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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: We will now have the singing of *O Canada*, led by the hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

TRANS MOUNTAIN EXPANSION

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, land belongs to the people who live there. The people choose representatives who make laws that reflect their land management priorities. That is the basic principle of democracy, and that principle is in peril if the government decides to ignore our laws whenever it wants.

That is why we stand with the people of British Columbia. As the government threatens to ram the Trans Mountain pipeline down their throats, we realize the Liberals could have done the same with energy east in Quebec. Bully federalism is a danger to us all, and that is why I introduced Bill C-392, which would force Ottawa to respect existing provincial laws and municipal bylaws wherever it gets involved.

It is time this government learned that basic respect for democracy and the people's right to choose is also in the national interest.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL CANADIAN FILM DAY

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, butter that popcorn, because today is National Canadian Film Day. Across the country, people will be gathering at over 800 screenings, taking in the incredible work of Canadian creators.

[*Translation*]

From Tofino to Toronto, from Whitehorse to Westmount, everyone is watching Canadian films, and this year's theme is shining the spotlight on female filmmakers.

[*English*]

Under the leadership of Reel Canada and executive director Jack Blum, National Canadian Film Day has been expanding the audience of Canadian productions for five years now. This year includes terrific films such as *Maudie*, by producer Mary Young Leckie, from my riding of Parkdale—High Park, *The Breadwinner*, and *I've Heard the Mermaids Singing*, which I will be watching tonight with my constituents at the Revue, our wonderful community cinema in Roncesvalles. There are seven screenings in my riding alone.

[*Translation*]

I encourage all Canadians, no matter where they live, to go to their local movie theatre, library, or school this evening to celebrate female filmmakers and learn more about Canada's history through the magic of film.

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[*English*]

CANADIAN ACHIEVEMENT AT BOSTON MARATHON

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Brantford's Krista DuChene, at age 41, finished third at the Boston Marathon, running in memory of the Humboldt victims. Training in our Canadian winters prepped her for a day where she would beat all but two in the best field ever assembled in the history of the race, and deliver the best result by a Canadian since 1980.

I do not know where to start with this remarkable, strong woman of faith. She did not start running seriously until her mid-20s, with an aspiration to make it to the Olympics. She juggled work, training, and raising three beautiful children. She did not get to the 2012 Olympics, and aimed for Rio instead. However, that came crashing to a halt in 2014, when she suffered a broken hip at the end of a race. Armed with a plate and three screws in her hip, she refocused to get to Rio, and almost a year to the day after breaking her hip she qualified for Rio at the Rotterdam marathon with a third-place finish.

She is a spectacular person, and an inspiration to all moms, athletes, and Canadians. I congratulate Krista.

SAMUEL BELZBERG

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 2, hundreds of friends, family, and colleagues gathered in New Westminster to celebrate the life of Samuel Belzberg.

Sam was an extraordinary Canadian who lived a remarkable life of service and dedication to his family and to his country. Sam was a visionary leader, and his drive saw him rise to become one of Canada's most successful businessmen. However, Sam still had more to do.

In 2003, Sam, along with Jack Blaney and later David Aisenstat, launched Action Canada, a fellowship program that would identify emerging leaders, bring them together, and send them on a once-in-a-lifetime journey to better understand Canada and how to contribute to it. Sam believed, along with his wife Fran, that such a fellowship network could have a transformative impact on Canada. He was right. Fifteen years later, Sam's Action Canada fellowship network is over 200 strong. The leaders Sam helped select, train, and mentor are a living monument to his generosity, vision, and unrivalled commitment to Canada.

I thank Sam. We will miss him.

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YOUTH FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, in my riding of Edmonton Strathcona, I had the pleasure of hosting a group of extraordinary young Canadians participating in a nationwide dialogue for action on the United Nations 2030 sustainable development goals. The three-year initiative Youth for Gender Equality is a partnership of Plan Canada, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, World Vision Canada, White Ribbon, and provincial councils for international co-operation, including the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation. The initiative offers a grassroots plan of action for Canadian action on the sustainable development goals.

At my session, the youth identified a broad range of gender inequality issues they face, including discrimination, wage gaps, and sexual harassment. Not stopping there, they identified actions and strategies for government and community alike to address the very challenges they face in seeking equality.

The results of these dialogues will be shared at the 2018 Y7 summit, occurring in parallel with the G7 summit in Quebec City, and will help inform Canada's SDG implementation. Here is hoping the government heeds their calls for action.

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● (1410)

HATE CRIMES

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a sad and heavy heart to speak about the hate crimes committed in Ottawa in the recent past.

First, the Jami Omar Mosque in my riding was vandalized with posters bearing white supremacist messages. Second, at Hilda Jayewardenaramaya Buddhist Monastery, a statue of Buddha, who symbolizes peace, was viciously decapitated. Third, a young Sikh man was physically assaulted and subjected to racial slurs and hateful comments about his ethnicity, and worse, had his turban ripped off.

These hateful acts have no place in Canadian society. I know that these heinous acts do not reflect the Canadian values of openness and inclusiveness. Our Canadian society is truly multicultural and inclusive.

I wish to assure our Muslim brothers and sisters, our Buddhists brothers and sisters, and our Sikh brothers and sisters that all of us here stand in solidarity with them all.

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WELLINGTON ADVERTISER

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, amid all the doom and gloom in the newspaper industry, there is good news, and that good news is in Wellington County in rural Ontario.

Fifty years ago, Bill and Trudy Adsett started a newspaper out of the front seat of their car. First, they only sold classified ads, but as time went on, they began to cover the news. Today, the paper, managed by their son, Dave Adsett, is one of the largest family-owned independent weekly newspapers in Canada. It is profitable, and it is the single biggest source of news in the county. As they say at the *Wellington Advertiser*, “We cover the county.”

The paper, along with Wellington County, is looking to the future. It has just digitized every edition of the paper, from its first edition on March 12, 1968 until today. It has also just received the Ontario Community Newspapers Association Gold Quill award.

I extend congratulations to the Adsett family and to all the staff at the *Wellington Advertiser*.

* * *

ENDANGERED WHALE SPECIES

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 23, I will be introducing a motion that would ensure that we, as parliamentarians, are doing everything we possibly can for the long-term protection of Canada's endangered whale species. This includes the North Atlantic right whale, the St. Lawrence Estuary beluga, and the southern resident killer whale.

I want to thank the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister of Transport for the extensive measures introduced to protect the North Atlantic right whale and our oceans. These whales are an integral part of our environment, our culture, and our economy.

I know that people across the country understand the importance of protecting these species. In New Brunswick Southwest, Joseph Howlett, a brave constituent of mine, tragically lost his life trying to save an entangled right whale.

Further study by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans will help inform longer-term measures to protect and recover these species. I will be looking for members' support on Motion No. 154.

VAISAKHI

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year in the heart of Surrey—Newton, the annual Vaisakhi and Khalsa Day parade attracts nearly half a million Canadians celebrating the birth of Khalsa.

Outside of India, it is the largest celebration in the world and an amazing display of the diverse and multicultural character of our country.

On April 21, I invite all members of the House and their constituents to join me in celebrating this joyous occasion, and I want to send my best wishes to all Canadians celebrating Vaisakhi and Khalsa Day.

[*Member spoke in Punjabi*]

[*English*]

Happy Khalsa Day and happy Vaisakhi.

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NATIONAL GRAIN WEEK

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our farmers have much of which to be proud: a tireless work ethic, an unwavering commitment to our rural communities, and a passion for the land passed on from generation to generation.

I invite Canadians across the country to join me in celebrating the inaugural National Grain Week. Through innovation, determination, and environmental stewardship, our Canadian farmers grow the highest-quality grain in the world.

To continue to be successful, our farmers must get their products to market, and they must have an efficient regulatory regime. We have much work to do, and time is of the essence. Amendments to Bill C-49 would bring much-needed accountability to our transportation system, preventing future crippling grain backlogs.

The trans-Pacific partnership provides access to lucrative new markets, ensuring long-term stability for Canadian grain growers. We must work together in the House to pass Bill C-49 as amended and ratify the TPP before the summer recess.

As Conservatives, we are committed to getting this done. In the spirit of National Grain Week, I ask everyone to join us.

* * *

● (1415)

[*Translation*]

ST-BONIFACE HOSPITAL ALBRECHTSEN RESEARCH CENTRE

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an important event is happening this Saturday in my riding of Saint Boniface—Saint Vital. It is the 30th anniversary of the St-Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre.

[*English*]

"World class" is a term often used to refer to the St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre: world class because it attracts top researchers from around the world; world class because it makes important scientific breakthroughs, like the recent PEG-2S antibiotic, which can help in the global fight against antibiotic resistant bacteria.

[*Translation*]

The Albrechtsen Research Centre has been committed to excellence from the very beginning. Initially led by Dr. John Foerster and now by Dr. Grant Pierce, the centre is known around the world for its innovation in cardiovascular research, neurodegenerative diseases, and agrifood.

[*English*]

I am really disappointed that I cannot be there on Saturday, but I will be there in spirit celebrating with them.

I wish a happy 30th anniversary to the St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this National Volunteer Week, I want to tip my hat to all the volunteers in my riding.

[*English*]

By generously giving their time and energy, volunteers in Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne contribute in an exceptional way to the good of our community. From serving hot lunches to seniors at soup kitchens to making sure that every child gets a toy at Christmas, they comfort the hurt and the lonely, and they fundraise for our charitable organizations.

[*Translation*]

It is thanks to volunteers that key organizations in Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne are able to operate, organizations such as La Mosaïque, Maison des tournesols, Repas du Passant, and the Greenfield Park Oldtimers Hockey Association.

[*English*]

Volunteers across Canada might be giving a lot, but they gain even more in return.

[*Translation*]

I invite all Canadians to get involved and, in turn, become leaders in their communities.

* * *

[*English*]

YAZIDI NEW YEAR

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Yazidi people celebrate their New Year. Every year it falls on a particular Wednesday in April, also called Red Wednesday. While this occasion is the celebration of a new year and new life, it is also a time to pay respects to those who have passed away. This year it may be difficult, because there has been so much loss for the Yazidi people, yet the resilience of this community is incredibly inspiring.

While many Yazidis have suffered greatly in recent years, members of the diaspora community, such as those right here in Canada, have brought with them rich cultural traditions and the hope born in a new year. Much of their religion is unwritten and their traditions are passed down orally, including the recipes they cook on holidays. Yazidis around the world today will celebrate with a banquet of traditional foods, coloured eggs, dancing, singing, and red flowers.

I wish all Yazidis in Canada and around the world a very happy New Year.

[*Member spoke in Kurmanji Kurdish*]

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PETITE RIVIÈRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Petite Rivière, more commonly referred to as just Petite, an elementary school in my riding of South Shore—St. Margarets but also in my community. Jut a few months ago, Petite was on the brink of closure, a decision that would have devastated its students and their families and our whole community, but we rallied around to support it. In February, the Nova Scotia Supreme Court overruled the former school board's decision to close Petite, meaning that an essential service and a driver of rural sustainability will continue to thrive.

Now, just a few months later, Petite has won a national contest, a $20,000 shopping spree for new technology from Staples Canada. The school was one of only 10 winners nationally of the Superpower Your School contest and was chosen out of over 740 applications, based on its remarkable sustainability and environmentalism. This is a school that raises chickens. Yes, actual chickens.

I would like to congratulate the students and faculty of Petite. I look forward to seeing what they do with their technology.

* * *

● (1420)

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a New Democrat, I am used to fighting for fairness, and we will never stop fighting for women in our country to be treated equally. Women in Canada have been fighting for pay equity for decades and continue to receive only empty promises from the federal government. This is beyond disrespectful, and I, together with my NDP colleagues, will not stand for it.

In 1977, the federal law dealing with equal pay for work of equal value, in section 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, was established, yet here we are in 2018 with statistics showing that women earn 31 cents less than men on the dollar.

Women have been waiting three years for the government to table pay equity legislation, and in this year's budget there is zero funding for its implementation. “Progressive” and “feminist” are words that mean something. They are not meant to be co-opted and manipulated for political gain.

Women have spent the last 40 years fighting, and we are done waiting. Enough is enough. It is time for the Liberal government to end the empty promises and to get pay equity done.

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BARBARA BUSH

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night the world lost an incredible individual and a dear friend of Canada. Barbara Bush, former first lady of the United States, wife of former president George Bush, and mother of six children, including former president George W. Bush, passed away at the age of 92. As the matriarch of her distinguished family, she was a bedrock of support, advice, and love. On her most recent birthday, her husband of 72 years lovingly tweeted, “I'm still the luckiest guy in the world.”

An international champion of literacy, Mrs. Bush left us with words of wisdom that we can still learn from. She said, “cherish your human connections.... At the end of your life, you will never regret not having passed one more test, not winning one more verdict or not closing one more deal. You will regret time not spent with a husband, a child, a friend or a parent.”

On behalf of the official opposition, I want to convey our deepest sympathies to the Bush family and to the American people on the loss of this remarkable woman, Barbara Bush.

* * *

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honour to welcome students, faculty, and alumni from Queen's University to Parliament Hill. Today is Queen's advocacy day on the Hill, and I am excited to see the traditions and spirit of the Queen's campus come alive in the nation's capital.

As one of the first universities in Canada, starting with 13 students and two professors in 1842, it is inspiring that Queen's has grown to be one of the world's leading post-secondary institutions, with more than 23,000 students and 131,000 alumni worldwide.

Queen's researchers and students are turning discoveries into new technologies and companies in clean tech, health, renewable energy, and many other sectors. Queen's is continually pushing the boundaries through establishing new and innovative facilities, such as Queen's Innovation Park and its soon to open Innovation and Wellness Centre.

Whether hon. members are Queen's graduates, as I know many of us are, or just interested to know more about Queen's success, I encourage all members of this House to join us later this afternoon for Queen's official reception, right here in Centre Block.

Once again, I welcome Queen's University and offer best wishes for a successful day on the Hill.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before the Prime Minister was elected, Canada was a great place to invest in the energy sector. Companies like Kinder Morgan did not need bailouts or guarantees. They had investors, and they had the commitment to get through one of the world's most rigorous environmental processes. In fact, the previous Conservative government got four major pipelines built, including northern gateway, which would have brought our energy resources to tidewater, which they killed.

Energy investment has fallen off a cliff, and now the message to investors is clear: "You need to have your project nationalized if you want it built."

Is this not what the Prime Minister wanted all along?

● (1425)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is breaking news to all of us today. Northern pipeline actually got built to foreign markets. Northern gateway did not get built, because the Federal Court of Appeal said that his government had not consulted properly with Canadians.

The member also knows that any discussion about investment in the energy sector has an awful lot to do with environmental protection: a $1.5 billion investment in the oceans protection plan. I am hopeful that I will have a chance to detail that plan—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have been asking for a plan on how to get this pipeline built for months, and the government has done nothing. It is not just out-of-work people in Alberta or Saskatchewan who are suffering from the government's actions. It is people all across this country. There are seniors whose pension plans are being affected as more and more money leaves Canada's energy sector, but instead of building a Canadian energy brand the Prime Minister can promote around the world, he is actually in Europe talking to elites and talking down our resources.

Why does the Prime Minister not champion Canada's energy sector and stand up for the men and women who work in it?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Fort McMurray, just a matter of days ago, he did exactly that when he spent time with energy workers and he spent time with CEOs of major energy companies.

He could not have been clearer in his message that Canada understands the importance of natural resources not only in the energy sector but in forestry and mining. All the policies of the government seek to enhance the contribution of the energy sector, not only in Canada but around the world.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the truth is the exact opposite. The Prime Minister was in Europe bragging about all that he is doing to punish Canada's energy sector. What he actually said, what he actually told his friends in

Europe, is that he was disappointed that he could not phase out the energy sector tomorrow.

Can the minister tell the House, if the Prime Minister is disappointed that he cannot phase out the energy sector tomorrow, by what date this Liberal government will finally phase it out?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is too bad that the Leader of the Opposition showed no patience last Sunday. He decided that he was going to speak to Canadians before the Premier of Alberta and before the Prime Minister of Canada, because he has extraordinary powers beyond the rest of us. He knew exactly what the Prime Minister was going to say, because he had already written his message before the Prime Minister spoke.

What did the Prime Minister say? That this government supports the Trans Mountain expansion while it invests historic amounts of money on the west coast that all Canadians find so—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am having trouble picking out a particular member heckling on this side, because there are so many. I would ask members to restrain themselves and listen to both the question and the answer.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would really like the Prime Minister to explain his idea of leadership, because he certainly has not shown any on the Trans Mountain proposal. It took him a month to bring two provincial premiers together to discuss an issue of national interest, and the upshot of the meeting was that the pipeline may or may not be built.

Why does the Prime Minister always wait until the last minute to intervene in matters involving our natural resources, our private investments, our jobs, and the Canadian families who depend on them?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister has demonstrated more leadership in the past two years than the Harper Conservatives did in 10 long years. We recognize that the expansion of the Trans Mountain project is in the national interest. This pipeline is going to be built. It is important not only for Alberta, but for Canada as a whole. We understand that, and we are going to move forward.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are the facts. The Premier of Alberta pointed out that each day of delay costs $40 million, and now we have learned that the Prime Minister wants to invest public money, taxpayer's money, to reassure investors. If I have understood correctly, the Prime Minister's inability to make decisions will cost Canadian taxpayers.

My question is simple. How much will the Prime Minister' incompetence on this file cost taxpayers?

● (1430)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are not like the Harper Conservatives. We understand that we can keep the economy going and look after the environment at the same time. That has always been and will continue to be our position. We are working with all our partners to move this project forward. Why? Because it is in the national interest.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon the Standing Committee on Health will table its report. It will highlight the need to implement universal pharmacare. The study, instigated by my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway, has made it possible for the committee members to hear testimony from 99 witnesses. It was a comprehensive two-year study, and the outcome of all this work is crystal clear. To quote our leader, Jagmeet Singh, "People need a champion for better public health care. It's not enough to defend it. We need to expand it."

Why is the government refusing to commit to implementing universal pharmacare now?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of their publicly funded universal medicare system, one that is based on their need and not on their ability to pay, yet there is certainly room for improvement. We recognize it and we have created an advisory council on the implementation of a national pharmacare program with a mandate to study and evaluate and to present to us options that we will be considering.

I look forward to the report that will be coming up, and I also want to take this opportunity to thank the health committee members for the wonderful work that they have done.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one in five Canadians cannot afford prescription drugs. For decades, federal studies, commissions, and reports have shown that a universal pharmacare program would help millions of people and save $4.2 billion in prescription fees. People do not want another study. They want a universal pharmacare program now.

Despite the fact that a new report representing two years' worth of work will be tabled today, the government still thinks that we need to continue examining the issue. Why?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of our medicare system. This system is publicly funded and based on people's needs and not on their ability to pay. However, this system can be improved. We have created an advisory council on the implementation of a national pharmacare program, with a mandate to study, evaluate, and recommend options for implementing a national pharmacare program. I would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Health for the wonderful work they have done and I look forward to reviewing their report.

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, reconciliation is not a hashtag. It is not a bumper sticker on a Liberal car. It is about recognizing the section 35 constitutional rights of indigenous people in this country, yet yesterday when my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou asked about the failure of the government to consult indigenous people about their section 35 rights on Kinder Morgan, the government did not even bother to respond. Therefore, on the record, do the Liberals believe that in the case of Kinder Morgan, the section 35 rights of indigenous people in Canada must be respected?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government responded to the Federal Court of Appeal decision in the northern gateway case that said there was insufficient consultation by the Harper government. It made absolutely no sense for us to use the same process, so we added four months more of consultation with indigenous communities up and down the line and we established a co-developed monitoring committee with indigenous communities. For the first time in Canadian history, many indigenous peoples have been involved and will benefit as we share prosperity in our energy sector.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts for my friend. Reconciliation and UNDRIP are going to be made real on the ground by the indigenous people of this country, yet in the middle of what they texted as an ultimatum to demand action, the oil company met with everybody but the indigenous peoples in this country.

Does my friend think they are just going to walk past indigenous Canada to build this Liberal pipeline? Is that what he is telling the people of Canada?

● (1435)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we met with 118 indigenous communities. Forty-three have signed benefit agreements, 33 of them in the province of British Columbia.

As the member knows, there is not unanimity on this file, not within political parties and not within communities. Ultimately, a decision has to be taken by one government in Canada's interests. We have made that decision, and the arguments, I am sure, are very well known to many Canadians.

* * *

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis that has been created by the government, and it is following on the uncertainty of the Trans Mountain project.

Let us take a look at what it has done to foreign investments. Since 2015, investments have decreased by $80 billion. In 2016 and 2017, they decreased a further 42% and 27%. Now the Prime Minister is travelling internationally, understandably in order to sell Canada to foreign investors, and what does he say? He says he laments that he cannot phase out the oil and gas sector tomorrow.

Is this how they think they sell investor confidence?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows we have consistently stated in this House from the very first days we were elected that we were committed to the responsible movement of our natural resources to global markets, something that the Harper government could not do in 10 years. There was not one kilometre built to give us access to global markets.

We also understand at the same time that we pay attention to environmental stewardship with a $1.5-billion investment in the oceans protection plan—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Milton.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thought it would never end.

Let us review the actual record of the government when it comes to its inability to get things done: the $36-billion investment in the Pacific NorthWest LNG project, cancelled; the $7.9-billion northern gateway project, cancelled; the $50-billion energy east and eastern mainline projects, both cancelled.

