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Friday, May 25, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 25, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

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• (1005)

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

MAIN ESTIMATES 2018-19

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to the main estimates 2018-19. In fact, I have several points. Some of those points will pertain to the main estimates as a totality, and other points of order will pertain specifically to the so-called budget implementation vote, or Treasury Board Secretariat vote 40, which I will simply refer to as vote 40 throughout the course of my argument.

At the outset, it is important to say that I support the stated objectives of the President of the Treasury Board with respect to reforming the estimates process and having better alignment between the budget document, the estimates documents, and the public accounts. That said, those goals will not be realized if for every step forward, we take two steps back. Moreover, we can have better information and better alignment between those documents without undermining the financial oversight role Parliament plays with respect to the government. It is in respect to that important role that I rise on a point of order today.

It is also important to say that these arguments will be procedural in nature. They are not about the substance of what is in the estimates, and pointing out the deficiencies in the way the government has chosen to seek funding for its new budget initiatives is not the same as opposing the substantive measures.

There are some positive measures in the budget, but the ends cannot justify the means in this case. Our duty as parliamentarians to oversee government spending does not begin with the programs we do not like and end with those we do, just as you, Mr. Speaker, serve the whole House and are charged with upholding the rights and privileges of the House, despite whatever partisan affiliation you may have had prior to your election as Speaker.

The first respect in which I believe this year's main estimates are deficient is in respect to their form. In *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, we read:

The business of supply is the process by which the government asks Parliament to appropriate the funds required to meet its financial obligations and to implement programs already approved by Parliament.

The government initiates its request in the House of Commons because, as stated in Standing Order 80(1):

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

To accomplish that task, according to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition:

The Crown, acting on the advice of its responsible Ministers, transmits to the House of Commons the government's projected annual expenditures, or "estimates", for parliamentary scrutiny and approval.

Further to that, we are to understand that:

During the legislative phase [of the supply process], the House considers and votes on the government's proposed annual spending plans (the main and supplementary estimates) and the legislation (appropriation bills) needed to authorize all consequential withdrawals from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

In other words, the government is meant to receive the authority to spend money out of the consolidated revenue fund from the House of Commons on the basis of the information it provides to members of the House through the estimates documents. As such, the form and content of the estimates have been contested over the last 150 years, and the rules and procedures of this place require certain information to be included in the estimates in order that members of the House are able to assess the spending plans of government prior to voting authority for expenditures of public money.

Requirements of the estimates are described in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition:

The main estimates provide a breakdown by department and program of planned government spending for the upcoming fiscal year. The estimates are expressed as a series of votes, or resolutions, which summarize the estimated financial requirements in a particular expenditure category, such as operations, capital or grants. The votes are expressed in dollar amounts, the total of which, once agreed to, should satisfy all the budgetary requirements of a department or agency in that category, with the exception of any expenditures provided for under other statutory authority.

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In response to complaints that the government estimates did not include sufficient information for parliamentarians to properly assess the integrity of government spending plans, the estimates were modified to include departmental plans, which include more detailed information about current and anticipated departmental initiatives. This practice dates back as far as 1981 and is so integral to the estimates process that the departmental plans are, in fact, considered to be Part III of the estimates.

I will spare members of the House a lengthy citation by referring them to chapter 18 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* for a historical survey of the estimates and the incorporation of departmental plans in the estimates.

Departmental plans are considered to be so important to parliamentarians' understanding of the estimates that a given department's departmental plan is automatically referred to the committee considering its departmental estimates. The authority for that comes from Standing Order 81(7), which I quote:

When main estimates are referred to a standing committee, the committee shall also be empowered to consider and report upon the expenditure plans and priorities in future fiscal years of the departments and agencies whose main estimates are before it. Any report on plans and priorities of a department or agency shall be deemed referred to the appropriate standing committee immediately after it is laid upon the Table.

The main estimates 2018-19 fail to meet these requirements of properly constituted estimates. It defies the well-established practice and reasonable expectation on the part of members of the House that the estimates will include the information they need to make a considered judgment with respect to the government's spending plan before giving authority for the spending.

Moreover, it violates the spirit of Standing Order 81(7), a standing order meant to ensure that members of the House have all the relevant information available to them with respect to the government's spending plans before authorizing that spending as part of the estimates process.

These estimates do that by supplanting Part III of the estimates with the budget document for all the government's new budgetary initiatives, valued at over \$7 billion, and all lumped together under Treasury Board vote 40.

There is no requirement for the government to present a budget in any given year, and there is no mechanism by which that document is automatically referred to committees for study. Nevertheless, we are being referred to that document, not any document in the estimates themselves, to get whatever details the government is prepared to offer about its proposed new initiatives.

To give a sense of the magnitude of the spending contemplated, consider that of the roughly \$276 billion of expenditures forecast in the main estimates, only \$83 billion actually stays with the government for operating and capital expenditures. The amount being requested under vote 40 is \$7 billion. That is 8.5% of the federal government's own operating and capital expenditures.

Together with the contingency fund of \$750 million under Treasury Board vote 5, the government is asking for \$7.8 billion, or about 9.4% of its actual budget, without providing the appropriate supporting information under Part III of the estimates.

While these are impressive figures, Speaker Jerome made the point in a ruling on December 7, 1977, that when it comes to deciding whether an item in the estimates is in order or not, "whether the amount is \$1 or a billion dollars makes no difference to the Chair." By extension, it does not matter whether the sum is over \$7 billion, either.

As Speaker Lamoureux stated on December 10, 1973, with respect to these matters, "The Chair has to make a ruling on principle".

To confirm that the government intended to supplant Part III of the main estimates with the budget document, such as it is, I would direct Your Honour to the testimony of Ms. Marie Lemay, deputy minister of the Department of Public Works and Government Services, at the government operations and estimates committee on May 10, 2018, in response to questioning by the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke. I quote from committee testimony. The hon. member said:

I want to follow up some of the questions that were raised earlier by [the member for Edmonton West], about table A2.11.

I want to try to clear things up a little...

There are things that are listed there for PSPC—\$653 million worth of spending—and for Shared Services—\$289 million of spending. That's nearly a billion dollars. Are those in the main estimates?

Ms. Marie Lemay responded, "Those were announced in the budget. They are not in the main estimates."

That is despite the government seeking appropriation for funds for those measures under Treasury Board vote 40.

I would further draw the House's attention to a number of examples in the documents themselves, which I do not pretend is by any means an exhaustive list but is merely a sampling of instances where authority is being requested for grants that are not described in Part III or any other part of the estimates.

Take for example the item "Ensuring Security and Prosperity in the Digital Age". In the annex of the main estimates that proposes certain allocations out of Treasury Board vote 40, this item is mentioned on eight separate occasions. The suggested allocations under this item are as follows: Communication Security Establishment, over \$42 million; Department of Employment and Social Development, \$2.7 million; Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, \$3.3 million; Department of Industry, \$4.6 million; Department of Natural Resources, \$2.2 million; Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, \$5,471,000; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, \$38,225,000; and the Standards Council of Canada, \$1.6 million.

●(1010)

Of the eight departments or agencies in question, only three bothered to mention digital initiatives at all in their departmental estimates. In the departmental plan for Employment and Social Development on page 54, for example, it is not exactly clear, given the subject heading in vote 40 and what occurs in the departmental estimates, how this funding is supposed to line up.

I quote from page 54 of the ESD departmental plan:

ESDC is developing and implementing a modern IT infrastructure that enables digital services; enables effective, efficient and timely availability of information; and ensures a secure technology environment. This will be delivered through initiatives to update and modernize the desktop computing environment, upgrade older server operating systems through the Application Portfolio Management initiative, as well as through establishing an Enterprise Architecture program to deliver on IT-enabled business transformation; and by supporting ESDC in delivering on Benefits Delivery Modernization of the Service Transformation Plan commitments to be delivered in the longer-term.

How that relates exactly to digital security is not exactly clear. The departmental plan for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, on page 22, says:

The Department will strengthen its relationships with information management and information technology services partners and maintain its ongoing participation in government-wide enterprise and modernization initiatives, including: the review and implementation of the new Treasury Board Digital Policy; the promotion of more accessible and open information via Open Government by design and default; the development of interoperability standards; the adoption of Government Enterprise systems such as GCDoc, GCSI (Government of Canada Secret Infrastructure), CTSN (Canadian Top Secret Network), and others.

While the RCMP departmental plan does provide considerably more information, and I will not quote at length from it, that still leaves five of the eight departments or agencies that did not include information on these proposed authorities in the estimates. Perhaps they felt that they did not need to, because the vote seeking authority for that spending actually appears as a Treasury Board vote, so they may have thought they did not need to include it in their own departmental estimates. If so, one might think the Treasury Board departmental plan would provide details for the over 200 items covered under vote 40. Alas, it does not.

Perhaps Treasury Board felt it did not need to provide those details because they appear in the budget document, but the budget document is not part of the estimates, which is, in essence, my point. Unlike Part III of the estimates, it is not automatically referred to committees for their consideration as part of the estimates study.

As a second example, consider the item “A New Intellectual Property Strategy”. That item appears in the vote 40 annex under five separate departments or agencies, but the new strategy is mentioned in only one departmental plan, the one for the Department of Industry. The Department of Industry requests \$6.2 million for this, the Copyright Board \$600,000, Courts Administration Service \$2.7 million—

• (1015)

The Speaker: Order. I am going to ask in a moment for the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona to give me an idea of how much time he expects to need for presenting the argument he is making on his point of order. However, I also want to make him aware, if he is not already, perhaps, of what is said at page 97 of *Beauchesne's*. It says:

The Member may interrupt and lay the point in question concisely before the Speaker. This should be done as soon as an irregularity is perceived in the proceedings which are engaging the attention of the House.

In this case, he should know, of course, and he probably does, that vote 40 is not before the House. It is, in fact, before the committee, so that is a fundamental problem.

Perhaps he could give me an idea of how much longer he expects to need to make his presentation. As I said, normally a point of order is raised in a very concise fashion, and he has had about 10 minutes

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already, which is fine, but I would expect him to wrap up in the next several minutes.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona has a point of order, so I am afraid I cannot let someone else interrupt his point of order.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to give you some sense of how long it will take to make this point. It is an important point, and I think the full point ought to be made. I would like to be able to take the time to show you why it is that members of Parliament are not satisfied that the appropriate information is in the estimates. I would say that this is relevant and an essential part of the argument.

However, before I try to give you a sense of the amount of time the point of order will take, and further to your point about the timing of these points of order, I too would like to quote from *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. This is about points of order on the estimates specifically, and not the general point with respect to points of order that you rightly raised. It states:

Speakers have often indicated that Members should take the initiative in bringing to the attention of the Chair any procedural irregularities with regard to the estimates. They have also repeatedly asked that Members raise questions about the procedural acceptability of estimates as early as possible so that the Chair has time to give due consideration to these [points].

I would also refer you to statements made on this very subject by other Speakers, particularly a statement from March 22, 1977, where the Speaker said:

[I]t cannot be expected that points of order would be raised at the time of tabling or referral of the...estimates. Nor can it be left to the last moment of consideration of the supply bill itself, if the administration of the House is to be expected to produce for consideration by hon. members the actual supply bill before the votes are taken.

In other words, if we were to wait until all of this was done at committee, it would put the House on the spot, and it would put you on the spot, Mr. Speaker, because if an important problem with the estimates was found, the House would then have far less time to find a solution to that problem.

I hope the government is compelled by the force of my argument, as I do find these to be compelling arguments, but if it is not, it may want to respond. I think it is reasonable to give the government as much time as possible to prepare its own response, as well as the other—

• (1020)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona still has not given me an indication, which I asked for, of how long he expects to need for this. I indicated that I was certainly open to hear a few more minutes. However, there is so much detail that it becomes a question of whether this is really more debate than a point of order when he is presenting so much in terms of argument. I would expect him to wrap up in the next few minutes.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

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Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, given that the crux of the argument in this particular case is that certain essential information is not being provided in the estimates, I think it is important to show that this information is not provided in the estimates. I think it is also relevant that the government seems to think that this information was provided by referring to documents outside of the estimates process. Therefore, while I do hear and appreciate your concern, I do feel strongly that this information is quite relevant to a technical point of order about procedure. It is not substantive debate. It is trying to demonstrate, for your benefit and for the benefit of all members of the House, that certain information is not in the estimates. If I am going to make the case that the estimates are not in their proper form, I have to be able to demonstrate that, and that is going to require talking about some detail of the estimates. I am making every effort not to debate the substantive merit of those measures, and I believe I am within order on that.

