuity of a personhood-affirming ethos, and there is also a continuity of an objectifying ethos. People are whole and integrated beings. When people objectify in one aspect of their life, it stands to reason that they are also more likely to objectify people in other aspects of their life.

There was a time not that long ago when certain behaviours would be dismissed as part of a politician's private life. Much of what was once considered people's private lives was actually the way they were using their position to take advantage of others. However in any event, so-called private acts by leaders, which involve the objectification of others, do have relevance for the common good because these acts are a reflection of character.

I believe strongly—and this belief has been reinforced by these events—that character should be the principal qualification for public office. I would encourage members of all parties at all levels to think seriously about the character of the candidates and leaders whom they choose. Past allegations of inappropriate behaviour will obviously be considered, but markers of bad character and in particular the willingness to treat people as objects must also be considered.

Although I do not have the time to fully explore this aspect of the discussion, it is important to also look further at how exploitative patterns of behaviour are learned. We have a crisis of sexual harassment and violence. We also have a generation of young men whose early exposure to sexuality has been through violent pornography.

Why, while talking about the importance of ending sexual violence, do we tolerate the existence of violence-depicting pornography, which is available to minors? These images do not respond to pre-existing desires; they shape desires, and they shape ideas about what is normal and acceptable. They aim to associate, in the minds of impressionable young people, objectification and violence with arousal and they imply that things are okay, which they are not.

This was well established in testimony heard by the health committee in response to Motion No. 47, a motion asking the committee to study the impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit material on public health.

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We support this legislation, and I also believe it is time for the government to act on the dangerous perception-torquing material that associates violence with sex in the minds of boys and young men, as ably laid out by expert testimony during Motion No. 47 hearings.

I want to conclude this speech by sharing from the public Facebook post of a friend and former colleague. It is easy, as a man, to be quite innocently obtuse to the reality of sexual harassment that most women face. Women speaking out like this has helped me to be aware of the problem and to commit to being part of the solution. My friend wrote on Thursday:

Almost 10 years ago, when I was a 21 and a new grad excited to start in politics, a politician sexually assaulted me at a political conference. I was naïve and I didn't know what to do, so I asked someone within my political party for advice. They told me that I was the one in the wrong, that I was probably coming onto him and clearly that was the case because when I told him no he stopped.

I spent almost 10 years blaming myself for this, questioning what I could do to prevent it from happening again. I could never find the answers, but I kept looking nonetheless. It's only been in this last year that I truly realized that it was not my fault and I wish I had kept looking for advice until I found someone that believed me.

I honestly did not believe that I had been sexually assaulted for many years, because someone told me I hadn't been—even though in my heart I knew that it was true.

So I would implore everyone to believe the stories, believe the survivors and understand that it's not an easy story to share.

• (1610)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I very much enjoyed the discussion, debate, and dialogue that has been taking place on this important piece of legislation. It is encouraging when parties on all sides of the House come to agreement.

When I look at the overall framework of the legislation, there are three words that come to mind: prevent, respond, support. We think of preventing incidents of harassment and violence, we respond effectively to these incidents when they do occur, and with regard to support, we support victims, survivors, and employers.

Could the member provide some thoughts on those three words?

• (1615)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, certainly the bill has good aims and is, generally speaking, a bill that moves in the right direction, one that we are proud to support in the official opposition, for the reasons I talked about.

Also, it is legitimate and important to look at the details of the legislation. I know we are going to have more of an opportunity to do that at committee. Some initial thoughts on that were ably laid out by my colleague from Lethbridge. It is important to dig into those details and see how we can make this the strongest possible piece of legislation.

The member is absolutely on the right track in terms of recognizing those core elements and emphasizing the right intention of this legislation moving forward.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of people mentioned today the need for proper training, not only for management but for people who are working within government, or in any agency. One segment the member did mention briefly in his

statement was the fact that there is so much information, on computers and places like that, that lead people in the wrong direction. Perhaps he could explain that or simplify it a little more.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I thank my colleague, the member for Yellowhead for that excellent question and for his consistent and excellent service in this place.

The member is quite right that we are living in an age where there is so much information out there. More and more, there is awareness and education around the importance of consent and the importance of recognizing equal human dignity. However, there is more misinformation, or media in different forms, that gives wrong impressions about these same questions.

I spoke about the prevalence of violent pornography and the fact that children, young boys as well as girls, are accessing this material and it is shaping their perceptions about what normal and healthy sexual relationships look like. We have on the one hand increasing information about the importance of consent, but on the other hand we have increasing misinformation, and that misinformation is something people are accessing at a very young age. It is leading them to associate the feelings of arousal with seeing very violent images.

This is a very real and significant problem. I would encourage members, as we move forward in these areas where we all agree on improving the mechanisms for reporting and addressing harassment, that we also think about this question of socialization, of how young boys in particular can come to think that things are acceptable that are not acceptable as a result of the media they are consuming.

I know it is a difficult issue. It raises questions about how we would engage with the Internet. It raises questions about, perhaps, civil liberties, but when we are talking about children it is a different matter. Children really have no idea the effect this material has on them when they consume it initially. Maybe they start out very young, simply curious about what this whole thing is all about, but it shapes their perceptions about what is normal and acceptable, and it has significant social consequences.

The issues raised by Motion No. 47, but also recognized by a recent status of women committee report, are issues we should have the courage to confront in this Parliament.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Edmonton Centre.

It is a great pleasure to join the debate today. It is not every day we get to stand and speak on a bill that we are quite certain will receive unanimous approval to move forward to committee.

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I have been here most of the day and listened to some very well-informed, very impassioned speeches on this legislation, led first by our minister. I thought she did an outstanding job with the introduction of this legislation. The member for Calgary Nose Hill gave a very impassioned statement. The member for Oakville North—Burlington shared with the House and with Canadians her own personal experiences with this particular issue and the issue of sexual harassment when she worked here on the Hill. The member for Jonquière made a very powerful statement. It has been a pretty special day here in the chamber.

I was disappointed with the comments from the member for Lethbridge, who said that this is not partisan but then tried to make it partisan. It is not that often that we have the opportunity to stand in unison on a particular issue, and for the member to try to imply that there are shortcomings in the legislation being sent to committee, which are just not there, was unfortunate.

The point the member for Lethbridge tried to make was that this was all going to fall back on the minister. She said that it falls on a Liberal minister, and if it was one of her colleagues who was in fact accused, the minister could dismiss it and sweep it under the rug. That is absolutely not factual.

This legislation would empower each and every one of us as a member of Parliament, who will be deemed an employer, with the responsibility of having in place a plan and a policy within our office, making sure there is a training component to it, so that all employees understand the process to follow should an incident arise.

We believe the Board of Internal Economy, which has representation from all parties, will be able to come together. They will look at this, so that as employers we can pool those resources and have best practices in order to make sure that we get this right.

Once that process is in place and once each of our offices, and we as employers, have that in place and we go through the training, if an incident does arise, there will be a process the employee can then follow. There is a list of independent arbiters, trusted persons, who can be drawn upon, and which would have to be agreed to by the employee, to find a way to deal with the particular issue or incident.

There will be an entire process that is mapped out to, hopefully, find a resolution that absolutely respects and protects the victim, and that gets to the truth of the matter. It is then and only then, after that process is followed, with the advice from the independent overseer of the process, once that resolution is found, then, if there is a problem with the process, the victim can go to the minister. The minister does not have to deal with it. The minister can turn that over to the deputy minister. However, that is only on the process. They would only weigh in on the process.

• (1620)

If they are not prepared to accept that decision, they can go to the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board and it can render a decision. If they are not totally pleased with that outcome, they can refer it to the Speaker, and the Speaker can take it under advisement.

There is a process in place. However, it is important that when we have this debate and move forward in dealing with the reality and the great challenge we are faced with, we try to come forward with the

very best process we can. With this proposed legislation, our government is taking a firm stand and strong action against harassment and violence, including sexual harassment and sexual violence in the workplace.

My honourable colleagues I know will surely agree that this behaviour is not acceptable nor tolerable, and it needs to stop. These experiences are all too common, and they take place in workplaces of all types. An Abacus Data study on harassment and sexual violence in the workplace found that just over 10% of Canadians believe that sexual harassment is really quite common in their workplace. Another 44% said that while it is not frequent, it does happen.

The social media campaigns we have all talked about have gained so much traction over the past few months, and the headlines splashed across papers in this country week after week serve to back up the statistics I just shared. The issue is systemic, rooted in an imbalance of power that is steeped in our culture. It is everywhere around us. It is in the media, entertainment, academia, business, and politics. Most of us have followed the stories on what is taking place on both sides of the border in sport and how we have had perpetrators take advantage of that power imbalance in the realm of sport. With story after story, we are hearing accounts about inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, shedding a very public eye on an issue that for too long was only discussed in whispers and rumours.

The fact is that these social media campaigns, these movements, are more than just a hashtag. They are a catalyst for a much-needed cultural shift, which is good news. Perhaps it is the only good news in an otherwise bleak picture. Women and others are coming forward and saying enough is enough. This is an important first step, but what happens next?

Employers have a responsibility to ensure that their workplaces are free from harassment and sexual violence, and employees need to know that if something does happen, they can report it without fear of reprisal or fear of being shamed. They need to know that there will be some kind of resolution. The bottom line is that people need to feel safe at work.

On the subject of keeping workers safe and healthy, I would like to note that we are also strengthening compliance and enforcement mechanisms under the Canada Labour Code, as announced in budget 2017. The use of monetary penalties and the authority to publicly name violators are just some of the changes announced to increase workplace health and safety and better protect workers' rights.

To get back to the subject at hand, I am not suggesting that harassment and violence exist in every workplace or that there are not employers out there who are genuinely committed to protecting the well-being of their employees. In fact, there are many companies who have led on this. I am suggesting that it is in everyone's best interest to tackle this problem head on. It is about doing what is right for people, and it also has an impact on the economy.

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Members might think that today's debate is overstating the issue and may be drawing too many conclusions, but what happens when someone experiences harassment or sexual violence at work? Eighty per cent of people do not report it. There is a victim left behind. I hate to put it so bluntly, but if they have already reported the incident or incidents and nothing has been done to resolve the situation, there are two choices left, practically speaking. They can either put up and shut up, or leave. These are not the right choices.

By working together in this House, I look forward to sending this legislation to committee.

• (1625)

The minister has said clearly that she is willing to look at amendments coming forward. I would hope that what comes out of that committee report will be something we can all support and certainly do a better job here on the Hill.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his fine speech.

Today, I rise not as a Conservative MP, but as a woman. Members have said that they want this to be a non-partisan bill, and I hope it will stay that way, because what we are debating today is important. It is also important to change people's attitudes. As a woman and as a victim, I have a bit of a problem, and I would like to know what my colleague thinks.

Are we not putting the victim at risk by forcing them to first speak to their employer, who may also be the perpetrator?

• (1630)

[*English*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, the member is committed to contributing to the development of this process so that we do get it right.

As an employer, a member will be responsible for putting together the policy and will be responsible for making sure that the training is in place. I would think that the pooled resources through the Board of Internal Economy will be able to get best practices. People will be on hand to whom staffers will be able to go. If the member of Parliament is the perpetrator, the individual will not have to go to that member. An independent person will be in place to whom the staffer can go.

We have to respect the victim and make sure a process is in place that does not further victimize the staffer. I am sure the process that is finally agreed upon will not include going to the employer first.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his comments reaffirming for those of us in the House that, once the bill gets to committee, the conversation will be open and collaborative. My comments come from that place.

I heard the minister talking about there not being a clear definition in the legislation, and the advantage of that is that, as we move forward in our understanding of the legislation, we would not limit how people would be protected. I understand that. I can see the point there. However, I also want to put forward the power of having a

definition in legislation so that, as things change, whether in society or within Parliament itself, we will not have a definition that starts to go backward and forward.

For me, it is important that part of the work of the committee be looking at a definition and that definition be included in the legislation.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner: Mr. Speaker, the intent of putting the definitions in the regulation is to give it flexibility. When we see how society has evolved and changed over the last number of years and we look at electronic media and other sources, we see there is a benefit to having it in the regulations, in that it would make it more nimble, more flexible, and more adaptive.

We do not know what is down the road. We do not know what we would have to respond to. The thinking is that, in legislation, the definition would almost be too restrictive, and in regulation, it would have additional adaptability.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Essex, International Trade; the hon. member for Abbotsford, Taxation; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Public Services and Procurement.