Again, the Prime Minister of Canada ends up going to Europe to try to sell investor confidence by saying that his plan is to phase out the oil and gas industry.

Can anyone over there answer for me—

The Speaker: The Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, expanded export capacity for the Alberta Clipper project, the Nova Gas pipeline, the Line 3 replacement project, the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline, support for the Keystone XL pipeline, the Arnaud apatite mine, Woodfibre LNG, the Ridley Island propane terminal: these mean tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of investment in the Canadian economy.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I heard again from oil and gas sector workers and their families, and they are still scared. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister was in France lamenting the fact that he could not phase out the Canadian energy sector fast enough. The Prime Minister's attack on the energy sector has driven billions of dollars out of Canada and into the hands of foreign competitors, including almost $90 billion in the last two years alone.

Why does this Prime Minister say one thing when he is in Fort McMurray and the exact opposite when he is in Paris?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister makes the same speech in Nanaimo, in Vancouver, in Fort McMurray, in Calgary, in Edmonton, in Winnipeg, and St. John's, Newfoundland, because he is delivering a message to all Canadians, and that message is that in 2018, environmental stewardship and the economy is one conversation. I am very anxious to hear members of the Conservative Party talk about the importance of the $1.5-billion investment in the oceans protection plan.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Natural Resources asked why we are not sharing his optimism. Is he serious? Investments of $86 billion are gone. Northern gateway, energy east, and Pacific NorthWest are cancelled. Trans Mountain is on its last legs, and we are facing a job-killing carbon tax. Again, the Prime Minister unveils his true vision for Canada's energy sector: phasing it out.

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of unemployed energy workers across Canada and their families, does the minister truly believe that phasing out Alberta's energy sector is reason for optimism, or is he just delusional?

● (1440)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not know that the member opposite had other powers and could do some kind of psychoanalysis across these 100 metres, but Canadians will understand.

We will say it as many times as the members opposite want to pose the question: the government is committed to the energy sector. I have just given tens of thousands of reasons that the workers in Alberta and in British Columbia are seeing that things are getting better. Thousands of jobs have been created over the last number of months, and we are confident that the entrepreneurship and the innovation genius of the people of Alberta will grow.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Todd Doherty: Check his water.

The Speaker: Order. The member from Cariboo—Prince George I know will want to wait his turn to speak until he is called upon to do so.

The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, things are actually only going to get worse. The Prime Minister said Canada must phase out the oil sands. He killed northern gateway, energy east, and the Pacific NorthWest LNG project, and he imposed a tanker ban and an offshore drilling ban. He is piling up costs and red tape, and investment and capital are leaving Canada at historic levels.

Yesterday in Calgary we met with energy investors and workers, and they want market access, certainty, and a champion. Instead, the Prime Minister was in France undermining Canadian oil and gas, saying he cannot phase it out fast enough.

He is failing and dividing Canadians. Why on earth will he not put our own country first?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is offering an expansion of export markets and a more certain process, which is just what the member opposite has asked for.

It is also a little hard to understand why it is that the members of the Conservative Party, many of whom are from Alberta, do not have confidence in Alberta's capacity to innovate and the entrepreneurship of Albertans. It was the very innovation of entrepreneurs in Alberta that unlocked the key to these vast resources. We have confidence in the entrepreneurship of Alberta. It is very surprising that members opposite do not.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It seems some members did not hear me. I would ask the hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie and others to wait their turn to speak.

The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these Liberals are killing Canadian innovation and killing Canadian jobs. Canadian energy creates jobs across the whole country and provides billions for social services, health care, schools, charities, and pension plans, but hundreds of thousands of energy workers have lost their jobs, families are struggling, substance abuse and suicide are up, and these Liberals here are laughing about it today.

Global oil demand will increase long into the future, but the Prime Minister will not let Canada compete. Canada's oil and gas is the most environmentally and socially responsible in the world. We on this side know it. They have no clue.

When will the Prime Minister quit attacking Canadian energy and—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of National Resources.

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member opposite, who comes from Alberta, would know that Alberta has created 15,000 new jobs in 2017. I am sure she also knows that Alberta will lead Canada in growth in 2018. Why would she not celebrate that?

I understand that the past 10 years of the Harper government were no reason to celebrate, but the future of Alberta is—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian Abousfian Abdelrazik has been imprisoned in Sudan for six years. He has endured isolation, unlawful detention, and torture. Even worse, Canadian intelligence officers allegedly collaborated with the Sudanese authorities when he was detained and undermined the work of Canadian diplomats.

How will the minister ensure that CSIS will never again be involved, directly or indirectly, in torturing a Canadian citizen?

● (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): The hon. gentleman will know that I am prohibited from commenting on outstanding court proceedings, but I would point out in response to his questions about transparency and accountability with respect to our security agencies that we have issued new ministerial directives and we have published those ministerial directives for the first time ever.

We are also in the process of working on Bill C-59, which implements a whole series of transparency and accountability measures, and we have created the first-ever National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this Canadian has already suffered unconscionable abuse and torture at the hands of Sudanese authorities, and the Government of Canada not only abandoned him but also was found by the Federal Court to have been complicit in his detention.

However, rather than work toward justice and accountability, the government has just walked away from settlement negotiations with Mr. Abdelrazik, giving no reasons.

Let me echo the call from Amnesty International. Will the Prime Minister instruct his officials to recommit to mediation and to apologize for Canada's role in his horrific ordeal?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is a distinguished lawyer and knows very well that I cannot comment on the items that are included in his question.

However, I can tell him that the issue of transparency and accountability is taken very seriously by our government. We have implemented measures in Bill C-59, in Bill C-22, and we have published the first-ever ministerial directives with respect to the issue of torture in dealing with international entities.

I am pleased to say that he is one of the members of Parliament that in fact serves on the national security and intelligence—

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebec has had enough of the Prime Minister's lax approach to the illegal migrants crossing at Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle. Quebec refuses to subsidize the Prime Minister's lack of leadership. It is asking to be reimbursed $146 million and will now limit accommodation for newcomers.

Why is the Prime Minister abusing Quebeckers' generous spirit?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada remains an open and welcoming country for people who need protection. However, our government is determined to ensure orderly immigration.

[*English*]

We have invested, as part of budget 2018, $173 million for border security operations, as well as for faster processing of asylum claims. We have the ninth meeting of the intergovernmental task force on irregular migration tonight.

I look forward to engaging with my counterpart from Quebec to continue the good collaboration we have with Quebec on irregular migration.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just imagine the chaos. This summer, 300 to 400 illegal immigrants will come to Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle.

The Government of Quebec has had enough and is demanding that the Government of Canada and the Prime Minister take action.

When will the Prime Minister step up and get the Minister of Immigration to stop giving us rhetoric?

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, who did not take border operations seriously? The Conservative Party. It cut $390 million from the CBSA. Who did not take asylum claims seriously? The Conservative Party. It cut funding from the IRB, which is why we inherited massive backlogs in the IRB.

We are doing the right thing. We are reinvesting in CBSA. We are reinvesting in the IRB to make claims faster. We are working with provinces, without alienating provinces like the Conservatives did in 10 years of power.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that will fly really well in Quebec today.

Government officials project that there could be 400 people who illegally enter from the United States this summer just at the Quebec border alone. They will claim asylum, will not have their claims heard for years, all the while benefiting from government social programs.

Canadians expect a fair immigration system. What is happening now is completely unfair, both to Canadian taxpayers and to those seeking who enter Canada while playing by the rules.

Could the minister stop the excuses and just tell us how he will end this crisis?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have invested $173 million to improve the processing of asylum claims in our country. When the time came to vote for that $173 million, the member opposite joined her party and voted against the measure. When the time came to invest in resettling survivors of Daesh, vulnerable women, the most vulnerable refugees in the world, the party opposite voted against that measure. When the time came to invest in CBSA, the party opposite voted against that measure.

We will take no lessons from the Conservatives on this issue.

● (1450)

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, spending tax dollars is not a metric in and of itself.

Quebec is demanding millions of dollars to fund the housing, health care, and education of illegal migrants. Quebec has called the Liberals' response unacceptable.

It is not compassionate to tweet #welcometocanada and turn Canada's asylum system into a joke. His ego and his failure have put Canada's social programs and once sound immigration system in jeopardy. Will the Prime Minister designate the entire Canadian border as a technical official point of entry for the purpose of applying the safe third country agreement?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is the party that cut refugee health care, the people who are the most vulnerable in our society, a measure that the Federal Court of Canada called cruel and unusual punishment. We will take no lessons on refugee response.

We are working very closely with Quebec. We have issued over 12,000 work permits to Quebec asylum seekers so we minimize the pressure on provincial services. We have provided an additional $112 million for the settlement and integration of newcomers in Quebec.

We will continue to work closely with Quebec, and I look forward to the meeting tonight.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many industries in Quebec are very concerned about the NAFTA negotiations. There is no guarantee that our aluminum industry will be protected from tariffs imposed by the United States and that the Liberals will keep their promise to protect supply management. The government must reassure producers as well as all the workers.

Will the Liberals reassure our industries and promise that the supply management system will be protected and that no punitive tariffs will be imposed on the aluminum industry?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand my hon. colleague's concern. The only policy idea we heard from the official opposition, the Conservative Party, was how to dismantle supply management. I can assure her that we were the party that fought to implement supply management, and we are the party that will defend it.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is holding its breath as Donald Trump threatens to remove steel and aluminum tariff exemptions on May 1 unless NAFTA is signed to his liking.

The minister is headed to Washington with only six out of 30 chapters negotiated and the idea of an agreement in principle being floated. What exactly is an agreement in principle and what will we give up to achieve it? Will it be brought before the House to be debated and voted on, or will Canadians be bound for another 25 years with a NAFTA that puts profits before protection of our environment, our sovereignty, and working people?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked with U.S. counterparts for months now to ensure that at every level our position is fully understood and that Canada is exempt from these tariffs.

The Prime Minister has raised this question directly with the President, as has the minister with her opposite numbers, as have I, and as have a variety of Liberals members of the House when they do their good work down in Washington on a variety of visits.

We will continue to advocate for a full exemption. I can assure the member opposite that we will always stand up for Canadian workers and Canadian values.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when firefighters, police officers, and paramedics put their safety on the line in service to all Canadians, when their work leads to the ultimate sacrifice, their families deserve our support in return.

[*English*]

Could the Minister of Public Safety tell us how the government is upholding the commitment that we made to Canadians to support the families of fallen public security officers?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we promised to create a non-taxable compensation benefit of $300,000 for the families of police officers, firefighters, and paramedics who died in the line of duty. As of this month, the memorial grant program is now in effect.

First responders put themselves at risk every day to keep our communities safe. From now on they can go to work secure in the knowledge that if tragedy strikes, this federal program will be there to help support their families.

* * *

● (1455)

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on page 75 of its electoral platform, the Liberal Party made the following promise: "We will raise the bar on fiscal transparency." However, what they are actually doing is raising the bar on fiscal secrecy. The President of the Treasury Board is proposing a $7-billion budget, but he is not quite sure of what he is going to do with it. He wants us to vote for it, but that would be like signing a blank cheque for $7 billion. He wants us to trust him and trust that he knows how to spend the money.

Why would we trust people who cannot do math and only know how to spend, spend, spend?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the changes made to the main estimates in order to enhance transparency and deliver timely results for Canadians. They include a new budget implementation vote, the funding details of which are set out in table A2.11 of budget 2018. That level of detail for every single budget measure is unprecedented. These changes are going to deliver real results for Canadians.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be a good sport and congratulate the minister once again on all his efforts to speak French.

Niceties aside, it is hard to take him seriously when he talks about public finances. Those folks over there were elected on a promise to run small deficits, but deficits are three times larger than planned. They also promised a zero deficit in 2019, but they actually have no idea when we will return to a balanced budget. Today they want us to simply trust them with $7 billion. The answer is no.

Why is the government being so secretive?

[*English*]

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives on budget transparency. The fact is that it was the Conservative government that took millions of dollars from the border infrastructure fund to use to pay for fake lakes and gazebos hundreds of kilometres away from the border.

We have ensured that our funding is strictly tied to the list of initiatives described in a detailed table in our budget. We are proud of this major step toward fiscal accountability. We will continue to ensure we do the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Says the President of the Treasury Board who was the greatest defender of the sponsorship scandal anywhere in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

He now expects us to believe that the novel he held up, which he calls his "budget book", has any legal weight in restricting on what the government spends this $7 billion no-strings-attached Liberal slush fund.

What crisis justifies giving those Liberal ministers the power to spend that money with no restrictions right in an election year?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that hon. member was part of the cabinet when the president of the Treasury Board, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, actually took funds from a border infrastructure fund to put gazebos in his riding.

Beyond that, if the hon. member would look at the main estimates, he would find that the inclusion of the $7 billion budget implementation is for measures approved and identified in Table A2.11 of budget 2018. Every detail is in there.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is not in there is legal enforceability.

The legislation does not clearly restrict the power of that group of Liberal politicians on the Treasury Board to move that $7 billion between and among priorities that have not been approved by Parliament. Governments can only spend what Parliament has approved and only on the specific purposes approved, except this slush fund will allow the Liberals to move the money wherever they want.

How is that accountable to taxpayers?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just about everything the hon. member has said is wrong. The fact is that he can go to Table A2.11 and he will see line by line items, detailed descriptions of these funds and where they will be invested for Canadians.

Let us be very clear. We will continue to invest for Canadians. That is what has created 600,000 new jobs for Canadians in the last two years and that is what has created the best growth in the G7. We are going to keep on investing in Canadians and being transparent with Parliament as we do it.

* * *

● (1500)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals go on and on about Kinder Morgan being in the national interest. Do members know what is in the national interest? Protecting our coastal economy. Do members know what else is in the national interest? Protecting our marine environment.

The proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline will mean a sevenfold increase in tanker traffic. These tankers will be filled with diluted bitumen. Do members know what is not in the Liberals' so-called oceans protection plan? Technology to clean up toxic dilbit.

When will the Prime Minister put an end to this charade and protect our coast?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that sevenfold increase is from five to 35 a month, so one tanker a day.

The $1.5 billion oceans protection plan strengthens the eyes and the ears of the Coast Guard to ensure better communication with vessels. It adds new radar sites in strategic locations. It puts more enforcement officers on the coast. It adds more primary environmental response teams to bolster Coast Guard capacity. It invests in new technology. We are conducting scientific research to make cleanups more effective. We reopened the Kitsilano Coast Guard station that was—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Kinder Morgan crisis, the Prime Minister is actually uniting the country, but not the way he thinks, because whether one is an oil worker in Alberta or an environmentalist in British Columbia, everyone can now agree that he screwed this thing up right from the very beginning. There has been no meaningful consultation with first nations, no credible environmental review, and no oil spill cleanup plan.

From the British Parliament to British Columbia, folks want to know when the Liberals are going to finally keep their promise to people on the planet.

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the oceans protection plan, there will be additional funding for Western Canada Marine Response, which will provide marine safety. It played a critical role in our decision in this project, and is facilitating an investment of $150 million to establish six new response bases in British Columbia, 135 new personnel, 43 new vessels, including spill response craft and barges. All new personnel, facilities, and equipment will be in place several months before there is any increase in traffic associated with the expansion.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills excused her words at an event featuring a notorious apologist for the war crimes of Syrian President Assad, an event hosted by Palestine House, long associated with anti-Israel extremism and terror, by saying that she was only meeting with a diverse array of individuals.

Diversity does not excuse pandering to extremist organizations in the Prime Minister's name. Again, will the Prime Minister renounce this unacceptable solicitation of votes?

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been abundantly clear that we oppose and condemn the murderous Assad regime and its indiscriminate violence perpetrated against its own civilians, including the use of chemical weapons. Equally, we have said many times that we are a friend of Israel and a friend of the Palestinian people, and that Canada is committed to the goal of a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side by side at peace with Israel.

I know that these are positions which my colleague, the member on this side of the floor, shares as well.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first example of the government looking the other way when Liberal MPs seek electoral support and funding from groups associated with extremism and terror. Government funding of Palestine House was cut by our previous Conservative government six years ago for just these reasons.

Again, will the Prime Minister distance himself from this outrageous tribute made in his name?

● (1505)

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just stated clearly the position of this government. It has been the position for a long time: clear condemnation of the indiscriminate violence perpetrated by the murderous Assad regime, and that we are friends of Israel and remain friends of the Palestinian people.

The member, too, has publicly condemned the recent attacks perpetrated by the Assad regime, and she has worked hard on these issues as a member on international human rights. Equally, she has done tireless work tackling issues of discrimination in all forms, including anti-Semitism. We applaud the work that she has done on this side of the floor. They are positions that this government believes in.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, first-degree murder charges against notorious gang leader Nick Chan were thrown out of court due to delay.

The Minister of Justice claims that she is appointing judges, but after a year and a half, only one out of 10 new judicial spots created to stem the backlog in Alberta's courts has been filled. This is worse than inaction. This is negligence.

Will the minister take responsibility for the release of this dangerous criminal?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has taken responsibility by moving forward with criminal justice reform that keeps communities safe, protects victims, and holds offenders to account. By way of introducing Bill C-75, we have fulfilled a commitment to bring forward substantive reform to the criminal justice system that will fundamentally address delays, if passed.

Further to that, I take my responsibility of appointing superior court justices incredibly seriously. One hundred and sixty-seven have been appointed, with 27 appointed in Alberta. We will continue to appoint judges to ensure that all vacancies are filled.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Ontario, 25 remote first nations communities depend on diesel as their sole source of electricity. This source is neither viable nor reliable. It is also extremely expensive.

Recently, the hon. Minister of Indigenous Services announced a historic partnership that would not only allow for reliable and clean power generation but would also contribute to economic development and infrastructure opportunities in first nations communities.

Would the hon. minister please share with this House the benefits of this project?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Sudbury for his question.

[*English*]

I was delighted recently to make an announcement of a $1.6-billion investment in the first nations-led Watay Power that will bring hydroelectric power from the Ontario grid to 16 first nations.

[*Translation*]

This is the largest indigenous-led hydroelectric project in the history of the province, and it has the largest scope.

[*English*]

This will reduce GHG emissions, the equivalent of taking 35,000 cars off the road, and will create close to 800 new jobs.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, China is becoming more and more aggressive, building military installations throughout the South China Sea, and today holding live fire drills in the Taiwan Strait.

Canada's government has thus far declined to condemn Chinese aggression in the South China Sea and has never stood up for Taiwan.

The Prime Minister can promote peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific by condemning clear acts of aggression. Will he?

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for our government, the promotion and protection of human rights in all our engagements, including those with China, remain primordial and a priority.

We raise human rights situations and actions at all opportunities to engage with our Chinese counterparts, including at the highest levels. We continue to encourage China to live up to its international commitments. We do that through ongoing and frank dialogue as we work towards a more stable relationship with China. We will never hesitate to raise concerns, whether they be human rights in nature or for China to live up to its humanitarian and human rights obligations.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to the tender for the dismantling of the *Kathryn Spirit*, the contractor had to provide an emergency response plan 30 days before the work began. However, when a fire broke out in the wreck, the 75 firefighters who responded had to work without an emergency plan because the only thing that Groupe St-Pierre provided them was a layout of the vessel. That is not much help in putting out a fire.

What is more, the Beauharnois fire chief assured me that if his men are not given a list of the contaminants that are still on board the wreck, they will no longer respond to emergency calls to the vessel. That is very worrisome.

Will the government stop minimizing this issue and finally launch an investigation?

● (1510)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not need to conduct an investigation. We need to dismantle the *Kathryn Spirit*, and that is exactly what our government is doing.

We recognize the risks that vessels of concern pose to shoreline communities and the marine environment. As my colleague knows full well, a small fire broke out in the machine room of the *Kathryn Spirit* during work to dismantle the vessel on April 10. No one was injured, and no pollution was observed. That is what is important to us. We also think it is important to quickly dismantle the *Kathryn Spirit*, and that is what we are going to do.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government believes that a sustainably developed resource sector is essential to the success of the Canadian economy. Getting this right requires us to work with indigenous peoples as equal partners through well-defined, predictable processes, like we do through co-management regimes across the north.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs update this House on the steps taken to ensure co-management is at the forefront of discussions on northern resource development?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Northwest Territories for his tremendous leadership on northern issues in Canada.

Canada's northern co-management approach to resource development is an example to the world, and one we are proud of. Both territorial and indigenous partners came together at the UN Permanent Forum on co-management in the north, because it has ensured that indigenous people are equal partners in determining the best use of their lands and their resources. Together, we will continue to develop a shared vision, one that is strong, prosperous, and sustainable.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister laid out critical bid criteria for those interested in the lucrative surf clam quota, such as that the successful applicant must be an indigenous company, in respect of which shares are owned by indigenous persons or groups.

However, we know the winning bid was not even incorporated until weeks after the announcement was made. We know that a Liberal MP's brother and a former Liberal MP are going to get very rich.

Will the minister table the bid criteria scores so we can all see how his Liberal family and friends won a bid without a company, without a boat, and without indigenous partners?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can give my hon. friend points for imagination, but I cannot give him points for sticking to the facts with what happened.

The fact that there is a new participant in this lucrative surf clam fishery should not surprise the Conservative Party. In fact, that party began a process three years ago to do exactly that, include a new entrant. What the Conservatives forgot to do was to include indigenous communities.