In terms of how long it is going to take, it is going to take exactly as long as it does to present what I believe to be the essential information for this point of order. Therefore, I would continue.

Perhaps these departments and agencies felt they did not need to address the new intellectual property strategy in their departmental plan because the vote-seeking authority for that spending is under the Treasury Board department. I think that this is quite relevant because we have had departments say at committee that because it is under vote 40 they do not have the information in their departmental plan, and because it is not in the departmental plan of the Treasury Board, it is effectively not in the estimates. That is why I think it is important for you to hear that information, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned before, the Treasury Board departmental plan does not attempt to provide information for those 200 items. We are led to believe that the government believes it is sufficient to discuss these measures in the budget document, but for the reasons I outlined before, they rightly belong in the estimates.

Indeed, the very wording proposed for the appropriations act for that vote refers directly to the budget. I am going to quote that vote to show that the government is invoking the budget document, as opposed to the estimates documents. The vote states:

Authority granted to the Treasury Board to supplement, in support of initiatives announced in the Budget of February 27, 2018, any appropriation for the fiscal year....

In order to respect your consideration of time, Mr. Speaker, I will dispense with quoting the rest of the language of the vote, because the important phrase here is “initiatives announced in the Budget of February 27, 2018”, a phrase that clearly suggests that, in the opinion of the government, an announcement in the budget is a sufficient basis for granting spending authority, notwithstanding the procedures and Standing Orders of the House. I submit to you that this is wrong. Members of the House should expect that the information they need to evaluate the spending plans of the government be included in the estimates themselves.

• (1025)

The Speaker: Order. I thank the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona. I think I have heard enough on the subject.

The fact is that this is a matter that is before a committee. The House cannot presume what the committee will do, whether it will

vote to pass the estimates or not pass the estimates, until it comes back before the House. It is not properly before the House. It is not a matter that I think I can consider in terms of this point of order, until that occurs. However, I thank the hon. member for this point of order.

The hon. opposition House leader.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order on this.

The rules governing the main estimates were adopted only in June of last year. As the House knows, when new rules are adopted, clarification is often required. We are not talking about some of the rules that the Liberals dumped on us last year, such as their approach to prorogation and omnibus bills. We are talking about the financial role of Parliament. I know that some in this House may be impatient, but I want to remind everyone that it took centuries to get to where we are today, and spending a little time on this important topic on a Friday is not unreasonable.

Page 114 of Josef Redlich's *The Procedure of the House of Commons: A Study of its History and Present Form* states:

The whole law of finance, and consequently the whole British constitution, is grounded upon one fundamental principle, laid down at the very outset of English parliamentary history and secured by three hundred years of mingled conflict with the Crown and peaceful growth. All taxes and public burdens imposed upon the nation for purposes of state, whatsoever their nature, must be granted by the representatives of the citizens and taxpayers, i.e., by Parliament.

Page 404 of the fourth edition of Bourinot's *Parliamentary Procedure and Practice*, published in 1916, states:

All the checks and guards which the wisdom of English parliamentarians has imposed in the course of centuries upon public expenditures now exist in their full force in the parliament of the dominion.

It could be seen as scandalous that what took centuries to develop cannot be given a little time on a quiet Friday. I am listening intently, as we all are, to my colleague from the NDP. I want to hear the arguments. I think he has been very careful not to engage in debate. This is an argument that we want to hear. Many of my colleagues who have been engaged on this file for some time, and who have brought it forward, no doubt want to return to the House and continue this debate with their own submissions.

The government proposed a change, promising more complete and accurate main estimates in exchange for less time to scrutinize them at committee. The President of the Treasury Board came through with his promise of less scrutiny at committee but has not provided accurate and complete information to Parliament.

Furthermore, vote 40 in this year's main estimates is nothing more than a \$7-billion slush fund that would allow the Liberals to move money around wherever they want, without parliamentary approval. The Parliamentary Budget Officer, in his latest report on the main estimates, had this to say:

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The Government delayed tabling the 2018-19 Main Estimates by several weeks to ensure better alignment between the Budget and Estimates. While the Government has included a new Budget Implementation Vote for \$7.0 billion, the initiatives to be funded through this vote are not reflected in the Departmental Plans. Hence, there remains a lack of alignment between the Budget initiatives and planned results.

The Government's approach to funding Budget 2018 initiatives provides parliamentarians with information that only marginally supports their deliberations and places fewer controls around the money it approves.

With respect to the former, virtually none of the money requested in the new Budget Implementation vote has undergone scrutiny through the standard Treasury Board Submission process, which as indicated by the Government, is to "ensure resources are directed to programs and activities that remain government priorities and achieve value for money." With respect to the latter, it is unclear that the proposed vote wording would restrict the Government to funding each Budget 2018 measure in the amount set out in the Budget Plan for each Department and Agency, rather than changing the allocations across any initiative mentioned in Budget 2018.

As I said earlier, some of my colleagues serving on the estimates committee may want to weigh in on this important discussion at a later date. In the meantime, I believe we must hear from the member the full submission on this important topic and the matter that is before the House right now.

• (1030)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. opposition House leader for her intervention.

An hon. member: Point of order.

The Speaker: No. As I indicated—

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Point of order.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Carleton will take his seat as the Speaker is standing.

As I indicated, I have heard enough on this subject. The matter is not before the House. It is before the committee, and I am not prepared to hear any more on this subject. I thank hon. members.

Orders of the day.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Point of order.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Carleton have a point of order on a different topic?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is the custom of the House that Chairs recognize points of order when they are called. I called a point of order before you went into orders of the day, and I know that you clearly heard that point of order, because you referenced me while I was making it. I am going to proceed to making that point of order. That point of order began prior to orders of the day.

It does relate to a matter that is before the House of Commons. Vote 40 is a matter before the House of Commons. The House of Commons has delegated to committees the study of estimates. That matter is before—

The Speaker: Order. It appears to me very clearly that the member is engaging in the same point of order that has already been dealt with. I will examine the arguments that have been made and will come back to the House in due course.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Point of order. Point of order.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Point of order.

The Speaker: The members for Elmwood—Transcona and Carleton will come to order. The members will take their seats. Only one person stands at a time.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Point of order. Point of order.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Point of order. Point of order.

The Speaker: Order. If the member for Elmwood—Transcona wishes to be heard in the near future, he will cease and sit down. The member for Elmwood—Transcona will take his seat.

Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS

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

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, commencing upon the adoption of this Order and concluding on Friday, June 22, 2018:

(a) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be 12:00 a.m., except that it shall be 10:00 p.m. on a day when a debate, pursuant to Standing Order 52 or 53.1, is to take place;

(b) subject to paragraph (c), when a recorded division is requested in respect of a debatable motion, including any division arising as a consequence of the application of Standing Order 61(2) or Standing Order 78, but not including any division in relation to the Business of Supply or arising as a consequence of an order made pursuant to Standing Order 57, (i) before 2:00 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions at that day's sitting, or (ii) after 2:00 p.m. on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, or at any time on a Friday, it shall stand deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions at the next sitting day that is not a Friday;

(c) notwithstanding Standing Order 45(6) and paragraph (b) of this Order, no recorded division requested after 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 21, 2018, or at any time on Friday, June 22, 2018, shall be deferred, except for any recorded division which, under the Standing Orders, would be deferred to immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business on Wednesday, September 19, 2018;

(d) the time provided for Government Orders shall not be extended pursuant to Standing Order 45(7.1) or Standing Order 67.1(2);

(e) when a recorded division, which would have ordinarily been deemed deferred to immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business on a Wednesday governed by this Order, is requested, the said division is deemed to have been deferred until the conclusion of Oral Questions on the same Wednesday;

(f) any recorded division which, at the time of the adoption of this Order, stands deferred to immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business on the Wednesday immediately following the adoption of this Order shall be deemed to stand deferred to the conclusion of Oral Questions on the same Wednesday;

(g) a recorded division requested in respect of a motion to concur in a government bill at the report stage pursuant to Standing Order 76.1(9), where the bill has neither been amended nor debated at the report stage, shall be deferred in the manner prescribed by paragraph (b);

(h) for greater certainty, this Order shall not limit the application of Standing Order 45(7);

(i) no dilatory motion may be proposed after 6:30 p.m.;

(j) notwithstanding Standing Orders 81(16)(b) and (c) and 81(18)(c), proceedings on any opposition motion shall conclude no later than 5:30 p.m. on the sitting day that is designated for that purpose, except on a Monday when they shall conclude at 6:30 p.m. or on a Friday when they shall conclude at 1:30 p.m.; and

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(k) when debate on a motion for the concurrence in a report from a standing, standing joint or special committee is adjourned or interrupted, the debate shall again be considered on a day designated by the government, after consultation with the House Leaders of the other parties, but in any case not later than the 20th sitting day after the interruption.

• (1035)

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Motion No. 22. The motion would extend the sitting hours of the House until we rise for the summer adjournment.

We are now heading into the final weeks of this current session of Parliament. We have an important legislative agenda before us, and we are determined to work hard to make significant progress. This motion to extend the sitting hours of the House is timely and, clearly, it is necessary. Members opposite will have more time for debate. The motion would do exactly that.

So far in this Parliament, the House has passed 54 government bills, and 44 of those have been given royal assent. We have more work to do. We have many important bills to make progress on before we adjourn for the summer recess and we return to our ridings.

Here are some examples of the important legislation that we would like to see make progress in the House of Commons: Bill C-74, the budget implementation act, 2018, No. 1, which includes measures to ensure every Canadian has a real and fair chance at success, including a new Canada workers benefit to assist low-income workers; an indexed Canada child benefit that will help nine out of 10 Canadian families; a lower tax for small businesses, and I am sure we can agree that the backbone of the Canadian economy deserves lower taxes; and better support for Canada's veterans.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the House to come back to order. I will take one point of order.

The hon. member for Carleton, a brief point of order.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it would have been a lot briefer if I had been allowed to finish it the first time.

Earlier today, the member was rising on a point of order with respect to the procedures of the government in its presentation of the estimates. Those estimates are currently before the House. In your multiple interruptions of his point, Mr. Speaker, you stated that the matter was not—

• (1040)

The Speaker: I would ask the member to make his comments concisely, and obviously with respect to rulings of the Speaker.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, you indicated that the matter was not before the House. The matter is before a parliamentary committee, the government operations committee, which is a creature of the House of Commons. The matter has been presented. The estimates were literally tabled in the House of Commons, right here across from me, by the President of the Treasury Board. In other words, the matter is very much live, and it is very much appropriate for the member to raise a point of order with respect of it.

I know that member probably has some policy objections to items in those estimates, but I did not hear him make any of those objections. He was focused exclusively on the procedural element and on the Standing Orders and the traditions and conventions that date back hundreds of years when he was making his case.

Therefore, it is not accurate to suggest that he was engaging in debate. There was no debate whatsoever about the policy substance of the estimates. His point was exclusively about whether those estimates provided enough information for Parliament to carry out its legitimate duty in executing the power of the purse.

The most fundamental rule of public finance in our parliamentary system is that the government cannot spend what Parliament does not approve. The member was making a point of order specifically on whether the presentation of the estimates, which gives authorization for any non-statutory spending, was done in the proper form. That is very much a point of order.

We are talking about the expenditure of \$7 billion. The hon. member chose a quiet Friday, out of respect for the work of Parliament, to raise this issue. It seems to me that he has taken the least disruptive possible approach to making his procedural case on this point. He was in the process of making that case prior to the Chair entering Parliament into orders of the day. We, as parliamentarians, should hear this argument, and we should hear it in its entirety.

It is not reasonable to expect he could make that—

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Carleton. I think he is aware that it is at the Speaker's discretion, when the Speaker feels the Speaker has heard enough. He will also know I have made a ruling that I have heard enough on the subject and that I will come back to the House, if necessary.

I want to point out to him what is said at page 338 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which states, "Under the Standing Orders, a brief presentation of arguments on the point of order is possible at the Speaker's discretion." There are many precedents where a Speaker has indicated he has heard enough in terms of the arguments.

Members may have various reasons for trying to take up time or make arguments, and that may be, but the point is that I have made a ruling. As the member for Carleton probably knows, the Chair cannot be challenged except through a motion. Now, that may come at some point, or not, but the point is that the member appears to be challenging a ruling of the Chair. Perhaps he does not intend to do that, but that is the impression I am getting. Of course, that is not appropriate.