• (1635)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is rare to have the opportunity to support a bill that deals with an issue that affects so many people across the country and throughout the world. That is why I am proud to rise today to speak to Bill C-65.

[*English*]

As a feminist government and one that cares deeply about Canadians, we are committed to taking action on workplace harassment and sexual violence in Parliament and in federally regulated workplaces. This bill underscores the Government of Canada's strong commitment to taking action that would help create healthy, respectful workplaces for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression—heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, or two spirit.

The tragic reality is that, despite our country's progress toward a modern, respectful society, we know that harassment and violence are persistent and pervasive in Canadian workplaces and that incidents often go unreported because employees fear retaliation. These behaviours can have long-term negative effects, not just for those who have experienced them but also for their families and employers as well, through lost productivity, absenteeism, and employee turnover.

[*Translation*]

Last fall, Abacus Data published a study on harassment and sexual violence in the workplace. It showed that over 10% of Canadians believe that sexual harassment is quite common in their workplace. Another 44% said that while it is not frequent, it does happen.

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The recent #MeToo hashtag campaign on Twitter confirms these statistics and clearly shows how pervasive and far-reaching this problem is.

[*English*]

Underpinning these realities are the many power imbalances and gender norms still in our culture that have led to unacceptable tolerance of these behaviours for far too long. It is time they stopped. One of the key building blocks leading up to the tabling of this proposed legislation was listening to Canadians. The Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour engaged Canadians, stakeholders, and experts to gather their experiences and perspectives on these very issues. Members of Parliament and senators also consulted to ensure the government could fulfill its commitment to making Parliament a workplace free from harassment and sexual violence. This engagement of Canadians resulted in the report released last November, entitled “Harassment and sexual violence in the workplace public consultations: What We Heard”. In this report, Canadians indicated that incidents of harassment and sexual violence in the workplace are not only under-reported but also often dealt with ineffectively when they are reported.

[*Translation*]

Statistics show that approximately 80% of victims do not feel like they can report what happened, so what choice do they have?

[*English*]

The report found that women reported more sexual harassment and violence than men, and that visible minorities and people with disabilities reported more harassment. These discussions with stakeholders and experts provided insight on how to address these and other issues, and they informed the bill we are discussing today.

Bill C-65 proposes to amend existing provisions in the Canada Labour Code and replace the existing patchwork of laws and policies with one comprehensive approach that takes into consideration the full spectrum of harassment and violence that can occur. It would also expand the coverage to parliamentary workplaces, such as the Senate, House of Commons, and Library of Parliament. This would include political staff on Parliament Hill. Our staff right now are subject to some of the most antiquated provisions, where they exist, in the modern world. It is time that staff get the protection they deserve, and that is why this bill is so important.

The changes being proposed to the Canada Labour Code include expanding the current violence-prevention requirements to ensure that employers take the necessary steps to prevent and protect against both harassment and violence in the workplace; repealing less-effective sexual harassment provisions currently found in the code; ensuring that employers are required to investigate, record, and report occurrences of harassment and violence—employers would also be required to take steps to prevent and protect against occurrences of harassment of violence as well as respond to them when they occur and to offer support to employees affected by them; protecting the privacy of employees coming forward to report harassment and violence; and extending occupational health and safety coverage to exempt ministerial staff. I welcome these changes. I welcome the discipline and the responsibility and the important protections that these would afford to political staff.

As part of the new approach announced by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, our government also intends to launch an awareness campaign and to provide support to employees and employers.

● (1640)

This support will help them navigate the incident prevention and resolution processes and direct victims to services. We are committed to this work because, at the end of the day, this is about ensuring equal access to and enjoyment of fundamental human rights for all Canadians.

Human rights are not pieces of pie. We do not run out of human rights by serving them to everyone equally. We do not run out of human rights when they are extended to all and enjoyed by everyone. In fact, they are strengthened for all. Human rights are fundamental, inalienable, indivisible, and universal. That means they apply to everyone equally.

When people have been made vulnerable and fearful, that is when we can and must shine light on these fellow human beings, that is when we must lead to make things better, that is when we must stand up and be counted, that is when we must support each other, and that is what is at the core of this legislation. It is together that we demonstrate our solidarity and support for Canadian women, the LGBTQ2 community, and their family members and friends.

Research indicates higher rates of violent victimization and an elevated risk of harassment and sexual violence for sexual minorities, including individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirited, and this includes queer people of colour. The intersectionality of gender and sexual violence must be understood. No one should face such acts of aggression and unwanted attention in the workplace or, in fact, anywhere.

[*Translation*]

That is why our government is taking a clear stand on the issue. Workplace sexual harassment and violence of any kind are unacceptable and will no longer be tolerated. We must work together to eliminate such behaviours from our workplaces. No government can do that alone.

[*English*]

The legislation we are discussing today also aligns with the plan announced earlier this year by the Minister of Status of Women, entitled “It’s Time: Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence”. The title, “It’s Time”, was selected because it is time to learn more about the pervasiveness of this problem, it is time to believe survivors, and it is time to invest in effective solutions. After many years of neglect, there is a lot of work to do.

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Developing this strategy was a key priority for our feminist government upon taking office, and listening to Canadians was a critical first step. As part of this engagement, approximately 300 individuals from more than 175 organizations shared their views during meetings held across Canada. The Canadian public was also invited to provide comments via email and through an online survey, in which more than 7,500 Canadians participated. In addition, the federal government created an advisory council of experts on gender-based violence and engaged with provincial and territorial colleagues to receive additional feedback to further inform the strategy. The strategy has three pillars: prevention, support for survivors and their families, and promoting responsive legal and justice systems.

Budget 2017 allotted \$100.9 million over five years to implement this strategy. To support this strategy, Status of Women Canada is creating a gender-based violence knowledge centre to better align Government of Canada resources, fill gaps in evidence and data, support federal coordination and accountability on key federal actions, connect service providers with researchers and policy-makers, and lay the foundation for future action on gender-based violence. The LGBTQ2 secretariat is fully behind and proud to support this important work to combat gender and sexual-based violence.

The bottom line for Canadians is that harassment and sexual violence are unacceptable anywhere, including in the workplace. Bill C-65 sends a strong message that our government is prepared to take bold action and be part of the solution on this critical matter.

[*Translation*]

In the end, our government pledged to take action against harassment and sexual violence in federal workplaces, and that is exactly what we are doing. We expect the amendments to yield results in the short and the long term. In the short term, more people will feel safe and supported and will speak up. In the long term, there will be fewer incidents as the culture changes. I am asking my colleagues to support this bill, which will prevent harassment and sexual violence in the workplace, and foster workplaces where everyone has a fair chance to succeed today and in the future.

[*English*]

It is time to end gender-based violence and sexual violence in the workplace.

• (1645)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things the bill particularly talks about is prevention measures. It leaves it at that, and then it talks a lot about after the fact, after there is an incident of harassment or violence and those kinds of things.

If we rescue a puppy from a stream, and then we have to rescue another puppy from a stream and then another puppy from the stream, maybe we should go upstream and find out why the puppies are ending up in the stream.

One of the things I did when I was first elected was bring Motion No. 47 to examine the impact of online sexual violence on men, women, and children in Canada. That motion passed unanimously in the House of Commons. The health committee did a study on it as

well. The recommendations that came out of that study were not nearly what I was looking for, but I noted that the status of women committee did a similar study as well. Recommendation 5 of the recent study by the status of women committee states:

That the Government of Canada examine E-safety models or increased controls to prevent violent and degrading sexually explicit material from being accessed by youth under age of majority and examine how violent and degrading sexually explicit material distorts young people's idea of consent, gender equality and healthy relationships.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on whether the government is going to be addressing that recommendation or how it is going to be addressing it.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his concern on this issue and for taking his own initiative on this matter. Let me be very clear. In the work done by Status of Women Canada and by the minister responsible for Bill C-65, prevention, support, and measures to make sure that this does not happen in the workplace to start with is exactly what we are focused on.

The status of women report talks about support, prevention, and remediation. This is also addressed in Bill C-65. That is what came out of the consultations with Canadians. After the fact, it is important that we understand how to deal with it, but let us prevent it from happening.

It is also the work of our government to make sure that men understand that sexual violence is their issue. Sexual violence against women is an issue for men and boys, not simply an issue for women. Our government is committed to making sure that we get at the root of this problem and that we are upstream, in the middle of the stream, and downstream so that girls and women can be safe.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's passion today in his speech, but it is going to require more from all of us than speeches in this place or the best intentions. This is going to require an incredible amount of hard work and breaking down structures that have existed for 150 years inside this House. It is going to take all of us rolling up our sleeves, digging in at the committee level, dropping our partisan hats at the door, and making sure that we are committed to making policies better for people who live and work in this place and in this city and who watch us from across the country. We really need to be committed to that.

This is not about patting each other on the back and saying that we are doing a great job. I do not want any kudos for the work we are doing here. I want not one more person to experience harassment here. That is going to take work.

One of the things it is going to take is an openness to amendments at the committee level. I have heard arguments today about the definition, something the NDP believes strongly must be part of the legislation. I understand the importance of it in the regulation, but there is no harm in making sure that we go above and beyond in this work and not do just the bare minimum.

I am hoping that the member will express today that they will be open to amendments in a non-partisan way to ensure that when we are finished with this legislation, we have done our very best and have left those partisan hats at the door so that every person going forward will benefit from this hard work.

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Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her passion and commitment to this issue. The Government of Canada and my colleagues are no strangers to hard work. We want to work hard on this issue. We want results for people who face sexual violence in the workplace. We want a Parliament and a House of Commons where no one, now or in the future, faces unwanted sexual advances in the workplace. That requires us to be collaborative at committee. That is what we intend to do.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question for the hon. member for Edmonton Centre builds on a theme he raised about the consequences of reduced productivity and absenteeism. Obviously, creating a regime for survivors of violence and victims of harassment is essential and the right thing to do. However, one of the trends I fear is that we are losing good people altogether.

In my own office, I am very fortunate to have incredibly talented women working for me without whom I could not do this job. I want to ask the member how the regime contemplated in Bill C-65 would help create a culture change that would ensure that the talented young women who are experiencing harassment today have faith in the system and will want to stay in these jobs and will want to contribute to the good work of government and the public service and federally regulated workplaces.

•(1650)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that if people at a workplace feel not only that they may not be safe but that if something happens to them they have absolutely no recourse, because their employer has all the power, then it is no wonder that when incidents happen 80% are not reported and that we lose talented women and vulnerable employees because the system is stacked against them. This is about changing the system so that it is fair for all.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a woman, I am pleased today to speak to this bill. I admit that I feel a little embarrassed, not because of the bill, but because it is now January 29, 2018, and no one considered drafting this bill until now.

We have all heard rumours, but not spoken up. We have all seen certain things, but not reported them. We are a party to the legislation. We are the legislators and our own employees are not protected. It is unacceptable that, in 2018, our own employees in this place are not protected.

This is a good piece of legislation even though, as a woman, I would have preferred that it be more substantive. We often hear that women are harassed, but so are men. We are now talking about this, but some men are harassed and never file a complaint. We also have to shine a light on that.

As everyone has said throughout the day, this must not be a partisan bill. We must sit down together and have a frank, honest, and perhaps, in some respects, an upsetting discussion because we are part of the problem and of the solution.

Today I went through some papers and came across the definition of sexual harassment. We hear a lot of things and are never really sure.

Sexual harassment is not an offence under the Criminal Code in the same sense as other assaults of a sexual nature. The Criminal Code codifies criminal harassment and includes sentences for that type of harassment. Legal recourse does exist for sexual harassment in the workplace.

Honestly, I always thought that sexual harassment was included in the Criminal Code because I consider that sexual harassment and assault are crimes. They are crimes because often it is the most vulnerable who are attacked, which is unacceptable behaviour from an employer or any other person. No one should ever use their power to try to buy someone.

We have all seen things. We all know someone or know of someone who was a victim of psychological or sexual harassment. I have two daughters who are 29 and 28. I hope they are listening to me. If not, I will send them the clip. No does not mean yes. No means no. When someone enters our personal space uninvited we have the right to say no. If they do not understand that, then we will say it louder. It is time for attitudes to change.

•(1655)

If we want to change people's attitudes, where do we start? Where do we stop? What is now acceptable? What is no longer acceptable?

The first thing we need to realize is that sexuality is all over the place now. It is everywhere in television and videos. Even comic strips always have an element of sexuality. It has become so commonplace that people no longer know the difference between what is appropriate and what is not.