We are very proud that the most impressive economic benefit to indigenous communities and Atlantic Canadians came from a group that included indigenous partners in five provinces: four Atlantic provinces and Quebec. We chose the best proposal and we are proud of that.

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec has always been a desirable destination for newcomers, but ever since the Prime Minister issued that irresponsible invitation, Quebec has been facing an immigration crisis, and Ottawa is not taking the issue seriously.

The case processing backlog at the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada is years long, yet the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship sees fit to tell Quebec what to do. That is irresponsible and unacceptable, as Quebec has said.

The government's carelessness is costing Quebec a lot of money. Will the government make a decision by the end of the day and reimburse Quebec for those costs?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is an open and welcoming country for people who need protection. That being said, our government is committed to ensuring orderly immigration.

[*English*]

This government is working very closely with Quebec on the irregular migration issue. We have worked very closely with Quebec on the intergovernmental task force on irregular migration. We have our ninth meeting tonight at which we will discuss issues of mutual concern.

We have worked very closely with Quebec to make sure there is extra funding for newcomers and integration in Quebec, an increase of over $112 million.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, in a moment, along with my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, we will be asking for unanimous consent on an important motion, because it is up to the Parliament of Canada to accept our role and obligation in furthering the work of reconciliation and in addressing the still harsh wounds from the forcible removal of indigenous children to destroy indigenous identity in the residential school system.

There have been extensive talks among all the parties, and I sincerely hope that you will find unanimous consent in this Parliament for this motion:

That the House call on the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to (a) invite Pope Francis to Canada to apologize on behalf of the Catholic Church to indigenous people for the church's role in the residential school system, as outlined in Call to Action 58 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report; (b) to respect its moral obligation and the spirit of the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and resume the best efforts to raise the full amount of the agreed upon funds; and (c) to make a consistent and sustained effort to turn over the relevant documents when called upon by survivors of residential schools, their families, and scholars working to understand the full scope of the horrors of the residential school system in the interest of truth and reconciliation.

● (1515)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association concerning its participation at the Visit to Paris of the Executive, held in Paris, France, from December 4 to 8, 2017.

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Health, entitled "Pharmacare Now: Prescription Medicine Coverage for All Canadians". Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I want to point out that this was a parliamentary initiative. It is the most extensive report we have done. It is really well done. We have spent two years on it. We have had 130 presentations from the best experts around the world. We have engaged the Parliamentary Budget Officer for a year to confirm the financial implications of such a program.

The national pharmacare study answers these questions: Will we save money, and will we have better health care with a national pharmacare program? The answer is yes.

I want to thank all the members from all sides for the work they have done. I also want to thank the analysts, who have produced a wonderful report, and the researchers, the chair, and the clerk of the committee for doing great work on this really important study.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative members of the Standing Committee on Health agree that the important issue of access to prescription drugs for all Canadians needs to be addressed. However, we feel that some portions of this report require further work for us to really understand the cost of the recommendations, including the use of more up-to-date figures that are now available. The federal government will also need to consult with the provinces and territories, which have jurisdiction over these areas, as well as with the more than 80% of Canadians who already have coverage, some of whom have excellent private insurance and may be unwilling to switch to a standardized public plan. More work needs to be done, and as such, the Conservatives have tabled supplementary information to this report and call on the Minister of Health for action.

● (1520)

Mr. Bill Casey: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the comments by the Conservative member. Certainly the report does not have all the answers, but it is a great first step.

I now have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Health in relation to Bill C-326, an act to amend the Department of Health Act, drinking water guidelines. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

I want to thank the member for Lac-Saint-Louis for developing this private member's bill. It calls on the government to conduct a review of drinking water standards and to make recommendations on our national guidelines.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 59th Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, on committee membership, presented to the House earlier this week, be concurred in.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to table three petitions from 184 constituents. These petitioners call to the government's attention that, as it is now written, the application form for the Canada summer jobs program forces employers to choose between their charter-protected freedoms and eligibility for government programming. They are calling on the government to remove the discriminatory attestation requirement from the Canada summer jobs application and to respect the charter rights of all Canadians, even those individuals who differ in political ideology from the government of the day. This brings the total number of petitioners on this issue to 493.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every year there are thousands of Canadian families that tragically have their lives changed forever when they lose an infant or when their child is stillborn. Many of these parents simply want the government to show more compassion toward their situation by providing them with the support needed to properly grieve and heal. I table this petition today, with thousands of signatures, from every single province and territory right across the country, calling on Parliament to stand shoulder to shoulder with Canadian families dealing with pregnancy and infant loss and to support Motion No. 110, which will be up for debate next Friday.

MARIJUANA

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is on Bill C-45. The petitioners say that it is a flawed bill that will not protect youth or climate or reduce the workload of the criminal justice system; that the implementation of the bill is being rushed, risking the health and safety of Canadians; and that the passing of the bill would put Canada in violation of three international United Nations treaties. Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the government to not proceed with the legalization of marijuana.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with the Canada summer jobs program. It states that it is a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that the government's duty is to defend the rights of all Canadians, regardless of whether they agree with the Liberal government. The petitioners are calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to withdraw the attestation requirement totally for the Canada summer jobs program.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind the honourable members that even when it is a petition, we refer to another member in the House by title, not by name. It is not hard to let it slip.

[*Translation*]

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

PRIVATIZATION OF CANADIAN AIRPORTS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as you know, the government is gearing up to privatize Canadian airports. It has asked Credit Suisse, which, incidentally, is in the business of investing in private airports, to conduct a study. We think this is a bad move.

Just look at what happened in Australia when the Australian government privatized airports. It did nothing to address the issue or fix the problem. On the contrary, privatization will create new problems and generate new costs not only for millions of air travellers, but also for the hundreds of thousands of employees of Canadian airports.

● (1525)

[*English*]

This is the first set of a series of 6,000 signatures that will be tabled in this House asking the government and Transport Canada to move away from and forget about its move toward privatization of the airports. It is my pleasure to table this first set of signatures in this House.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise again on behalf of petitioners from my riding and across the country calling on the government to establish a national strategy to combat plastic pollution in aquatic environments. They say that whereas plastics in our oceans, lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water pose a dire threat to sensitive ecosystems, wildlife, communities, and individuals, and whereas plastics make their way through these bodies of water in a variety of ways, including in stormwater outfalls, global ocean tides and currents, and direct industrial and consumer waste disposal, they are calling on the federal government to work with the provinces, municipalities, and indigenous communities to develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution in and around aquatic environments, and they identify several measures.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition from English language teachers who are highlighting the removal of the teach English as a second language accreditation requirement from its funding agreement with the federally funded language instruction for newcomers to Canada programs in Ontario in October 2013, which has resulted in some service providers hiring individuals who lack TESL training.

They note that current practices fail to deliver high-quality language instruction to newcomers participating in federally funded programs in Ontario and that they bring up significant language teaching inconsistencies and underestimate and underutilize the skills of the over 4,500 TSEL Ontario accredited teachers who care deeply about the high-quality language instruction they provide.

They ask that the government reinstate the funding agreement that requires federally funded programs to hire only TESL Ontario accredited teachers and to designate language instruction for newcomers to Canada instructors in a national occupational classification.

PENSIONS

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to table this petition signed by constituents from my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore, and Belcarra, including Don and Marilyn Portelance and many others, who are worried about the changes proposed by the finance minister under Bill C-27. They say it threatens the retirement security of Canadians. They know that pensions are deferred wages and that they belong to the workers who earned them. They are asking the finance minister to withdraw this bill immediately.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition calling on the Minister of Transport to cancel the Department of Transport's plans to designate the shore of Gabriola Island in the Salish Sea as a new bulk anchorage site, where five bulk anchorages are proposed, each for 300-metre-long bulk commercial vessels. This is a petition with signatories from Surrey, Calgary, Osoyoos, Gabriola Island, Nanaimo, and all over the B.C. coast, calling on the transport minister to recognize that the project, as proposed, could have catastrophic oil spill risks, particularly affecting the marine environment and the wetlands of Sandwell beach and Whalebone Beach, right in the heart of Snuneymuxw First Nation territory. We urge the transport minister to take the petitioners' advice and cancel the bulk anchorages proposed.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned and I am not alone. The people of the Lake Memphremagog region who signed this petition are also deeply concerned. They fear for the quality of the water from Lake Memphremagog, which is deteriorating.

On the Canadian side, the water is safe to drink and the people from the towns of Magog and Sherbrooke do drink it. However, on the U.S. side, the water is not safe and people there do not drink it. The petitioners are calling on the Minister of Global Affairs to submit this problem to the International Joint Commission so that it can review the quality of the water in both Canada and the United States.

[*English*]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table a petition today on an important day.

The people of Winnipeg North who signed the petition call on the government to look at the need for Canada to have a national pharmacare program, one program for over 35 million people.

I have been tabling a number of petitions like this in Ottawa. My daughter Cindy, who is here, has been tabling them in the Manitoba legislature.

This is a special day, given the report from the standing committee.

* * *

● (1530)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 1

The House resumed from April 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-74, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound has six and a half minutes coming his way.

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to pick up where I left off last night with respect to the budget implementation bill.

When I ran out of time last night, I was in the middle of explaining that due to the government's economic mismanagement, my oldest granddaughter, who just turned 13 last month, will be 40 years old by the time Canada is able to return to balanced budgets, if the government is allowed to continue on. It is simply unacceptable.

Canadians are tired of seeing the government run deficits to accommodate their out-of-control spending disease, and it is a disease.

I note that the Prime Minister has also given himself the title of Minister of Youth. I wonder whether the Minister of Youth has informed young Canadians across the country that they will be paying for the Prime Minister's out-of-control spending. The Prime Minister is spending and spending, and it is on the backs of future generations, like my 13-year-old granddaughter.

I have always believed that when necessary, the government should step in and stimulate the economy in tough economic times. It is important for any government to spend when it is necessary, but it is equally as important to pay down debt when it is possible. That was the plan under the previous government. The previous government ran deficits, but it was at a time when the economy was recessing. The GDP growth rate in 2009 was negative 2.9%. By comparison, in 2017, the GDP actually grew by 3%.

As we can see, despite significant economic growth, the government continues to pile on the debt and spend without any true plan of action. Perhaps the most frustrating part of these continued deficits is that Canadians are not seeing the bang for their buck. Where is this money going? What is the plan? I am asked these questions on a daily basis.

A recent report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer revealed that half of the infrastructure funding that had been promised by the government had not been spent yet. This accounts for a total of $7.2 billion in unspent funding that local municipalities desperately need.

All the budget has to offer with respect to correcting his is that the government is finalizing negotiations with the provinces and territories. Really? The government also said that three months after the 2015 election. Again, there is no real plan.

Earlier, I mentioned that in 2009, the previous government began running deficits in order to stimulate the economy in response to the economic recession. Unlike the deficits that the Liberal government is running, that spending was necessary. There was a clear and direct plan for all of that spending. Initiatives were targeted and had a purpose. It was not simply spending for the sake of spending.

For example, the 2009 budget made $2 billion over two years available in direct, low-cost loans to municipalities to finance improvements to local projects. Furthermore, the budget also expanded infrastructure funding so immediate action could be taken to stimulate the economy. Most important, there was a plan to return to balance, and we did that.

Prior to the 2009 budget, the previous government paid down almost $40 billion on the national debt, so when times were good, we paid down on the debt. Just like a mortgage on a house, a business, and student loans, we paid it down. Just think of what it would be like to pay interest on another $40 billion in debt.

We can see that the difference here is pretty clear. In 2009, the budget was clear that funding for infrastructure was to be significant and immediate. There were no political lines about finalizing negotiations, which we all know means further delays. The budget set out what the government was expected to do, and that was take action.

After my twelve and a half years experience in municipal government, one of the things that was always tough was getting infrastructure money through the federal government and the provinces. I can honestly say that in my years in federal government and municipal government, I never saw infrastructure money flow as quickly as when Minister Baird, minister of the day, was here. It was done the right way. I give the minister of the day credit for that.

Furthermore, the budget empowered local municipalities to address issues of real local concern.

● (1535)

Recently, the main bridge in the community of Chesley in my riding was severely damaged. The bridge connects the north and south end of the town, so right now the community is quite literally split in two.

Bruce county has earmarked funds to fix this immediately and has applied to the provincial government for disaster relief funding. However, it would have been nice for me, as the local member of Parliament, to have been able to work with the community to see what kind of federal support would be available. Unfortunately, though, with the government's plan, or lack of, when it comes to infrastructure, it is such a mess that it is impossible to figure out what money might be available.

Again, on infrastructure, the government's plan is a total mess and the budget does absolutely nothing to fix it.

The reason I am presenting the House with this information is because I want to show what a real economic plan looks like. I entirely disagree with the government's decision to run deficits during a time of growth, but if this is the direction the Liberals have decided on, it is vital there be some form of a plan and not, as I said, simply spending for the sake of spending.

With that said, I will not be supporting the budget implementation bill, and I am happy to take any questions from my colleagues.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the opposition is choosing not support this budget implementation bill. We are calling on a number of very important things to support, such as money for veterans, ensuring workers have the necessary resources to have the ability to continue to receive income even when they are preparing to get back to work.

Could the member explain why he can, just carte blanche, say that this entire budget is not worth supporting, given that he might disagree with just one or two elements of it?

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well what Canadians across the country have been saying, and my riding is no different. They cannot get their heads around why their municipalities cannot get funding. All the Liberals keep saying is that they are working on an agreement. However, they have no problem funding, carte blanche, an economic development corporation in China, but not to build projects in Canada. People cannot get their heads around that. This is just one bad example, because there are many of them.

The Liberals have no problem spending money in countries all over the world. However, Canadians expect our tax dollars to be spent in the right way and in their own country.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member speaks fondly of his grandchildren and his children, as I do with four children. Living in Ontario we have seen a disastrous economic policy of debt and deficit and we are literally on the same path federally.

Could the hon. member comment on the impact this has on young people, his grandchildren, my children, and future generations that have to pay for the debt and deficit being placed upon them by the Liberal government through this budget?

● (1540)

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague's riding well and his constituents are very similar those who live in my riding. They care about the future of their children and grandchildren. We are getting a double whammy in Ontario as far as out-of-control spending and mismanagement. Luckily we will fix that on June 7 this year in Ontario. However, we will not be able to fix the overall bigger federal problem until October 19, 2019.

This kind of spending cannot go on. I talked earlier about mortgages, student loans, and that kind of thing. We have to pay them back at some point. The government just does not get it. To make my 13-year-old granddaughter not have a balanced budget until she is age 40 is just plain unacceptable.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is in a budget is just as important as what is not in a budget.

I note that this week the Minister of Immigration made an announcement with respect to the policy impacting people with disabilities. In particular, he was very proud to say that for the government to discriminate against people with disabilities 25% of the time is better than 100% of the time. From my perspective, discrimination is discrimination is discrimination. One of the issues why it was so delayed, even for that announcement, was that he said he was engaging in a process of discussing the issue with the provinces and territories. After two years there is nothing in the budget implementation act that addresses this issue. I would like to hear the member's comments around that.

By the way, there was a unanimous recommendation from the committee to the government that it repeal this discriminatory policy.

Mr. Larry Miller: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the comments of the minister; however, based on what the member has just said, it sounds inappropriate and irresponsible.

We have an obligation to look after the disabled and the handicapped, the same as we do for veterans and seniors.

We all know that the minister said that the veterans asked for more than the government could give. It sounds like it was the same thing for disabled people.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, advancing gender equality is one of our most important priorities. From appointing the first gender-balanced federal cabinet and the first federal minister fully dedicated to gender equality, the government continues to introduce new measures and key investments that underscore our ongoing commitment.

Since then, we have launched the first federal strategy to address gender-based violence, released the first gender statement as part of last year's federal budget, and enhanced the use of gender-based analysis by federal organizations. To ensure our leaders better reflect Canada's diversity, we have increased gender diversity across 4,000 senior federal appointments and used the comply or explain approach to increase diversity on corporate boards.

Our efforts to advance gender equality extend beyond our country's borders through our work and membership on the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which I attended a few weeks ago. We are taking an active role in shaping gender issues on the international stage. Through these and countless other actions, we continue to play our part and lead by example.

Budget 2018, “Equality + Growth: A Strong Middle Class”, builds on these achievements. It is a bold step forward that reflects the government's feminist agenda, putting gender at the centre of decision-making, and focusing on equality as a driver of economic growth. It recognizes a simple but powerful idea that when we invest in women, we strengthen our economy for everyone.

Budget 2018 ensures that this idea will continue to guide Canada's way forward. It introduces new GBA+ legislation that would enshrine gender budgeting within the federal budget-making process. Moreover, Status of Women Canada will be made an official department, strengthening its capacity to apply the gender and diversity lens.

Budget 2018 proposes a number of investments in Status of Women Canada including, very importantly, $100 million over five years for the women's program, which will strengthen the women's movement. This will fund projects to end violence against women and girls, improve their economic security and prosperity, and advance women and girls into leadership positions.

Budget 2018 will also invest $25 million over five years for research and data collection in support of the government's gender results framework. The framework is essential to measuring our progress towards our gender equality goals.

Building on our efforts to end gender-based violence, budget 2018 invests $86 million over five years in the gender-based violence program. That is over the $100 million that we invested in the previous budget. This will increase our capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable survivors.

The budget also invests $6 million over five years in a national framework to address gender-based violence in post-secondary institutions, our university campuses. Engaging youth is key to creating an inclusive society, which is why the Government of Canada is proposing an additional $7.2 million in funding over five years to lead a national conversation on gender equality with young Canadians. This is in addition to the $2 million over two years put forward for a strategy to engage men and boys on gender equality, which is a topic I will be playing a leadership role in.

Finally, as part of our commitment to GBA+, the government will invest $1.3 million in 2018-19 in a national round table to share results and best practices with key stakeholders, including provinces and territories.

These investments recognize the role Status of Women Canada will continue to play in implementing the government's feminist agenda.

As budget 2018 makes clear, gender equality is a government-wide priority. The budget includes a number of important measures that will create opportunities for all Canadians.

Introducing proactive pay equity legislation is an important step on the road to fulfilling the government's feminist agenda. It will help reduce the gender wage gap and support women's economic empowerment.

The new women's entrepreneurship strategy, which I hope all of us in this place will support, will help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses through access to financing, talent, networks, and expertise.

● (1545)

The strategy will help break down barriers to growth-oriented entrepreneurship, including new direct funding from the regional development agencies targeted to women entrepreneurs, mentorship, and skills training, as well as targets for federal procurement from women-led business.

The new employment insurance parental sharing benefit supports gender equality in the home and in the workplace. The government is proposing an investment of $1.2 billion over five years, starting in 2018-19, and $344.7 million per year thereafter. The benefit will provide additional weeks of "use it or lose it" El parental benefits when both parents, including adoptive and same-sex couples, agree to share parental leave. This incentive is expected to be available starting in June 2019.

In addition, we are strengthening the Canada child benefit so that it continues to help families that need it most. The 2017 fall economic statement indexed these benefits, starting in July 2018, to keep pace with the cost of living. This will provide an additional $5.6 billion in support to Canadian families over the 2018-19 to 2022-23 period.

Winding down, we also know that indigenous peoples, especially those living in remote and northern communities, face distinct barriers when it comes to accessing federal benefits, such as the Canada child benefit. To help indigenous peoples access the full range of federal social benefits, the government will provide $17.3 million over three years, starting in 2018-19, to expand outreach efforts to indigenous communities and to conduct pilot outreach activities for urban indigenous communities.

Finally, through innovative initiatives and essential investments, budget 2018 is helping create a strong foundation to achieve gender equality in Canada. Gender equality is not just a shared goal, it is a pathway towards an inclusive, prosperous country where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

● (1550)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech specifically dealt with some of the gender elements in the budget.

A friend of mine, a young woman, said to me that this appears to be a budget written for women by men. I think part of the reason many people see the budget in that way is that it talks about gender equality, but it really tries to dictate to women on the choices they make, and in a way which I think is out of step with where society actually is right now.

The biggest instance of this is the "use it or lose it" parental leave. The government wants to say to families that parents can no longer decide for themselves how they divide up their parental leave. From now on, the government thinks that each person has to take a certain portion of parental leave. That is because the government wants to micromanage how families divide up their responsibilities. For many families, it is not going to work. It may be a single parent family. It may be a family where one person has the kind of job where it just is much less practical for that person to take the leave than for the other person. In many cases, there may be a desire to breastfeed, which is something that men cannot do.

I wonder if the member can tell us why this budget presumes to dictate to families how they divide up their child care responsibilities. Is it not more in keeping with the nature and goal of feminism to let people make their own choices, to give them the tools and the ability to make their own choices about how they divide up responsibilities within their own family?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his commitment to feminism. I appreciated his remarks.

As the hon. member will know, according to our present legislation and the way that maternity and paternity benefits work, there is enormous parental choice. The father or mother can take parental leave. My next-door neighbour, who is a man, has done exactly that.

For the first time, we are introducing "use it or lose it" benefits for the second parent. We know that this has worked well in Scandinavian countries. We know that this has worked well in Quebec. We are on that pathway. We know that this is going to help more women get into the workforce and increase labour attachment. It is a very good policy.