I have heard enough, as I have indicated, so we will continue with debate.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, I will to continue. Bill C-76, the elections modernization act, would strengthen—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona indicates he has a separate point of order on a different subject.

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, this point of order is with respect to the timing of raising points of order about the estimates. You rightly have presented some arguments about general points of order, but I would like to put on the record another passage from a previous Speaker who addressed the issue—

The Speaker: Order. The member for Elmwood—Transcona must understand that I am not presenting arguments. The Speaker makes a ruling. I have made a ruling. He again appears to be challenging the ruling. I regret that he does not like the ruling, but the only manner to challenge a ruling is through a motion. The Speaker is not challenged in this fashion. It is the custom in the House that one person stands at a time, and I would ask him to take his seat as is required by the Standing Orders.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: I will not take my seat until I'm heard.

The Speaker: If he wishes to be heard, he may not be heard for some time. It may be difficult to recognize him if he does not take his seat and come to order.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona will come to order.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: It's my right to be heard.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The member for Elmwood—Transcona will come to order.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: You have not heard me.

The Speaker: We may not hear from the member for a while if he continues like this.

The opposition House leader on a point of order.

• (1045)

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, we do need some clarification on this in that we had not gone to orders of the day. We were dealing with the member for Elmwood—Transcona's point of order, which you cut him off. Then I brought in my intervention. Then the member for Carleton rose on a separate point of order. You did not recognize him, for whatever reason, and then you moved to orders of the day. Then clearly you came back and stopped orders of the day and went back to the member for Carleton's point of order, which should have actually been heard before orders of the day.

I understand there was a lot happening here, but procedurally we do need some clarification on how he should have been recognized and been allowed to speak before we went to orders of the day. Instead, Mr. Speaker, you went to orders of the day, and now we have a bit of a situation on our hands that will need to be rectified.

The Speaker: I thank the opposition House leader for her point of order. As I said previously, and it is very well established, that it is at the discretion of the Speaker to determine when he or she feels he or she has heard enough of an argument.

As it turned out, in fact, the point of order from the hon. member for Carleton was in my view on the same topic. Whether or not a member declares personally that orders of the day have or have not started is beside the point. Orders of the day had been called. It has commenced. I had called for debate. We are under way.

Members may not like that, I recognize that, but the hon. government House leader now has the floor. I have heard enough as I have indicated.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton says he has a separate point of order. I anticipate he will make very clear the topic of the point of order very briefly so I can determine that it is in fact a separate point of order.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the topic of the point of order is the points of order of members of Parliament. In fact, there were many of them made in rapid succession about 10 minutes ago, immediately before we appeared to have accidentally and perhaps erroneously fallen into orders of the day. There were about 15 members who were seeking to make those points of order. I ask that they be allowed to be recognized. It is the custom that whenever a member makes a point of order, that point is recognized by the Chair.

In fairness to the Chair, there was a lot of sound at the time, and it is understandable that it might not have been clear exactly which members at which moments were making their points. However, now that I have brought the matter to the Speaker's attention, I ask that he give the other members who had been making points of order at that time the opportunity to make those points, because if they are not given the opportunity, there may well be procedural matters that were not brought to the Speaker's attention that could only be brought to his attention if the members making them were given the floor and recognized, as is their right as members of Parliament.

No one could expect any Speaker to be cognizant of everything that goes on in a chamber this size, with 300-plus individuals in it. As a result, it is perfectly reasonable that the Speaker rely on members of the House to bring procedural challenges to the attention of the Speaker. That is why, when members raise points of order throughout debate, as they have done for decades or centuries, it has not been seen as an insult to the Speaker; far from it. It is merely a recognition that it is impossible for any one Speaker to see every single procedural difficulty that might have occurred.

Therefore, I am asking the Speaker to allow the members who were clearly observant to problems of procedure and order to rise now and raise those points with the Speaker, and that he have the opportunity to rule on each of those points of order so that the House can dispense with all of the concerns that members of Parliament have brought to the Speaker's attention.

Moments ago, we had a discussion that the New Democratic member for Elmwood—Transcona was raising a point of order on one subject and then felt compelled to raise points of order on other subjects. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we respect your decision that you do not want to hear more at this moment about the issue of vote 40, but I do believe that the member for Elmwood—Transcona had other concerns, other points of order, that he attempted to bring to your attention. Again, it was very loud in the House at that moment, so it is possible that the Speaker did not hear the member making those points of order, but he did so about 25 times, to my inexact count, and it would be appropriate to allow him to rise on his separate points of order in order to raise them, and that other members who raised points of order at the exact same time be given the opportunity to raise them with you, Mr. Speaker, as well.

Statements by Members

●(1050)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. If I heard you correctly, you read the motion that we will shortly be discussing in English only. There was no French interpretation at that time. I think it is the right of all the francophone members of the House to be able to hear the text of the motion they are going to debate in their own language. I would like to know how you intend to rectify this situation.

[English]

Mr. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, as an effort to improve my French, I always keep my translation either on “floor” or on “French”. This morning I had it on “French”. I can confirm that I did not notice a time when there was not French translation. I will say that it was quite loud in here and I could understand why the hon. member might not have heard it, but as far as I was concerned from this side of things, I certainly heard it on translation.

●(1055)

[Translation]

The Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie and the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

There does not seem to be a consensus as to whether the motion could in fact be heard. The hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie can consult today's Order Paper. If she requires assistance, I am willing to read the motion in French as well.

[English]

The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga has a point of order on a different matter.

Mr. Harold Albrecht: Mr. Speaker, on this particular point of order, it was impossible to hear what was being said. In fact, I heard clearly in my earpiece the interpreter saying “inaudible”, indicating that they were not hearing, and so how could they possibly have interpreted for the rest of us?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I heard the intervention from my hon. colleague from the NDP. The member for Hull—Aylmer did concede in his comments that he could understand how certain members would not have been able to hear the original reading of orders of the day. Even members on the government side are acknowledging that some people might not have heard.

He acknowledges that this is the case—

The Speaker: Order. I must say that it is a little hard for me to accept from the hon. member for Carleton the argument that members could not hear me reading the motion when one of the reasons they could not hear was that he was banging on his desk at the time I was reading it. That is not permitted in the House of Commons, as he ought to know as an experienced member of this place.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, regarding the point raised by the NDP member for Hochelaga and the member for Hull—Aylmer, I put on my earpiece during the point of order to try listening to the simultaneous interpretation, and I heard absolutely nothing. This matter is worth looking into. We should take a few moments to find out whether the simultaneous interpretation was actually available.

[English]

The Speaker: I thank hon. members for the arguments on this subject. I will remind hon. members that they can find the motion that I read on page 238 of the Notice Paper, which is available to members.

I think I have heard enough on this subject, but in any event, it is 11 a.m. and time for Statements by Members.

The hon. member for Nickel Belt.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

CAPREOL

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to offer the community of Capreol, in the Nickel Belt, my warmest congratulations on its 100th anniversary.

[English]

Capreol was previously known as Onwatin Junction during the fur trade. The foundation of its history has deep ties to the railroad, thanks to innovators like its founder, Frank Dennie, who saw great potential for growth to build this community. The community spirit among its residents, business owners, and volunteers is second to none.

The year 2018 is a year full of milestones. Capreol-Trinity United Church turns 100, the Capreol Curling Club turns 90, and the Northern Ontario Railroad Museum celebrates 25 years of great success.

●(1100)

[Translation]

I would ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Capreol on its 100th anniversary. I look forward to taking part in the celebrations with locals. Thank you. *Meegwetch.*

* * *

[English]

MARIJUANA

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government ignored opposition warnings, good science, and common sense when it put together Bill C-45, its marijuana legalization bill.

Statements by Members

This legislation will do nothing to keep pot out of the hands of kids or eliminate the marijuana black market. In fact, provisions wrapped into the bill would allow children from 12 to 17 years of age to possess up to five grams of marijuana for personal use, making it easier than ever for kids to score pot.

Just this week, Durham Regional Police reported that marijuana-laced cookies and gummies had found their way into Oshawa's elementary schools on two separate occasions. As many as eight kids were reportedly affected. Some of these kids were as young as 11 years old.

Legalization will only make marijuana more accessible to kids, and troubling incidents like the one in Oshawa will become the norm in our schools.

I urge the Liberal government to listen to indigenous groups, municipalities, police, and doctors and delay this implementation until we can ensure our students can be protected.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, children around the world disappear every day. They may be runaways, victims of a family kidnapping, or they may simply be lost.

Today, we mark International Missing Children's Day. As the father of two young children, I cannot imagine the pain and despair caused by the disappearance of a child.

[English]

In Canada, there are more than 47,000 missing children.

In my riding of Pontiac, two young Algonquin girls from the first nations reserve of Kitigan Zibi, Shannon Alexander and Maisy Odjick, went missing on September 10, 2008. Ten years later, their community is still searching, because a community will never stop searching for a missing child.

[Translation]

I encourage all Canadians to visit the website "Canada's Missing" at disparus-Canada.ca and learn about cases still being investigated.

[English]

It is our responsibility to do everything we can to ensure the safe return of our missing children.

One missing child is one missing child too many.

* * *

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in January, I and 22 community organizations in Vancouver East sent a letter to the Minister of Employment asking the government to re-examine the Canada summer jobs funding formula. Our call went unheard.

Vancouver East has a higher-than-average number of non-profits compared with other ridings, and many of them serve highly vulnerable populations.

Vancouver East is one of the lowest-income ridings in the country, so CSJ funding matters.

Vancouver East is the third-largest urban aboriginal community, so CSJ funding matters.

Cultural and socio-economic factors should be considered along with youth unemployment in determining funding.

In 2018, over 57% of the groups recommended for funding in Vancouver East did not receive any funds. In 2016 and 2017, it was 61%. This is wrong.

The process of reinvestment of slippages causes the loss of many potential jobs, because it is very difficult for groups to hire students so late into the summer.

I am calling again for the minister to make the CSJ program more fair and equitable.

* * *

●(1105)

[Translation]

LACHINE CANAL

Mr. David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Lachine Canal is an important part of the history of Canada, Quebec, and my riding, LaSalle—Émard—Verdun. The canal opened in 1925, was enlarged twice in the 19th century, and played an important role in the industrial development of Canada and Montreal. Lachine was a stop for vessels on their way to the major industrial centres of Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago and, at its peak, just before the 1929 crash, 15,000 vessels a year travelled through the canal, providing jobs for 25,000 workers.

Several Quebec cities, such as Verdun and LaSalle, owe much of their development to the canal's construction. The Lachine Canal is reminder of Canada's industrial history and was declared a National Historic Site of Canada in 1996. Renovations will bring about changes to its use, as the recreational aspect of the canal is being developed. I am extremely proud that our government has taken steps to protect the canal and to ensure that this irreplaceable ecosystem remains sound and an asset for future generations to enjoy.

* * *

ENGAGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to salute municipal elected officials from my riding as well as their spouses and staff. They are here to take part in federal government consultations.

The riding of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup is made up of 58 municipalities and four RCMs, most of which are represented here today. Despite their very busy schedules, these mayors and reeves agreed to take the time to come learn about the nation's capital and participate in workshops.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to salute these men and women who work so hard and are so dedicated to developing our communities.

Statements by Members

As the former mayor of La Pocatière, I know first-hand how important it is for public officials to be engaged with their fellow citizens. I have no doubt that every one of them cares deeply about helping their municipalities and RCMs flourish

I am proud to speak on their behalf here in the heart of our democracy.

* * *

[English]

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, members of Parliament were seen sporting a yellow rose in support of people with cystic fibrosis. Members of my household are familiar with the challenges caused by CF. Growing up, my son's best friend suffered from complications of this debilitating disease, and still does.

Nick was an active child and never let it slow him down, but at 29 years old, he is currently waiting for a double lung transplant. It is because of this that I would like to highlight the efforts of my other friend, Cheryl, who also has CF. She and her husband Keith have raised thousands of dollars for CF research through the Great Strides walk for cystic fibrosis.

I would like to urge all members of the House to donate to CF research and to sign their organ donor cards. This small act can mean saving the life of someone who is waiting for a transplant.

* * *

WOODSTOCK FUNDRAISER

Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight the incredible generosity of one of the communities in my rural riding of Tobique—Mactaquac, as demonstrated through an amazing fundraiser recently held in Woodstock, New Brunswick. Bryan and Susan Hayden recently hosted “An evening in the Valley” in support of the Children's Wish Foundation after being named chairs of the More Wishes, More Wonders chapter of the board.