When we were little, on New Year's Day, our uncles chased us and tried to kiss us. We do not see as much of that in families nowadays, thank goodness. Nevertheless, attitudes need to change. We have to change our attitudes as legislators, but we also need to give victims more of a voice because they are the people we are talking about today. This bill is supposed to protect victims. It is supposed to protect us too, but the focus is on the victims.

Earlier, I was reading "Ensemble, contre les violences à caractère sexuel". I have witnessed the protests. We have all, be it on television or from someone we know, heard about implicit or explicit promises to reward someone for agreeing to a sexual request. We may have heard about implicit or explicit threats of retaliation if the victim comes forward, threats that may or may not be acted upon. That is what we are speaking out against. We want to protect the people who report these crimes so they need not fear retaliation. That is extremely important.

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Many people have spoken here today. As for me, I will be speaking personally, as a woman. I cannot say my name, but I can say that it is the woman, not the MP, who is speaking. The MP will speak later. I am having some trouble accepting the fact that an employee who is having a problem with an abuser is supposed to go to their employer, yet if the abuser is the employer and there is a third person in the same office but that person is only 20 years old, that third person cannot help the victim. There needs to be an independent structure to prevent this type of thing from happening. I am putting myself in the shoes of the victims who are forced to go to their abuser, who is also their employer. I think going to an abuser to say that they did something inappropriate must be the hardest thing in the world.

As I listened to everyone speak today, I was pleasantly surprised to realize that we are all on the same wavelength. This bill must be non-partisan. It must put victims first. It must be neither Liberal, nor NDP, nor Conservative. It must be a bill from the men and women who represent Canadians in every riding. I dare to hope that this bill will be so good and so non-partisan that it will be a first for Canada and will lead to other similar bills in other jurisdictions.

The important thing, in my opinion, is to craft a bill that gives victims a voice.

● (1700)

I commend the women and men who have found the courage to report their perpetrators, in spite of the lack of protection and resources, and especially in spite of the threat of retaliation.

The government must set an example and must do everything in its power to ensure that all employees are adequately and fairly protected across the country, in all workplaces, including the Parliament of Canada. The government must walk the talk and enact transparent, robust, fair, and equitable legislation.

More and more individuals are coming forward, and there has never been a better time to take action. However, we must be diligent, because a poorly drafted bill could hurt victims even more. We must absolutely consult victims and take their opinions into account to draft the best bill possible. Victims might prove to be a great help in putting together a bill that would protect everyone.

At the same time, parliamentary employees must enjoy the same protections as departmental employees. The burden of proof must not rest exclusively on the shoulders of victims. Victims must be given all the support they need along the way, including both psychological and financial support. It is up to us to decide. Furthermore, the committee study must not be tainted by partisanship, especially when it comes to choosing witnesses. Otherwise, if it passes as introduced, this bill will hurt victims in a number of ways. Lastly, adequate training should be mandatory for all employees and all employers.

With everything that happened last week in Canada, particularly in Quebec and Ontario, we were not all proud to be politicians. I was wishing I had another job. The good thing is that today we can stand up in the House and say loud and clear that sexual harassment must stop. It should no longer be a daily topic of conversation.

As politicians, we need to take responsibility. We also need to stop assuming that only women are affected, because it is not just women

who are harassed. We also need to recognize that, and say so loud and clear.

What is more, the employees who work for us here on the Hill or in our riding offices should feel safe. This bill should not be the only one created to protect victims of crime.

I would like the vaguer aspects of the bill to be better defined. The government must provide more detailed explanations of the many exemptions set out in the bill. For example, organizations that have procedures equivalent to federal government procedures will be exempt from the federal regulations. In my opinion, that does not mean much.

● (1705)

I hope that the exemptions will be better defined because the more exemptions there are, the more confusing things can get. If we want a clear and transparent bill, everyone has to be able to understand it. When I say everyone, I do not just mean Canada's legislators. Ordinary Canadians should be able to read the bill and understand from it that there is someone who will speak on their behalf and that we are here to help them.

As I said earlier, I want to ensure that the government focuses on helping victims. They are the ones we are talking about here. Today, I was pleased to see everyone set partisanship aside and talk from the heart, with emotion, and especially with a bit more knowledge. It is ridiculous that we still have to talk about sexual harassment in 2018. We are dealing with old ways of doing things, and we need to rise above that today and change people's attitudes. Everyone here will agree that changing people's attitudes is not something that can be accomplished overnight. It will require some education. Every one of us can educate ourselves, but sometimes we need help in understanding our behaviour.

We are lawmakers, and we had a great debate on the bill today. Now, this bill will be sent to committee. We all know the committees of the House and how they have a tendency to partisanship. Witnesses get invited because they are Liberal, or Conservative, or NDP. That must not happen this time. The witnesses who are invited must be people who understand, who are familiar with workplaces, who know about sexual harassment and have passed legislation. For instance, Quebec has very strong legislation against sexual harassment.

We need people who are better equipped than we are to fully understand what kind of legislation we should pass here to guarantee that victims are properly protected. This is about our employees, employees working in federal workplaces, in our environment. Our environment needs to become a calm place and, above all, a place where people can report workplace abuse without fear of retaliation.

In closing, I want to say that I know Chantal is listening to us today. There is a little bit of her in this. She does not work with us, but I have met her, and I know how much good it does for her to see debates like the one we had today, untainted by partisanship.

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• (1710)

[English]

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

Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member across the way, and I appreciate that there is a desire from members in all political parties to contribute to the debate. I get a sense that, at the very least, we will have a very interesting committee discussion. I suspect we will continue to see it being dealt with in an apolitical fashion, as all parties recognize that this is the type of thing we need to move forward on.

The member across the way expressed some interest in how presenters might be invited to participate. I wish her well, along with the committee ultimately responsible, in terms of ensuring that we try to carry the momentum we are seeing in the House in a very apolitical fashion to ensure that we have the best piece of legislation so that all of us can be proud of it.

One of the aspects of the legislation, and I made reference to this earlier, is its general framework, in which the three words that come to mind are “prevent”, “respond”, and “support”: prevent incidents of harassment and violence, respond effectively to these incidents when they do occur, and support victims, survivors, and employees. Could the member comment on that?

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his hard work.

I would like the bill to be fleshed out. I find that some things are vague, and I would like them to be explained more clearly. There are the exceptions, for example. The bill contains many exceptions. I do not want the bill to have too many of them. I spoke to victims of crime for my former bill. There should not be too many exceptions because it leads to confusion, and even we will not be able to make head or tail of it.

I believe that the bill must be clear for victims and for us, in order to make the work easier for all parliamentarians. I hope that it will be. It would help if we could work well together.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech.

Indeed, it is nice to see everyone in the House of Commons united around a bill that we all seem to agree on.

I heard my colleague say that she would like to set limits and get rid of some exceptions. Quite often, and rightly so, I believe victims are praised for their courage and told that they will be believed. That is wonderful. Victims must be supported. However, if we were to better define the crimes in question, I think that would help make reporting them less of an act of courage. It would just be enforcing the law. I cannot help but think that a publicity campaign or information campaign needs to be defined.

I am 55 years old. When I was little, no one even talked about seat belts, and people smoked in cars with the windows closed and with kids in the car. Some things are just not done anymore. We do not throw stacks of paper in the garbage. There have been awareness campaigns.

An awareness campaign should force men to look in the mirror and realize that they need to make some changes. Could this be defined in the context of this bill? Can we expect this to be addressed in committee?

• (1715)

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I completely agree. First and foremost, we need to define what we are talking about. As I said earlier, what may have been acceptable 10 years ago is no longer acceptable now. Attitudes have changed, for all kinds of reasons. We need a framework with good definitions, so that everyone is on the same page.

Sometimes, we hear sexist jokes. These do not bother me, because I have always hung around with guys, and I have learned to ignore them. However, these jokes are not acceptable to the new generation.

A definition is not only very important, but necessary. It is necessary to specifically designate what is considered sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is often confused with sexual assault. They are not at all the same thing. They are similar, but they are not the same. We need good definitions so that we, as legislators, can understand the legislation and understand what we need to do to protect victims.

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to stand and say how pleased I am to see the strong support of parliamentarians across the political spectrum for this particular bill.

As a physician, I am very familiar with violence of all kinds, including workplace, domestic, and societal violence. Due to the fear, stigma, and shame associated with violence, most people do not talk to anybody but do feel safe talking to their physician. I was always a repository of all of this information and knowledge, sometimes unable to do very much about it except to advise a patient about what to do.

Today, we see full disclosure. Everyone is disclosing now, and because of that full disclosure, some people feel very safe in joining the ranks and the throng so they are not singled out. However, it does not mean the shame has gone away. It does not mean that the stigma has gone away. It does not mean that blaming the victim has gone away.

It is not enough to talk about the issue. We have to do something concrete, and who, other than this place, this Parliament, can do something concrete about this? We make laws and we create policies, and we create programs that will deal with the issue once and for all.

I believe this bill is creating—albeit some people think it should be amended, etc.—a first step to keep a promise the Liberal government made when it first came to power, that it would deal with exactly this particular workplace harassment and this particular culture in the workplace.

Government Orders

We need to look at this. I know people have spoken about different types of harassment and violence. I want to say that violence is not just physical and it is not only sexual. Psychological violence is rampant in the workplace, where people do things or do not do things or do not say things because of the fear of losing their job or a promotion or of reprisals by the people who are in authority in the workplace.

We need to really look at a full and comprehensive spectrum of violence. Psychological violence is as important and as damaging as actual physical violence. There is a great deal of psychological violence in the workplace.

To look at this, we need to look at an integrated approach. I think we are looking at—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I will just call the member to order momentarily. I would just draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that we were under comments and questions to the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix. I did not realize the hon. member was scheduled to come up. We were still on the remaining 10 minutes.

We will get the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix to respond.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Vancouver Centre will then have the floor.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Mr. Speaker, having sat with my colleague on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women from 2006 to 2011, I must say that she is very knowledgeable about sexual harassment. She has long been a strong supporter of victims. I know that she will raise some good points about this bill, and I hope that, for once, they will be non-partisan.

[*English*]

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time with the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

If I may be permitted, I will just quickly go over the first bit of what I said. I am really pleased to see the support of all members of Parliament for this bill, despite political affiliations.

This is an issue that is of great interest to me, as a physician. The fact is that people fear reprisal, there is stigma, and there is shame with regard to violence of any kind. I am familiar with physical violence, domestic violence, and societal violence. Sometimes the only person victims feel safe to tell their stories to is their physician, because of patient-physician confidentiality. Quite often physicians cannot do very much about it because people cannot be forced to speak out or to go wherever they need to go, but we can do certain things.

We now have a culture where there is open disclosure. People are less afraid to speak out because of the number of people who are speaking out. There is safety in numbers, and people feel they are not being singled out. They feel it is safer to speak out. However, that is not enough. There is still stigma and shame attached to victims of violence. The mentality to blame the victim still goes on.

We need to take concrete steps to change workplace culture, and Bill C-65 would do that. If we pass the bill in the House and we bring in the policies and the program that would support the bill, we would see a slow but definite change in the culture of at least the House of Commons as well as federally regulated workplaces.

There are three areas we need to look at. As always, protection is the most important. As a physician, I can treat diseases. I can put on band-aids and do whatever I need to do. However, if I do not look at the cause then I am not able to give long-term help or long-term support.

We need to look at the culture. This culture of abuse of authority and of making people afraid in order to do what one wants them to do is not 150 years old. This has gone on for millennia. This culture is so deeply ingrained that it is going to be difficult to remove it, but with goodwill, we can all start to do it.

The first thing we need to do is examine ourselves. What do we do? How do we think? How do we behave? What are the thoughtless things we do to our own staff when we are angry at them or we feel they are not doing the job well? What are the things that we do, both men and women, whether physically, psychologically, or in fact sexually, that make our colleagues feel ashamed and threatened? These are the things we need to do first.

Before we can do anything, we need to take the physician health himself approach. We have to look at our behaviour. We have to look at how we pass information on to our children. We have to look at how we bring up our children so they can learn to respect each other and understand the way to behave with each other. We have to start with these fundamental things. It begins in kindergarten.

I have heard people talking about pornography, etc. That culture starts at the beginning of one's life. That culture starts with how we deal with each other from the very beginning, with how we talk with each other at home around the dinner table, with how we shame people and how we denigrate people. These are some of the things that we have to start examining.