Women's organizations across the country have applauded this budget, and I think would take issue with the hon. member's opinion.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member spoke a lot about the importance of gender equality. I said earlier that what is in the budget is as important as what is not there. I looked, in vain I might add, in the budget, and it does not include the much-anticipated and hoped-for pay equity legislation. It is a promise that the Liberals made 40 years ago. It is a promise that the current Liberal government made back in 2016. It is a promise that the Liberals made in the budget speech. However, in the bill itself, when the rubber hits the road, there is no pay equity legislation. How can the member square this circle? When will women finally see pay equity legislation pass in the House? Talk is cheap, and we are constantly asking women to wait, and to wait, and then to wait some more.

● (1555)

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member that it is about time, and it will be time. She is absolutely right. It was a commitment in the Liberal platform and in the budget, and proactive pay equity legislation will be brought in, in the fall of 2018.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to thank the Minister of Finance and his staff for all their hard work over the past several months to create this year's budget. Their efforts have more than paid off. Budget 2018, entitled "Equality + Growth: A Strong Middle Class", is a win for all Canadians, including my constituents of Brampton North. I am particularly excited to see the changes to the small business tax rate, which was one of our campaign commitments. It was announced in the fall of 2017, and it will come into effect once Bill C-74 is passed. We made a promise to middle-class Canadians that we would lower their taxes and make sure that everyone pays his or her fair share. With this reduction in the small business tax rate, we are keeping that promise.

When we first took office, we cut the small business tax rate down to 10.5%. We are cutting it again, down to 9% by 2019. For small business owners, this latest change would mean savings of up to $7,500 per year.

There are almost 900 small businesses in my riding alone, a fact that continues to impress me, given that Brampton North covers just 36 square kilometres. We should never underestimate the entrepreneurial spirit of Bramptonians, and indeed of all Canadians. That number should tell us just how many of my constituents this would impact.

It would mean that local institutions like Mackay Pizza, a place I loved to visit growing up as a kid, can save up more quickly for a new oven, stove, or fridge. It would mean that new restaurants like Paranthe Wali Gali, which I just visited last month and which opened a little while ago, can have the financial flexibility they need to get the most out of their first year in business. It would mean that day care centres like Alpha Child Care can buy more blankets for nap hour and more books for storytime. When small local businesses can invest in themselves, that is a win for all Canadians.

Budget 2018 also takes significant steps to strengthen Canada's workforce, making sure that for every new job our economy creates, there is a Canadian ready to fill it. We will provide $448.5 million over the next five years to the Canada summer jobs program, building on our budget 2016 commitment to more than double the number of jobs in the program.

There are many programs in my riding that take advantage of the Canada summer jobs program to hire students and provide fantastic services to the community. The Aspire for Higher basketball camp is just one of many excellent examples from Brampton North. Founded in 2013 by a group of young but passionate men and women, Aspire for Higher has made a change in the lives of many kids through sport, and makes this its number one priority regardless of each child's financial circumstances. I am grateful to Aspire for Higher for the work it has done in the Brampton community, and I am happy to say that our government has been able to provide support to its summer programming every year since we were elected. By increasing Canada summer jobs funding, we can support even more local initiatives like Aspire for Higher as they continue to build a brighter future for our communities.

This year's budget also provides substantial investments in job training for Canadians who are no longer in school, with a focus on women and minorities. The key to ensuring strong and sustainable growth is to make sure these groups have just as much opportunity to succeed as every other Canadian.

Skilled trades, especially red seal trades like welding, baking, and electrical work, offer high-quality and well-paid middle-class jobs that are critical to Canada's economic growth. Despite this, women are often significantly under-represented in these fields, making up just 11% of new registrants. As the Minister of Finance pointed out in the new budget document, this shortage hurts the few women who do work in the skilled trades. Many are both paid less and viewed as less capable than their male counterparts.

Let me be very clear: this is unacceptable. That is why we are providing $19.9 million over the next five years to a pilot apprenticeship incentive grant for women. The grant will provide funding to any woman who decides to receive training in a red seal trade that is male-dominated. Based on current industry demographics, almost 90% of red seal trades fit that definition. This means that with this one grant, we would be making an entire job sector more accessible to women. This is nothing short of remarkable.

● (1600)

Finally, I was thrilled to see that the budget is allocating $81.4 million over the next five years to improve the passenger protect program. The No Fly List Kids organization did invaluable work to make sure that this funding was included in budget 2018. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud its members for their tireless advocacy on this issue.

I would also like to thank the Ontario caucus, which I chair, for its work on this file. In the fall of last year, we sent letters to both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Public Safety asking that they take action on updating the passenger protect program. Looking at budget 2018, it is clear that our government is listening. The money would make a world of difference to the innocent Canadian children and their parents who have been unfairly caught up in Canada's air traveller screening program. It is unfair. Travelling as a family is stressful enough without delays. My son is just five years old, so I can speak from personal experience. I cannot imagine what it must be like to have one's young child stopped again and again every time one tries to fly. Our government is going to make sure that we have a fair redress system in place, so that Canadian children and their families can book flights and know with confidence that they will be safe from unnecessary and excessive screening. This is real, significant change.

Budget 2018 would have an overwhelmingly positive impact on the lives of Canadians, and I look forward to watching that happen.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was very generous of my friend to congratulate the work of the caucus that she chairs, and I appreciate the Brampton restaurant recommendations. I can assure the member that next time I am door-knocking in Brampton, I will pull up that list and be sure to take advantage of those opportunities.

I want to ask the member about the supercluster policy in this budget. She spoke about small businesses. On this side of the House at least, we agree that small businesses are very important. However, what the government is doing is continually squeezing small businesses. On the other hand, the Liberals want to spend public money from those taxes on some of these superclusters. The government wants to be involved in picking winners and losers in the economy, when it will not actually support businesses by allowing them to keep more of their own money and have the flexibility to make those investments. It is no wonder that as a result of these policies we are seeing a decline in business investment.

I wonder if the member would support the idea of moving away from these kinds of big-business government subsidies, and instead moving to a system where we actually recognize that business is best left alone to create value on its own, without the kind of interference in small-business activities that many people were concerned about in the fall and that we know still needs to be rolled back.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to address that. As I mentioned in my speech, we have lowered the tax rate for small businesses. For corporations, our tax rate is extremely fair, one of the lowest in comparison with many countries. The supercluster idea is a phenomenal idea. So many small businesses have actually created relationships in the city of Brampton. Our educational institutions and our big businesses have reached out and created bonds that are going to last a lifetime. Whether they were the chosen ones or not, businesses have been coming up to me saying that they have immensely benefited from the relationship-building and the bonds they have created by working with industry partners and institutions in their local areas.

The program is a success, and our tax rate cuts are a success. Businesses feel the confidence they need in order to create jobs and spur growth. That is exactly what our government and Canadians have done over the past several years. We have created over 600,000 jobs for Canadians, and that is with the help of the businesses that are creating these jobs, because they are confident in the work and the investments that this government is making.

● (1605)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the key issues Canadians are faced with, particularly in the immigration stream, is around the work of the IRB. At the moment, the IRB is faced with a major shortfall in resources. Although the budget recognizes that and has put some resources into it, the amount of money put into the IRB from budget 2018 would not reduce even half of the backlog of existing cases that are sitting there waiting to be processed. Over 40,000 cases are waiting to be processed, at a time when we have a situation where new claims are being added on a monthly basis to the tune of 2,100 cases.

Does the member not think that the dollars in the budget are inadequate for the IRB to do its job, and that if the government does not ensure that the IRB has the resources to process the cases in a timely fashion, then we actually put our immigration system in jeopardy?

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I am a tireless advocate for immigration and for making sure that we have an effective immigration system that Canadians and those wishing to become Canadians and members of our society can rely on.

When we took office, the immigration system was a complete mess. What hurt me the most were those cases that had to go before the IRB, such as the legacy cases that existed because the Conservatives had just said, “Whoops, well, we don't have the time to process these cases. You can wait five to six years.” I had constituents waiting five to six years who had not even had a single hearing. That is ridiculously unfair, because as we were processing new people who were arriving to the country, those people had been completely forgotten.

Now, finally, I can say that with the help of our immigration minister, the department, and the IRB, they have been quickly getting through all of those cases that were long forgotten. My constituents, those legacy cases, are getting processed. They are having their hearings. As of this last fall, I have had such good news to share with my constituents.

We have made immense improvements and we continue to make it even better. We hope to make sure that the system is perfected by the end of our term.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, may I, on behalf of my constituents in Battle River—Crowfoot, pass my condolences to the people of Humboldt and to the parents who lost a child and a hockey player in that horrific accident. I know we are all moved and we have seen other statements, but on behalf of my constituency, I want to pass on our sympathies and condolences.

It is a privilege to stand in this place this afternoon to speak to budget 2018. I would like to begin by echoing the words that our Conservative leader said on budget day, words that have been mentioned many times here in the House already. I would quote him when he said, "Never has a [Prime Minister] spent so much to achieve so little." I may add that never has a Prime Minister so blatantly made a promise and so blatantly broken a promise, not only once, not twice, but now three times.

During the 2015 election, Liberals promised there would be three modest deficits of $10 billion or under before they would return to a balanced budget in 2019. Did they keep that promise? Obviously, no. As a direct result of that broken promise, the Liberal government is on track to add $450 billion to Canada's national debt over the next 27 years, with a budget projected not to be balanced again until 2045.

The deficit this fiscal year is $18 billion, three times that which was promised. We now have a national debt of $669 billion, and the interest rate for that crippling debt is rising. This year it will be $26 billion and by 2022 it is projected to be $33 billion, which is more than the spending on any one government department, including the $25 billion that is spent on our national defence. If this is not an insult to our men and women in uniform, perhaps the fact that there is no mention of military spending in the budget is.

Of extreme disappointment to many of my constituents, there was also no mention in the budget of the agricultural sector. The only reference to farming in the budget was the $4.3 million over five years that was brought forward to support the reopening of farms at two Ontario federal penitentiaries. What does it say about Liberal priorities when inmates in our federal penitentiaries come before our farmers?

Budget 2018 also failed to address any uncertainties related to the North American Free Trade Agreement or provide a response to the major tax cuts that were announced in the United States. One month after the finance minister delivered the budget, he was quoted in the *Financial Post* as saying in reference to the significant tax changes in the United States:

> There was no place in our budget for saying speculatively what we might or might not do in the future based on analysis that hasn't been completed.

I could argue with that. I could argue, knowing the finance department, that I very much doubt that there was no analysis done or that it was incomplete moving into a budget. In terms of a budget that is going to give confidence to investors and people here in Canada, he backed away from mentioning anything that would give some confidence on the completion of that trade agreement.

He said that the Liberal government is not yet prepared to help Canadian businesses tackle competitive challenges in the face of the corporate tax rate in the United States being cut from 35% to 21%, in the face of a U.S. tax system that fully supports the adoption of new technologies, and in the face of new U.S. incentives for intellectual property and marketing until he has undertaken a complete analysis of the impact of these reports.

● (1610)

He said this despite the fact that investment in this country has been waning since the oil price collapse of 2014, with a total decline of almost 18%. Once the strongest in the G7, it has been the weakest over the past four years.

He said this despite the fact that we are struggling to attract capital investment from abroad, with foreign direct investment plunging last year to the lowest level since 2010; despite the fact that Canada's average corporate tax rate is about 27%, three percentage points above that of the world's advanced economies; and despite Canadian businesses being faced with regulatory changes, new carbon taxes, carbon prices, minimum wage hikes, and higher energy or electricity prices. He said this despite the fact that the Business Council of Canada, representing chief executives from dozens of major companies, asked the finance minister prior to the release of budget 2018 for an immediate response. There was silence.

John Manley, former Liberal finance minister and head of the Business Council of Canada, stated:

> We're hoping for a signal that the government is on the case. There's really no indication in the budget they're on the case. The first step to solving the problem is admitting that there is one. And they're not admitting that there is one.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce concluded that budget 2018 is long on spending and short on growth. It agrees with the Business Council of Canada and has implored the Liberal government to "... act with urgency to implement measures that will retain and attract business investment in Canada."

They get it: we need to attract business investment opportunities back to this country.

We on this side of the House applaud the efforts of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Business Council of Canada because we know, as do many economic experts, that business investment is the most important source of economic growth in this country. The government must leave more money in the hands of business so that it can invest more in innovation, productivity, and enhanced technologies.

However, before the government takes any steps that affect business, it needs to invite small and medium-sized business owners to the table. In his keynote speech at the April meeting of the chamber of commerce, Ken Kobly, president of the Alberta Chamber of Commerce, called out our provincial and federal governments for failing to talk with business owners on policy that affects them. As a result of this failure, Mr. Kobly said, the federal government's budget "was heavy on platitudes but light on any real long-term economic diversification plan."

Jack Mintz, of the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy, said that rather than providing real tax reform to more powerfully impact economic growth, most provisions of budget 2018 are "aimed at raising taxes, whether it's tightening international rules, throwing money at CRA to curb avoidance, [or] capping the deduction for small businesses on passive income." He said that to get any economic growth, "the Liberals are relying heavily on government spending." He further said, "It all harkens back to the 1970s, when Pierre Trudeau's policy framework offered regional development, politically driven grants, wage and price controls, a far-too-generous employment insurance program, and subsidized Crown corporations."

Obviously it comes as no surprise that the apple has not fallen far from the tree.

The province of Alberta has experienced the worse decline in investment in this country. Energy investment is at the lowest level on record, below even the worst of the 2009 recession, with a loss of over $80 billion and more than 110,000 jobs. With drilling rigs heading to the United States, where there is a more hospitable investment climate, there has been a significant decline in capital spending.

If these facts are not bad enough, a week ago Kinder Morgan announced that it has suspended work on the Trans Mountain expansion project. The blame for this development rests squarely on the shoulders of our Prime Minister, who has failed to take a single concrete step to ensure this project is completed.

John Ivison said last week, "The consequence of failure is the collapse of his entire economic and environmental framework, not to mention reputational damage from which he might never recover."

● (1615)

We need this project in Alberta. We must do all we can to get the oil moving again to a deepwater port so we can build our markets around the globe. We cannot rely on the United States. The budget does not give any encouragement for investment to come back to our country. We need to see a plan, soon, that will do this.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his great display of passion and conviction as he was alliterating his points today. I heard him reference a lot of different sources, such as Jack Mintz and various other individuals who provided their input. The fact is that we are the fastest growing country in the G7 right now. Canada is doing extremely well.

My question for the member opposite is very simple. Does he ever look to get any facts from sources other than the Fraser Institute and Rebel Media?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, I quoted a number of other articles, authors of those articles, and economists. I know the member would rather quote George Soros and that group.

However, what we have seen with the Liberal government is huge growth in program spending. The member wants to talk about all of the other things, but there has been a huge growth in program spending.

Since coming to power, the Liberals have increased program spending by 6.3% each year. This amounts to $304.9 billion projected for 2017-18, from $253 billion in the fiscal year 2014-15. This is much faster than the growth in revenue coming into the federal government, which is at 3.3%.

If we fall into another downturn and if we should fall into another recession, with the government spending as it is in good times, what will the response be in times when we fall back into zero growth or negative growth? We would not have the opportunity then to invest and kick-start the economy. We will see that it will not have the impact it would if we had balanced budgets, paying down debt, lowering taxes, and all of that, which the Liberal government has negated and not done.

● (1620)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, could my colleague comment on the fact that we have a 556-page bill. It is an omnibus bill, which is rather obese, not just omnibus? Could he suggest to the Conservatives that they support the NDP motion to split the bill in two? The government should take out the greenhouse gas pollution act part of it, which really stands on its own, so we can debate it properly in the House. It is a very important issue. I think perhaps the Conservatives would have very different reasons to want to pull that out than the NDP, but it is a very important part of the bill. There are a lot of parts of it that need more clarity.

Will the Conservatives support our desire to have that part of the bill split out so it can be debated properly here and in committee?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the member by relating a story. Not that long ago, I went to a restaurant. I sat down and had the salad. This nice big salad came, but then a bug crawled across the top if it. The waiter came, took the insect off my salad, and said "There you go."

There is nothing in this budget that is good. When we see the bad crawling across the budget, as this is, then removing one or two pieces of it is not going to make it good again. It is a bad budget. It does not meet the needs of Canadians. It is a budget that adds taxation. It is a budget that does not bring investment back to Canada. It is a budget that we see a lot of spending that even former Liberal governments would not have been caught up in.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that in 2017, only $1.9 billion was spent in infrastructure. The Liberals brag about their infrastructure, but the budget does not answer the questions of why they were incapable of getting their infrastructure dollars out the door.

Although the Liberals may talk about gender equality and some of the things that may be very well intended, as far as bringing economic growth, even John Manley, former deputy prime minister in the Liberal Party and finance minister, said this budget offered very little.

Therefore, I do not think that opening it up and pulling one or two parts out it is going fix anything in this budget.

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support of Bill C-74 and budget 2018. This is our government's third budget and another step to ensuring every Canadian has a real and fair chance at success.

Our government's plan to strengthen the middle class and to grow the economy is working. Since November 2015, the Canadian economy has created nearly 600,000 new jobs, most of which are full-time positions. Our unemployment rate is at near historic lows. Canada has had the fastest-growing economy among the G7 countries. I have heard this optimism first-hand from the residents of Brampton West.

In budget 2018, we put forward steps to ensure the benefits of our growing economy would be felt by more and more people. This budget supports our government's people-centred approach and introduces policies that will help Canadians and the middle class, and those working hard to join it.

Imani, a constituent of mine, is a single mother and is working hard to make ends meet. She is working part time as a server at a restaurant, while searching for a full-time job as a research analyst. Imani did not know that she was eligible for the working income tax benefit last tax season, so she did not claim it. To give Canadians like Imani a real chance at success, our government will replace the working income tax benefit with a new and improved Canada workers benefit for up to $2,335. The Canada workers benefit will increase both the maximum benefit amount and the income level at which the benefit phases out.

The Canada Revenue Agency will automatically consider residents for the Canada workers benefit when they complete their tax return, even if they do not claim it. This means Imani and 300,000 other low-income workers who did not claim WITB last year will receive CWB in 2019, and 70,000 Canadians will be lifted out of poverty by this policy by 2020.

Speaking of significant policies, we have to talk about the Canada child benefit. The Canada child benefit has proven to be one of the most impactful social policies for the lives of hard-working middle-class Canadians. The CCB is helping nine out of 10 families in Canada. In Brampton West alone, 36,000 children have benefited from the Canada child benefit, with $134 million in payments last year. Across our country, six million children have benefited from the CCB, with $23 billion in payments last year, with an average payment of $6,800.

At a hockey tournament in Brampton West last week, I met Reena. She told me about her 10-year-old son Raj's dream of goal tending for the Toronto Maple Leafs. With modest incomes, Reena and her husband Gautam could not afford to enrol Raj in a hockey league without the Canada child benefit. This year's CCB payments went toward Raj's goalie equipment. I am proud to report that Raj earned his first shutout last week. Increasing the Canada child benefit payments amount and indexing payments will help ensure more children like Raj have the opportunity to explore their dreams.

Budget 2018 is also putting gender at the heart of its decision-making. Advancing gender equality is not only the right thing to do; it also makes sense from a purely economic standpoint. A study by McKinsey and Company states that we could add $150 billion to the Canadian economy by 2026 through steps to advance gender equality for women.

Budget 2018 was guided by a gender results framework and helped form policy that would work to help support women and girls, reduce the gender wage gap, and increase the participation of women in the labour force, which helps boost economic growth for all Canadians.

An example of this policy-making is the new employment insurance parental sharing benefit that will give greater flexibility to parents by providing an additional five weeks of El parental benefits when both parents agree to share parental leave. This “use it or lose it” incentive encourages a second parent in two-parent families to share more equally in the work of raising their children, which will allow greater flexibility for new moms to return to work sooner, if they so choose.

● (1625)

A few months ago, I had the opportunity to meet a young family in Brampton West. I heard about the challenges the parents faced in raising their newborn child while having to worry about how the mother would return to work. With the changes made by our government, she will be able to go back to work to support her family and not fear being left behind when it comes to her career.

Budget 2018 id also supporting women-owned businesses so they can grow, find new customers, and access more opportunities.

Balbir is an extremely motivated entrepreneur with a passion for teeth as a dental hygienist. Some members of the House may have seen her on the last season of CBC's *Dragon's Den*, discussing her mobile dental hygiene practice. Through budget 2018, we would make more capital available for women entrepreneurs, like Balbir, so many more women can take their businesses to the next level.

The $1.65 billion in new financing for women will help us create the economic foundations of tomorrow. Additionally, with a total commitment of $105 million over five years, budget 2018 also supports investments directly in women-owned businesses and in initiatives that provide women with better access to essential business resources, such as networking and mentorship opportunities.

While we work to become more inclusive of women in our economy, we must also look to supporting those who have served our country. As a proud sister of a brother who continues to serve our country in the Canadian Armed Forces, the government is committed to ensuring the well-being of our veterans and their families. The budget delivers for our veterans and helps them live a productive life post-service. In budget 2018, we are implementing our new pension for life option for veterans which will deliver a tax-free monthly payment for life to recognize pain and suffering. It will provide an income replacement payable at 90% of a veteran's pre-release salary, indexed annually.

The Conservatives had 10 years to make the changes veterans were asking for, but they did absolutely nothing. They did nothing but cut budgets, close offices, and ignore the voices of our veterans. Budget 2018 also shows our continued commitment to veterans and their families. That is a commitment we made to our veterans and we will do exactly that to support them and their families.