“An evening in the Valley” raised in excess of \$170,000. This is from a small community of only 5,000 residents. In Susan's words, “To say that we live in a fantastic place is an understatement. The room was magical—more wishes and wonders really will come true!”

The overwhelming support for this fantastic cause from the people of Woodstock and surrounding area is mind-blowing. It is stories like these that make me prouder than I ever thought I could be of such a supportive, caring area.

This year Make-A-Wish Canada celebrates 35 years of granting wishes. Congratulations to Make-A-Wish Canada for all its hard work and passion for the past 35 years in making a difference through the creation of life-changing wishes for children living with critical illnesses. I wish them all the best in the future. #RiverValleyProud

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the citizen of the year from the city of Brooks and County of Newell, Ahmed Kassem.

Ahmed is well known throughout the city and county for his incredible volunteerism. He has been a pillar of his community for almost two decades. He is a volunteer board member of several important community organizations and has devoted countless volunteer hours to helping new Canadians and long-time residents alike. Through his radio and television show, *Global Village*, he has reached thousands with a message of inclusion and goodwill. Through his work, Ahmed has helped build relationships between communities across the city and county. His efforts have brought different cultures together and helped make the city of Brooks and the County of Newell the vibrant, multicultural places they are today.

Ahmed is truly a role model, setting an aspirational example. I look forward to seeing the great work he will continue to do in the years to come. I congratulate Ahmed Kassem, citizen of the year.

* * *

TS'ZIL LEARNING CENTRE

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the beautiful Pemberton Valley, north of Whistler, with Mount Currie rising 2,300 metres straight up from the valley floor, is the territory of the Lil'wat Nation.

For 20 years, starting with basic portable buildings with no proper heating, the Ts'zil Learning Centre has provided a place where first nation people come to receive healing support, to overcome their residential school experiences, and to gain essential skills, such as trades certification or a high school diploma.

It is safe, familiar, and caring, and it is critical to the pride and progress of the Lil'wat people, in their way.

Today, with an \$8 million investment by our government and an innovative partnership with locally based Murphy Construction, the beautiful new Ts'zil Learning Centre is rising up. Murphy Construction provides training, mentorship, and job creation for the Lil'wat Nation; 68% of Murphy Construction's employees are first nation.

Lamarr Williams attended Ts'zil, and conducted our tour. He is Murphy Construction's lead on the project. The lead for the Lil'wat Nation's approach to advanced education and training, through Ts'zil, is Lisa Fisher.

Murphy Construction and Lil'wat Nation are jointly, deeply committed to the Ts'zil Learning Centre. It is an honour to witness their approach. Ts'zil is showing us the way forward, together.

Statements by Members

●(1110)

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Mary Ng (Markham—Thornhill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak about Asian Heritage Month.

From athletes and entertainers, to business owners and community volunteers, Asian Canadians have made an incredible contribution to our country.

The 2003 SARS outbreak was a challenging time for the Asian-Canadian community when so many people grew afraid of shopping at Asian businesses. Community leaders in Markham—Thornhill rose to the challenge, and in doing so, encouraged others to do the same.

The first Taste of Asia festival brought the community together to promote local businesses and gave us a reason to celebrate who we are and the heritage that binds us. For the last 16 years, the leadership of the organizers, the Federation of Chinese Canadians in Markham and the Association of Progressive Muslims of Canada, have been a shining example of how Asian Canadians have helped make our country the compassionate and prosperous nation we know today.

I look forward to seeing many members in Markham on June 23 and 24 for this year's Taste of Asia Festival.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the government for taking the advice of the official opposition and blocking the sale of Aecon.

Unfortunately, when it came to B.C. seniors care homes, the Liberal government has not followed the same advice. Now we have B.C. seniors in care homes being run by the Chinese state.

One of these homes is located in Summerland, B.C., in my riding. It was just reported to me that recently 20 seniors were left overnight with only one nurse on duty. If there had been a fire or any other emergency, this would have been a disaster in the making.

The seniors in Summerland and in British Columbia generally deserve better. I am hopeful that this Liberal government, which created this mess, will now do the right thing and fix it. I am asking the government to please stand up for the seniors at this care home in Summerland.

* * *

EXPLOSION IN MISSISSAUGA

Mr. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night, an explosion rocked a restaurant in a bustling plaza across the street from my house in Mississauga.

Fifteen people were injured; three are still being treated. Young children were at the restaurant, but thank goodness, none were hurt. Police Chief Jennifer Evans and her team are on top of the investigation. Mayor Bonnie Crombie and her team at city hall are actively involved.

Our government, including federal law enforcement agencies led by our Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness have been offering assistance to local authorities.

I want to express my gratitude to first responders for their outstanding professionalism and quick reaction. Peel Police are looking for two suspects and are working hard to ensure that those responsible will be held accountable. They are asking anyone who may have any information to contact them.

In the meantime, our thoughts are with those affected. The people of the great city of Mississauga are strong and are there for each other.

* * *

[*Translation*]**TAIWAN**

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the Taiwanese community in Canada and Canada-Taiwan relations, but I also want to convey the NDP's concerns about certain recent events.

[*English*]

This month Air Canada began listing Taiwan as part of China, going against long-standing policy and upsetting many Taiwanese-Canadians. We call on Air Canada to reverse this decision immediately.

The NDP also wants to see Taiwan play a meaningful role in international organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The NDP calls on the Government of Canada to do more to stand up for Taiwan, where there has been tremendous human rights progress over last two decades, including for LGBT rights.

Taiwan is a beacon of diversity and democracy, and an important partner to Canada. The NDP celebrates Taiwanese Canadians. It is time this government stands up for them.

* * *

EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN BRANDON

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the exceptional work of the emergency services personnel who responded to a massive fire that broke out in downtown Brandon last Saturday, May 19. The fire quickly spread to several other buildings. Battling the blaze for more than 24 hours, Brandon Fire & Emergency Services personnel gained control of this inferno with the help of neighbouring fire departments from Souris-Glenwood, Oakland-Wawanesa, and CFB Shilo. Our entire community is grateful to them for their remarkable service in the line of duty, for keeping people safe, and for saving Brandon's downtown from further destruction.

Oral Questions

As well, I commend the Red Cross, the Brandon Bear Clan, the Salvation Army, and everyone involved for their generosity in supporting the 93 adults, 57 children, and many pets who were evacuated from their homes, which were in the line of fire in last Saturday's blaze.

I continue to be proud to represent the fine people of Brandon—Souris, who continually go above and beyond the call of duty with their volunteerism and their dedication to our community.

* * *

• (1115)

[Translation]

DISASTER MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION FUND

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only a year ago, two towns in my riding were flooded. The homes of many people in L'Île-Bizard—Sainte-Geneviève and Pierrefonds-Roxboro were damaged or even completely lost. Despite the military and financial assistance we provided the province and the help of Quebec, the municipalities, and individuals, many people are still trying to get their lives back to normal.

[English]

Whenever these natural disasters happen, such as floods or forest fires, I am always proud to see how Canadians come together to help their neighbours. I am now proud to see the federal government introduce the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund. This fund will help our communities prepare for the future to hopefully avoid the worst of future natural disasters. This is good for all Canadians.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last night a blast from an improvised explosive device went off in a Mississauga restaurant. Initial reports are that a number of people are injured, some critically. On behalf of the Conservative Party and the official opposition, I convey our thoughts and our prayers to the victims and their families.

Can the government provide this House with an update on the situation?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I join the member opposite in expressing our compassionate thoughts for those injured in last night's horrendous attack with an improvised explosive device in Mississauga. We hope for their speedy recoveries.

The Peel Regional Police are currently leading the investigation. Two men are being sought, and anyone with information is of course encouraged to contact the police. We have offered the full support of federal law enforcement resources to this investigation.

I would like to advise this House that at this time there is no indication of a nexus to national security. Our tremendous thanks, of course, go to all first responders, who once again showed their

tremendous professionalism and compassion as they rushed to help the victims of this terrible tragedy.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us review what we know about “clamscam”. The fisheries minister went out of his way to award a surf clam quota to a company that, one, was run by the brother of a Liberal MP; two, had the lowest percentage of indigenous ownership of all the bidders; and three, did not even own a boat when they were awarded the quota. Now the minister is under federal investigation for his actions.

Will the government scrap the cronyism and restart the bidding process?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are obviously happy to work with the commissioner to answer any questions that he might have. Our government believes that increasing indigenous participation in offshore fisheries offers a powerful opportunity to advance reconciliation. That is why we created a process to consult industry and indigenous communities on potential participation in this surf clam fishery.

This process was very similar to the one that was undertaken by the previous Conservative government, except that they forgot to include indigenous people. The expressions of interest selected for next steps include five first nations from Atlantic Canada and Quebec, and there would be significant economic opportunities for these indigenous communities.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we did not do was award our friends and family contracts when they did not even own boats.

The fisheries minister is under federal investigation. Communities in Newfoundland, such as Grand Bank, are suffering as a result of his actions, but we are hearing crickets from other Liberal MPs in Atlantic Canada. Nothing.

Will the veterans affairs minister from Newfoundland or the health minister from New Brunswick finally stand up to the cronyism coming from their cabinet colleague and tell him to restart the bidding process?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of our decision to introduce indigenous participation, and it is consistent with our government's commitment to develop a renewed relationship between Canada and first nations people. The minister made this decision to allow for increased indigenous participation in the fishery, and we reject any claim to the contrary in the strongest of terms, no matter how many times it is repeated in this House.

Our government is proud of this decision and of how it will benefit the largest number of people in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, as well as five indigenous communities in five provinces.

Oral Questions

● (1120)

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like Pinocchio's nose, the investigation into the Minister of Fisheries keeps going on and on. Now the minister has supposedly ordered a business owner to back out of a partnership with Clearwater in favour of an alliance with a Liberal MP's brother who owns Premium Seafoods.

Will the fisheries minister confirm these facts and keep his nose from growing any longer?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the previous government, our government decided it was important to bring a new participant into the surf clam fishery. However, unlike the Conservatives, we remembered to include indigenous communities. We are proud of our decision, which will benefit the greatest possible number of Atlantic Canadians.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are wondering which Liberal Party friend will get the largest catch in the saga surrounding the fisheries minister's fish tale. Patronage, a breach of contract, and deception were all part of the strategy used to obtain lucrative fishing quotas for Liberal cronies.

Why does the Minister of Fisheries not admit he was wrong and start over with a clear, fair, equitable, and transparent bidding process?

[English]

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have stated, these allegations are absolutely false, no matter how many times the Conservatives restate them in the House. The fact that there is a new participant in this fishery should be no surprise to the Conservatives. They started a similar process three years ago. The only difference was that they forgot to include indigenous people.

Our government is proud of the fact that we had a robust process that picked the best group that is going to make sure it benefits the largest number of Atlantic Canadians, including five indigenous nations from four Atlantic provinces and Quebec.

* * *

*[Translation]***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised indigenous peoples that he would honour and protect their rights. He repeated those promises on the world stage saying that he would honour the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

What have we seen in the past three years? There have been bogus consultations, secret agreements, and blank cheques for Kinder Morgan.

Which relationship is more important, the one with Kinder Morgan or the one with indigenous peoples?

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows there was unprecedented consultation that led up to the decision to approve the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline. As the member also knows, 43 indigenous communities, 33 of them in British Columbia, signed agreements with Trans Mountain expansion, because they understand the prosperity of the oil and gas sector must be shared with indigenous people. It was just this week when I had meetings with, for example, the president of the Manitoba Metis Federation, who said that the 400,000 members of his community support this pipeline. I think the hon. member will have to say that is pretty impressive consultation.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the government is bankrolling a Texas oil company over first nations' opposition, it has picked a side. Respecting the rights of indigenous people is not a formality. It cannot be an add-on or an afterthought. Free, prior, and informed consent means it needs to be real and it needs to be meaningful. Two hundred and thirty international organizations have signed a letter to criticize the government on precisely that.

If the government is so confident that the process was not rigged, why is it fighting in court to stop the release of those documents? What is it afraid of?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, has the hon. member consulted with those 43 indigenous communities? Does she understand the prosperity that will come from major energy projects? Has she consulted with the chiefs, who have publicly said for all Canadians to hear that they have been very much a part of this process, very much a part of this decision, and very much a part of shared prosperity that is in the interest of all Canadians, including indigenous communities in Alberta, British Columbia, and all across the country?