We need this legislation. This legislation looks at how we can protect people from workplace violence. Employers would be required to investigate, record, and report incidents. That is the first thing. Labour programs would bring in toll-free lines for employees and employers to link up with experts who can help them through conflict resolution and negotiations, as well as navigate all of the processes.

We need to look at providing educational material, which this legislation would provide. We need guidelines that would provide support services for those who are victims, keeping foremost in mind the safety of the complainant. Complainant safety is really a problem. Fear of reprisal is a big problem, as is losing one's job, being demoted, not getting the wanted promotion, or not getting that big part in a movie one wanted.

• (1725)

Some of these are very real, and people need to feel that they are not going to be blackballed for the rest of their lives because they spoke out. That is going to be very important as we look at the protection component.

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The next one is to look at effectiveness and if we have effective ways of dealing with this: how to deal with it effectively immediately; how to deal with a problem when it occurs; and how to support the victims themselves? That is a big part of that effective response.

Even though I stand here as I woman and as a long-time feminist, I want to say that this is not only about gender harassment. Indeed, there are men who are harassed in the workplace, either psychologically or physically. In fact, men are more at risk of physical violence in the workplace. When we look at that, we see 19% of women have a tendency to seek help, fill out a report, and look for support services; yet only 7% of men do that because of the absolute shame that a man has of being in this position. Therefore, I want us to look at the broad ways in which we can deal with this problem for both genders, to look at all of the ways in which we can keep people down. If because of this bill a lot of men are going to seek help, then it will help them to get the help they need.

The third pillar is to support the employees who are affected. This legislation does not replace the Criminal Code. There are going to be times when we need to look at going to enforcement because of the criminality of an act that has occurred in the workplace. This does not replace that, but it will bring into force Part III of PESRA, which is the employer and staff relations act that would bring in health and safety precautions and protections into the workplace.

I caution everyone in this House not to think that we will turn on a dime and that we will make changes. However, by passing this legislation right now, and by the ability of all of us in this place to think that this is extremely important enough to come together and to forget our differences, then we will make it safer for people to feel they can speak out, by protecting them when they speak out. If we do that, it will be one major step in moving this agenda forward. However, we need to have clear guidelines and clear policies. This bill is going to do exactly that, so we are not just talking or just tut-tutting and saying how terrible things are; we are actually putting into place concrete processes, steps, and sanctions that will affect employers and employees in the workplace.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's passionate speech. She highlighted a number of important details about the bill, but I would like to go back to the definitions, which are just as important.

There can be such a thing as too many definitions when the time comes to go to court or make legal decisions. An overabundance of definitions can be restrictive. The flip side is a legal vacuum, and definitions can vary from one country to another. When it comes to defining harassment, a person can say they have been physically harassed or even assaulted, and there is also the definition of psychological harassment. It varies from person to person.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the importance of including definitions in Bill C-65. Does she think the government will agree to the amendments about definitions that the NDP is going to propose in committee?

• (1730)

[*English*]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes a very important point. If we do not know what we are talking about, how can we deal with it properly? Then we get vague. The member is absolutely right that no one can do anything if there is vagueness and the barriers that are created by vague language. I hope that, when the committee looks at this, it will look at ways in which to strengthen the bill and make sure it works for everyone. The political will is here. All of us in this House, in every political party, are in agreement that we want to do something and we want to make it stick. We want something that is effective. Therefore, I am hoping that we will all be able to talk about this in the spirit that we have right now in this House, one of co-operation, and build not only a very strong and good bill but a set of regulations that will make this work well.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, early on in my career here, I brought forward Motion No. 47 to have the health committee do a study on the impact of online sexual violence on men, women, and children to see how online sexual violence was affecting Canadian culture. A recent study showed that the top 88 videos viewed on the Internet contained not only sexual content but violence combined with sexual content. Another study showed that a vast majority of the population is consuming this on a weekly basis.

One thing we looked at was some sort of opt-in legislation or a filter of some sort. I noticed that the status of women committee undertook a similar study. Recommendation 5 in a recent report said:

That the Government of Canada examine E-safety models or increased controls to prevent violent and degrading sexually explicit material from being accessed by youth under the age of majority and examine how violent and degrading sexually explicit material distorts young people's ideas of consent, gender equality and healthy relationships.

Does the member think this is perhaps an area to look at to prevent harassment and violence in the future: looking at what people are viewing today and how it is shaping their minds and thinking on a lot of these things?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, the member raises an important point, and I am very well aware of what the status of women committee said. It is very difficult, though, to police what people do in the privacy of their own homes. I think the member is talking about underage people. There is not just legislation and police who can deal with underage children. There is parenting. There is the V-chip that can be installed to prevent kids from getting certain things on television and stop people from accessing certain things if they are underage. Parents need to take responsibility for doing this in their homes.

I know of so many young women and men who are locked in their bedrooms and are on their computers doing who knows what, and they are victims of luring and predators. We need to talk about how to deal with this. I do not know that we can legislate what people do in the privacy of their own homes, but we might want to talk about policies and programs that might give parents the tools they need to prevent their children having access to certain things that are harmful to their growing minds.

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Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak in the House today in support of Bill C-65, especially because parliamentarians and the House of Commons are finding common cause in taking action on workplace harassment and violence.

Clearly this affects us all. We all know someone who has experienced some form of harassment or sexual violence in the workplace, and some of us may even have experienced it ourselves.

We know of the debilitating impact harassment and sexual violence has on women, on under-represented groups, employers, and Canadians in general. This is a key commitment of our government, and I am very proud that Bill C-65 is our effort to address harassment and sexual violence in federally regulated workplaces. This bill works to create safer and more respectful workplaces and sends a clear message to all Canadians that our government, the Government of Canada, is saying that harassment and sexual violence is unacceptable.

A lot of research shows us that this workplace behaviour has gone on for far too long and has also gone largely unreported. An Abacus Data survey last fall asked Canadians about harassment in the workplace. It found that over one in 10 Canadians said that sexual harassment was really quite common their workplace. Another 44% said that it was infrequent but it did happen. These respondents reported that women aged 30 to 44 were most likely to see this problem in the workplace. One-fifth said that it was common, and a total of two-thirds said that it happened in their workplace.

The study results explain that “The prevalence of this behaviour is no doubt in part because it rarely carries consequences for the harasser...The large majority of women, and most men, agree that normally there are no sanctions applied against those who sexually harass women in the workplace.” These findings paint a staggering portrait consistent with the picture that was painted during our recent government consultations.

Our government makes policy and legislative changes based on evidence through meaningful consultation with Canadians. Over the past year, the government has consulted widely with stakeholders and Canadians to gain a deeper understanding of the issue and to determine the best way to move forward. Consultations were also held with the government House leader, members of Parliament, and the Senate. I think it is very safe to say that all members and senators support the work we are doing together on this front.

In November of last year, we released the report “Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Workplace Public Consultations: What We Heard”, which summarized our consultations. I would encourage my hon colleagues to read it, share it with their constituents, help educate everyone about the intolerable impact this has, and join together in taking action.

Allowing this type of behaviour to continue in our workplace negatively impacts not just individuals, not just groups but ultimately the entire country as a whole and the country's economy. For example, we know that harassment and sexual violence primarily affects women. This means that women and other vulnerable groups face barriers to fully participate in the workforce and in society. How

can they not when they feel threatened at the place they work? These behaviours act as barriers to not only women but other vulnerable and under-represented groups, such as members of the LGBTQ2 community. These are the very groups of people we need to ensure have a fair chance at success. We need diversity of viewpoints in businesses, organizations, the public service, and, of course, right here.

We know that our culture is largely patriarchal. It is a culture where the sexualization of women can contribute to intolerance. Somehow this is seen as normal. Research shows us that visible minorities, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ2 community are also disproportionately affected. We found that this behaviour was tied to power and privilege, and that it was independent of gender. It is often those with the least power who are least able to advocate for themselves. They fear reprisal, including sanctions or shame, and are least likely to be aware of what they can do to stop inappropriate behaviour. This creates and perpetuates inequality.

Sexual harassment can be more persistent in low-wage, low-profile jobs where there is, most unfortunately, low accountability for the employer. It means that the less power and status one has, the more likely one is to be vulnerable to experiencing harassment or sexual violence at work.

● (1735)

The fact is that no one should feel scared or like a target in places of work or anywhere else for that matter. This is especially true for women and under-represented groups, and their families suffer as a result. Harassment and sexual violence are also critical barriers women face when entering the workforce and maintaining employment that is lucrative enough to provide for themselves and their families, which makes sexual violence and harassment not just a moral issue but of course an economic issue as well. Victims of harassment and sexual violence often feel that once reported to their employers, any steps taken by employers to address the behaviour are often insufficient or ineffective. One aspect of this bill would ensure that employers are required to investigate, record, and report occurrences of harassment and violence. Employers would also be required to take steps to prevent and protect against these behaviours as well as respond to them when they do occur and provide support to employees affected by them.

Employers are not immune to paying a price and feeling a negative impact as well. This impact is felt through reputational costs, loss of productivity or absenteeism, low levels of employee commitment, high turnover, or legal costs. This adds up in lost time, stress, depression, and anxiety. It costs employers financially and it certainly does not build a strong, cohesive, and resilient Canadian society.

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Allow me to note that we are also strengthening compliance and enforcement mechanisms under the code. The use of monetary penalties and the authority to publicly name violators are just some of the changes announced to increase workplace health and safety and protect workers' rights.

Our government ran on a commitment to take action on workplace harassment and sexual violence in Parliament and in federally regulated workplaces. Today, together, we take an important step toward that aim. I am confident we will be joined by our colleagues and Canadians and that others will follow our lead. This is about doing what is right for people and doing what is right economically.

My hon. colleagues and I know the status quo is not an option. We know we need this legislation and that we should support it for families, employers, and all Canadians.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her speech. I would like her to tell us how Bill C-65 will apply to organizations with collective agreements.

For example, how will Bill C-65 and the collective agreement apply in resolving a harassment complaint that has gone to arbitration and where there is proof of harassment?

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Madam Speaker, maybe this is a little unusual, but I would also like to thank my colleague for her contribution to this. I am not able to get into details, but no doubt this is the beginning of a lot of serious work. Each and every one of us is taking harassment and sexual violence in the workplace very seriously. Of course, it is going to take beyond the members of Parliament in the room, and I look forward to ongoing consultation with Canadians to ensure the success of Bill C-65.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that my hon. colleague was here for the last question that I asked so I will not reiterate that entirely.

One of the recommendations that came out of a recent status of women committee talked about bringing in an e-safety model, preventing access of youth who are under age, and examining how violent and degrading sexually explicit material distorts young people's ideas of consent, gender equality, and healthy relationships. I wonder if the member is familiar with what is going on in the U.K. in regard to opt-in or age verification. I know that her colleague said there is not much we can do about this. I would just ask if she is aware of what is going on in the U.K. in terms of this.

• (1745)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his work and for offering that suggestion. This is what will happen next, I would say.

We are taking the lid off something that has gone on for so long, that has gone unreported and has created such suffering, and intergenerational suffering. The good work that is being done around the world will only help make Canada a stronger, more resilient, and safer society.

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

Madam Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could add some further thoughts in regard to the important role the national government can play, along with the fact that what we have witnessed all day here is a sense of non-partisanship. Members from all sides of the House are looking forward to the bill ultimately going to committee. There is no political party here trying to strike one for a victory. Rather, it seems to be about the fact that this type of legislation is needed, so let us approve it and get it to committee.

Can the hon. member give her thoughts on how encouraging it is to see that support for a very important issue for all Canadians?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Madam Speaker, I think it speaks to the fact that this is commonly understood by parliamentarians to be a serious challenge in Canadian society. It goes to show that while we are always trying to improve our institutions and to be more open, transparent, and inclusive, certain things cut straight to the heart of the matter. We are all very privileged and honoured to be discussing Bill C-65 and what we can do with regard to workplace harassment and sexual violence.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, the shadow minister for employment, workforce development and labour.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to speak to Bill C-65, which amends the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act, and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1. I would like to state right from the start that I look forward to supporting the bill so as to ensure it is sent to committee for further study.

The broad themes addressed in Bill C-65 are very important, particularly in light of the recent reports that we received related to sexual misconduct and sexual harassment, both on Parliament Hill and elsewhere. It is necessary to ensure that whether in this place or anywhere in Canadian society sexual misconduct and harassment are not tolerated.

Unfortunately, we have a systemic problem in our culture where we spend so much time on rights and freedoms and not enough time on obligations and responsibilities to create safe, healthy, non-toxic workplaces. It needs to be a priority of all employers, of all members of Parliament, of all senators that our places of employment here on the Hill and in our constituencies are places where all employees feel valued, feel safe, and feel respected.