The steps we have taken in budget 2018 will help Canadians of all stripes access more opportunity by ensuring they have the support, the resources, and the confidence they need to succeed. We have made great strides for the past three years. I know Canadians are looking forward to many more this year, and we will continue.

I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to improving the lives of so many Canadians in Brampton West and across our country. I am proud to support the bill and the budget. It creates opportunities for middle-class Canadians, while making lives easier. I strongly encourage all members to do the same and support this critical legislation.

● (1630)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the parliamentary secretary for national revenue's expertise on the national revenue file, why is there nothing in the budget implementation bill, or the budget, or anywhere else in the government's legislation plan to tackle issues such as the CEO stock option loopholes, and especially the offshore tax havens? There are estimates that we could bring in $10 billion to $12 billion more revenue every year if we closed down offshore tax havens, which would help her government pay its debts.

I will again mention one egregious example. A Canadian mining company has gotten away with not paying $690 million in Canadian taxes because it funnels its profits through Luxembourg, where it has one part-time employee. Could she comment on that, and why we continually not only allow this but add to the number of countries where we allow people to put their tax money offshore instead of in Canada?

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, I have said many times in the House that cracking down on tax evasion is a priority for our government. Budget 2018 invests almost $100 million in the CRA, and that is in addition to nearly $1 billion in the last two budgets to allow it to go even further in terms of fighting tax evasion.

This budget also includes legislative changes that would close tax loopholes used by multinationals. We have fully adopted the international standard for the automatic exchange of information with our OECD partners. Starting this year, we will have access to even more data from other jurisdictions, which will enable us to pursue tax cheats even more efficiently. As I have said before, tax cheats cannot hide anymore.

This government has shown leadership on this, and we will continue to do just that.

Ms. Kim Rudd (Northumberland—Peterborough South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard an earlier speaker talk about SMEs. I am an entrepreneur, and as an entrepreneur and a woman, I appreciate so many of the measures in the budget that support women and the work we do.

In my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, I have the great privilege of meeting with many industry leaders and having conversations about how they see the benefit of more women, more indigenous people, and more people with disabilities involved in the world of work as well as on boards and in positions of authority.

I wonder if the member could talk a bit about the importance of getting women into these roles, and particularly about the $74 million for women to get into the red seal trades. There is a shortage of trades in this country, and we are getting a great response to that. I wonder if she could talk a bit about that as well.

● (1635)

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud of budget 2018, because it puts gender equality at the centre. For the first time ever, a GBA+ analysis was done on the entire budget to make sure that every budget policy was looked at through a gender lens. This is a policy we will continue in the future.

We are taking a leadership role in addressing the gender wage gap in the budget, in supporting equal parenting, and in tackling gender-based violence and sexual harassment. We are also introducing a new entrepreneurship strategy for women.

As I stated earlier in my speech, and as studied by Mackenzie Global, by taking steps to advance equality for women in the workforce, such as employing women in technology and the trades and boosting women's participation in the workforce, we could add $150 billion to our Canadian economy by 2026.

We understand that to move forward as a country, we have to include everyone, including women, indigenous voices, and minorities in this country. That is exactly what the budget does, and that is exactly what we will continue to work toward.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. 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 Peace River—Westlock, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Employment Insurance; and the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Indigenous Affairs.

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-74, the budget implementation bill for 2018, and to provide comments on the budget in general.

I will start by simply pointing out that this is another unnecessarily huge bill that is very difficult to digest and properly critique in the time allotted. It is not just an omnibus bill. It is really an obese bill that is 556 pages long and amends 44 separate pieces of legislation.

The Liberals decried the practice of the past Conservative government numerous times and ran on an election promise to abolish these bloated bills. However, they have not only continued the practice but have actually restricted the length of debate on these bills at committee.

The NDP, for one thing, is asking that the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act within this bill be pulled out and debated separately. This is a very important issue on carbon pricing, and I think it needs a full debate so that Canadians can hear how critical it is to our efforts to tackle climate change and meet our Paris targets. There is a lack of clarity in the greenhouse gas pollution pricing act, and a lot of details have been left out. It really needs to be studied carefully at committee.

Carbon pricing is an important tool in our fight against climate change, and we need to ensure that the positive outcomes from such legislation in British Columbia, where carbon emissions declined as long as its carbon tax was gradually increasing, are replicated federally.

In such a large bill, it is perhaps not surprising that there are a few parts of the budget I was very happy to see. One is the nature fund, a $500-million fund that will be matched by non-governmental partners to provide over a billion dollars to protect important ecosystems across the country.

Before I was elected to this place, I sat on the board of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and I was proud of the accomplishments of that organization in protecting more than a million hectares of land across the country. Many of those projects were at least partly funded by a similar fund created by the former Conservative government.

I do not often have good reasons to thank the previous Conservative government, so I will take this opportunity to do that and hope that this nature fund will do even more for conservation efforts across Canada, such as in the Garry oak savanna of southern Vancouver Island, the desert grasslands of the Okanagan valley, the native prairie grasslands, the Carolinian forests of Ontario, and the salt marshes of Atlantic Canada. This fund provides an exciting opportunity to really make a difference, and I commend the government for creating it. I wait anxiously to hear the details, because they seem rather lacking right now.

On the subject of protected areas, I must add a bit of disappointment related to the Minister of Finance's budget speech. He clearly said that the national park fees were going to be done away with for good. I actually applauded that, and I do not really applaud the Minister of Finance very often. Unfortunately, I found out the next day that he had misspoken and that the promise only applied to youth. I will say that free parks would be a brilliant way to get Canadians out into this country's most beautiful places to appreciate the natural wonders Canada has to offer.

Getting back to the good news in the budget, I was also glad to see the significant new funding for fundamental research, an action that was recommended in the recent Naylor report. I used to work at the University of British Columbia and can speak first-hand to the essential nature of basic research. While applied research is important, the most innovative and game-changing discoveries science has given us have come from the pure curiosity of scientists, and this funding is most welcome.

We in the NDP were very happy, at least initially, to hear the word "pharmacare" mentioned in the budget. Canada is the only country in the world with universal health care that does not have universal coverage for prescription drugs. The Parliamentary Budget Officer reported last year that Canada would save a minimum of $4 billion per year if we had a universal pharmacare program. We in the NDP have been championing this for years, and last year we tabled a motion asking the government to begin talking with the provinces within the next year about creating a pharmacare system across Canada. The Liberals inexplicably voted against this eminently reasonable motion, saying that it was not the right time.

Now is the time for pharmacare. Unfortunately, our initial excitement about the mention of pharmacare in the budget was dashed when we realized that this would be only another study, and a study without a dime of spending attached to it. Of course, it is not mentioned at all in Bill C-74.

● (1640)

The government should act immediately to bring pharmacare to Canada, and while it is at it, the Liberals might want to consider adding teeth, eyes, and ears to universal health care, and any other body parts we might have forgotten about when we created medicare.

What else is missing from this budget and from this massive bill? Despite government claims that this budget was all about equality in gender, there is not one cent in it to tackle the pay equity gap in Canada. I was really encouraged a couple of years ago, very early on in this Parliament, to see the Liberals vote in favour of an NDP motion on pay equity, but two years later, there has been nothing done to really advance pay equity across this country.

For a budget on equality, this budget completely missed the boat on narrowing the income gap between the one per cent, the wealthiest Canadians, and the rest of us. Today the two wealthiest Canadians, two individuals, have as much wealth as 11 million other Canadians. Many CEOs of big Canadian companies receive much of their salary, millions of dollars per year, in stock options, on which they pay only a fraction of the tax that we mortals pay. Fixing this inequity alone could bring $800 million to help balance the budget or fund programs that would make Canadians' lives easier.

Offshore tax havens are an even more blatant form of tax avoidance. Following the release of the paradise papers, some analysts calculated that Canada is losing between $10 billion and $15 billion per year in lost taxes. The Conference Board of Canada has suggested that the gap between what taxes are owed in Canada and what the government actually collects may be as high as $47 billion. One Canadian mining company has avoided paying $690 million in Canadian taxes simply because it reports its profits in Luxembourg, where it has one part-time staffer. It is ridiculous and shameful, but it is completely legal, because the country got written permission for the scam from the Canada Revenue Agency. The government continues to add offshore tax havens to the list available for Canadian companies and individuals, so now they can hide their wealth in Granada or the Cook Islands if Barbados and the other many countries with very low-tax regimes do not suit them.

Finally, I will wrap up by simply pointing out that there is no new spending in this budget for climate action, despite the clear signals that Canada will fail to meet its Paris climate targets. We need bold action and significant investment on this front. Instead of pouring money into Barbados, the Cook Islands, or Luxembourg, let us invest those billions in eco-energy retrofits, renewable energy incentives, and electrical vehicle infrastructure to get back on track and make Canada a better place to live for our children and their children.

● (1645)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue talk about the investments we have made over the last three budgets in the CRA. I happened to be in Granada when we signed the agreement between our two countries to share information around our taxes to ensure that we were adequately taxing companies that had accounts there, and they were able to share that information with us. I wonder if my hon. colleague could correct the record on the relationship we have with some of these countries to ensure that the companies are sharing the information we need to crack down on tax evaders.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I am not an expert on the Granada situation, but I do know that Canadians and Canadian companies can funnel their profits through other countries that have very low-tax regimes. There is the example I just gave. Here we have a company that puts its profits through Luxembourg, where it has a part-time consultant staffer and can report that profit as being made in Luxembourg, and the company is avoiding $690 million in Canadian taxes. It does pay $80 million or something to Luxembourg, but Canada is losing $690 million. That is not some shady thing. It is legal, because the company went to CRA beforehand and got a signed letter saying that it was okay. This is where that has to stop.

I am not a tax lawyer. I do not know how these things work, but that is wrong, and we have to fix it. All the talk about how much CRA is working to go after the little fish in Canada and after the small businesses is really annoying to most Canadians. They want the big fish caught, and they want to see that money stay here in Canada where it can be put to good use.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for giving credit to our previous Conservative government for some good policies.

We hear from the government that there is $1.1 billion being given to the Canada Revenue Agency in order to help fight tax evasion. However, we hear how annoyed Canadians are that the CRA is going after the small guy here in Canada.

Does the hon. member believe that the money that is given to the CRA is working to fight tax evasion or is it just rhetoric to blow more money on an agency like the CRA?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I would follow up on what I said previously. The CRA seems intent on getting $100 here or $1,000 there, and is going after the little fish, regular Canadians and small businesses. They are not the real tax avoiders. They are not the real tax cheats. Many of them are just trying to make a living and trying to build their companies to provide jobs for Canadians. The CRA and the government seem intent on making it more difficult.

The government floated the small business tax measures in the middle of last summer with only a short comment period. Canadians rose up in real anger over that. I heard from so many of the small business owners in my riding. Naturally, they were very irate about that. However, after a lot of push-back from the Conservatives and the NDP, the government has moved back on some of these measures.

This whole attitude of going after the little fish is wrong. We should be bringing in strong legislation that helps us fight offshore tax havens and limits the CEO stock option loopholes, that can fight tax cheats in Canada and bring in revenue that we need to help Canadians who are struggling in their daily lives.

● (1650)

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the budget implementation act is the next step in the government's plan to grow and strengthen the middle class by promoting equality and investing in the economy of the future. As the representative for Richmond Hill, I am proud to stand today to speak to these targeted measures, which are evidence-based policy proposals that are not only the right thing to do, but are also the smart thing to do.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to discuss Bill C-74 and the measures in budget 2018 by highlighting two of the most important and innovative benefits the budget has to offer, namely the Canada child benefit and the Canada workers benefit.

Unemployment rates are near the lowest levels we have seen in 40 years, and over the last two years, hard-working Canadians have created nearly 600,000 new jobs, most of them full-time jobs. We should all be proud that since 2016, Canada has led the G7 countries in economic growth.

I will spend the rest of my time today on what steps the government is taking to provide more support for parents and low-income workers, strong measures that create greater opportunity.

In budget 2018, the government introduced the new Canada workers benefit, CWB, putting more money in the pockets of low-income workers. The new CWB encourages more people to join the workforce, and offers real help to more than two million Canadians who are working hard to join the middle class.

This new benefit would provide even greater support than existing benefits by raising maximum benefit levels and expanding the income range so that more workers can qualify. By ensuring low-income workers take home more money while they work, the benefit encourages more people to join and remain in the workforce. It gives them more purchasing power and more money to invest in what matters to them most. This single measure supports businesses, workers, and families.

I am going to take a moment to give hon. members a rundown of exactly how the CWB would help working Canadians. The low-income workers earning $15,000 would receive up to almost $500 more from the CWB in 2019 than under the previous system in 2018. Whether this extra money is used for things such as helping to cover the family grocery bill or buying warm clothing for winter, the bottom line is that the Canada workers benefit helps low-income working Canadians make ends meet.

The government is also proposing to increase the maximum benefit provided through the CWB disability supplement by an additional $160 to offer greater support to Canadians with disabilities who face financial barriers to entering the workforce.

Again, these measures are not only the right thing to do, but they are also the smart thing to do. These targeted measures will help Canadians day to day, while the increased economic activity will lift the Canadian economy quarter by quarter.

Furthermore, starting in 2019, the government will also make it easier for people to access the benefit they have earned by making changes that would allow the Canada Revenue Agency to calculate the CWB for any tax filer who has not claimed it. Allowing the CRA to automatically provide the benefit to eligible filers would be especially helpful to people with reduced mobility, people who live far from service locations, and people who do not have Internet access.

In my own riding of Richmond Hill, I coordinated a free tax clinic for many constituents, helping to ensure that nearly 50 of them received the full tax benefit that they were entitled to. The reality is that many Canadians do not have the money to hire tax consultants or the time to invest in researching the tax benefit that may be available to them. By simplifying our tax code and automatically providing the benefits to eligible filers, we will ensure that everyone who can benefit from the CWB actually will.

An estimated 300,000 additional low-income workers would receive the new CWB for the 2019 tax year because of this change. These are Canadians who would not have otherwise received the benefit to which they are entitled.

● (1655)

In my riding of Richmond Hill, based on the 2011 census data, 3.7% of the workers in my riding make below $10,000 annually, and 5% earn between $10,000 to $19,000. That translates to 17,400 people who potentially will benefit from this.

The bottom line is that enhancements to supports under the new CWB will also raise roughly 70,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2020. Combined with the previous enhancement, the government is investing almost $1 billion in new annual funding starting in 2019 to put more money into the hands of low-income workers, which means more money into Canadian businesses and new opportunities for low-income Canadians.

Over the next year, the government will also begin work on improving the delivery of the CWB to proactively provide better support to low-income Canadians throughout the year rather than through an annual refund after filing their taxes.

I would like to spend some time highlighting one of the most important social benefits introduced in decades. Since 2016, the government has been supporting Canadian families through the Canada child benefit, CCB. The CCB gives low-income and middle-income parents more money each month, tax-free, to help with the high costs of raising kids through a streamlined, generous, and, most importantly, targeted system. Thanks to the CCB, nine out of 10 Canadian families have extra help each month to pay for things like healthy food, music lessons, and back-to-school clothes.

In 2016, there were 9,220 families in my riding of Richmond Hill, which translates to 14,360 children, who had received over $4.5 million through the Canada child benefit. This is real help going to families who need it the most. It is a number that will only increase as our community continues to grow. Canadians realize the impact of this program in making it easier to start a family, and our new measures expand the benefits of the CCB.

Families benefiting from the CCB are getting $6,800 on average this year. Since its introduction, the CCB has lifted hundreds of thousands of Canadian children out of poverty. I cannot overstate the importance of this accomplishment, and every member in this House who supported this initiative should be proud of the very real difference they have made in the lives of children across the country. This is the real change we promised, which is why I am pleased to say that Bill C-74 will strengthen the CCB by increasing the benefits annually to keep pace with the rising cost of living. This is two years earlier than originally planned, which was made possible thanks to a growing economy and an improved fiscal track.

In conclusion, to ensure that the benefits of a growing economy are felt by more and more people with good, well-paying jobs for the middle class and those people working hard to join it, we need to maximize workforce participation by creating more incentives for people to transition to work and to stay in the workforce while providing targeted benefits that assist Canadians who need it in their day-to-day activities. This bill, I believe, will do just that.

For these reasons, I urge all members to support the budget implementation act.

● (1700)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the hallmarks of this budget, given the fact that it is an omnibus budget bill, is that ongoing debt and deficit situations are going to happen. To put it in perspective, my 14-year-old right now will be approximately 42 or 43 years of age before we return to balanced budgets. The deficit situation is going to increase by almost $500 billion to become $1 trillion. Today's debt and deficits are tomorrow's taxes and service cuts.

I wonder how the member reconciles the fact that we are saddling so many young people in this country with debt and deficit.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, the perceived deficit is an infrastructure deficit. This is an investment that we are making in the growth of our economy. As the member can see, it is already paying off. Over the last two years, we have created 600,000 jobs, most of them full-time jobs. Also, as members know, the debt-to-GDP ratio is the lowest among the G7 countries.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Richmond Hill for his speech and his focus on families, but I hope everyone has brought their sense of irony with them today.

Bill C-74 contains 556 pages and amends 44 separate acts. It is bigger, by 100 pages, than anything the Conservatives ever did.

What I am going to ask, since the government has gone that far, is why there are no concrete measures in this budget to protect workers' pensions. Why is there nothing there to prevent companies from paying—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Do you want a bigger bill?

Mr. Randall Garrison: That is what I am saying. You went this far, so you might as well have a bigger bill. Then you could have protected workers' pensions against companies paying their shareholders and paying out their profits before they take care of what they owe their workers. You could have included the pay equity legislation that we have been waiting for, which would have a big impact on families, or you could have done something about the fact that only four out of 10 unemployed workers can actually access benefits from the EI program.

Why, when you have gone all this way to 556 pages, did you not do some of those things that actually would help working families and those who are trying to retire?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am sure the hon. member was asking a question of the member for Richmond Hill rather than wanting an answer from me. I want to remind hon. members to ask the question through the Chair, not to the Chair.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, as members know, our government has done a great job on the pension front. I do realize that this is a great step for us to be able to take in our next or future budgets. I thank the member. We will consider that in our future considerations.

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Richmond Hill on a very well-researched presentation, especially in dealing with some of the numbers involved in the benefits that are being received by his constituents.

I think many of us have crunched the numbers, and I know that in my own riding several million dollars of investment, even on a monthly basis, is occurring. I wonder if the member has made the same observation I have in Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, which is that the money almost immediately goes right back into the economy.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for highlighting the benefit that he is also receiving as a result of the CCB.

As I mentioned, close to 14,300 children in my riding are receiving the benefit. You are right that the benefit is going directly into buying what these children potentially might not have benefited from. It is going directly into the economy, whether through buying books or school supplies or through registration in after-school classes that could help them to continue their education.

I have made similar observations. I challenge all my colleagues to make sure that they extract that data on the number of families receiving the benefit, the number of children receiving the benefit, and the total amount that is going to the economy.

This has a day-to-day benefit. When it comes to our economy, it is making quarterly benefits. As we can see, it has generated over 600,000 full-time jobs.

● (1705)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Once again I want to remind hon. members to place their questions through the Chair and not directly to the other members.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by apologizing. I have been battling a bit of a chest cold that has gone into my head, so I have that frog voice and may have to take a couple of drinks of water. However, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the budget, and in particular to speak to it as seen through the eyes and the lens of the people of Barrie—Innisfil.

We just had a couple of weeks in which we were able to spend time in our ridings, and I certainly took advantage of that, meeting with a lot of individuals and groups and stakeholders, including high school students, and meeting with seniors in seniors' residences. In the course of those conversations, there were great questions that came up, but there were also significant concerns related to the direction our country is going, more so because of the experience we have had as Ontarians in seeing the decimating effects of debt and deficits and the impact they have had in reducing government services, whether in health care or in education. In fact, it is well known that if the provincial debt in Ontario was a department, it would actually be the third most expensive department, behind education and health care.

When we put it in that context and think of the devastating effect of debt and deficits, we are certainly heading down that path here federally with the Liberal government. Quite simply, we are heading there because the architects of the debt and deficit situation and of the failed green energy program in Ontario are the same people who are now in the shadows of the PMO, directing government policy, directing this Prime Minister with respect to some of those failed policies. Of course, we know who they are: Gerald Butts and his good friend Katie, who have come here to effectively do what they have done to Ontario. Quite frankly, they are doing a terrific job at it by comparison to Ontario.

I had an opportunity to visit a high school last week, and there were great questions. We talked a lot about foreign policy and about legislation, and these high school students were deeply informed. They are part of a global perspectives program. In fact, this week they are in Cuba, doing some work there to understand certain aspects of government literally around the world. That is where these students travel to.

One question in particular really struck me. It was near the end of the conversation. I had spent almost an hour and 20 minutes with these young students, and somebody said to me, "What do you think of the Prime Minister?"

Now, of course I would look at that as a loaded question, but I was more than honest with the student. I said, "You know, he is a nice guy. He really is. I believe that your Prime Minister is a nice guy, but I think he is a terrible prime minister." I was quite frank with them. I said that because of the situation we are in fiscally and the path we are heading down fiscally, the debt and deficit situation.

We heard, of course, the promise of the last election. There were lots of promises in the last election. One of them was not to have any omnibus bills, and what are we facing here? An omnibus bill by the Liberal government.