* * *

● (1125)

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, have they consulted the first nations who said no to Kinder Morgan?

Elections are about democracy. Elections are about fairness. Elections are about making sure everyone has an equal voice. The Liberals abandoned their promise to make every vote count. They promised that they would never shut down debate on an elections bill, and now they are doing exactly that.

Why are the Liberals so determined to undermine democracy and fairness to all Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is so much in this bill that we and the NDP agree on, and I am looking forward to working with the NDP members to ensure we get this through so we can make those changes to the unfair elections act brought in under the previous government. We can do that for Canadians so that every Canadian who has the right to vote gets to cast that vote and have their voice heard. Let us work together and let us get this done.

[Translation]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2014, when the Conservatives used time allocation to limit debate on the Fair Elections Act, my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North said, “The Canada Elections Act is like no other....This legislation should be designated such that time allocation cannot be applied to it.”

I do not get it. What has changed since 2014?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleague across the way on reversing the changes made by the previous Conservative government. It is important to do that in order to allow Canadians who have the right to vote to go and vote. We have already had 30 hours of consideration at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, as well as four days in the House after first reading. Let us work together for Canadians to adopt these changes in time for the election in 2019.

[English]

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are demonstrating their total lack of respect for Parliament. The new elections act intends to rig the system in their favour and what is worse, they are trying to force it through Parliament with little debate. What a farce.

Elections Canada is being instructed to implement the bill before it has even been studied or debated. Will the Prime Minister instruct Elections Canada to stop the implementation of the bill until Parliament passes an amended version?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the party opposite seems to have amnesia about Bill C-23. The Conservatives forget that they were the ones for whom *The Globe and Mail* ran a five-part series demanding that they not go forward with their elections legislation. Bill C-76 is undoing the damage that they did to our democracy.

In fact, they even went so far as to not consult Elections Canada on elections legislation. That is what we did in drafting this legislation. It was not instructing them, as the Conservatives are so falsely accusing.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 86 is the number of hours that were debated under the Fair Elections Act under the previous Conservative government. Now after just two hours, the Liberals have shut down debate and are attempting to rig our election system. Liberals can talk all they want about respect for Parliament and Canadians, but allowing only two hours of debate is anything but respect for our democracy.

Will the Prime Minister instruct Elections Canada to stop implementing these changes to the Elections Act before this bill has had a chance to be reviewed?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we want to talk about respect for democracy, robocalls. If we want to talk about respect for democracy, the in-and-out scandal. If we want to talk about respect for democracy, the parliamentary secretary to the former Conservative prime minister went to jail for breaking election laws.

If we want to talk about respect for democracy, this side gets it.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that the parliamentary process is still structured so that a piece of legislation must pass the House of Commons and then the Senate and then receive royal assent before it is implemented. If that is the case, will the Prime Minister instruct Elections Canada to halt the implementation of Bill C-76 until it actually passes Parliament with amendments, instead of trying to rig the system in his favour?

• (1130)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the other side keeps talking about rigging elections. The other side seems to forget that 400 academics signed a petition asking them to stop Bill C-23 when they were in power. Why was that? It was because they were worried that the Conservatives were going to circumvent democracy.

We are not afraid of Elections Canada. We are not afraid of the commissioner of Elections Canada, but perhaps that side is. Conservatives paid \$250,000 in fines for breaking election laws. We will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to democracy in this country.

[Translation]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to show a total lack of respect for Parliament. They want to rig the election and do not want Canadians to know about it. After just two hours of debate, the Liberals decided to limit the time allocated to debating this bill.

Will the Prime Minister ask Elections Canada to put off implementing this bill until Parliament passes an amended version?

I want my children to live in a democratic country.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague must know, I recently had a baby, and I also want my kids to grow up in a democratic country. This is important to me. Robocalls, in and out scandals, \$250,000 bonuses, and an MP being sent to prison do not reflect respect for democracy. What am I describing? The party opposite.

Oral Questions

On this side, we work for democracy. I hope that my colleagues on the other side will work with us.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned this week that someone within the Liberal Party ordered Elections Canada to work on implementing this bill before Parliament had passed it. Let us think about that for a second. Elections Canada started work implementing a bill that had not been passed after the Liberals gave notice that they would shut down debate just an hour after introducing the bill. Sure enough, what did they do? They shut down debate.

Will the Prime Minister instruct Elections Canada to halt the implementation of this bill until Parliament passes the amended version?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us set the record straight. The previous government, when it came to elections legislation, refused to consult Elections Canada on developing that legislation. What we did is something that governments, until the Harper Conservatives came along, did from time untold. As we developed this legislation, we worked with Elections Canada to ensure the draft legislation was being done in accordance with its best practices.

This legislation is based on recommendations from the CEO of Elections Canada. Let us all work together for democracy.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister talks a good game when it comes to offering to work with the opposition members to amend the legislation. How is that possible when he has already instructed Elections Canada to implement this bill even before it was sent to committee? The truth is that the Prime Minister has already decided to rig our elections system in his favour.

Therefore, again, will the Prime Minister rescind his order to implement this bill before any amendments are passed by Parliament?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague clearly did not listen to the answer I just gave, so I invite him to rewatch that.

However, one thing I would like to point out is that in terms of rigging elections, that was what the previous Conservative government was trying to do when it took the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I am having trouble hearing the answer to the question. I would ask members to listen. They may not like what they hear. That is the nature of this place. People do not like what either one side or the other says sometimes, but it is important in a democracy that we hear each other and that we do so without interrupting either other, members or the Speaker.

The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to ensuring we have integrity in our system, that is exactly why we have ensured that the CEO of Elections Canada has a mandate to inform Canadians about elections, something the previous government took away. We also gave the commissioner of Elections Canada the power

to compel testimony and the power to lay charges, which is something that might have come in handy under previous scandals.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Victoria is surrounded on three sides by water. The Canadians I represent keep asking me why the Liberals want to impose the real risk of a catastrophic spill of bitumen upon our shoreline. They remember the recent devastating spills on the Pacific coast and reminded me that when the Prime Minister came to Victoria, he promised on the media to redo the Kinder Morgan process, then broke that promise. Now they are asking me again why the Liberals are willing to use our tax dollars to write a blank cheque to Texas billionaires. What can I tell them?

• (1135)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member can tell them that the \$1.5 billion investment through the oceans protection plan will yield a world-class response. We think Canadians from coast to coast to coast deeply care about their coastline and the integrity of them. They also understand that the responsible development of our natural resources will mean thousands of jobs for Canadians.

The economy and the responsible use of our resources is what Canadians want, and that is what we are delivering to them.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week, two first nations in Manitoba were uprooted. Their evacuation due to the forest fires resulted in the worst coordination efforts in years. Leadership in Little Grand Rapids was not listened to and people were left stranded until the last minute.

Before this life-threatening ordeal was over, blame was squarely placed on the chief and council, which is unhelpful and unacceptable. It seems the experiences of previous years have not been taken into account.

Will the minister work with the province and ensure that indigenous communities are heard and respected, and that what happened this week never happens again?

Mr. Don Rusnak (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, community members are our absolute priority. We have been working with public safety, national defence, and the Canadian Red Cross to ensure that the urgent evacuations of Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations are occurring as quickly as possible since the state of local emergency was called on Tuesday.

The evacuations from Little Grand Rapids First Nation and Pauingassi First Nation are now almost complete. We are ensuring that essential supports are in place for evacuees, and this includes mental health supports as needed. The government operations centre will continue to monitor and assess the wildfires as the situation evolves.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian taxpayers' money should be spent responsibly. Canadians deserve flawless accountability when it comes to how their tax dollars are being used. Yesterday, I gave the minister an opportunity to tell us where and when Ms. Jean would explain her totally unacceptable spending. Disconcertingly, the minister dodged the question. Today, I would like an answer.

I am even beginning to wonder if the government is hiding something as it continues to support her bid. What is it hiding from us?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the International Organisation of La Francophonie is a multinational organization that is crucial to promoting the French language, peace, and sustainable development. It is also an important vehicle for advancing Canada's priorities and promoting our values. That is why our government supports Ms. Jean's bid for re-election as head of the OIF. Ms. Jean actively promotes Canadian priorities, such as gender equality and youth and female entrepreneurship.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ms. Jean has lost the confidence of France and African countries. People are speaking out everywhere, both here and elsewhere, about how she is bringing the reputation of the OIF into disrepute. She is also tarnishing Canada's reputation as we speak. The government has known about her scandals and inappropriate expenses for a year now. Enough is enough. The Liberals need to demand an explanation from Ms. Jean.

The question is, when and where is she going to deliver that explanation?

[English]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide a quote for my hon. colleague, which states, "I am especially pleased that, for the first time in its history, La Francophonie has elected a Canadian woman as its head." Who said this? Former prime minister Stephen Harper.

While the Conservatives continue to play politics with this issue and flip-flop on their support for Michaëlle Jean, our approach is to ensure that we support her as she demonstrates the values that Canadians hold dear. At the same time, we will support the modernization of the financial practices of the OIF.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, Ms. Jean was a good choice, but her management skills leave much to be desired. That is the problem with Ms. Jean. She has abused the trust Canadians placed in her. She has abused the trust La Francophonie placed in her. For a year now, Canada and the entire world have been aware that Ms. Jean is mismanaging La Francophonie's finances, just as the current government is mismanaging Canada's finances.

Why is the Liberal government continuing to lend its support to a person who is so irresponsible with public funds?

● (1140)

[English]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I will re-emphasize that L'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie is a critical multilateral organization for promoting the French language, peace, and sustainable development. It is an important tool for advancing Canada's priorities and promoting our values. That is why our government and the Government of Quebec support the renewal of Michaëlle Jean's term as head of the OIF.

Ms. Jean actively promotes Canadian priorities there, such as gender equality and entrepreneurship among youth and women. The current rules overseeing financial management—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us take a specific example. Does the Liberal government agree with Ms. Jean's handling of the Hermione project? This was a project that should have cost \$400,000, but it ended up costing \$1 million. That is not all. A Francophonie executive wrote in an email, "We have no choice but to see Hermione through to the end and try to 'cover up' its budget anomalies".

Covering up anomalies. Does the Liberal government support this cover-up?

[English]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we believe it is important to support Michaëlle Jean and promote Canadian values at the OIF. The current rules overseeing financial management and transparency at the OIF must be strengthened and updated. Our government is determined to ensuring that Canadians' money is used judiciously. We will continue to support Michaëlle Jean, but ensure that transparency is always available.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES, AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, my colleague from Vancouver East met with a group of Iranian professionals who are all highly skilled and graduates of Canadian universities. The government says that they are exactly the immigrants it wants to attract to Canada but, because they are Iranians, the processing time for their permanent resident applications is 300% to 1,200% longer than the average.

What steps is the government taking to ensure that these applications are processed within a reasonable period of time?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand very well the frustration of the affected individuals. We engaged with the community to better understand their concerns.

Our absolute priority is to protect the health and safety of Canadians. For that reason, all immigration candidates are subject to a thorough background check by national security agencies. The wait time for these checks depends on the complexity of the file.

Although we understand the frustration these individuals are experiencing, it is important that applicants be subject to rigorous background checks to ensure the safety of Canadians.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, President Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal is a dangerous and misguided decision, and Canada has been too silent. The deal was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council in a binding resolution.

Therefore, what measure is Canada taking to signal its support to our EU partners still in the JCPOA, and what action is Canada taking to protect Canadian companies operating in Iran from potential sanctions by the United States? Where is the plan?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada certainly supports an effective rules-based international order. We believe that the joint comprehensive plan of action is essential to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons capability and to ensure greater regional and global security.

The JCPOA is not perfect but it has helped curb a real threat to international peace and security. We certainly regret the decision of the U.S. to withdraw from the deal, but we will continue to work with our allies and partners, internationally and here at home, to hold Iran to account.

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[Translation]

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Harper government was good at making grand announcements, but lousy at getting results. That is obvious when we look at their approach to helping the parents of murdered and missing children. They introduced a program that was so complicated that only a few dozen families received money.

On this National Missing Children's Day, can the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell the House what this government is doing to fill the gap in support for families dealing with these tragedies?

• (1145)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer for his support and his empathy for grieving families.