I want to reference the good work that was done by my colleague from Peace River—Westlock. His Motion No. 47, which went to the health committee, asked what the health effects of online violent pornography were to men, women, and children. That is a study that was very worthwhile. Unfortunately, the report does not really reflect the testimony that was provided by witnesses and seems to have been somewhat homogenized.

Government Orders

This is a bill which protects vulnerable people from exploitation, which is a noble goal. It is my hope that we in the House will achieve the goal that is set out in the bill. Despite the important objectives outlined in the bill, there are some questions that must be addressed. Sending Bill C-65 to committee will allow us to ensure that we meet the high expectations Canadians have for us as legislators as we deal with these critical issues.

We know that sexual harassment is not a new phenomenon. Unfortunately, there have always been occurrences. However, now victims are starting to speak up and out against those who use their positions of power to sexually harass those who have less power. It is important that harassment claims be dealt with appropriately and that they be seen to be dealt with appropriately. This inspires greater confidence in the systems which are in place, prevents abuses, and ultimately ensures that victims and perpetrators are both dealt with in a way that reflects the spirit of the law. We know that beyond the toll harassment can take on a victim, there are significant costs to a workplace where harassment is tolerated. Lost productivity, absenteeism, higher turnover all have an economic cost that undermines an office or a business.

By way of background, part 1 of Bill C-65 amends the Canada Labour Code to strengthen the existing framework for the prevention of harassment and violence. This includes sexual harassment and sexual violence in the workplace. Bill C-65, if passed into law, would put sexual harassment under the purview of workplace health and safety. Areas of federal jurisdiction would be under the new regime, including the federal public service. Part 2 amends the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act with respect to the application of part II of the Canada Labour Code to parliamentary employers and employees, without impacting the privileges and immunities of this place, the other place, and their members. In essence, harassment policies will be also be expanded to cover parliamentary workplaces. The bill will not change the way complaints are handled between parliamentarians. Sexual harassment complaints between members and senators will continue to be handled as they have been previously. Finally, part 3 amends a transitional provision of the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1.

In essence, the bill puts forward a multi-step process for dealing with complaints of harassment or violence. It aims first to prevent harassment and violence, but when it does occur, a system is to be in place for a complaint to be filed. An employer must try to resolve the complaint. If that does not work, mediation is an option. If that option fails or is bypassed, an individual identified as a competent person is to report on the incident and make recommendations to the employer, who then is required to implement the recommendations. I will not go into all the details here, but if the complaint remains unresolved, the minister of labour steps in to ensure compliance.

● (1750)

There are some issues I have with the bill, mostly with the lack of precision in the drafting. The first concern I would like to highlight is related to the fact that the minister of labour is given a great deal of power in the complaint process. The minister of labour is set up to be the arbiter of matters that proceed through the initial steps of the process but go unresolved. The trouble here is obvious, especially as we consider that this new regime is meant to provide protections to

staff here on Parliament Hill. For example, if an individual who works within the office of a Liberal MP is harassed and he or she proceeds through the process that would be in place, he or she may find his or her situation being addressed by a colleague, maybe even a friend of the perpetrator.

The minister of labour would be in an awkward position here, to put it mildly. As anyone watching the news in the last week will realize, a sexual harassment situation arising in a political office can end a career. Are the Liberals seriously saying that the minister of labour, whether in this government or any other successive government, would be able to rightly deal with a situation of this type from an unbiased perspective, without any concern for political consequences? I doubt it.

A victim must have access to a process that is reliable and cannot be improperly interfered with. Even the perception that there could be interference calls the whole process into question. An independent third party would serve employees and employers much better here.

There are other problems within the legislation that require some further clarification as well. Throughout our time in government, Conservatives always placed a strong focus on supporting victims. It is our intention to ensure that the Liberals focus on supporting them as well through this legislation, as they have said they would. One of the concerns related to this point is the option of mediation as an avenue to solve harassment complaints.

The government must be absolutely clear about what is meant and intended with these sorts of areas of concern. The Liberals have said there would be a campaign that would focus on sexual harassment awareness. To date, there has been no mention of the cost of this campaign, where it would be targeted, or what the specific goals of the campaign would be. A campaign will not be successful unless it has defined goals and a strategy to meet them.

Similarly, there needs to be a plan for outreach to those people who have experienced sexual harassment. The plan is to help those who have been aggrieved to navigate the process of resolution and to direct victims to the support services that would be available to them. The bill needs to have an accurate costing estimate to accompany it. All Canadians have a stake in ensuring any campaign has a meaningful impact. The Liberals would do well to map out their plan for this campaign as quickly as possible to that end.

Bill C-65 also identifies a number of exemptions that need to be clarified. To give one example, there is an exemption to opt out of the regime for harassment complaints if workplaces have an equivalent regime of their own already in place. What would this look like? How would such requests be handled?

Government Orders

Finally, certain terms in the bill are not presently adequately defined in the law. The term “competent person” is someone a person could go to for help rendering a decision in the case of a complaint. What does a competent person look like? How would we describe a competent person? There needs to be an expansion in that part of the bill. Is it the law of contract definition of the competent person, which is someone who has the mental capacity to enter into an agreement? Is that what was meant by a competent person? Then such a person could be any individual in an office. Is it someone who has the required skills, training, experience, and other characteristics to truly be helpful? Someone in human resources or a counsellor might be more appropriate in a case like that. What does competency mean in relation to addressing complaints of sexual harassment, and for the purpose of Bill C-65?

These are all areas that could be more neatly defined to make this a better piece of legislation. Bill C-65 must be clear. It must be clear what it means. It also must be clear what it does not mean.

The intent of the bill is noble. However, it leaves many questions unanswered. I look forward to seeing the bill debated more fully at committee. I am sure that all members of Parliament, staff, and all Canadians want to see workplaces free of sexual harassment. I hope this bill, after some improvements and clarifications, will be helpful and will contribute to greater safety in the workplace.

• (1755)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a two-part question. The first part is with respect to the existing processes for learning more about sexual harassment in the workplace. My staff and I have done a webinar that relates to this topic. It is training that is available to all members and their staff in the House of Commons. Have the member and his staff had an opportunity to do this, or will they?

Second, the member raised the topic of the executive, legislative, and judicial roles of this legislation potentially being harmonized within the minister and whether that is appropriate. Does the member feel that there is a particular officer of Parliament in whom this adjudicative role should reside? Does he have an opinion on it?

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, the training the House offers to members and their staff is very good. I encourage all members and their staff to participate in that training. It provides a good framework for the basis of a healthy and functioning office, one that will give good results and provide an environment that is safe and respectful to all individuals.

As for the adjudication of complaints, I appreciate very much the part in the legislation that allows for mediation. That is a very important part. When an individual has the freedom to engage a supervisor or an employee about a sexual harassment claim, I think that is good. However, we and our staff would be better served if there were an outside third party set up where someone could lodge a complaint. The complaint could be lodged confidentially with that third party. It could then be investigated confidentially and a response given as to whether it was a complaint suitable for mediation or it needed to be escalated through the ranks.

Mr. Jim Egliniski (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned that he was concerned about overlapping jurisdiction and rules. I have been involved in the government since

1968. I did not want to go back that far, but that is when I first started. We have had study sessions on these matters starting in the mid-seventies through the eighties, nineties, and two-thousands. I have taken a number of different courses.

Bill C-65 has to be pulled together to make it work as one unified bill. I wonder if the member would like to speak to how we can pull it all together so there is one bill respecting different agencies within the government and within industry.

• (1800)

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, ideally, one single process would be the best way we could provide a solution for what Bill C-65 is hoping to address. Under employment standards, if parliamentarians and senators fell under that legislation, we would be well served. There would be a clearly defined process whereby an independent third party would properly investigate a complaint in confidence so that the person bringing it forward would not need to feel that his or her job was threatened, and the person being accused of inappropriate behaviour would have the protection confidentiality would provide until the investigation was complete and further action required. A central agency looking after that under employment standards would be the ideal place for it.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak this afternoon to a bill that seeks to amend the Canada Labour Code with regard to harassment and violence.

I thank my colleague from Provencher for making valid arguments and reiterating our party's position. We support the bill at second reading. I just came from the meeting of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, where we are getting ready to receive this important bill that we would like to improve.

This bill was introduced on November 7, 2017, by the government, but in light of recent events, we see that it is quite timely. In her speech today, the minister indicated that we can find a definition of harassment in the Canada Labour Code. However, we could learn from the experience and legislative expertise in Quebec on the matter.

What do we mean when we talk about psychological harassment? We must clearly define what we are talking about. According to the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, it is vexatious behaviour. It is harmful or humiliating behaviour that is displayed repeatedly or during a single and serious incident by hostile or unwanted behaviour that undermines the dignity or integrity of the employee and which has repercussions on the workplace. It may range from ridiculing the person or their work, isolating them, preventing them from speaking, making offensive or defamatory comments or gestures about or toward them, unsettling, threatening, or assaulting them, or making them suffer reprisals. The person is discriminated against, ostracized, and isolated.

We will likely consider these elements during the committee study to ensure that psychological harassment and physical violence are properly defined in the bill.

Government Orders

Harassment obviously has many consequences. The person might feel victimized. Their integrity was undermined, their self-worth compromised. This has a serious impact on self-esteem, leading to a loss of motivation and potentially to physical or mental health repercussions. The person sometimes tries to stay away from a workplace where there is a risk of accident or disability, for example, or where they feel ostracized. There may be personal issues. This can even lead to job loss, firing or absenteeism due to illness, not to mention financial problems.

Harassment is a serious problem in the workplace, and we must work to eliminate it as quickly as possible, because it has negative consequences not only on the victim, but on the work environment and productivity as well.

The minister has tabled a bill that will require federally regulated companies to adopt a prevention policy and to investigate and report on all cases of harassment that are brought to their attention. They will also have to provide psychological support to employees affected by harassment.

Currently, there are no sanctions in place against the employees at fault. However, recommendations may apply to the companies. Today we discussed two components, namely employees in federally regulated workplaces and political staff. However, the initial steps are the same. Once a policy is in place, the employee can go to their employer to file a complaint. If the complaint is not resolved, there is an optional mediation process. After that, the file can be assigned to an investigator, referred to as a competent person. My colleague just mentioned the importance of properly defining who would be a competent person to handle complaints.

● (1805)

However, as we heard today, we want the process to protect the integrity of those who feel they were assaulted, those I believe are victims, because we care about them. That is why I asked the minister this morning to ensure that anyone who at any time believes that they have been the victim of assault to be able to report it to a third party that is not the employer. We will have to discuss that in committee. In the case of employees under federal jurisdiction, the third party would be the Department of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour. That is important because we do not want anyone who feels they are the victim of assault at the hands of their employer to reach out to Employment and Social Development Canada only to be told that they need to talk to their employer. That would be unfortunate. We want to protect victims, who are at the heart of the process, and ensure that the process does not put obstacles in their way as they attempt to access the main resource, which is the Department of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, the third party with investigative power. That is for employees under federal jurisdiction.

The same process applies to employees of political staff. It involves becoming familiar with the policy, talking to the employer, and eventually seeking mediation or the help of an investigator or competent person. We are in a political environment, which is bound to be significant. I am pleased to see that the government is being open about the need to ensure we have an independent process in a partisan setting. We must ensure that political staff are not the victims of partisan games. Someone gave the example of an

employee of a government MP who files a complaint. We must ensure that the process is independent. We are going to look at that in committee to determine the best way of going about things and to ensure that the labour minister does not end up in a conflict of interest. As members know, there are a number of commissioners who report to the House. They are independent and could play a useful role in this regard.

Those are some of the issues we would like to raise in committee. We have listed some of them. It is important to avoid any retaliation against the victims, including political staff, during the process. It is also important to properly define the notion of a competent person. This is the expert who will be appointed to investigate a given situation. Of course, we must also always take care to avoid conflicts of interest and uphold the principle of the presumption of innocence throughout the process.

All of this takes resources. The minister was pretty vague about the resources she intends to set up at Employment, Workforce Development and Labour that will be dedicated to working with businesses to raise awareness and support them in implementing harassment and violence prevention policies.

Those are our questions for the minister. This is an important and necessary step because nearly six out of ten employees in federal workplaces report having been victims of harassment. That means there is a problem and we have to take meaningful steps toward fixing it. This is a step in the right direction, and we will certainly encourage the government to draw inspiration from initiatives and expertise related to psychological harassment that are emerging across the country. As a Quebecker, I am proud to say that the Government of Quebec has been working on this issue for over a decade now. It has developed expertise that could be very useful to us as we lay the foundation following this initial step.