As for the debt and deficit situation, the government talked about $6 billion in debt. We know that this year it is three times more. As I said earlier, the projected deficit is not expected to be balanced for at least another 30 years or so. Think of how that is going to impact those young people, and that is exactly what I said to them. I said that today's debt and deficits are tomorrow's taxes and reduced services, just as we have witnessed in Ontario over the course of the last 15 years. That is precisely what is happening here, and it is scary. It is scary not just for my four children but for every one of those high school kids, who will be expected to pay for this just like the younger generations are in Ontario. This spending and this debt and deficit situation is going to cripple these young people.

● (1710)

I have heard that the average household in our country has about $47,000 in debt. When coupled with the federal debt and deficit situation, the provincial debt and deficit situation, and the requirement of municipalities to take from their taxpayers what they need in order to produce the goods and services they do for their communities, we cannot take it all from these people. How much is too much?

Just the other day, I met with the Canadian Police Association, and I asked, "Is a 53% marginal tax rate too much? Is 55%, 57%, 60% or 70% too much?" That is the path we are heading down.

What the government likes to do is take from producers and give it to the non-producers. That is precisely what is happening here with this program spending. That is why we are not seeing the deficit situation correct itself for almost a generation. This is the same generation the finance minister speaks to and says there will be a generation of job churn in our country. It does not provide much hope when the finance minister is talking in those terms.

The other interesting thing about the budget is what I call the Liberal election slush fund. The fact is that the Liberals are allocating $7 billion to the Treasury Board and this money can be dispensed in other departments as we head to an election, and the accountability of this will not even come until after the next election. What do we think the Liberal government is going to do with this money? There will be goodies floating around. We can bet that Gerald Butts is already figuring out where this money is going to go, just like what we are seeing in Ontario. If someone wants a free pony, Kathleen Wynne will give it to that person in this election. That is the way it works with these guys. They try to buy votes, so this $7-billion slush fund will be used exactly for that.

I will remind Canadians every chance I get that the Liberals came here and talked about transparency and accountability, saying that things would be better under this government. The fact is that they are far less transparent and far less accountable, and the $7-billion slush fund proves that.

The other issue in the budget is carbon taxes and the impact they are going to have on families. I have news for the members. We live in a barren, cold country that requires us to heat our homes and to drive to certain places. The Liberal government is going to penalize people for the necessities of life, adding 11¢ per litre as a result of a carbon tax, and $264 a month for each family to heat its home. Those numbers are real, and they are quantifiable. Blindly raising these types of taxes for people, the government will not even tell us what the impact of a carbon tax is going to be in terms of reducing emissions. It will not tell us what a $50 tax on carbon producers is going to mean in terms of reducing emissions. If it does not know the answer, how can Canadians have any confidence and give any support to the implementation of a carbon tax?

Lastly, the budget does not speak to the issue of competitiveness. We clearly see that the United States is going one way with taxes and regulations, and Canada is going another way. The Liberals talk about gender equality. This is a gender equality budget, they say. It is mentioned over 300 times in the budget. The reality is that they are truly heading toward gender equality. We have seen the flight of $84 billion of capital from our natural resource sector. Gender equality will happen when no one is working in this country. Then, clearly, everybody will be making nothing. That will be the Liberals' definition of gender equality with respect to what they are doing to our natural resource sector.

On the issue of pipelines, I have a news flash. The Liberals do not want pipelines in this country. They do not want Trans Mountain. They can stand and shout to the hilltops all they want, but the reality is that they do not want us to be a carbon-producing country. In spite of the assertions of the Prime Minister, we know the truth. Basically, what he said in Paris was that if he could turn the switch tomorrow, he would. More importantly, the evidence of that is clearly those who are working in the shadow of the PMO and Gerald Butts.

● (1715)

What he has said, and it is very clear and Canadians need to understand this, is that the government is not looking for alternative routes for pipelines or alternative pipelines. It is looking for an alternative economy. This budget will hurt our economy. The Liberals will hurt our economy. I am not going to support this for the people of Barrie—Innisfil.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of things in my colleague's speech stood out to me. I am sure my colleague and everyone in the House are proud Canadians. I am a proud Canadian. Our Prime Minister is everyone's Prime Minister.

For someone who goes into schools as often as I do and has held as many town halls as I have, 29 so far, I have heard from many people. When the previous government was in power, people told me they were concerned about the cuts to veterans offices and to science. I still hear those concerns, but now I am feeling optimism from our young people.

I do not believe the $47,000 in debt that my hon. colleague mentioned was accumulated in the last two and a half years. That was probably through a series of lifetime decisions made by a previous government.

My constituents have told me they feel more optimistic about evidence-based policies and about having the facts behind them.

On the new tax-free Canada child benefit, what is my colleague hearing from his constituents on the benefits of that and how they are using it?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, once again, I have respect for my hon. colleague. We went to high school together. Three of us sitting in the House, including the Minister of Innovation and Science, all went to the same high school.

The child care benefit is one of those issues I do hear about, but I hear about it in the context of the amount of debt and deficit that each Canadian household faces. It is not just the accumulated amount, but the fact that we currently have the highest consumer debt nation in the G7. A Bloomberg report just over a year ago said that a strong majority of people were using the child tax benefit to deal with their debt situation.

I do not come from a generation, and I am sure the hon. member does not come from a generation, where we want to put ourselves in a position of ongoing, sustainable debt. We have to ensure that not only our consumers, our households are in a position to thrive and succeed, but governments need to set the example. When we talk about a generation of significant deficits and debt, we are not providing the example we need.

Furthermore, if there is a downturn in the economy, what room will the government have to manoeuvre which will not cause pain for the average Canadian family? That is a fair question.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this debate today.

I want to ask my colleague a question about the Prime Minister's comments. The Prime Minister was to western Canada last week and he gave us a story about how committed he was to both the Alberta and Saskatchewan energy industries. Then of course the pipeline story broke and since then he has talked a lot but he has not done anything.

I was very concerned when I heard about his conversation in France. He goes to another country and he gives a completely different story than he has given in Canada. He tries to leave an impression in western Canada and then he goes to France, says that the he does not support the energy industry and he would like to shut it down as quickly as possible.

Could the member tell us what he thinks about a leader who says one thing to one group of people when he wants to get their support and says something completely else when he is on the international stage and thinks Canadians are not listening to him?

● (1720)

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, it is symptomatic of a problem that the Prime Minister has with respect to saying one thing and doing another. We saw this during the election campaign when he talked about it being the last time an election would be held under first past the post. He backtracked on that. He has backtracked on multiples of other things.

On the issue of pipelines, and this is really concerning to me, is the fact that he stands in front of Canadians, goes to Fort McMurray, speaks to the Alberta oil sector, speaks to all Canadians about the fact that this pipeline will be built. Imagine the Premier of British Columbia, the Premier of Alberta, and the Prime Minister getting together. I do not have a lot of confidence that any one of them wants this pipeline to be built quite frankly.

Again, the Prime Minister, in all his bravado, stands and says one thing, but there is no chance the Prime Minister and the Liberal government want a pipeline built. The Liberals want it gone, because they think our natural resource sector, the people who depend on it and the people who are employed by it are dirty. That is the fact of this. The Liberals can stand all they want and say they want a pipeline built, but the reality and the truth is they do not.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer a few comments today on legislation that will implement many of the commitments made in budget 2018.

While there are many things I would love to touch on that have been canvassed during the course of this debate, I will restrict my comments to two key themes. The first is the measures that seek to ensure that all Canadians have a shot at success in Canada in the 21st century. The second is that budget 2018, in my mind, is a budget for Atlantic Canadians.

The first theme, if I can boil down the general thesis of this government to a single idea, is that we need to create a society and an economy that works for everyone. The opportunity to succeed or to experience happiness in Canada should not depend on whether someone's family comes from money, but should accrue to a person by virtue of being Canadian.

If I look at some of the first measures we adopted, there is a consistent theme that carries through to the legislation we are debating today. The very first measure we adopted as a government was to raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% of Canadians and cut taxes for the middle class. We followed up on that initiative by introducing the Canada child benefit, which puts more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families, and we stopped sending child care cheques to millionaires. Incredibly, this program has cut childhood poverty for 300,000 children.

Anecdotally in my own experience, I have spoken to families that have told me this benefit has allowed them to enrol their children in swimming lessons. I had a single mother tell me that, for the first time, she was able to afford new clothes for her children on the first day of school because of the new income from the Canada child benefit.

We love to cash things in with respect to economic growth and in GDP development, which is very important, but we cannot forget there are very human experiences behind those numbers. Talking to the families in my riding and hearing them tell me that their kids are better off because of this policy, lets me know we are on the right track.

We built upon these investments by investing in a national housing strategy. I would like to thank the member for Spadina—Fort York for his work on this important file. We continue to invest in measures that will improve the lives of Canadian families.

When I look at the budget implementation act, I can point to measures like the Canada workers benefit. This benefit is more generous and replaces the very valuable working income tax benefit. It is kind of complicated to understand for a lot of people who do not dig into tax policy, so I hope my colleagues will allow me just a moment to explain in very basic terms what this does.

This policy was designed to help people who were working hard in our communities but could not seem to get ahead. Now we talk a lot, admittedly, about the middle class and those working hard to join it. This policy is designed specifically for those working hard to join it. People who are earning $15,000 a year and are working hard will see a benefit of about $2,300 through this new policy, which accrues to them automatically. That is $500 more than they earn today, and $500 for a person earning $15,000 a year makes a significant difference in the quality of that person's life.

If I look at other measures, like indexing the Canada child benefit, I know we are doing the right thing. If we have measures that are designed to help with the cost of living, those measures need to continue to increase as the cost of living increases. The value of benefit today needs to adjust as the cost of living goes up. It is one thing if that single mom is able to afford a new outfit for her kids on the first day of school this year. However, I want to ensure this program stays intact so that family can continue to afford those basics in life, which so many of us take for granted, 10 or 20 years from now and that her grandchildren can enjoy those kinds of benefits in perpetuity.

I will change gears a bit and talk about some of the measures I saw in budget 2018 that are designed for Atlantic Canada. This is an issue that is very near and dear to my heart. One of the reasons I got involved in politics was the fact that so many people from my region had a hard time staying in Atlantic Canada, despite the fact they want nothing more than to do that.

I was a young person who gained an education. After eight years in university, I realized I had to pay down some pretty serious student loans and quickly found myself moving west to Calgary to find work. I was able to move back home. I looked at what my family was doing and I saw that a great number of my family members had to move to find work. I have five sisters, two who moved to Ontario for work when I was thinking about running for office. I had to move to Calgary to find a job. I had two sisters, with two university degrees, who became teachers. One moved out of the province and another had her husband flying in and out of the Middle East to work in the energy sector. My youngest sister finished her education and moved to Halifax from our rural community so she could find work.

My family is not unique. My family and my community could be replaced with any other family or community in Atlantic Canada and the same story would be true. We need to do more to ensure there are opportunities for families and people to stay in their communities if that is what they want to do.

● (1725)

When I look at some of the measures we have adopted, we have an economic growth strategy designed specifically for Atlantic Canada. This strategy has seen a new immigration pilot introduced for our region to ensure our communities, which are getting older, have an influx of people to fill our labour market needs, and also build stronger, more vibrant communities.

I see measures to increase innovation in Atlantic Canada, like the ocean supercluster, which will help us tap into the strategic resource, the Atlantic Ocean.

I see opportunities from the infrastructure spending we have seen. My riding alone has seen projects like the Trades and Innovation Centre at the Nova Scotia Community College Pictou campus. It put about 120 people to work for a while, but it also leaves the community with a strategic asset that will educate our skilled workers for generations.

I have seen investments at St. Francis Xavier University in the new institute of government and the Centre for Innovation in Health.

I see our municipalities being able to afford water and wastewater treatment facilities. I see our small craft harbours being built, which creates jobs in the short term but provides economic security for our rural communities by providing our fishermen with a safe place to fish going forward for years.

It is important to me that we are making these kinds of investments. However, when I look at budget 2018, I see this trend is continuing. This is not some flippant theme we had in the first few years of our government. This is a long-term commitment. We have seen, after a significant advocacy from my Atlantic caucus colleagues, $250 million put into small craft harbours to ensure these wharves continue to be repaired and our harbour infrastructure continues to support our fishing communities.

We see measures like the investment to protect against the threat posed by the spruce budworm, which was seriously threatening the forestry sector in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. We have seen our forests decimated in different parts of the country and in our region at different times in our history. However, to know we are putting $75 million to protect these strategic resources, our forests, to help people work in our natural resources sector is incredibly important to me.

In addition, our regional development agency, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, has seen an increased investment to the tune of $48 million in budget 2018. This will help ensure our communities can tap into economic development opportunities when they present themselves. This is very serious. In Atlantic Canada, we depend on this agency to help build more vibrant communities and to support businesses scale up and hire more people.

As long as I hold this position, I will not give up on supporting those who need our help to ensure that whether people come from money or come from nothing, the Government of Canada will be behind them. I will continue to be an advocate for the economy in Atlantic Canada so our families can succeed and call Atlantic Canada home for generations into the future.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS ACT

The House resumed from March 29 consideration of Bill C-374, An Act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at report stage of Bill C-374, under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1810)

[*English*]

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

(Division No. 648)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Aubin
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Benson
Benzen	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boucher
Boudrias	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Carr
Carrie	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Chong
Choquette	Clarke
Cooper	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCourcey	Deltell
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diotte	Doherty
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubé
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Fillmore	Finley
Finnigan	Fisher

Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gallant
Garrison
Genuis
Gill
Goldsmith-Jones
Gourde
Grewal
Hardcastle
Hardie
Hehr
Holland
Hussen
Jeneroux
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leitch
Levitt
Lloyd
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
McDonald
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Monsef
Morrissey
Murray
Nater
Ng
Nuttall
O'Connell
Oliver
O'Toole
Paradis
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rayes
Rempel
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sopuck
Sorenson
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harder
Hébert
Hogg
Hughes
Hutchings
Jolibois
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lightbound
Lobb
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McKay
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Moore
Motz
Nassif
Nault
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliphant
O'Regan
Ouellette
Paul-Hus
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poilievre
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Sarai
Schiefke
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Sorbara
Spengemann
Stewart
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tassi
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vandal
Vaughan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Wilkinson
Wong
Yip
Yurdiga
Strahl
Sweet
Tan
Thériault
Trudel
Van Loan
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Zimmer– — 294

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from April 17 consideration of the motion that Bill S-210, an act to amend An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the Civil Marriage Act and the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill S-210, under private members' business.

● (1820)

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

(Division No. 649)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Angus
Arseneault
Ashton
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barlow
Baylis
Beech
Benzen
Bernier
Bezan
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block
Bossio
Boudrias
Brassard
Breton
Brosseau
Calkins
Caron
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Chen
Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arnold
Arya
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Benson
Bergen
Berthold
Bittle
Blair
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boissonnault
Boucher
Boutin-Sweet
Bratina
Brison
Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings
Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chong

Choquette
Cooper
Cullen
Dabrusin
DeCourcey
Dhaliwal
Diotte
Donnelly
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gallant
Garrison
Genuis
Gill
Goldsmith-Jones
Gourde
Grewal
Hardcastle
Hardie
Hehr
Holland
Hussen
Jeneroux
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leitch
Levitt
Lloyd
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie
Maguire
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
McDonald
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Monsef
Morrissey
Murray
Nater
Ng
Nuttall
O'Connell
Oliver
O'Toole
Paradis
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Poissant
Qualtrough
Clarke
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
Deltell
Dhillon
Doherty
Dreeshen
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Eglinski
El-Khoury
Eyking
Falk (Provencher)
Fergus
Finley
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodale
Graham
Hajdu
Harder
Hébert
Hogg
Hughes
Hutchings
Jolibois
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Leslie
Lightbound
Lobb
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McKay
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendès
Mihychuk
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Moore
Motz
Nassif
Nault
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliphant
O'Regan
Ouellette
Paul-Hus
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poilievre
Quach
Ramsey
Rankin
Rayes
Rempel
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stewart
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudel
Van Loan
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Whalen
Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Zimmer– — 293
Ratansi
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Sarai
Schiefke
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sohi
Sorbara
Spengemann
Strahl
Sweet
Tan
Thériault
Van Kesteren
Vandal
Vaughan
Viersen
Warawa
Waugh
Weir
Wilkinson
Wong
Yip
Yurdiga

NAYS

Members

Trost– — 1

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC) moved that Bill C-330, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (landlord consent), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand and debate my private member's bill in the House today. I look at the two votes we just had which were unanimous. They were on items put forward by Liberal members and concern very practical matters that will make things better for Canadians. I certainly I hope this particular piece of legislation will be received in the same spirit of co-operation, because I am truly convinced that this bill would make things much better and solve a really significant and difficult issue.

What Bill C-330 would do if passed is amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to provide for regulations requiring the consent of landlords to tenant activities in respect of controlled drugs and substances. More specifically, the enactment would require the written consent of any landlord on whose premises the production or sale of any controlled substance is to occur.

The bill is in response to the access to cannabis for medical purposes regulations, which came into effect August 24, 2016. These new regulations do not require individuals who wish to produce marijuana in their residence to notify or seek the consent of their landlords. The federal government failed to provide clear direction for landlords and insurance companies when it made changes to the medical marijuana rules.

Under the rules, Health Canada gives specific guidelines on how to safely set up a medical grow op, but when it comes to checking if the safety rules are being followed, the federal department is leaving that up to the municipalities. I think all of us who live in communities have had our municipalities express extreme frustration on this issue. According to the local development and engineering services director in Kamloops, the problem is that federal privacy rules apply, which prevent local authorities from knowing where medical marijuana is being grown. They do not get a list of addresses, so they cannot actually do anything proactively in terms of going out and inspecting the premises. It is a significant issue. There is no system to proactively check if tenants are growing the allowed number of plants according to their permit.

When asked about this issue, the health minister said the federal government's role is to ensure people who need medical marijuana have access. I want to pick up on that point. I do not disagree that people who need medical marijuana should have access, but I want to give an example. Some people need digoxin for their heart, but they do not have to actually grow foxglove in their home to get digoxin. If people need something that is medically necessary, surely to goodness we could find a better way than having them grow it in their home because they cannot afford it. We have found ways around antibiotics and drugs like digoxin. We do not require people to grow their own medication. The government says that we have to provide access, but who is looking out for the landlords who have put hundreds of thousands of dollars into their homes? They are having their homes destroyed because the federal government has not found a better way to provide access to needed medical marijuana. Surely we can do better than that.

This is important for people who might be listening, because there is a lot of talk right now about the new recreational regime. Bill C-45, which is before the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, is a proposed regulatory framework for cannabis for recreational purposes. As I talk, members will see there is a huge difference between what is proposed for recreational use and medical marijuana.

With medical marijuana, the task force that was tasked with going around and making recommendations to the government essentially suggested that as the government moved toward legalization of marijuana and regulations the distinct system of the medical marijuana regime be maintained for medical purposes.

● (1825)

We have two very distinct systems. One is recreational, and that is Bill C-45, which is moving through the Senate. We also have the issue of medical marijuana, which has been around for many years.

The medical regime will allow people, including those under the age of 18, with the support of a health care practitioner, to have access to cannabis for medical purposes. They can purchase it from a federally licensed seller of cannabis for medical purposes. They can cultivate their own, if they are over the age of 18, or designate someone to grow cannabis on their behalf, which is called "designated production".

There used to be limits on how much cannabis could be stored. The Liberals tried to align the recreational and medical regimes, but they took away the limits on what can be stored, which had been in place before.

When the Liberals put out the new regulations around recreational use, they talked about four plants. I think they did that because they knew they would be heading into the difficult territory we have seen with the medical regime. It is four plants. It can be regulated. The provincial authorities have the ability to regulate. For example, strata condominiums can say whether one can have dogs or cats. There is an ability for provinces to create some regulations around the four-plant designation. I believe some provinces are saying no to the home grow and others are saying yes. The government recognized that with any more than four plants it would be heading into very difficult territory, but there was no consideration given to the issue. It is only the federal government that can solve this issue with the medical marijuana. The provinces cannot do it nor can anyone else.

It is important to note that with a medical licence, people can grow their own and be designated to grow for someone else. There is a maximum of four licences to grow cannabis in one residence. For example, a 1,500 square foot apartment could have up to four licences. What does that mean in practical purposes? If one has been prescribed three grams per day, that means one could have 15 plants indoors, six plants outdoors, or a combination of indoor and outdoor plants. However, it is not uncommon or all that extreme that a person may have a prescription for seven grams a day. I remember the government moving the limit for our veterans from 10 grams to three grams. Again, seven grams is a number we can use. If there is a licence to grow for four people at seven grams a day, a person could have an enormous number of plants indoors. It could be up to 120 plants growing indoors if someone had four licences for seven grams. It is an incredible amount.

I will recount the true story of someone who came into my office, and this was part of the genesis of the bill. He shared his story with CBC in February 2017:

> Longtime landlord Darryl Spencer was left scrambling for insurance after discovering a tenant was growing dozens of medical marijuana plants inside and outside his rental house.

When the landlord told his insurance company about the perfectly legal grow-op, his coverage was cancelled, leaving him with no insurance, few rights and a big cleanup bill.

Spencer says the downstairs tenant in the Kamloops, B.C., rental property got a medical marijuana licence that allowed him to legally grow as many as 60 plants without his landlord's permission or knowledge.

This was his retirement savings plan, by the way. He had decided to put his money into a revenue-making rental property. There were 60 plants there without his knowledge.

The article continues:

A call from a concerned neighbour prompted Spencer, who is also a retired fire inspector, to check out the home he's rented out to different tenants for a decade.