Today, our government commemorated National Missing Children's Day by announcing a new benefit for parents of young victims of crime. This new benefit will provide more solid, more generous, and more flexible support that is better suited to the needs of

Oral Questions

grieving families. This benefit will also reflect greater empathy and compassion for families who need a bit of help taking care of what matters—in other words, the well-being of their family.

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[English]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, residents along the railway to Churchill and the residents of the town itself want a solution. What they are getting instead is Liberal interference.

The government's chief negotiator has made it clear to iChurchill Inc. that it is only interested in dealing with a Toronto-based financial firm. Yesterday in question period, the Minister of Transport said of the government's chief negotiator, that he was working with all “serious partners”.

What is the Liberals' definition of “serious partner”?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our priority remains with the safety and well-being of the people of Churchill and northern Manitoba.

We will continue to support our chief negotiator in this. As I am sure the member understands that negotiating in public would be irresponsible. We do not want a repeat of what happened and led to this current situation. We are working toward a comprehensive, long-term solution, and that is exactly what we will do.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, true to form, the pattern of these Liberals is to say one thing and do another.

Yesterday, the Minister of Transport said that the chief negotiator was working with “all serious partners”. However, we know that is not happening. iChurchill Inc. has met the government's three criteria for an agreement, but has been sidelined in favour of a large Toronto-based financial firm. Why?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, what we want is a comprehensive, long-term solution that will best serve the people of Churchill and northern Manitoba. That is exactly what we are working toward.

The work of the chief negotiator is very important in this process. We are going to make this happen, but negotiating in public would be irresponsible.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are inventing new ways to be soft on crime. The Liberals are passing new provisions in the Criminal Code that large corporations can commit serious offences, like fraud and insider trading, plead guilty, promise to make it better, and evade jail time.

Oral Questions

The budget bill is meant to outline the government's plans for spending. Can the Prime Minister please explain why he included a "get out of jail free" card for big corporations in a budget bill? How does that make any sense?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to respond to this question. Budget 2018, the budget bill, contains provisions for a remediation process that allows law enforcement and prosecutors to enter into discussions with corporate members in order to get the information needed to facilitate the criminal prosecution of individuals. It is also a means by which corporations can be held to account to take remedial action to restore the harms that have been done to individual Canadians. This is a very important advancement forward that will improve the safety and protection of Canadian interests.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if that is true, why did it not go to the justice committee? Why was it not included in Bill C-75 rather than Bill C-74? The Liberals have proposed dramatic changes to our criminal justice system that provide a "get out of jail" card for corporations charged with criminal activity. Not only have they snuck it into a budget bill, they rammed it through the finance committee without hearing from any witnesses, not one.

Can the Prime Minister tell Canadians why this radical change was not studied properly at the justice committee, where it belongs? Why is he intent on using a budget bill to continue to pass his soft-on-crime agenda?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rather than simply talk tough on crime, our government undertakes to implement measures that actually will create a more just and secure environment for all Canadians. The measure that was brought forward in this budget bill is an important measure that is going to make a difference. It provides an opportunity for the government to sit down and work with corporations in order to restore security and to remediate issues that have arisen. It is quite appropriately within the budget. It has been brought forward in a very transparent way, and it was before the finance committee.

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● (1150)

TRANSPORT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, residents in my riding are fed up with low-flying planes practising training manoeuvres right above people's homes, sometimes from 6 a.m. to 11 at night, throughout the summer. The minister has the power, through the Aeronautics Act, to intervene to finally give the people in my riding some peace, but thus far, he has turned a blind eye, leaving the burden of proof on constituents to compile evidence of low-flying planes. Will the minister finally step in, address the situation, and stop the constant aerial bombardment by low-flying aircraft?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do realize that noise from aircraft must be managed, while ensuring that aviation safety is

not compromised. We try to encourage operators to work with local residents in an effort to have their noise complaints addressed. They are best handled at the local level, given that local representatives and airport officials have intimate knowledge of regional matters and are best able to address local concerns.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, food is at the heart of our culture, our communities, and our economy. I am very proud of the many initiatives under way in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia in support of local food and for the leadership my party has demonstrated in the past on this important priority.

My private member's bill, Bill C-281, would establish a national local food day, giving all Canadians, including parliamentarians, the opportunity to celebrate the diversity of local food from coast to coast. Will the government support Bill C-281 and a national local food day?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question and for introducing a bill to create a national local food day. I am pleased to tell him that we will support his bill.

Our government recognizes the importance of our agriculture and agrifood sector for local and regional economies. We proudly support local agriculture through the Canadian agricultural partnership, a five-year investment of \$3 billion in the sector in co-operation with the provinces and territories.

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[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change unveiled her panel for a just transition for coal workers and communities. Out of the 11 task force members, only one represents a coal community, yet the Liberals appointed a donor to the Prime Minister's leadership campaign to chair the panel. Only one community representative for all four provinces? This is not consultation. It is a sham.

Why is the government stacking a task force with Liberal donors instead of appointing members who actually understand coal workers and their communities?

Oral Questions

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that phasing out coal is good for our health, our climate, and our kids. It is one of the most important steps we can take to tackle emissions and also meet our obligations under the Paris Agreement.

We are very pleased that we are working with communities, with unions, and with workers to figure out a just transition. We know that everyone has to be part of the solution. We need to support workers and communities to do what is right, which is to ensure economic prosperity and also make sure that we take action to tackle climate change.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister announced a just transition for coal workers and communities task force without notifying the mayors of the communities its decisions will affect.

Nine out of 11 members on the task force are from large urban centres. One is an expert on tidal technology. Do they know where the Prairies are? None has lived in a coal mining community in my province. They cannot understand the way of life, as they have never lived it. Decisions they make will not affect them personally.

Why does the minister think hard-working Canadians in remote and rural mining communities do not deserve multiple voices on this panel?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely committed to working with communities, to working with workers, to working with business, and to working with provincial governments. We need to do this. Phasing out coal is critical to tackling climate change. Almost 800,000 people die each year from pollution.

We need to be working together, and that is my commitment.

* * *

● (1155)

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I welcomed to Ottawa over 40 elected officials from my riding who have infrastructure projects they want to carry out. Despite the Liberals' promise to invest \$180 billion over 10 years, there is no program under which they can apply for funding for their projects.

The mayors of Kamouraska and Rivière-Ouelle want to fix up their waterfronts to make them major tourist attractions in their communities.

Could the minister responsible for Canada Economic Development tell us why his department will no longer fund this type of project in our rural regions, which have been abandoned under this Liberal government?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Economic Development Agency of Canada works throughout Quebec on projects of a certain size. It works with the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development on

larger projects. There are always ways to submit proposals for value-added projects through these two organizations.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year Canada is the G7 president, and I am excited to see Canada taking a leadership role on the world stage. The Minister of Foreign Affairs recently hosted foreign ministers from our G7 partners in Toronto, where we made firm our commitment to the international rules-based order.

Could the parliamentary secretary please inform the House what else we were able to achieve with our partners?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend from Oakville North—Burlington shares the commitment of this government to see Canada retake a leadership role on a broad range of issues throughout the world. I thank her for the question about our G7 presidency, which presents a vital opportunity for us to set the agenda on a series of international discussions.

At the foreign ministers meeting, we discussed pressing global issues, like the ongoing Rohingya crisis, the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria, Russia's flouting of international norms, the descent into dictatorship in Venezuela, and a diplomatic solution in North Korea. We are retaking a leadership role on these issues in the world.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Liberal members of the environment committee rammed through Bill C-69, a badly flawed environmental law. In fact, they passed over 200 amendments without any debate. Imagine that. They did this despite over 7,000 Canadians emailing them to ask for more time to review the bill. What happened to the Prime Minister's promise of raising the bar on openness and transparency? Remember that?

Why are the Liberals shutting down debate on important bills like this one?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud that our government is putting in place better rules to protect our environment and build a strong economy. I was very pleased that the environment committee was able to hear from over 50 witnesses and review over 150 submissions in our comprehensive review of this important legislation in the past few months.

Oral Questions

We need to rebuild trust that was sorely lost under the previous government. When that government passed the amendments, it had no debate. It had no input. We are committed to doing what is right. We took input. We made amendments. We need to move forward, because we need to make sure good projects go ahead in a timely way, while we protect our environment.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, Ottawa hosted the National Dementia Conference to provide hope to Canadians and inform them about the realities of living with dementia. Dementia continues to pose significant challenges for those affected, their families, and their caregivers.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health tell the House what action the government is taking on dementia?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nickel Belt for his question and for his work on seniors' health.

[English]

Our government is strongly committed to improving the lives of Canadians with dementia and to providing support for their families and caregivers. The Minister of Health was pleased to announce at last week's national dementia conference the members who will serve on the advisory council. These include people living with dementia, caregivers, researchers, and health care practitioners. Together we will work to create a national dementia strategy for Canada, which will be supported by the over \$20 million in investments in dementia care in budget 2018.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know what the Liberals' carbon tax scheme will cost them. Requests for information filed with the Liberals have been returned with key information blacked out. The government knows what the carbon tax will cost Canadian families, but it is refusing to tell us. All the Prime Minister is telling us is that we are not paying enough, especially for gasoline.

When will the Liberals end their carbon tax cover-up and tell Canadians how its big impact will affect our wallets?

● (1200)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the facts. We know that 80% of Canadians live in a jurisdiction—Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia—where, through provincial action, there is a price on pollution. Fact: their economies are the fastest-growing economies in the country. Fact: climate change is real. Fact: we need to take action. Fact: there is an economic opportunity of \$23 trillion, so I would encourage the party opposite to join us in taking serious action to tackle climate change and grow a clean economy.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, while Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean parades around gilded halls eating petits fours, La Francophonie is sinking into insignificance. La Francophonie is a great institution that promotes cultural diversity and international co-operation, combats homogeneity, and develops our language. It is also the only institution, the only international organization of states, of which Quebec is a member. Transforming this institution into a lounge for Her Excellency will suffocate it. Quebec's voice will be drowned in champagne and caviar.

When will the government withdraw its support for Michaëlle Jean?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the International Organisation of La Francophonie is a multinational organization that is crucial to promoting the French language, peace, and sustainable development. It is also an important vehicle for advancing Canada's priorities and promoting our values. However, we can improve how the OIF is managed. The OIF is governed by 84 member states and governments, and we have started discussions with some to—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Repentigny.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, Montrealers were unwittingly subjected to brainwashing experiments funded by Ottawa and the CIA as part of Project MKUltra. That is not science fiction. Those experiments really happened at the Allan Memorial Institute between 1957 and 1964. Despite denying all responsibility, the government is making all kinds of out-of-court settlements with families that launch legal action on behalf of the victims.

Rather than force families to take their cases to court, will the government publicly apologize and compensate all those hundreds of families?

[English]

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we have great sympathy for those who have suffered this type of loss, but we remain confident in the criminal justice system to deal with the matter appropriately. We will continue to monitor it carefully to ensure that appropriate support is given.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec lawyers held a special assembly yesterday to tell their board of directors to back down. It is unacceptable for our institutions to attack the Government of Quebec's laws. Curiously, it seems the Minister of Canadian Heritage funded that unacceptable lawsuit. Quebec is French and must remain so.

Will the heritage minister acknowledge her lack of judgment in supporting the lawsuit? Will she withdraw her funding?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the situation with the Barreau du Québec. Some organizations decided to take legal action, and that is their choice. As this matter is now before the courts, we have no further comment.

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[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.):**

[Member spoke in Inuktitut]

[English]

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.

The Nunavut Planning Commission is audited annually, yet over the past three years it has been subjected to two additional audits at the direction of the implementation branch, all of which consumes valuable time and resources. It has been reported that the most recent audit again gave the commission a clean bill of health, and concluded that it was underfunded.

Given this conclusion, will the minister instruct her bureaucrats to stop wasting resources, increase the funding, and let the commission get on with its very important work?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Nunavut for his question and acknowledge his contributions to the NPC when he was chair of the commission.

Canada, the Government of Nunavut, and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated determine the core funding for Nunavut's institutions of public government. The financial review evaluated compliance with the funding agreement, not funding sufficiency.

This is why the funding agreements have been increased. In 2016, the Nunavut Planning Commission also received one-time supplementary funding of \$4.9 million to complete the draft Nunavut land use plan.

The parties are collaborating with the Nunavut Planning Commission on a path forward for the development of the draft Nunavut land use plan, and we are continuing to work with them to ensure the success of that plan.

● (1205)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, thank you for acknowledging the serious interpretation problems we ran into this morning when it was impossible for hon. members, both francophones and anglophones, to hear the motion moved by the government, either in English or in French.