To sum up, this is a step in the right direction and a constructive approach that we want to implement with the government to advance this legislation, although some questions do remain that we hope to clarify at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

● (1810)

The minister mentioned one thing that I really appreciated, namely, the need for a cultural shift, and she can definitely count on our collaboration in that regard.

[*English*]

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if we are looking at the incidences of sexual harassment and we take it here to the House of Commons as an example in attracting more women to politics and encouraging more women to stay in politics, how important is it that women, men, and people of minorities across the country hear that all people in the House are working together to find a solution regarding the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Madam Speaker, we have to set the highest standard in society since we are looked at as models.

Government Orders

This tier of the issue, the harassment of staffers, has to be dealt with in a cautious and particular manner. That is why we feel we should prevent partisanship from being involved in that process.

As the member knows, regarding the conduct between parliamentarians, we already have defining rules for elected members.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the issues referred to more and more today is the victims and how we need to listen to them. As a Conservative, I know we are very proud of the Victims Bill of Rights that we passed. I know my colleague had something to do with that.

Particularly, I would like to mention the current Bill C-38. It spells out consecutive sentencing for human trafficking. This is a trend we see with the government. It talks a good game but when it comes to actually doing things, like standing up for victims, as we have seen with Bill C-38, the government seems to just avoid the issue altogether.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Madam Speaker, the member mentioned that we were the party that brought forward the victims Bill of Rights. What we want in the process and what we will be very keen on is to ensure we not double-victimizing people who may have been involved in a harassment situation. That is why we feel the independence of the third party involved in the investigation is a very important aspect.

One other issue I would like to point out is that today we have discussed parliamentary staffers and employees of the federal government, but the government also has a lot of civil servants. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of harassment mentioned by civil servants. We have a responsibility because they are the people working for the government.

We certainly have to clean our own house, which includes the civil service. As well, there are those who are working under the federal jurisdiction. This is certainly one aspect we will ask the minister about to ensure we take care of the harassment occurring within the civil service.

• (1815)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, does my hon. colleague feel we should be moving beyond just Bill C-65, looking at the big picture of what is happening in Canada, and why people are moving in this way?

We have had harassment policies in the civil service since the seventies, yet it still seems to continue. Does the member feel we should be looking at a broader picture to see why this is happening?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Madam Speaker, when it comes to harassment, there must be zero tolerance. We can draw inspiration from the mechanisms put in place to go even further than current laws and ensure that an independent third party investigates harassment cases and makes binding decisions to protect the victims.

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am going to be sharing my time with the member for Essex. I am honoured in this astonishing time to be speaking to the vitally important issue of sexual harassment and violence in our public dialogue and in our workplaces.

I am going to talk about the brave young women who are coming forward, the legacy of social justice women's rights activists on whose shoulders we stand. I am going to talk about the support of my party, the NDP, for Bill C-65. I am going to affirm that no party is immune to the revelations and bad behaviour that are being reported. I am going to talk about the cost of shutting women out of politics. I am going to talk a bit about some of the changes to the bill that would help us to make it even better protection for workers.

The imperative for us to take this action as parliamentarians is fuelled by the terrible stories that we are hearing. I have a quote from a former parliamentary staffer, Beisan Zubi. She said that being a parliamentary staffer on the Hill was "a crash course in sexism and sexual harassment". She said, "But if I'm being honest, I would have also warned them to stay away, that Parliament Hill, in my experience, was a fundamentally unsafe place for young women." How can that be said about the Commons, the place for the people? Lauren Dobson-Hughes said, "You take your cues from people around you who are in positions of power, and if they don't think that's weird, if that didn't even momentarily give them a second glance, then you think, 'Maybe the problem is me; maybe that's just normal.'" It is not normal.

More than anything, I want to state it is a privilege for us to be in this House and to be able to make permanent change at this historic time. I want to honour the brave women who, after decades of holding these stories back, are risking themselves and their reputations and are telling their stories and ringing the alarm on deeply embedded sexism and violence in our common discourse and in our workplaces, including this workplace here. I recognize the great cost to women for coming forward. I want to say to them that I am really sorry it happened to them and that we are going to honour their bravery by doing the right thing here in this House. We recognize that we have the highest responsibility to act on the respect and importance of the words that we have been given. This is the global #MeToo movement. This is Time's Up, and time is up.

We are determined to ensure workplaces in this country are safe from sexual harassment. We know all workers everywhere deserve and are entitled to a safe and secure environment. The work before us today is to make sure there is zero tolerance for harassment and violence in our workplaces, and that when it does happen, there must be a transparent process where the complainants are confident that they will be treated with respect and privacy, and those who are accused know there is a process that will be adjudicated, and the public will have an idea about what that process is.

Government Orders

The labour minister's proposal, Bill C-65, amends the Canada Labour Code to include sexual violence and harassment, and it attempts to do a similar thing within parliamentary workplaces where the concern about parliamentary privilege has even prevented the Canada Labour Code from having effect in our constituency offices across the country and here on the Hill. I am very grateful to the labour movement for identifying changes that we can put in place that would improve the bill and also to my colleagues, the member for Saskatoon West, our former labour critic, and the member for Jonquière, our current labour critic, because the work by them and their staff is building our case and we are going to make this legislation even better.

• (1820)

I want to give thanks to the men in the NDP caucus who I serve with, as well as the members of Islands Trust Council, where I served for 12 years. I personally have had a very good experience as an elected woman in politics, maybe because Islands Trust Council had an exactly gender balanced 26-person council. Maybe that had something to do with the change in tone. However, what we are talking about today is the experience of workers and not so much about parliamentarians.

I want to acknowledge that if we can get more women into Parliament, they will change the tone. "Add women, change politics" is something we hear a lot. They will change the tone and also enact policies. We have seen across the world that by removing barriers to women's participation in public life, systems and countries protect all vulnerable people better than we do right now. We have seen this in other parts of the world. Canada is, sadly, really behind the ball on this.

The status quo policies that we have had in this Parliament have meant that the number of women elected to office has stalled out. If we could bump that number up, it might be that we would have less sexual harassment. We heard that specifically, maybe nine months ago. Daughters of the Vote was a beautiful initiative on International Women's Day, but one sister, Arezoo Najibzadeh, powerfully and symbolically left her seat empty to represent the cost of violence against women that keeps women from participating in public life and prevents them from taking their seats. Hands were raised to that sister. Both the member for Hochelaga and I saluted her efforts on that day. She is a reminder to me that we need all the diversity of voices in this House to change the country and bring proper representation.

That is the cost of keeping political staffers in an unsafe place and causing women to say that Parliament Hill is not safe for them. This is the power of social media. It makes it possible for us to transmit these stories, and it is bringing down some pretty amazing political leaders right now. Again, we are in quite a time.

I want to also acknowledge my Aunt Kim Malcolmson, who I have talked about in the House before. She was a pay equity commissioner. She was very challenging for my old grandfather. She was a hard-core feminist, a CCF-Waffle Party-Tommy Douglas aficionado. She shaped me enormously. She is in palliative care. On Friday morning, my fabulous Uncle Paul Barber told her that Patrick Brown had been forced to resign his seat, and although it was very hard for her to speak, she demanded to know more details. On

Saturday, I was able to visit her in the hospital and let her know that the New Democrats were going to return to Parliament by calling out the need to act to end violence against women and sexual harassment, and at the end of the week we were going to be celebrating the two-year anniversary of the successful motion from me and the member for Jonquière in the House to legislate pay equity. I was able to let Kim know that we were coming into Parliament fighting. That was on Saturday, and yesterday she passed away.

I like to think, because she was a woman who knew she was going to Heaven, that she is looking down on this amazing time that we are living in and seeing that the work that has been done is carrying on and that the young women leaders in this country, with their deep bravery and astonishing ability to tell stories, are changing the way we will go forward with this legislation.

The labour movement is urging changes and New Democrats will be urging changes in committee. We are glad that with the new House leader of the NDP, we were able to accelerate the passage of this bill. We will debate its details and get changes as fast as we can so that we can make politics a safe place for all members of our country.

• (1825)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a bill that I think all parties in the House support.

I want to probe the member's thoughts a bit on getting more women involved in politics. All of us agree that it is important to get more women elected in politics and sometimes the mechanism for that involves party leaders wanting to intervene more in local nominations, but there is push-back in terms of questions about the independence of local nominations. There is, I guess, a tension between different important values in terms of getting more representation but also the importance of the local process.

I would genuinely like to hear the member's thoughts on what the best mechanism would be for ensuring that outcome, from her perspective.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, I am really proud that 43% of the New Democrat candidates nominated for the federal election slate in 2015 were women, and we elected a 40% female caucus. I have a lot of strong women around me today. That is borne out again and again. If political parties offer women, voters say yes to women. I believe the Conservative Party nominated 17% women and about 16% to 17% of its caucus is female, while for the Liberals it was 30% and 30%.

My colleague, the member of Parliament for Burnaby South, proposed a private member's bill that would have given incentives for political parties to nominate more gender-balanced slates. Unfortunately, a feminist Liberal government voted that down, which was very disappointing.

We are now looking to the Liberals to see what they will bring to this Parliament that might also give political parties incentives. In the meantime, they could do what the NDP does: Riding associations are not allowed to go to a nomination vote until they show that they have exhausted all equity candidate nomination possibilities.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her intensely personal speech. Her story about her godmother or her aunt who was so devoted to these issues until her last breath was really quite moving.

I can assure you that we are all happy to see that all parties and nearly everyone here welcomes this bill and realizes the critical need for it.

A few points have been addressed more than once today, including, for example, the fact that the bill does not define what needs to be regulated. The courage it takes to report this behaviour was brought up many times.

Does my colleague believe that if we came up with a clear definition of these actions, we could create better awareness campaigns that would point specifically to the exact kind of “off-colour” behaviours that we want to stop?

• (1830)

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, the hon. member asked a fair question. I am reminded of the words of Carleton University's Jennifer Robson, who said that harassment policies on paper do not work if workers do not have all the information and, most of all, the trust. That is up to us.

However, the member is quite right that getting as much detail as we can in here right now would make implementation and understanding much easier to get at, both from the side of the employer and from the side of the worker. We have heard concerns, for example, that the bill may not protect the privacy of the people coming forward, as much as it might, when the competent person selected as their mediator is a co-worker. It is not clear what the actual penalties for the employers would be, whether that is a federally regulated industry or, in this case, a member of Parliament. Also, it is not clear how anonymity and privacy would be protected.

There are many details we will be taking in good faith to committee, and we will try to make this as specific as possible. That is what our brothers and sisters in the labour movement have called for.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to dedicate this speech to all women who have come forward as part of the #MeToo and Time's Up movement. I want to thank them for their courage and strength. I also want to express my extreme, deep frustration that it continues to take women laying themselves bare to the public in order to agitate for change. We need to do better.

Today, I hope I am passing through the House one small part of their voices, voices that have reached out to me on social media, sending emails, and who have been thankful for those of us who are sitting in the House agitating for this change.

Women in our country are raising their voices in unison around this issue in a way we have not seen for a very long time. I am reminded of what my colleague for Nanaimo—Ladysmith mentioned of the 338 women who sat in the House in March 2017, of the power and passion they brought, of their deep desire and hope for a political career in the House someday, which extends beyond just

our seats here. It extends to everyone who works to support us in the House, right down to our pages who help support us every day. I want more than anything for all of them to be free to pursue this career and to pursue this life free of harassment. I want them to see that day come. I do not want them to have to be worried about bracing themselves to face the toxic workplace they are reading about, watching and learning about.

I came from the labour movement. I worked in an auto manufacturing facility. I was one of 15% of women in that workplace. However, being part of a union environment, having the protections, policies, and clear and very defined definitions of harassment in the workplace, went miles to ensure that everyone in that workplace understood their responsibility in doing better.

I commend those in the labour movement. They have done an incredible amount of work to eradicate this behaviour. We are not going to have to look too far for policies that work in the public, labour, and our communities because they exist. We simply need to ensure they exist here as well.