● (1830)

He discovered a mess of extension cords, fans and bright lights packed into a room filled with dozens of marijuana plants. The upstairs tenant, a woman with a small child, was complaining about heat radiating through the walls and electrical breakers going off....

...landlords have little recourse if a tenant is growing licensed medical marijuana. They don't even have the right to know it's happening. Yet it's landlords who are being denied insurance

They do not have the right to know what is happening when a tenant is growing medical pot.

Spencer told Go Public, "I was worried about the fire hazard. That was my first thought because of the extension cords, the use of electricity and that something could catch fire."

When he notified his insurance company about his tenant's grow-op, Gore Mutual cancelled his coverage.

"They wouldn't cover claims to do with medical marijuana or air quality contamination," he said.

Gore Mutual Insurance said that it "does not provide coverage for marijuana grow-operations regardless of their legality because this type of operation in a residential building presents inherent insurance risks."

The article continues:

Those risks, the company says, include "a greater likelihood of water damage, mould, fire, vandalism and burglary."

Under most basic home insurance policies, marijuana-related damages or anything that companies believe is "high risk" is not covered.

This is a view that is shared by many insurance companies, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

"While regulations may allow for the legal growing of marijuana for medical purposes, it does not change the structural risk grow-ops pose to homes and condos.... The operation of a grow-op, whether legal or not, is still a high-risk activity."

That was from Andrew McGrath, spokesman for the Insurance Bureau, in an email to Go Public. The article continues:

Gore Mutual Insurance told Spencer it might reinstate his coverage if he got rid of the tenant and took specific steps to ensure the house was safe to live in.

He actually had no ability to get rid of this tenant because of the laws of the land. He actually had to tell his tenant he would pay him to leave. That was a significant cost for him.

The article states:

The insurance company also wanted air and soil testing, plumbing and electrical inspections, and the house checked for mould.

Spencer did it all, while searching for another insurance company that would cover him right away. None would.

He went for quite a while with no insurance. I remember that he came in and chatted with me in my office. He was devastated. He was absolutely beside himself seeing his life savings potentially completely at risk.

As I noted, he finally paid the tenant to leave, then he did all the remediation that was required. Of course, he is out thousands and thousands of dollars.

We talk about availability and affordability of housing in this country. When we have potential landlords who are terrified that if they rent their homes they will have no recourse, and they still do not in terms of this medical marijuana issue, I think they rightfully are saying that they are not going to rent. They will take their homes off the market or sell them. Therefore, this is an issue that has ramifications for more than individuals and their finances. It has significant ramifications for the availability of affordable housing.

Go Public covered the story. Eventually Spencer did all the work and managed to cover things off.

I do not think anyone is appreciating the cost to landlords of people growing medical marijuana. According to the Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations, it can be absolutely prohibitive.

What I am asking is that we get support to get this to committee. I appreciate that people who have a need for medical marijuana need affordable access to it, but surely, at the same time, we cannot be jeopardizing the hundreds and thousands of dollars of investments by people across this country who are being absolutely devastated by this particular structure of a regulation.

● (1835)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member seems to be fairly strong in her convictions on the issue. I think it is important to recognize, as we have been dealing with the legalization of cannabis in Canada, that there has been a great deal of consultation. Whether it is formally, through standing committees, or meetings with stakeholders, in particular the provinces and so forth, it has all helped us shape what we believe is a policy that is quite acceptable to Canadians. It is a policy that actually makes sense.

The question I have for my friend across the way is whether she has shared her thoughts with any provincial jurisdictions. Are some provincial jurisdictions onside with what she is recommending?

The member is talking about hundreds of thousands of tenants in all regions of the country. To what degree has she done any sort of consultation? Many of them would say it is somewhat discriminatory.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I am absolutely stunned by that question. Municipalities across this country have been begging for changes. This is not a provincial issue.

The provinces are very appropriately dealing with the recreational issue. The government realized that they needed the ability to deal with the recreational issue, which is a maximum of four plants, because some provinces are saying four plants is too many and others are saying it is reasonable. What we are talking about is potentially up to 120 plants, and the only group that can make this change is the federal government.

Did the member not think in terms of the landlords and the availability of housing? If he owned a home and saw the hundreds of thousands of dollars that he had put into his home possibly go up in smoke and he did not have insurance, how could he possibly sleep well at night knowing that he was imposing that on some of his constituents?

● (1840)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for a well-intentioned legislative effort here. My question to her, through you, would be with respect to the issue of the safety of extension cords that she addressed in her speech and the possibility of one's insurance being cancelled, which I think she also referenced in this specific illustration. I wonder if there would be a way to work with insurance companies to address that issue.

I noticed that Sun Life Financial recently announced that it will cover medical marijuana. Insurance companies of that kind, health insurers, are changing their policies as a result of this legislative change. I am wondering why insurance companies could not address that and why routine inspections on safety grounds by landlords would not provide a remedy.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I think it is appropriate that insurance companies need to have some input. However, what I articulated is that because of the privacy rules, no one even has a right to know, much less to look toward inspecting. Insurance companies are going to have adjust and adapt to the new reality.

This is about landlords having the right to some semblance of control over what happens. They might own a farm and say that it is perfectly fine with them if their tenants grow plants in their field. If it is one's own home, it is perfectly reasonable to do what one wants in one's own home. However, we are talking about landlords who have absolutely no control when hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage is done to their hard-earned investments.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member if she ever been in a home that has had this kind of thing inside it. If not, has she talked to anyone who has?

One of the larger problems with the scale of what is being allowed is that the humidity level of these houses destroys the frame of the house. I have personal and first-hand knowledge of houses that have been condemned after this has happened, and the owner had no recourse.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, I have seen pictures, but I have not been in one of these homes. However, in my own neighbourhood there was a house that was rented out, and we watched as what appeared to be mould grew up the outside walls of the house. Then one night there was a fire. Again, this was a landlord without insurance who lost the home. Obviously, in retrospect, it was a grow-op that was happening inside.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to debate Bill C-330, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, also referred to as "landlord consent".

I would like to thank the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for giving us the opportunity to debate this issue.

As my hon. colleagues know, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act is the federal law used to control substances that can alter mental processes and that may cause harm to health and society when diverted to an illicit market.

[*English*]

Under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, it is illegal to conduct certain activities with controlled substances or precursors unless authorized by regulation or if an exemption is granted. These regulations and exemptions allow for lawful activities with a medical, scientific, or industrial purpose. Bill C-330 proposes to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to provide a specific regulation-making authority concerning the creation of requirements for written consent from landlords to produce a controlled substance in leased premises. It would also require the minister of health to report back to Parliament on an annual basis to explain why additional regulations had not been made, if that is the case.

I would first clarify that the bill, as written, would have implications not only for individuals who are authorized to cultivate small amounts of cannabis for medical purposes but for other parties using leased space, including licensed producers of cannabis and licensed dealers of other controlled substances.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

I remind members that the existing regulations on controlled substances under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act have quite a broad scope. They allow the government to tightly regulate a wide range of activities and aspects connected to the production and sale of controlled substances.

[*English*]

In addition, if a licensed dealer were to produce such substances in a commercially rented facility, the lease agreement would likely include details on the specific activities taking place in the facility, making the landlord aware that the controlled substances were being produced. Consent would be provided by way of approving the lease.

[*Translation*]

The commercial production of medical cannabis is already regulated by the Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations, created under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

[*English*]

Provisions in the access to cannabis for medical purposes regulations require that any application for a producer's licence be accompanied by a declaration by the owner of the site consenting to its use for the proposed activities, if the applicant is not the owner of the site.

[*Translation*]

As we debate Bill C-330 today, I think it is important to consider Bill C-45, the cannabis act, which is currently being studied by the Senate.

[*English*]

Should this legislation receive royal assent, oversight of cannabis would, for the most part, no longer fall under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act but rather under this new legislation, the cannabis act. A change in federal oversight would include comprehensive requirements for producers of cannabis and rules for individuals who choose to legally cultivate a small amount of cannabis in their homes for both medical and non-medical purposes.

[*Translation*]

If the cannabis act is passed, it will create a new legalization framework, with stringent regulations restricting access to cannabis by controlling the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis. If BillC-45 receives royal assent, adults will be able to access cannabis that has been quality controlled and that comes from a legal and tightly regulated industry.

[*English*]

Provinces and territories would be responsible for the distribution and retail sale of cannabis, while the federal government would oversee the production of cannabis to ensure consistent product safety and quality standards across Canada.

Subject to provincial limitations, the bill would also permit adults to grow up to four cannabis plants at home for personal use, provided that they were obtained legally. Allowing adults to grow a limited amount of cannabis in their dwellings is consistent with the advice from the task force on cannabis legalization and regulation and with the approach adopted by many jurisdictions in the United States that have legalized cannabis.

[*Translation*]

If the bill receives royal assent, both the commercial producers and any adults who choose to cultivate a small amount of cannabis at home will have to comply with the provincial, territorial, and municipal regulations in place. This would include compliance with all fire prevention regulations, building codes, and any rules or regulations set by the landlord or leaseholder.

[*English*]

Provinces, territories, and municipalities, based on their own authorities, have the flexibility to set additional requirements and restrictions, beyond what is being proposed in the cannabis act, to address matters of local concern and community priorities. In fact, a number of provinces have already decided to pursue such additional restrictions with respect to home cultivation.

[*Translation*]

For instance, Alberta is proposing that all home grow-ops be limited to indoor cultivation only. Nova Scotia wants to grant landlords the power to prohibit the use and cultivation of cannabis in rental units. New Brunswick wants all outdoor cultivation to be done in locked enclosures, and proposes separate, locked spaces for all indoor cultivation.

● (1850)

[*English*]

We will continue to work closely with provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, as well as other stakeholders and partners, to successfully implement our new legislative and regulatory framework to strictly regulate and restrict access to cannabis.

[*Translation*]

Once again, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to debate this issue.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is pleasure to rise to speak to Bill C-330, which is the initiative of my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

As I understand the initiative, when she introduced it on December 14, 2016, the member moved that this be an amendment to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to deal not with recreational cannabis but rather to the issue of medical marijuana grown in homes and the impact it would have on landlords. Her remarks today illustrate that was the objective of the bill, that medical marijuana grown at home should be done so only, she claims, with the written consent of the landlord. That is what we are here to talk about, not, as I understand it, the issue of recreational cannabis, as seems to have been understood by others.

The initiative is well intentioned. The story that was recounted by my colleague from the CBC program *At Issue*, or whatever the CBC program was, is a poignant one. I, however, believe the bill would not do the job. I have several reasons for that, but I certainly understand the challenge she has put before us, which has to be addressed by insurance companies.

We have to provide more authority for landlords to address their legitimate interests. If there is the ability to have 120 plants for four people in an operation, if a person has a licence to grow seven grams a day as the member indicated, it seems to me we should do some serious analysis of how that could be. The intention of the regulations, which I will talk about in a minute, was not to allow that to occur, with all of the intended consequences that she eloquently described.

First, and in our view, the bill would create an unjustified barrier to patients' charter-protected rights to have reasonable access to medicinal cannabis. That is the law of the land, for better or for worse, since the Federal Court so decided in the Allard case.

Second, there is already a housing crisis in my part of the country. To the extent that this would be even a tiny impediment, that is something we ought to look at as well. I concede it is not the main issue here, but if one lives in a housing crisis, as I do in the city of Victoria, any restriction on tenants is something we need to address. I recognize the bill would apply, by the way, to residential and commercial landlords as well.

Third, I do not believe, despite what my friend said, that this is a federal matter at all. Landlord-tenant legislation has been the provinces' jurisdiction since Confederation. If there are problems with the federal Privacy Act, let us fix it. However, amending the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to deal with landlord consent is, in my judgment, unconstitutional and would never be accepted by the Supreme Court of Canada. Whether this is motivated by fearmongering over medicinal cannabis I do not know, but it has been repeated by our courts on many occasions that patients have a charter right to reasonable access to medicinal cannabis. Therefore, an additional obstruction to that, a restriction on that right, is something we should look at very carefully.

Municipalities have the authority to deal with this. I certainly believe the rentalsman in our province. If necessary, attendant legislative reform when we bring in legislation to address cannabis in a more holistic way is where we need to deal with this. However, to suggest that we would change criminal law to do so is overkill, unnecessary, and is likely inappropriate constitutionally anyway.

The bill purports to amend the whole Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Despite its wide breadth, it is intended to respond to the access to cannabis for medical purposes regulations. Although we do not see that in the face of the bill, I think that is the objective. However, it applies beyond that as well.

That regulation allows individual patients to produce a limited amount of cannabis for their own medical purposes or to designate someone to produce it for them. Designated people can only grow for a maximum of two individuals, including themselves.

The member made a good point in describing how that could be abused and how we could have, in her judgment, up to 120 plants in a house. Anybody who has been in a grow-op, as I have, will know the impact that can have on property values, and of that there is no doubt. I am not here to deny for a moment the devastating impact that can have on property.

● (1855)

The Constitution now allows, thanks to the Allard case from 2016, that there be this reasonable access to cannabis for a patient. If that is abused, it can be addressed in other ways. I think that is what the gravamen of the member's concern really is—that the abuse is obvious—but I am not entirely sure that to grow a couple of plants for use is going to cause the concerns that she has suggested in the worst extreme examples that she has given us.

A story from *Global News* in February of this year demonstrates the growing need for access to medical cannabis. We have heard a lot about this from veterans and others. Their claim is as follows:

> The most recent Health Canada figures show that at the end of [2016], almost 130,000 Canadians had signed up with the country's 38 licensed cannabis producers . That's a 32 per cent jump from the more than 98,000 registered at the end of September 2016 and up from the 7,900 granted access to medicinal cannabis in mid-2014.

There has been an enormous increase in access to medical cannabis under the legislation that was brought in by the government, the medical cannabis regulations that were addressing a specific response to the Allard decision. The government had to do something; they did it, and that is what they did.

Bill C-330 seems designed to create a new barrier to reasonable access to cannabis for medical purposes. In addition, subsection 177 (7) of those regulations already requires owner consent if the proposed site of production is not the ordinary place of residence of the applicant or of the designated person. Anyone who would be cultivating more than the permissible amount or selling marijuana out of a residence would already be engaged in an illegal activity, irrespective of whether written consent by the landlord is obtained.

I think the fear that this proposed bill is addressing, as was made clear in the hon. member's remarks, is the potential impact on property values and the potential damages. I think that is an issue that should be addressed separately.

With respect to provincial jurisdictions, it is up to the provinces to determine how they choose to regulate rental properties. I think the member has demonstrated that there is a need here to address this issue, but that does not mean that it should be an amendment to the Criminal Code or the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to deal with this issue. It is an issue that needs to be changed.

Every province in the land is now addressing the challenge of cannabis. This is about medical cannabis. I understand that, but that is no reason why we cannot use this opportunity to amend our legislation. Municipalities and the provinces are making changes. We can change the landlord-tenant law to address it. Just as a landlord has every right to say that there will be no smoking of any substance in a property, for these kinds of property damage issues some kind of regulated access may need to be provided from time to time.

When safety is an issue, if there is any reasonable cause to suspect those kinds of electrical wires that the member spoke of, or if there are other obvious concerns, they should be addressed. The issue is where we address them. I do not believe they should be addressed in essentially federal criminal law, as the member would do.

Many jurisdictions in the United States have regulations about cannabis and landlord consent, although most are determined by state or municipal governments. For instance, the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act provides that an owner can prohibit the smoking or cultivation of marijuana in a written lease. That state is not one of the states, by the way, that has legal marijuana for recreational use.

In Colorado, where cannabis use for medical and recreational purposes is permitted, one of the cities there, Gunnison, has a municipal code and marijuana business licensing regulations that require landlord consent as part of the application to operate a marijuana establishment. Therefore, suitable regulations are available.

In conclusion, first, this is the law of the land, whether we like it or not. Second, it is using a sledgehammer to kill an ant. Third, it is no doubt unconstitutional anyway.

● (1900)

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in support of this important piece of legislation brought forward by my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Our party opposed the legalization of marijuana in Canada. Our opposition was based on concerns we heard from scientists, doctors, and law enforcement officials who said that the Liberal plan was being rushed through without proper planning or consideration for the negative ramifications of such complicated legislation. Most concerning to us was that the Liberal marijuana plan does nothing to keep marijuana out of the hands of children, eliminate organized crime, or address issues of impaired driving. In the Prime Minister's haste, Canada will find itself in violation of three international treaties when his marijuana bill passes, compromising Canada's integrity on the world stage.

Another voice that we heard from was that of the Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations. It raised an important point trying to address another practical implication that was ignored in the government's rush, which is that multi-unit dwellings are different from detached homes. The Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations told us it was critical that any new marijuana law look at this fact and take it into account. The government did not.

In a detached home, what an owner-occupant does largely affects only that person. In multiple-unit dwellings, an occupant's actions in one unit can very often have a significant impact on the occupants of the other units. Noise, illegality, and overcrowding are just some of the issues that reasonable people have long recognized as matters that cannot be ignored if all tenants in a multi-unit dwelling are to enjoy their homes, and if landlords are to enjoy their investment.

Marijuana is no different. Simply put, a landlord should have the freedom to contract in or contract out the terms relevant to the lease. A property owner should also have the freedom to set parameters around that lease and use of their private property, particularly with regard to uses that create risk and uncertainty.

This bill requires that persons or classes of persons who intend to produce or sell any controlled substance or any class of controlled substances in leased premises obtain the written consent of the landlord. The bill also prescribes the manner and form in which that consent is to be obtained and the conditions under which it must be renewed.

Our party opposed the legalization of marijuana in Canada, but our party strongly supports the rights of property owners vis-à-vis their private property. Our party supports Canadians who wish to protect their communities and the health and safety of their children from the risks associated with a proximity to the production and sale of drugs. Landlords should not have to suffer the adverse effects of leasing to an individual who wants to produce a controlled substance at home. The risks are simply too high. Their tenants should be able to enjoy their homes unencumbered.

Growing marijuana in apartments, or any rented dwelling for that matter, raises serious concerns. These include safety hazards due to excessive electricity usage on wiring not designed for the proper power draws. Increased humidity brings the risk of mould. Interference with other tenants is also of concern. The safety hazards I mentioned earlier put tenants at risk as well, and frankly, the smell can be very unpleasant. There is a risk to the building's integrity, which means a risk to the landlord's investment. Insurance companies currently tend to cancel insurance policies when they learn that any marijuana has been grown. That leaves a landlord with no liability insurance, putting both the landlord and other tenants at risk.

● (1905)

It also leaves the mortgage holder with no coverage if the building is destroyed or damaged by fire, even if the fire is unrelated to the marijuana: no insurance, no mortgage renewal. It is not practical to permit limited home growing in multi-unit dwellings or rental units. Enforcement on the limits on growing would be extremely difficult both for landlords and for the police which the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has actively spoken about in consultations and has stated to the government.

What could be enforced is a ban on all growing in dwellings other than single family homes or a ban on inside home grown entirely. The Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations urged the government to prohibit all marijuana growing in multi-unit dwellings and in rental dwellings of any size. The scientists, doctors, and law enforcement officials who said that the Liberal plan was being rushed through without proper planning or consideration for the negative ramifications of such complicated legislation were simply ignored.

My colleague, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, mentioned the impetus for this bill, a constituent of hers who saw his investment completely destroyed because his tenants grew medical marijuana without consent. She has heard from many others with similar voices, and no doubt we all have. There is no recourse for landlords and the other tenants who find themselves in these situations. There are no protections, no consideration.

I urge all MPs to support this legislation. Let us address this issue in a practical way and give tenants and landlords the piece of mind they deserve.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to the bill of the member opposite.

A fairly significant effort has been made by the Prime Minister, working with the Liberal members of Parliament in particular, but also Canadians from virtually every region of our country, to deal with a campaign commitment we made in the 2015 election, a campaign commitment we have taken very seriously.

We have seen all sorts of consultations take place since the last election, which would include the standing committee of the House going into our communities and listening to what the professionals and stakeholders have had to say on the issue of the legalization of cannabis. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement have both done an absolutely outstanding job in advancing this file. When I say the Minister of Health, I not only mean the current minister but the previous minister of health as well.

The individuals who work for those ministers should also be congratulated. They have been so thorough in ensuring that what we present to the House of Commons and to other jurisdictions, whether it is provincial or municipal, will be supported by a vast majority of Canadians. I am absolutely confident that the direction the government has taken on the legalization of cannabis is the right one.

I first heard about the idea at a party convention a few years back when we were in third party. An overwhelming majority of the grassroots of our party wanted to see the legalization of cannabis. At the time, I was a little indecisive. I decided I would consult with my constituents and listen to what they had to say before I took a position on it. I have had all sorts of opportunities to get to understand the issue to the degree that I am absolutely confident that what has been proposed is very solid.

When the member proposed the bill, I had a difficult time with it. I am not sure the member realizes the impact of what she has proposed. I asked her who she had worked with on this and what sort of consultation was done. I do not believe the necessary background work has been done with respect to the bill.

Contrast that to what the Government of Canada has done. I applaud many of the comments we hear, whether from New Democratic members, the leader of the Green Party, or other independents. They have recognized the effort of this government with respect to the manner in which it has proceeded. I have listened to the position of the Conservatives on the legalization of cannabis and I have drawn the conclusion that the only ones who would support what they have suggested are gangs, people who have a vested interest in it.