I would therefore ask you to confirm that at the next opportunity government Motion No. 22 will be read once again so that the debate may begin.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie for her point of order.

I have been informed that the interpreters read the motion in French. I therefore find that the motion was submitted to the House properly.

[English]

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I am left with a bit of a challenging moment. The primary role of all MPs in this place is to be able to understand what is in front of Parliament so we can engage in debate on behalf of the people we represent. I have been here awhile, as have you, Mr. Speaker, and have certainly never seen a Friday like we had this morning. I am not sure it was the Friday you were expecting. It was not the one I was expecting. I am sure many MPs have never seen the House taken with such disorder.

The primary job of the Speaker is to allow for the lack of disorder, as it is sometimes referred to in our text, and the ability of MPs to hear one another in debate. I did not engage in any of the noisemaking, but that is irrelevant, because I was unable to hear either your reading of the motion or the government House leader's response to the motion, as I am sure was the case with many other MPs as well.

The government House leader is saying that I should have put my earpiece in, which I did, but I still could not hear what was happening. It is not my responsibility as an MP to create that order. That is, of course, your job, which we grant you, Mr. Speaker, through the election of the Speaker. That was not attained at any point in either your reading or the government House leader's response.

I have great respect for you, Mr. Speaker. We have known each other a long time. This place has, from time to time, become quite emotional and quite engaged, as it should be. We are meant to represent the passions of Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Having been in the House with an interest in hearing what you were saying and the government House leader's response to the motion, I find it impossible to determine that we had anything resembling order, or that I had any opportunity to do the job I am here to do.

I think it was a reasonable request by the member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie, yet we are somehow pretending that what happened prior to question period was normal and good orders of the day. With all due respect, I find that impossible to believe, and I—

Privilege

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for his point of order. It is, of course, the same point of order on which I just ruled.

However, I want to point out that he talked about it being the responsibility of the Speaker to maintain order. In fact, the Speaker can only guide the House. The Speaker is, of course, the servant of the House. However, to suggest that the Speaker can create order without the co-operation of members is not the case: it requires a decision on the part of all members to have decorum here. The behaviour of members in this place is up to each of them as individuals. The best the Speaker, I suppose, hopes to do is to control himself or herself. Beyond that, it is quite a challenge, as the member very much knows.

Now, I have indicated that the motion is properly before the House. As I mentioned before, the member can read the Notice Paper and motion in it, if he wishes to see the details of it again. It is available there.

I would now proceed to the tabling of documents.

The hon. opposition House leader is rising on a different point of order.

• (1210)

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, yes, it is different in that I require just one more point of clarification, if I could. What I still do not understand is this. It was clear that before we moved to government orders, you had recognized that there were points of order. There were actually a number of them. You proceeded, though, with government orders. I just want to know why—

The Speaker: I am sorry, but again, the member is challenging the decision of the Chair, which can only be done by a motion. I have made it very clear.

I would ask the hon. opposition House leader to take her seat, because one member stands at a time. In fact, I would wish that all members recognized and understood the rule in this House that one member stands at a time. Sometimes we see that when one member is standing, another gets up well before it is really time for them to speak, so I would ask them to keep that in mind and refrain from doing so, even though members are eager to be up and get ready for their statements, or what have you. However, that is one of the important rules of the House. It is a question of respect for other people speaking that there is this rule of the House that only one person stands at a time. Obviously, members will be leaving and so forth, and that is fine.

That said, I have made my ruling.

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PRIVILEGE

RIGHTS OF MEMBERS IN RAISING POINTS OF ORDER

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege pertains to what happened earlier today. Of course, members have a right to raise points of order if they suspect that the proceedings of the House are not in order. I still have several points of order with respect to vote 40. I was not able to be heard.

In the earlier comments of the Chair, as well, there was some aspersion cast as to what my motives for raising those points of order might be. I think it is a violation of my privilege as a member of this House to be told by the Speaker that I cannot continue with a point of order because he suspects it may be specious. I will try to reassure you that it is not a specious point of order.

However, I think that because my privilege was violated in this case by comments made by the Chair, I think the appropriate thing to do would be to find a prima facie case of breach, so that the appropriate motion can be moved and this issue be considered by the procedure and House Affairs committee as to whether it is appropriate for the Speaker not to hear a point of order because, apparently, he has views about the motives of the member before hearing the point of order and making a judgment on the substance of the point of order itself before it is made.

That is the question of privilege I would like to raise with you. I hope you will find there is a prima facie case of a breach, so that the appropriate motion can be moved and the procedure and House affairs committee can consider this.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona for raising his question of privilege. I will consider the matter and get back to the House, if necessary.

The hon. opposition House leader is rising, I think, on a point of order.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to add to my hon. colleague's intervention, I think the other question of privilege that we would be concerned about is that the member for Elmwood—Transcona said that he actually had five points to his point of order. I know that you heard one. Clearly, you ruled at that point that you felt it was out of order at that time, and we will accept that.

What about the other four points? You ruled them out of order without hearing them, in what appeared to be a rush to get to the orders of the day, namely, to government orders. The estimates process is nothing to dismiss so quickly. I think it is important that we do hear these other points of order, rather than rushing to government orders. They are valid or they would need to be heard before you would be able to rule whether they are valid.

The Speaker: I thank the opposition House leader.

I want members to remember, of course, that the ability to raise points of order is not an unlimited right of some sort. In fact, as I have said a number of times this morning, the Chair has the responsibility to exercise discretion as to when the Chair feels he has heard enough. Therefore, that is what I did. However, as I said, I will come back to the House, if necessary, in relation to the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1215)

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, in relation to the review of statutory instruments.

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

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Yesterday, I asked twice for unanimous consent to expedite debate and a vote on Bill S-245 to provide certainty for Kinder Morgan to proceed with the Trans Mountain expansion. Earlier in the day it was denied by the Bloc, and later in the afternoon it was denied by the Liberals. Given that the Liberals claim, of course, to want the expansion to proceed and that the deadline is only a week away, I am confident that members will not want to cause more delay and risk to the expansion. Thus, I again seek unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move that notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, Bill S-245, An Act to declare the Trans Mountain Pipeline Project and related works, to be for the general advantage of Canada, and be deemed votable.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to pose the motion?

Some hon. members: No.

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC) moved that the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, presented on Thursday, November 23, 2017, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, intellectual property is a complex term, so let me start with a bit of a definition. Intellectual property, or IP, is a creative work, such as a design or a manuscript, for which the creator has rights and can apply for a patent, copyright, or trademark. The Conservative Party of Canada recognizes that a robust IP regime is critical for Canadians to not only make a living off the research and creative ideas, but also bring those innovations to market and improve lives in Canada and around the world.

Regulations and laws related to IP protection try to strike a balance between providing firms an incentive to innovate and promoting a competitive market. There are three models of IP used by Canadian universities: institution-owned, creator-owned, and co-ownership models. For more background, technology transfer refers to a formal transfer of rights from scientific research to another party in order to use and commercialize new discoveries and innovations resulting from that research. IP protection is key to technology transfer because it allows researchers to publish the research and still provide industrial partners with the incentive to commercialize their

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inventions and retain their competitive advantage. Essentially, a good IP strategy lets researchers and innovators work collaboratively on ideas and enter into partnerships. The government's role is to keep the marketplace as competitive as possible, with low taxes and fewer regulatory hurdles for our country's innovators.

A few weeks ago, the Liberal government unveiled its long-awaited IP strategy. Included among the changes are the creation of a governance regime for patent and trademark agents, \$30 million to create a third party patent pool to acquire IP that Canadian firms could access, and \$17.5 million over five years to set up a government team of IP advisers. In total, the Liberals' IP strategy will cost Canadians more than \$80 million. In my opinion, as the Conservative Party's science critic, this IP strategy is a confusing approach that has too much government involvement in the private sector. The patent collective or patent pool idea is a complex system that requires merging private sector interests. Therefore, the government should not have its hands in this.

Many with a keen interest in innovation, myself included, are unsure how this IP strategy will ultimately help Canada's innovation sector. The president of the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada, Grant Lynds, told *The Hill Times* that the government's patent pool leaves his group with many questions and that the government's goal is not clear because the government did not specify which patents and which licensing firms would form the collective. This overall IP strategy is typical of the government, which often makes promises to Canadians without sufficient consultation with the Canadian public. It then rolls out legislation and strategies that have not been fully thought out. We are seeing this right now with the Liberals' marijuana legislation.

Another point this strategy left out was creating an innovation box, which would provide a tax incentive to encourage firms to develop and implement Canadian inventions and innovations. The Intellectual Property Institute of Canada suggested using this, which is a strategy used in the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, and other European countries. China, a country leading the world in innovation, subsidizes IP and has a higher rate of IP filings. Despite claims by the government to have consulted with all stakeholders on this issue, the innovation box suggested by the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada was not mentioned in the strategy at all. Instead, the Liberals focused on the patent collectives as the main announcement.

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The Liberals committed to setting up and managing a patent collective, which is an immensely technical process not commonly managed by a government. In procurement and funding research, the federal government generally does not retain intellectual property resulting from those transactions. It is unclear what IP the government has to offer to users, and there is no clear strategy for how the government would go about acquiring further IP that would be useful to Canada's innovation sector. We have witnessed from many mishaps, such as the Phoenix pay system debacle, that the government has neither the agility nor the technical know-how to effectively manage something as complex as a patent collective.

Like the superclusters program, the proposed patent collective is the latest addition in the government's heavy-handed, top-down approach to Canadian innovation, which essentially amounts to picking winners and losers. On the one hand, the government supports selected businesses with public dollars, while on the other hand it continues to make life more difficult for businesses outside of its chosen few, with increasingly higher taxes and more red tape.

• (1220)

Earlier this year, the Liberals announced their superclusters initiative, which divided \$950 million among five consortiums of businesses in a variety of industries. There were problems with this program from the start, mainly with the transparency of the initiative. We do not know who participated in the selection process that resulted in the five consortiums. Was it the innovation minister's political staffers or federal bureaucrats? We do not know.

The program amounts to insiders in Ottawa picking winners and losers. While the government touted the job-creation potential of this initiative, the reality is that outside the minister's chosen industries, we have seen a dramatic loss of jobs across Canada. Tens of thousands of energy workers are still out of work in my home province of Alberta.

In *The Globe and Mail*, Mark Milke wrote that, "Superclusters' is just [a fancy] name for...corporate welfare". The article states:

Almost \$1-billion in new corporate welfare for the newest political interference in the marketplace, this for so-called "superclusters," i.e., for locales where politicians hope industries and universities will create the next Silicon Valley.

He went on to call the superclusters initiative a government-sponsored Ponzi scheme. I tend to agree with this view. The government has no hand in private industries and should not be picking winners and losers. The government spent almost \$1 billion on this initiative, and I suspect most individuals will not see much benefit from the investment.

While the previous Conservative government made targeted investments in 2011 in lung-, breast-, and ovarian-cancer research, we gave earmarked funds to the granting councils to disburse through a peer-reviewed process, not by handing over tax dollars straight to private companies. Similarly, when we invested in quantum computing, it was not through funds awarded to the Institute for Quantum Computing, a public research institution associated with the University of Waterloo.

The Conservative Party supports the creation of a process to allow the patent holder to restore time lost on 20-year patent protection due to delays in government approvals. Conservatives support small and

medium-sized businesses and their need to commercialize innovation. Because of this, we support a shorter and simplified process.

In fact, the previous Conservative government created a stronger record on IP that aligned us with international standards. During that time, we passed and ratified anti-camcording legislation, legislation around the proceeds of crime, regulations for copyright offences, the Copyright Modernization Act, WIPO Internet treaties, the Combating Counterfeit Products Act, and legislative changes to implement five IP treaties. As well, we extended the term of copyright protection for sound recordings, provided IP agent-client privilege, and laid the foundations for the Liberals to table CETA and to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty.

Already in Canada small businesses face tremendous hurdles to be successful. The government tried to make it even harder, with the small business tax proposal from last year.

Adding another layer of government bureaucracy to IP just does not make sense. Conservatives recognize that small businesses generally do not maximize the benefits of their IP assets as a result of a lack of knowledge, limited staff, and high costs. We need to help small businesses however and wherever we can. Conservatives are committed to creating a low-tax and streamlined regulatory business environment that will not only retain Canadian innovators but also attract innovators from abroad. Ensuring that innovators can translate their creations to market is the key to a strong innovation sector.