The behaviour we are talking about is not new, as has been raised by a lot my colleagues today. However, it can and must change. It is going to take all of us. To start with, there can be no more whisper campaigns in the House. There can be no more women who are warning other women about who to stay away from or who not to be alone with. That is unacceptable. It is a very deep part of our culture here. Women have been trying to protect women through these very subversive campaigns. No more to that. It has to come out to the light of day. We have to shine a light on it. We have to challenge that behaviour each and every time we see it, not just the women in the House. Every man sitting in the House has to challenge it from other men on a constant basis. Only then will we strive to create a workplace that is safe, without these hiding places and excuses for this behaviour. It is the excuses that have allowed it to continue to breed.

Earlier a colleague mentioned that some had training here throughout the years. Well, clearly it has not worked. However, I recognize this work is ongoing and will take all of us working through our lifetimes to continue to improve it, I hope, at a better pace than we have had. However, it is clear that we can and we must do better.

For people who have sat and listened to a colleague say something inappropriate and let it go by, that day is done. We can no longer do that in this place. We must challenge it. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of people we represent from our ridings and on behalf of Canadians, we cannot allow this place to become a mockery or a toxic pool that is to be avoided at all costs. We are losing the best and brightest in the next generation by not showing them better. We all hope those young people will some day take over our seats, as those young women did on International Women's Day.

Government Orders

•(1835)

We have to commit not just to the legislation, which is very important. I am so happy that everyone in the House provided consensus on the motion by the MP for Berthier—Maskinongé, which she brought up earlier, in getting the bill to committee as quickly as possible. It is critical that we get to the committee level and start this very difficult work, and that we do it with our blinders off and we do it honestly. We cannot bring to the committee the excuses, the hiding places, the reasons people think this is just the way it is here. We have to throw all of that to the side and really work to challenge the structures that have existed for 150 years in this place, but certainly beyond that, as one colleague mentioned earlier, for millennia, from the beginning of time.

We have to challenge it at the smallest root, the smallest comment that goes by that we might portray as harmless and that it is just what men say in a locker room or to other men. These are not harmless. This is the beginning of harm. This is the beginning of letting these things slide by until it affects one individual so badly that his or her life is forever altered. We see that happening with women in Canada right now. We see women who are being attacked on social media because they have come forward. That is unacceptable and if anyone in the House is aware of people being attacked, we also have a responsibility to speak out and say that attacking women who come forward is not acceptable. There is due process within the laws and there is due process hopefully within our workplace with this legislation going forward, but that in no way excuses us for not speaking up when we see it. We have to take that seriously.

I know there are men here, whom I work with every day, who do not support this culture, who think it is wrong, who do not behave this way, who do not condone it, and who do not teach their sons or daughters that this is okay. It is time for those men to start speaking out. Although this is impacting women, it impacts men too. We know that this is not a gender issue. This is not for the women to fix. This is for all of us to fix together.

I would like to dig into the bill that we have before us, but before I do that I want to say that an example of how women in the House are struggling to come forward, struggling within our own parties, within this structure, to be able to call this behaviour out, is the fact that we had a Canadian Press survey done for female MPs. It was anonymous and passed through all of our whips' offices in December and we had very low participation in the survey. It was extremely low. I believe it was below 40% participation of women MPs. Because we exist in a structure where we have parties that we have loyalties to, women in this place are afraid to call this out, but women need to be brave and we need to embolden the men that we sit with as our colleagues every day to be brave as well.

The bill is an important first step, but we have to go far beyond where the bill is going and that will involve the work at committee. That will mean things like a definition. We have had some conversation about a definition today, whether the definition should be in the bill itself, or whether the definition should be part of the regulatory piece that goes along with this legislation. Defining what harassment is allows us to challenge it. Without that very basis of understanding, how can we educate people in the House as to what it is? This is the very core of the work that we should be doing in the House.

I implore the government to please look at all the amendments that come forward, by taking that partisan hat off at the door, because this is work that we are doing for the future of the House. On International Women's Day last year when 338 women sat in the House, that was more women than have actually ever sat here elected. We are doing a poor job in Canada of attracting young women and this is one of the many reasons why. We need to do better.

I ask for commitment from all of my colleagues to look at the amendments on the basis of the amendments, to put their partisanship aside, and to let us do the hard work that is necessary to change the House to a zero tolerance workplace.

•(1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague.

A unionized workplace with very clear protocols that explicitly define the type of behaviour that is not acceptable is a very good example. I would like her to provide other examples where this type of code is in place, setting out that this very specific type of offence is not to be committed. I would like her to tell us how helpful this would be.

Quite honestly, I was even surprised many times during her speech by the shocking statistics on workplaces where certain rules of silence exist. Am I naive or just lucky to have never heard about them? Earlier, another colleague told us that, according to a certain intern, working here was literally akin to working in a snake pit.

I would like my colleague to speak a little more about a code and the definitions of what should be added to this bill.

[*English*]

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, labour has not done an incredible job throughout our country. I will say that the NDP is proud to have unionized staff from UFCW Local 232. They have worked very hard on anti-harassment language within the collective agreement we have. One of the questions we have is how we will now mesh what some workers on this Hill have in a collective agreement with what is now being proposed. This is an important understanding.

Also, we can draw from the collective agreements that exist across our country on the best practices that exist around harassment policy and education on that policy. I am proud to have done this in my former life for the union that I belonged to. It is incredibly important work, because no matter how many times we are educated, things are shifting and changing in our world, certainly with cyberspace, cyber-bullying, and all the things that are happening outside, which really are an extension of our workplace, according to the code.

It is quite shocking to Canadians that we do not have labour law that applies to us here on the Hill. That is quite a shock to most people in Canada. They are completely unaware of that and find it appalling that this is the only space that exists in Canada where we do not really have any laws to protect people who work here every day with us.

One of the things I can point to specifically that Unifor has is a women's advocate program. This is someone who has been specifically trained in the workplace for people to access. It is an independent person who does not provide counselling per se but who does provide connections to community partners that exist, so people can receive the help they really do need. This goes along, of course, with supporting the financial aspect of needing access to those services. It is something that has worked quite effectively. It has been lauded at the United Nations as a workplace model to challenge harassment and also to provide people with the information necessary when they really are struggling under the weight of these incidents.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to raise one more thing. In the House today we are talking about our response to sexual harassment in the workplace. Bill C-65 will definitely do a lot in order to help us along that journey and make sure that individuals who come forward with allegations are heard and that action is taken.

My question is this. I am wondering if the hon. member could comment as to what measures could be taken within this place, and perhaps even within other workplaces, but giving priority to this place, that are preventive in nature to make sure that the staff who work for members of Parliament are actually free of victimization.

• (1845)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, it is going to take an incredible amount of work and a commitment from all of us to be a part of the solution. It is not just about those of us in the House. It is about people on the Senate side. It is about people who work for us, such as our parliamentary protective services and pages in the House. It is about everyone.

The education required is extensive. I have watched the educational video that is provided by the House and I find it to be lacking. There really is not enough there. The education that happened in the union I belonged to was a 40-hour program for each person. This was a deep commitment with a yearly follow-up. It would be one day every year. Training is updated on a constant basis. The work is never done. I hope this work will improve, will become better, and will change things. Education is key.

A commitment from everyone that they will challenge this behaviour will go an incredibly long way. If we continue to sit silent and this opportunity to improve what we have currently governing us in this place passes us by, then shame on us. We will have missed an opportunity to improve the lives of Canadians. When women can focus on their work free of harassment, that work will continue to grow and we will all reap the benefits of that.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There being no further members rising for debate, by order made earlier this day, Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code

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(harassment and violence), the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Budget Implementation Act, 2017, No. 1, is deemed read a second time.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, maybe we could see the will of the House to call it the time of adjournment so we can go to adjournment proceedings.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I am rising to follow up on a question I asked on December 2 of last year. This was a question about workers at CAMI Assembly in Ingersoll, Ontario, who at the time were on strike. They have since gone back to work, thankfully, but they have really been feeling the negative impacts of NAFTA on their community. It was wonderful to see their entire community come out in support of them and recognize the importance of auto manufacturing jobs to the health of their local economy.

NAFTA talks have continued this week and very little is focusing on its impact on working people. Before committing to any agreement, we need to ensure that Canadians' lives and our communities have been improved by this trade relationship.

Twenty-three years ago when NAFTA was originally negotiated by the Mulroney Conservatives they tried to sell Canadian workers on the idea that it would bring prosperity to everyone across the continent. Mulroney's government claimed that NAFTA would be a great equalizer and was a trade agreement that would float all boats. Labour and civil societies were deeply concerned that the weak labour side agreement would do nothing to change the alarming trend of growing income inequality in our country. However, the Conservative government pressed on, and today we know the harsh impact of this trade deal on working people.

Since 1994, successive governments have neglected to address the alarming and worsening reality that the NAFTA promise has not led to increased standards of living for all, and that the majority of the benefits have gone to those who already hold a great deal of power and influence.

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Income and wealth inequality in Canada today is at a crisis level. To say that NAFTA has not played a role in that would be disingenuous. Just ask those 3,000 workers at GM's CAMI plant in Ingersoll who waged a long and bitter strike in order to get a commitment from the corporation to retain their jobs. Workers will still see their main production vehicle moved to two plants in Mexico, where workers are paid an average of \$4 per hour.

This world-class facility in southwestern Ontario has provided the surrounding regions' economies with millions of dollars, but unfortunately, under NAFTA its fate is uncertain, as have been so many other production lines before it.

Often, proponents of free trade try to pass off the loss of automotive jobs as being due to an advancement in automation alone. Although automation has contributed to a small decline in jobs in manufacturing, we need to be very clear that the level of automation in a Mexican auto plant is identical to one in Canada. The real issue is that consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments have allowed corporations to take advantage of low-wage economies and workers worldwide, ignoring their rights while putting Canadian workers at a serious disadvantage.

The international standards for labour laws are codified by the International Labour Organization's eight core conventions, and although Canada signed on to ratify all of them, we cannot turn a blind eye to the reality of workers in North America. Canada must be a world leader when it comes to promoting labour standards around the world at all times. This means that the Liberal government cannot ignore labour standards while renegotiating NAFTA or other future trade agreements.

There is a question I need to ask. Is the labour chapter in NAFTA a red line for the Liberals that they will not dare cross in NAFTA or any other trade agreement we have, or like their predecessors, will they continue to protect the interests of their rich friends by raising them up while the rest of us continue to sink?

• (1850)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of going with the member for Essex to her riding. I saw first-hand the impact NAFTA has had in her community over the last 24 years.

First and foremost, I reiterate, for the House's attention, that the Prime Minister has made income inequality between workers and CEOs one of his principle themes in all his international discussions. Quite frankly, thanks to his leadership and that of the other cabinet ministers, and indeed all members of this House, this whole idea is picking up speed in the international community as one of the great issues of our time that we have to resolve.

Let me get to the question at hand posed by the hon. member for Essex. Overall, our objective has been to not only modernize NAFTA but to introduce ideas that will ensure that we do not leave workers behind. From the beginning, our intent has been to introduce progressive labour ideas, ideas that benefit women, who when they earn a fair day's wage, it will be for a fair day's work. They should not be treated one whit differently than men.

We have made good progress in Montreal over the last couple of days. I had the good fortune to be there for most of it, accompanied by members from the NDP and the Conservative Party. I am glad to say that it was a unified front we presented to our American and Mexican colleagues.

Having said that, progress is slow. At the top of this idea, in terms of modernization, is to make sure, as articulated in the Prime Minister's vision of making sure we are addressing income inequality internationally, that the workers are not left behind, as happened 24 years ago. Indeed, quite rightly, the hon. member for Essex identifies her riding as particularly hard hit.

Six days ago, I had the privilege of being in North Carolina. I met with members of Charlotte, a city of about 600,000 or 700,000 that is booming as a result of reinvestments accrued as a result of the benefits of NAFTA. At the same time, there were many workers out in the countryside who lost their jobs 24 or 25 years ago. Quite frankly, this is what our innovative labour chapter for NAFTA is meant to mitigate against. Let us not leave the workers behind.

What does this mean? We want to make sure that, for example, it is not a race to the bottom in terms of the Labour Code. As articulated by the hon. member, who is quite right, a variety of corporate decisions were made in Canada and the United States over the preceding 24 years to relocate displaced factories to Mexico, where the average cost per worker is far less. In large measure, our progressive idea about the labour standards that could be shared among the three countries tries to address the income inequalities that exist between the Mexican worker, the Canadian worker, and the American worker. Is it going to take some time to resolve? Of course it is.

We are making the assumption that NAFTA progression will continue at its slow and steady pace, but let us not forget that, quite frankly, the introduction of the labour chapter is very progressive. It is also very ambitious. There are some details to be ironed out over the next little while.