In fact, the bill is talking about that. The Conservatives are saying that a tenant would not be able to grow a plant. Members say that tenants could always ask. We have hundreds of thousands of tenants across the country. The Conservatives are saying that each of those tenants would have to get permission.

● (1910)

Let us imagine someone renting a house in a suburban area. Those are rentals, too. Maybe the Conservatives are thinking just of the apartment blocks. Is there a form of discrimination? To what degree did the member actually talk to some of the stakeholders regarding this?

At the end of the day, I do not believe this has really been thought through. In listening to some of the comments, we know that the Conservative Party does not support what the government is doing on legalization.

● (1915)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: This is about protecting landlords. It is about Spencer.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, members can say what they will, but at the end of the day, it is legalization of cannabis. It has gone through another mechanism in order to prevent certain things from taking place in thousands of homes where people would have the right to make that decision.

When I look at the Conservatives' policy, and this is just one aspect of it, it is almost as if they lost that one so they will do this instead. When we ask where the Conservatives are coming from on this, their approach is that they do not want to see it legalized. They just want it decriminalized.

If we decriminalize cannabis, many in the so-called criminal element would love to see that, because it would make it that much easier for them to sell it and make substantial profits. According to the Conservatives, it would still be illegal but decriminalized. This would mean that if a 14-year-old child goes into a high school with a bag of cannabis and wants to sell it, even though it is illegal it would no longer be criminalized. Maybe the Hells Angels would be supportive of a policy of that nature.

With respect to the bill proposed here, what the Conservatives are really saying to millions of tenants is that their neighbour can grow a plant but they cannot, unless they have permission from the landlord. Many landlords might want to take the option of saying no.

It would be interesting to hear what other Conservative members have to say about this legislation. Are they all in sync on wanting this legislation? I stood up because no one else was standing up to speak to it. I suspect that the Conservatives wanted to vote.

Mr. Pat Kelly: I was standing. She did not look, but I was standing and ready to go.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I am encouraged to hear that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that there is no going back and forth. The speeches are to be addressed to the Chair, and so are the questions and comments, if there were time for questions and comments here, which there is not.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has a minute and 20 seconds.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I will keep my eyes on you, Madam Speaker, so that I am not interfering with the other side, as I know the members opposite are a little edgy on this piece of legislation.

All private members' bills are wonderful initiatives that individual members bring forward. Some bills will pass through to committee stage, and others will not. From what I heard of the presentation, I do not see an argument as to why the bill should go to committee. It will be the chamber that ultimately decides that. I am not saying that it should not go to committee, but I did not hear any argument that would justify it at this stage in the game.

Individuals who attempt to address the legislation going forward might want to provide some sense of the degree to which consultation has been done. The bar was set very high by the Prime Minister and the government in terms of the amount of consultation that was done on the legalization of cannabis, but we wanted to get it right. However, I do not see that within the proposed legislation before us.

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BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 1

BILL C-74—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-74, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures. Under the provisions of Standing Order 78 (3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

OCEANS ACT

BILL C-55—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

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CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-330, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (landlord consent), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the next speaker that unfortunately, there will only be a couple of minutes for this part of the speech.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, since I only have a couple of minutes, I will cut to the main part of what I was going to discuss.

First is a reminder that we are not debating Bill C-45. We are debating something completely different. It was disappointing that so much of the debate seemed to be confused with Bill C-45.

I spent many years in the mortgage industry, as some are aware. The ability to grow substantial amounts of medical marijuana in a home, without a landlord's consent, or with the landlord's consent, for that matter, produces some extremely difficult problems. The mortgage industry and the insurance industry have for years and years been extremely clear about not wishing to either insure or mortgage a property in which marijuana has been grown, whether legally or not. The issue has been expressed by many others. It is about the health hazards, the destruction of the property, the compromise of the structural integrity of the home, and the presence of noxious fumes and mould. These are the types of issues. Even if a person can legally grow 120 plants, no mortgage lender will ever mortgage a property that has been known to have had marijuana, in any quantity, grown in it.

This is a serious issue about stigmatizing a property. Once a property is known to have been used for the cultivation of marijuana, it becomes literally unmarketable. For many years, this would come up time and again. An application for a loan would come in. It would become known and disclosed that marijuana had been grown on the property, and no lender would touch it. I do not have time to read here the lending practice, but I can assure the House that marijuana being grown in a home makes the home unmarketable.

Bill C-330 attempts to address that issue by giving landlords at least some ability to control what goes on in their own property that will affect the marketability of the property, the insurability of the property, and certainly the ability to get a mortgage for the property. I support the bill for that reason. It would give some level of protection to landlords so that if they chose to rent a property to someone who would grow marijuana legally, under a medical marijuana prescription, it would be a contracted choice between the landlord and the tenant.

At present, landlords are in a disadvantaged position, where they risk their property through the growth of marijuana. It is perfectly legal, from the point of view of having a prescription for medical marijuana, or indeed, not that I want to bring Bill C-45 into it, but if it is passed and given royal assent, even to grow two plants. We might all agree that two plants is not a health hazard.

Right now, the mortgage and insurance industries do not agree with that. In 20-plus years as a mortgage broker, I never saw a lender that would knowingly mortgage a property when it was known to have had marijuana growing in it. That is something that the federal government will need to address, and the bill is a way to address it so that at least a landlord would have the ability to insist that marijuana not be grown in a property and would have at least some level of protection.

Madam Speaker, you only gave me two minutes. I trust I have exceeded that, and I will conclude with that, if that is your wish.

● (1920)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have almost six minutes the next time that this matter comes before the House.

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise tonight to talk about pipelines and their impact on the national economy. I know that 125,000 people in northern Alberta have lost their jobs due to the government's inaction on getting the products produced in the resource development sector to market.

In my riding, we have been devastatingly hit by the actions of the Liberal government. One of the major projects that has not gone forward because of the actions of the government was the Carmon Creek SAGD project. This is a project that was going to bring the oil out of the ground near Peace River, Alberta, and it was going to bring oil to the international markets. The company cancelled that project shortly after the current government came into power, due to the lack of pipeline access. It said that given the remarkable actions by the government it did not see that a pipeline was going to be going forward anytime soon and so it pulled out. It was a $10-billion project. The company had already spent $2 billion developing the project and it backed away from $2 billion. It left $2 billion lying up in northern Alberta. In that same week, the company made an announcement that it was investing in Kazakhstan.

I ride the airplane a lot of times back and forth from here to home, and I sit in the back of the airplane and talk to the oilfield workers. Paul Cox was the last guy I sat beside on my way home from here. He is working in Kazakhstan. That is a coincidence, one might say, but I do not think it is a coincidence. A company named Shell was the proposer for the Carmon Creek project. It backed out and it is now investing in Kazakhstan. This guy happens to be working in Kazakhstan. He is from Alberta. He flies halfway around the world to work in Kazakhstan in an industry that he knows and loves. That is what we are dealing with when it comes to the actions of the Liberal government.

Everyone knows the current situation with the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline. Kinder Morgan has been saying it has stopped proceeding with it. Just today, we heard that it has pulled out all its people who have been working on permitting. It has pulled them out of B.C. and told them to go home as the company does not see a way forward right now. Kinder Morgan has already halted action on the ground there, and we are looking to the government to do something.

Today as well, the member for Calgary Shepard moved a motion at the finance committee to study the financial impact of this pipeline on Canada. The government continues to say that this pipeline will get built, that this is a national building project. What did the Liberals do at committee? They voted the motion down. They voted not to study the impacts of the pipeline. I thought they said it was such a great pipeline. If this was such a great pipeline and they were so happy, would they not want to show the world how great this pipeline is? No, they voted that motion down.

This is not the first energy project to be in jeopardy. We have seen the death of energy east. We have seen Kinder Morgan come and go. Northern gateway was approved. The Liberals said, “We have approved the pipeline.” We have heard them say that over and over again, and here we are, northern gateway is dead. Petronas LNG is gone, sold off to the highest bidder. The government has a terrible track record when it comes to standing up for our resource industry. It has a terrible record when it comes to any pipeline development in this country.

What is going to be the net impact on the national GDP? We have seen things that have happened in Alberta before that have impacted the national GDP. What is going to be the impact on the national GDP of the Liberals' actions up to this point?

● (1925)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, unfortunately there is not enough time in this session to address all of the claims that the member has raised, but I do want to tackle some of the issues that I feel are very critical. Those are around job creation, what is happening in Alberta, and how we are standing up for Canadian jobs on this side of the House.

Last year alone, Canada added more than 420,000 jobs, most of them full-time jobs and many of them in our resource sector, including in Canada's oil patch and including those linked to our approval of the Line 3 pipeline.

In fact, the job gains posted in Alberta are some of the most significant that have occurred in any province in the country. According to Statistics Canada, Alberta added 55,000 new positions last year, and its economic output is again leading the country on a per capita basis.

As one University of Calgary professor told The Canadian Press earlier this year, Alberta's economy is recovering faster than almost anyone could have ever expected.

What is the result? Let me review.

Canada's unemployment rate is hovering at a 40-year low, and last year our 3% growth led all G7 countries.

Now, that does not mean that there is not still more work to be done, which is why we are getting the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline built. It is at the top of our list, as has been reconfirmed and reiterated time and again by the Prime Minister.

We have determined that the $7.4 billion project is in Canada's national interest because of the jobs it will create right across the country, and also because of the greater access it will provide to global markets for Canadian businesses. It is also because of the increased revenues it will generate for all levels of government within the country and because of the new economic opportunities it will offer for the 43 indigenous communities that have signed benefit agreements up and down the pipeline's route.

All of these benefits will come at the same time that we are making the largest-ever single investment to protect Canada's oceans and coastal communities, strengthening the eyes and ears of the Canadian Coast Guard to ensure better communication with vessels, adding new radar sites in strategic locations, and putting more enforcement officers on the coast.

It also means enhancing our response capabilities, protecting whales and other marine life, and building meaningful partnership with indigenous peoples.

We know that economic prosperity and the environmental protection that we are so proud of can go hand in hand in this country. That is why the Prime Minister repeated this past Sunday that the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is of vital strategic interest to Canada. That is why he instructed the Minister of Finance to initiate formal financial discussions with the pipeline proponent. That is why we are pursuing legislative options to exert the Government of Canada's clear jurisdiction over this project to see it proceed.

As the Prime Minister has said, this pipeline will be built. I can assure the member that it will be built.

● (1930)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, did I hear 55,000 jobs? I said 125,000 jobs have been lost in northern Alberta since the government took office, and the parliamentary secretary says that we should not worry, because 55,000 have come back.

The government's actions have led to the cancellation of countless energy resource projects. The government said that the Trans Mountain pipeline is on the top of its list; it is the only thing left on the list. It is the only thing.

What other project does the government have? Energy east is gone. Northern gateway is gone. Keystone XL is in jeopardy. Petronas LNG is gone. Shell's Carmon Creek project is gone.

What other projects are on the list, other than Trans Mountain?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, our government's objectives have been very clear in this country: to develop the vital infrastructure that is critical to getting Canadian resources to global markets, something that the former government failed to do.

We are also restoring public confidence. We are advancing indigenous reconciliation, something the former government did not do as well. We are enhancing environmental protections.

We really believe that all of these things are critical to a strong economy in Canada. We also believe the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion is a part of that. That is why we have been supporting this project.

The Minister of Finance has initiated formal financial discussions with Kinder Morgan as we also pursue our legislative options for asserting the Government of Canada's jurisdiction to see this pipeline built.

We are determined to grow the economy in Canada. We are determined to find solutions to economic and environmental resource development.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Social Security Tribunal of Canada is a real disaster. We waited months for the KPMG report, and it is damning. Every case referred to the tribunal, which the Conservatives created in 2013 for the stated purpose of saving $25 million per year, has ended up costing more than under the old board of referees system, not to mention taking longer. It costs close to $2,400 now, compared to $720 before.

The Conservatives claimed their system would be more efficient, but the tribunal has a backlog of cases. Simply put, the tribunal takes five times longer to handle cases than the old system did. I would like to congratulate the FTQ, the CSN, and the Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi, MASSE, for their amazing work on this file. Wait times for employment insurance appeals have gotten longer and longer ever since the tribunal was set up. It was 109 days by the end of the first year, and it is now 219 days. Imagine waiting nearly a year for an appeal.

The status quo is no longer tenable. It is time for the government to keep its word and reform the Social Security Tribunal, as it promised to do.

Speaking of promises, the office of the minister responsible for social development has admitted that the tribunal is inefficient, saying that the backlog has been growing since 2013, and Canadians are waiting. His staff also said that the tribunal's decisions have an impact on people's lives and that it is important to restructure the tribunal to make it more efficient and more productive, so that people get decisions within a reasonable time frame.

As for the Prime Minister, he promised to “create new performance standards for services offered by the federal government” by reforming the appeals process at the SST so that Canadians receive “timely access to needed services”.

Nearly two and a half years later, however, we are still waiting for the promised changes. I would therefore like to know why the government is not doing more on this issue.

In 2013, the Conservative government made the mistake of ignoring warnings from my colleagues, unemployed workers' groups, and unions and carried out this reform without doing any consultations.

As Gaétan Cousineau, the coordinator of Mouvement Action-Chômage de la Gaspésie, has said, many people get discouraged and decide not to appeal due to the backlogs, whereas under the old system, appeals used to be made in person, in our regions, before boards of referees. Representatives of Mouvement Action Chômage de Saint-Hyacinthe have made similar comments.

I will therefore ask my question in clear terms. When will the Liberals finally decide to take action and get rid of the Social Security Tribunal once and for all? I am asking this question on behalf of all the unemployed workers who, as I said, may have to wait almost a year for their appeals to be heard.

● (1935)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for requesting this adjournment debate. As the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development said, the delays that Canadians are experiencing at the tribunal are unacceptable.

[*English*]

Simply put, as the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development has stated several times in the House that the delays Canadians are experiencing at the tribunal are unacceptable.

Last year, on March 7, our government announced that the tribunal would undergo a comprehensive review process to improve its appeals process. This review was a response to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities and of the employment insurance service quality review. We released that report publicly in January.

The report was very clear. It explained the reasons why the tribunal was not functioning as it should. It also provided seven recommendations on how the tribunal could better fulfill its mandate, each supported by a range of more specific options, from making changes within the current legislation and governance and appeals structure to proposing foundational changes to the tribunal.

We intend to implement all recommendations of the report in addition to assessing all options presented. We will also consider options that go beyond those recommendations. Our government will release an action plan that will focus on both short and long-term improvements, with the aim of making the recourse and appeals process faster, simpler, and more client-centric. We will also provide new support to assist people with their appeals.

As we are implementing changes to the tribunal, we will work closely with unions, employers, and other stakeholders. On that note, we will ensure that the EI commissioners and stakeholders play a key role in shaping this renewed system. We have already asked them to give us their insight on potential improvements that go beyond the report's recommendation and options. During the development and implementation of our action plan, we will need the expertise and views of these key partners to improve the system. We want to ensure they have their say on renewing the appeals process. That is why we are working with the commissioners to establish a group of partners that we can connect with regularly when we have issues and questions as we move forward.

We want to build upon the relationship that exists between our government and the organizations that represent employers and workers, and invest in fruitful discussions to arrive at the right system for Canadians.

It is through working together that we will achieve real success, which is creating an appeal system that will be more efficient, fairer, more transparent, and more responsive to the needs of Canadians.

● (1940)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, I am sure that unemployed workers are eager to find out what is meant by going beyond the recommendations.

It is high time the government put words into action and established a system that truly meets Canadians' needs. Many unemployed workers have had to wait over a year before their employment insurance appeal was heard by the tribunal. That is completely unacceptable. Unlike that of the Liberals, the NPD's position has not changed. We are calling for the government to abolish the Social Security Tribunal and to bring back the boards of referees, which have proven to be effective in the past. People felt that they received fair rulings, and I think that is the only solution.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, we agree that the system set up by the previous government has failed Canadians, and we do not contest the complaints as presented to us today.

Our government has reviewed the recommendations that were part of the report of the Social Security Tribunal and we are committed to improving the appeals process to ensure we deliver high quality, client-centric services to all Canadians.

Our past efforts, combined with further transformative actions, will result in a tribunal that will be more efficient, more fair, and transparent, and where partners will have a role in shaping its renewal through continued engagement as changes are explored and implemented.

By working together we can achieve real and lasting success with a system that will be more efficient, fair, and transparent for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

We remain determined to do better and to establish a recourse process that meets the needs and expectations of Canadians.

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday was Equality Day, and the 33rd anniversary of the coming into force of the equality provisions in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

By great coincidence, or probably great planning on the part of some of our NGO partners, yesterday I had the great honour of being at a reception to honour six women who fought for equality for indigenous women in Canadian law. Last night we honoured Ms. Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, Ms. Yvonne Bedard, Senator Sandra Lovelace-Nicholas, Dr. Sharon McIvor, Dr. Lynn Gehl, and Senator Lillian Dyck, six women who were described in this way by the Ontario Native Women's Association:

> The Famous Five fought to gain recognition for the equal personhood of women in 1929. So too, the Famous Six are fighting for recognition of the equal personhood of Indian women. But 88 years after the Privy Council ruled in favour of the Famous Five, the Famous Six, and the many thousands of Indian women and their descendants whom they represent, still do not enjoy equality with their Indian male counterparts under the Indian Act. This is an embarrassment to Canada, and a contravention of our human rights obligations.

Last night they were honoured, including Yvonne Bedard on her 80th birthday. It was so good to be able to thank them for fighting so hard. For 40 years, these women fought in court to regain Indian status for themselves and their children, which the Indian Act said they would lose if they married a white man, which is completely discriminatory. Of course, that is not mirrored for indigenous men who marry white women. Only the women were discriminated against.

I was very moved to hear the speech in particular by Sharon McIvor. She described how she now considers the 45,000 indigenous kids who regained their first nation status as a result of her court case her grandchildren. However, she said that 300,000 are yet to be included because the Liberal government has continued to resist full human rights being restored to all indigenous women in the Indian Act.

Members will remember the vote in the House on June 21, when my colleague, the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, moved, in tandem with the amendments that were proposed in the Senate, to bring full gender equality for indigenous women into the Indian Act. To our great shame, the Liberal government voted those amendments down. The Liberals said there were unintended consequences. The Liberals voted to revert to discriminating against indigenous women. This was the "6(1)(a) all the way" amendment, which these famous six indigenous women warriors were asking the government to restore.

Madam Speaker, through you, I ask my counterpart on the other side of the aisle why indigenous rights for women should have to be the subject of consultation. Are they not full human rights?

● (1945)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people. Second, I would like to congratulate all of those women who were recognized last evening, and many other women across Canada who have fought, and continue to fight, hard for gender-based equity in our country, including those within the House of Commons.

I also want to reiterate that our government is absolutely committed to ensuring gender equity for all women in Canada. That includes ensuring sex-based equity for indigenous women regarding the Indian Act registration. The government is pleased that Bill S-3, which finally eliminates all sex-based discrimination from registration provisions in the Indian Act, has now received royal assent. This is a tremendous step forward in this country for reconciliation, for indigenous women's rights, and for respect and equity in Canada. This includes circumstances prior to 1951, and in fact, the bill remedies sex-based inequities dating back to 1869.

While the balance of Bill S-3 was brought into force immediately after royal assent, the clause dealing with the 1951 cut-off will be brought into force after the conclusion of the co-designed consultations. The government has made it clear that consultation and partnership are essential prerequisites for any major changes involving first nations. We have set that out from the beginning. This approach is in keeping with its commitment to a renewed, respectful relationship, a partnership based on the recognition of rights, and to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The effective removal of the 1951 cut-off will require extensive consultations with communities, affected individuals, and experts to ensure we get this right. The government is committed to ensuring that this measure is implemented in the right way, both in terms of first nations communities and individuals who will become entitled to registration. As Senator Sinclair noted in his speech and in other places regarding Bill S-3, while he is somewhat reluctant that he sees us delaying the implementation of the charter right, he can also see the need to do so because of that competing constitutional obligation to consult. He said that he was prepared to support the legislation because it enshrines the right, and we would ask that members of the House of Commons do the same.

Consultations will be focused on identifying additional measures and resources required to do this right, and on working in partnership to develop a comprehensive implementation plan. This is a responsible and prudent way to proceed as a government. We will ensure that the government implements these measures in a way that will eliminate or mitigate any unintended negative consequences for communities and individuals.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Madam Speaker, how could there be unintended consequences of restoring full human rights to indigenous women? Three hundred thousand remain affected by the fact that the government did not restore full gender equality to the Indian Act. With respect, the six women who were at the foundation of the court case that forced the government to take this step are not happy with what the government has done, and the parliamentary secretary heard the government get called out on that last night.

I ask for a fourth time why a so-called feminist government needs to consult on whether indigenous women have human rights.

● (1950)

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, we are the first government in this country to recognize the very need to change the legislation that currently exists in Canada, which has been there for hundreds of years. We are restoring rights to indigenous women with respect to gender-based equality in this country, and that cannot be denied as it is clear in the legislation.

We are the first government in the history of this country to ever do so, and we have been committed to this process since the very beginning. We are determined to do this. We are determined to do it right, and with royal assent of Bill S-3, much of that process has already begun as I speak today.

We are also committed to changing the relationship that Canada has had with indigenous people in this country, and in changing that relationship we have agreed to do so in a respectful way to work together as partners. I would ask the member opposite to understand and accept that.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:51 p.m.)

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