Let me also point out that I had the pleasure of meeting representatives from Unifor, the Teamsters, and PSAC, and the list goes on, not only in consultations in Montreal but elsewhere. The bottom line is that we are listening to their concerns. We have networked widely with them. We have received tremendously valuable input from front-line union managers as to what is required as we make this evolutionary leap forward.

I am very confident that subject to the will of the other two participatory nations, we will be able to get good jobs for Canadians, protect Canadian jobs, and make sure we leave no workers behind.

• (1855)

Ms. Tracey Ramsey: Madam Speaker, I want to say to the member that a truly progressive, labour-focused government does not allow the abuse or the poor working conditions in low-wage economies to bolster the profits of its own domestic top 1%. That has to end. It does not create advisory councils or sign on to trade agreements that have no real power to affect progressive change.

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I am curious, because we have now signed on to the TPP, what the actual progressive labour standards will be in the TPP that will protect the 58,000 jobs that are projected to leave our country.

I want to tell the member opposite that as someone who has been laid off in a sector because of plants leaving our country for low-waged economies to take advantage of workers, it is incredibly important to stand up for those workers and to not sign on to any deal that will further disadvantage them. If we had a level playing field, there is no doubt that Canadian workers would thrive and excel.

It is incumbent upon the government to ensure that we do not sign trade agreements that further the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Madam Speaker, as mentioned by my hon. colleague, it is vitally important that we leave no workers behind. The same is true for our indigenous population, and of course, for the environmental requirements. All of these issues combined make not only good progressive sense but good business sense.

In the context of workers, let me remind the hon. member that it was this government that raised taxes on the richest 1%. There is more work to be done in this regard, by all means. The Prime Minister and the cabinet is seized with this issue. We are in close cooperation and interaction with all the progressive unions, indeed all the unions in Canada, ranging from forestry to mill workers to the Public Service Alliance.

I can assure the hon. member that we will protect the rights of workers in these ongoing NAFTA discussions and will come up with the best proposal in the interest of Canadians.

TAXATION

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in this House and address a matter that I dealt with some months ago when I directed a question to the government, more specifically a question for the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, asking the Liberals and asking the member about how shabbily small business owners in Canada have been treated under the Liberal government's new tax laws.

These tax laws were awful. I had hundreds of emails coming in from small business owners who felt that the current Liberal government that had promised lower taxes was actually breaking its word and making it more difficult for Canadian businesses. Of course, these angry Canadians ran to their MPs. The problem was that some members of Parliament did not actually engage with the members of their community who were concerned about the taxes. One of those was the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. I am in the neighbouring riding. I had to go into his riding and hold a round table there where angry small businessmen and businesswomen from his riding shared with me how frustrated they were with the Liberal approach to small business. The changes that were being made involved the ability of business owners to sprinkle income—in other words pay money to their children and to their spouses because in many cases the whole family is involved in running the business. The heavy-handed government was coming down and saying they shall not pay money to their children unless

the government, the tax department, allowed them to. We could understand why there would be such anger among our small business owners.

The people also had a problem with the fact that money that these businesses would have earned and the profits they would have made would have been set aside by them in a rainy-day fund. Perhaps, if someone in the business got sick, or perhaps the business took a turn for the worse, or perhaps there was an opportunity to grow the business and expand it, there was some cash available to invest in that. Historically, that money sitting there, worked hard for by the business owners, was taxed at a low rate. Now, the Liberals were going to tax that money at 73%. The government members have come forward and said they might make some changes there, they have amended the sprinkling provisions a bit, but they are not going to announce until the budget what they are going to do with passive income.

Small business owners found this out on the eve of Christmas. Suddenly, they were scrambling to find their accountants and their lawyers to make sense of the changes the Liberals were making, and again it was a fundamental breach of trust. That should not surprise us. When we look at the history of the Liberal Party in government, all we have seen are breaches of trust. What we have seen is the breaking of promises on deficits, breaking of promises on balanced budgets, breaking of promises on reducing the tax burden on Canadians. In fact, now we find the Prime Minister and the finance minister entangled in a web of scandal and intrigue that involves French villas. It involves Caribbean islands and the Aga Khan. It involves offshore companies, all being traced back to the Prime Minister and his finance minister.

My question for the parliamentary secretary, or whoever is here to answer this question, is threefold. First, has the government done an analysis of how much extra revenue it will receive by changing the small business rules? Second, will the tax rules apply to the Prime Minister and the finance minister? Third, why did the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon not conduct public meetings to address these concerns?

• (1900)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from British Columbia, the hon. member for Abbotsford, for his speech.

Unfortunately, my hon. colleague seems to have taken some liberties. I will address our record of accomplishments on small business taxation so that he can learn from our example.

[*English*]

This government has shown that it is attentive to the small business sector by virtue of keeping its commitment to lower the small business tax. In fact, since we last met in this chamber, today small businesses are now paying 10% instead of the previous rate they were paying in 2017. Next year they will pay 9%.

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The small businesses in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon or in the riding of Gatineau, and I suspect in the riding of Abbotsford, are very happy with the lowering of taxes, money they can now reinvest in the business, buy a new computer, hire a new employee, or make plans to expand, knowing those funds will be available to assist them in whatever their business plans are. We certainly want to reward success in our country.

My colleague from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, indeed all my colleagues, were very vocal and instrumental in helping the finance minister consult as broadly as possible and bring back to the House of Commons a plan that would reward success in the country, that would clarify the rules, and that would require companies remunerate only people who were working, present, and contributing to the business. This can include family members, as we see on farms. My grandfather was a dairy farmer and my grandmother participated as equally in that enterprise as did my grandfather.

In the agricultural and small business sector anywhere, family members right now are contributing to those businesses. That may continue and that may continue to be deductible. However, those family members who are not participating in the businesses, as most Canadians would acknowledge, should not be a write off unavailable to other Canadians.

With respect to passive income, I was very pleased, and I know the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon was pleased, that the passive income measures will now essentially only apply to less than 3% of Canadian-controlled private corporations, those with huge cash piles. They will not come under the threshold the minister has set. However, 97% or more of Canadian-controlled private corporations will see no impact from the provisions. One hundred per cent of small businesses will see no retroactive impact from all this.

We have been very attentive to the small business sector. For my part, small business in Gatineau, and I suspect in British Columbia, are very happy with the things we have put in place.

• (1905)

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I am surprised that the member for Gatineau would presume to speak for the people from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, a riding I know well because I live in it, that he would presume to speak for the people of Abbotsford. He has not been there in recent memory that I know of, yet he suggests they are all happy.

In fact, the small business people in my riding, neighbouring ridings, and right across the country are angry with the Liberal government. They were promised they would see tax reductions. It was only when we put the fire to the feet of the Liberal government that it actually started to reduce the small business tax rate. Also, small business is not happy with carbon taxes being levied against them, which are going to undermine their competitiveness within a very competitive global economy. They are not happy with additional payroll taxes. They are not happy with the GST that the Liberal government charges on carbon taxes. This is a—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Madam Speaker, we started out with small business taxes. I took the member through a very positive story

with respect to that. On carbon taxes, the member should spell out very clearly if he is taking the position for his party, that it is against meeting our Paris requirements. The member, like his colleagues, except for one, voted to implement the Paris accord, and that is exactly what we are doing.

With respect to business people, whether they be in British Columbia, my riding of Gatineau, or anywhere in Canada, I would be very surprised if the member opposite could produce a business person who is not ecstatic that we have reduced small business taxes. We will continue to do so right through 2019. I have not seen one yet, but perhaps the member could introduce me to one.

Also, I would be privileged and honoured at any point to visit the riding of Abbotsford with my hon. friend.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise in this evening's adjournment debate to address the issue of overpayments in the Phoenix payroll system. Being overpaid may not sound like a huge problem, but it is a huge problem when our federal public servants are asked to pay taxes and to make employment insurance and CPP contributions on money that they will ultimately have to return to their employer, the Government of Canada.

The government's original response to this situation was very lacking. We saw that a huge number, tens of thousands, of 2016 T4s were inaccurate. In order to try to avoid that problem for the 2017 T4s, the government has tried to put forward a compromise solution. We live in a social media age and we have a government that is very keen on digital communication, so I am going to try to summarize that compromise by reading some tweets from the Department of Public Services and Procurement.

On January 5, the department's Twitter account posted, “#GoC employees: Did you receive an overpayment in 2017? Call the Contact Centre or your compensation advisor by January 19, 2018. If the overpayment is processed by January 31, you will only need to repay the net amount.” However, then tweet two said, “If the 2017 overpayment is not processed by the end of January, you will have to repay the gross amount. The Pay Centre or your compensation advisor will confirm if your overpayment was processed.”

It strikes me that the government should be trying to ensure that no federal public servant has to repay a gross amount that they are not actually receiving, but the government has tried to make this contingent on the January 19 deadline. What do we then see?

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From that same Twitter feed on January 11, “#GoC employees: the Pay Services Client Contact Centre is currently experiencing higher than normal call volumes.” Then we have, “If you were trying to report an overpayment, you may also submit a Phoenix Feedback Form to inform the Pay Centre of your situation, and no further action will be required.” “We apologize for any inconvenience this is causing and will keep you informed of our efforts to resolve this situation.”

My office understands that when employees submit that online form, they do not get any confirmation of whether or not it has been received, so understandably people are nervous. I am wondering if the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement can inform the House how many overpayments were reported by the January 19 deadline and whether or not those files are being successfully processed for the end of the month.

I would also note that the Minister of National Revenue could issue a remission order to ensure that these Phoenix overpayments are not subject to tax. I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary whether his government is prepared to issue a remission order to ensure that no federal public employee has to pay tax on a Phoenix overpayment.

● (1910)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his questions.

I am pleased to inform the House of the progress we have made on overpayments. The government wanted to give priority to overpayments made to public servants in 2017, in order to avoid the problems that might arise from inaccurate T4s.

In a more general context, we know that we are trying the patience of public servants and the public in general. Again, I want to assure public servants and all Canadians who are watching that the government is assigning all the staff necessary to resolve the problems associated with the Phoenix pay system. We are of course working together with our employees and public service union partners. When the Phoenix pay system is stabilized, this will have been done for and by our public servants.

There is a window for the overpayments. If an overpayment made in 2017 is processed in January, the employee will receive a correct T4. If public servants report an overpayment or if they are identified by the system as having received an overpayment within this window, they will receive a correct T4. Otherwise, an amended T4 will automatically be sent to the Canada Revenue Agency, and the employee's tax return will automatically be updated. This makes it easier on the employee.

Unfortunately, as my colleague surely knows, deductions, such as the Quebec Pension Plan, the Canada Pension Plan, and employment insurance belong to the employee. Departments cannot collect or reclaim these deductions, which is why the gross amount must be paid back to the government.

We know there is a problem, and to fix it, we will only be asking employees to repay the overpayment as of July 1, 2018.

Furthermore, there will be a reimbursement plan with very generous terms for employees to repay the money. Employees will have time to receive the refund of the taxes they are owed, and then to plan and budget the repayment.

We know that this is not ideal, which is why we wanted to focus on and prioritize the overpayments at the beginning of 2018. A large number of public servants have reported overpayments, but we had already identified some of them. We are making a lot of progress to prevent the problem my hon. colleague described.

I thank him for his comments. I would be happy to continue discussing potential solutions with him.

● (1915)

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir: Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his remarks, although I know that he did not really answer the questions that I raised. Therefore, I want to provide him with another opportunity to enlighten the House as to how many overpayments were reported by the January 19 deadline, and to give us some sense as to whether or not they are being processed successfully.

I would also like to raise the possibility of a remission order to ensure that federal public servants do not have to pay income tax on Phoenix overpayments. If the government is confident that the system will work as smoothly as the parliamentary secretary suggests and that public servants will not be on the hook, then surely it should be willing to issue this remission order to make sure that is the case.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Madam Speaker, I want to make one thing very clear to all the public servants and Canadians who are tuning in: all public servants will be paid the money they are owed, the money they have earned.

I am personally committed to ensuring that all public service employees receive what they are owed, and I am going to make sure that happens.

Naturally, in the case of overpayments processed after the early January deadline, we need to ask for the gross amount back. We are instituting very generous repayment conditions for employees.

I am not in a position to answer the member's question specifically, given that we have received reports from a large number of public servants. However, in many cases, we had already identified them. To avoid duplication, I would ask my colleague to be patient. We will make sure the information gets out. I can assure you that we are working on it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 7:18 p.m.)

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