Furthermore, the government's patent collective to acquire IP that would be accessible by Canadian firms is bound to be a bureaucratic quagmire. The government described it as:

a way for firms to share, generate, and license or purchase intellectual property. The collective approach is intended to help Canadian firms ensure a global "freedom to operate", mitigate the risk of infringing a patent, and aid in the defence of a patent infringement suit.

I prefer the explanation by Richard C. Owens, a Munk fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, who compared the patent pool to the government's setting up "a program to help a canoe builder to acquire the right screws."

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Patent pools form sometimes to help a group of large corporations with product development. However, the government's proposal is for smaller firms, which are unlikely to have a shared interest in the first place. Richard C. Owens described the patent pool as a "one-stop, online listing of public sector-owned intellectual property available for licensing or sale". Again, this creates hurdles for small businesses, which will probably be unable to afford the purchase of the IP from a third party.

Additionally, as previously stated, it is unclear what IP the government currently possesses that it could offer but also what incentive there would be for owners of profitable or cutting-edge IP to sell to the government for its collective, when they could license those properties themselves.

We are already experiencing a brain drain of innovative thinkers who are going to the United States, where the red tape is not as rigorous as it is in Canada. This patent pool does not address the problem and will ultimately hurt the Canadian economy when these people move south of the border with their ideas.

• (1225)

As I mentioned earlier, the budget also included \$21.5 million to create a team within the federal government to work with entrepreneurs and help them develop strategies for using intellectual property and expanding into international markets. When it comes to assisting private sector innovators and quickly translating their ideas to market, it is difficult to believe that the solution is more bureaucracy. In the *Financial Post*, Richard C. Owens wrote, "try to imagine the business person desperate, naive or confused enough to get involved with such a lot."

In my role as shadow minister for science, I have toured many labs, innovation hubs, and universities, and I have had the pleasure of sitting down with some incredibly inventive creators. I have seen first-hand that Canada has no shortage of bright minds. However, the panel behind Canada's fundamental science review found that "twice as many Canadians have won research-related Nobel prizes while working in the U.S. as have been awarded to Canadian-born or foreign-born scientists working in Canada." To me, this statistic reads that we have no shortage of talent to draw from, but we do have a problem converting ideas into usable goods or systems that can be inserted into the lives of individuals in Canada and around the world.

Economist Jack Mintz noted, "Our regulatory environment is becoming infamous for its unpredictability and hostility to new projects." We know that this is certainly true for the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion project, which may fail because of the government's incompetence. It is also true for our innovators who own intellectual property. For all the talk and money the government throws at innovation objectives, it forgets that the innovation sector is largely made up of small firms that are small businesses first and foremost. These innovative firms are not immune to the struggle other businesses are facing in this country due to the government's increasing tax burden.

Earlier this month, the Conference Board of Canada gave Canada a C for innovation. This grade was because of weaknesses and a lack of investment by the private sector. This is not surprising, because we know that the government has created a lot of restrictions and

tape within the private sector. A high tax rate, when compared with new, lower taxes in the United States, will drive more businesses south of the border. We know that we have immense talent and innovative thinkers in Canada. However, we continue to lag behind other countries in innovation because of a lack of support from the government. Canada has never had an issue with creating innovative products; it is our ability to commercialize them that is inhibiting our success in being a leader in innovation and reaping the economic success around the world.

The productivity gap between Canada and the United States will threaten our economy, and it already is. This new IP strategy from the Liberals does nothing to address this gap. It is just more red tape and government involvement at a time when we need the opposite: We need a government that will create a more competitive business environment for innovators, allowing their ideas to succeed.

We know how business-friendly our current government is. I know I just mentioned the Trans Mountain expansion project, but it is worth repeating. A private sector company wanted to invest billions of dollars in the Canadian economy to build a pipeline, which would help thousands of unemployed energy sector workers get back to work. The federal government did not support this early enough. It did not step in to stop one provincial government's crusade against the pipeline. Now, we just learned that the Liberal government is pledging millions of taxpayer dollars to incentivize the company to still build the pipeline here. I assume it is millions of dollars, because the Liberals will not tell us how much. Let us imagine that. A company wants to invest in Canada, and the government is so inactive on this file that now public money will be used to prop up the project. Even if Kinder Morgan wants to complete the project, it will still be up against much red tape.

As an Albertan, I have been immensely interested in this project. I think it should be built because it is in the national interest of Canada. However, all the actions taken during this process show the world that under the current government Canada is not a place to invest as a private sector company, and this will have implications for IP owners and firms around the world.

Not getting the IP strategy right will have huge implications for the economy. IP-intensive industries account for approximately two million jobs, or 13.6% of all jobs in the Canadian economy. They also make up 25% of the GDP, which accounts for \$332 billion. As well, 40% of all exports can be attributed to IP-intensive industries.

When dealing with IP, we need to strike the right balance to encourage innovation and creativity while attracting more investment, providing businesses with clarity, and promoting consumer confidence. This was not done in the overhaul of the IP strategy.

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As a member of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, and as the official opposition shadow minister for science, I have met with many stakeholders in this industry. Most private sector stakeholders would like to see their flexibility maintained with regard to IP ownership.

● (1230)

Colleges and polytechnics feel their best IP policies are aligned to the understanding that commercial exploitation of IP is best achieved by the private sector. Many leaders within the private sector have advocated for more funding for intellectual property and technology transfer and have pointed to statistics that show a strong correlation between research funding and invention disclosure. Essentially, industry stakeholders are looking for less red tape and more education.

As well, this IP strategy is costing Canadians a lot of money. The government has committed almost \$85 million for this strategy, including \$2 million just to conduct a survey to determine whether Canadians understand intellectual property. Hopefully, with so much being spent on the survey, the government will actually listen to what stakeholders tell it and not ignore the information as we usually see.

One of the most common themes I hear from my constituents when door knocking is how much government Canadians have. Most people would agree government has too much involvement in our lives, the current government even trying to tell Canadians how to think and punishing them when they do not agree with it. This IP strategy is yet another example of too much government involvement and it shows how much out of touch the Liberal government is with everyday Canadians.

The government is getting too involved in the lives of innovators and I think it will have the opposite effect of what the government wants to achieve with this strategy. Too much government involvement will deter our innovators and perhaps turn them to the United States rather than encouraging them to go public with their ideas right here in Canada. This will hurt our economy and ultimately all Canadians who stand to benefit from intellectual property.

The Liberals are a proponent of big government. They have been criticized for acting morally superior and not making time for people who do not share the same viewpoint as them. Our Minister of Environment even said in a media interview that she had no time for people who did not completely agree with her exact policy ideas on how to combat climate change. Imagine a member of cabinet, whose purpose is to represent all Canadians, not willing to listen to people who do not share her viewpoint.

The Liberals want government involvement in every aspect of Canadians' lives, which discourages a healthy free market. The government's role is to set up and enforce society's basic rules. After that, citizens should be free to make their own decisions and cooperate with each other to provide for their wants. The government should not intervene on each and every problem.

As with the case on this IP strategy, the government will likely create more problems than it solves with the patent pool. That is what big government does, creates more problems than it solves.

After the Liberal government released its first budget in 2016, *Maclean's* magazine declared that big government was back. The author of the article wrote the "move toward a government-led economy was evident..." This is clear by the ease at which the Liberal government will run deficits.

At the end of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's time in office, he was praised for his work in having the federal government become less active in the daily lives of Canadians and replacing big government programs with direct benefits. This is the type of government most Canadians prefer.

The government needs to step back, give the private sector the room it needs to innovate. It does not need the government to tell it how to do that. What these people need is for some outlets to provide advice on how to maximize their IP protections and ensure a low-tax and streamlined business environment that will enable a quick transition of ideas to marketable goods and services.

The Liberal government's approach to IP is typical of its heavy-handed approach to most things, with more government than necessary. In the case of intellectual property, less is more. The new rules will not help innovators come up with more profitable IP; it will actually hinder them. It is time for the government to step back and let Canadians develop and execute their innovations, which will in turn drive growth in all sectors of our economy.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this very important issue, and I will end with one quote, "That government is best which governs least, because its people discipline themselves."

● (1235)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I came to this place, I worked most of my professional career in entrepreneurship and education. Even when I was doing education, I was teaching entrepreneurship or innovation. This is a very important subject and very dear to me.

As the member opposite mentioned in his speech, Canada recently received a grade C on innovation. There is obviously much room for improvement.

I wonder if the member opposite would comment on the investments that the Government of Canada is making in science, superclusters, small business tax cuts and how that has improved our score from the D grade the Conservatives received on innovation when they were in government.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, it is funny that we are championing, I guess, a C grade on what the member across the way is doing in his comments.

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He mentioned the superclusters initiative. That is essentially an initiative where the minister of ISED has chosen the six groups of companies across the country that he feels are the most important to be invest in, not so much on where Canadians and investments are headed. It is confusing to think that would be the solution to drive more investment into Canada. If a company is not part of that group of six, is it not supported by the government? Will it not have any sort or say in where the government's focus on industry is headed? Probably. If the government has focused so heavily on those six initiatives, it begs the question on what is important to the other industries in our country.

For example, an initiative was put forward and we found out it was rejected within the oil and gas sector. Does this now mean that a number of the initiatives that were put forward by those companies are not seen as creative enough or maybe not innovative enough to be supported by the government? If an organization supports the oil and gas sector, the energy sector, is it now maybe questioning its government's commitment to that sector? I would suggest that is absolutely the case.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member has been doing some great work. He has been travelling across the country, meeting with innovators and scientists. I want to congratulate him on all that hard work.

It is often said that the Liberals agree with science and evidence-based decision-making as long as it is in agreement with its ideology. One of the things I am hearing about the superclusters, and I know the member brought this up, is small and medium-sized markets. It is clear, and the thought process is, that a lot of the decision-making and investments into these superclusters are going into vote-rich areas that the Liberals see as future potential gains. However, in the meantime, the Liberals are leaving behind small, medium-sized, and rural Canadian cities that are at the heart of innovation. Those small clusters are receiving nothing from the government because of its focus on those urban settings.

In his travels, what has the member heard from small, medium-sized, and rural areas?

• (1240)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, the member raises some phenomenal points on exactly what I have been hearing across the country. I was in rural communities in British Columbia, in Alberta, and in Saskatchewan. All three of those communities were curious as to where they stood on a protein supercluster that had been announced. They think they might be part of it. However, there is a lot of confusion because of the mixed messages they have been given by the minister and the minister's staff. They are curious if this is being headquartered somewhere, if there are a number of employees that come along with this, if there are certain deadlines they have to meet. Certainly, a lot of these small companies within these rural communities are wondering if maybe this is just an Ottawa-based project from which they have no opportunity to really grow their local economies.

The member for Barrie—Innisfil also raised another great point with respect to the science file. We have been hearing a lot on the science file, on the support for a number of initiatives within the Naylor report. We only saw about half of the Naylor report addressed within the last budget. There was a lot of hope within the science

community leading up to the budget. Then about half of the recommendations were actually addressed.

Again, this leaves a number of small businesses and small innovators questioning the type of support they have from the government. The trickle-down effect of that is going to be immense, and we are going to have a number of small businesses looking at other places, such as the United States, to set up business as opposed to innovating in Canada.

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I sit on the industry committee with the member opposite, and I have found his contribution to be very good to our committee. As we were developing the IP strategy, I thought his questions to the witnesses were excellent. The report was great too. The IP strategy that has come out of the report has been extremely well received. I own a number of patents, and I have spoken to a number of high-tech companies that make patents. They think our IP strategy will work excellently.

Could the member tell me which high-tech company, specifically, he has spoken to that says the strategy is not good? I am not interested in hearing a politician's view. I am interested in hearing about a specific high-tech company that says is not a good.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy the interventions of the member on the industry committee as well. We have enjoyed our time there over the last few months. I would remind him I was not there for the entire IP strategy. He may think differently. However, I was put on the committee just at the end of the IP strategy.

The comments I referenced in my speech were from the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada. The president of the institute who governs this said that the government's patent pool left his group with many questions and the government's goal was not clear. The government did not specify which patents and which licensing firms would form the collective.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things my colleague touched on right at the end of his speech was the innovation that happens in the Canadian oil patch, particularly in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and northern B.C. Necessity is the mother of all invention. Could he talk a little more about that area of the economy?

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Mr. Speaker, the member for Peace River—Westlock is also the deputy shadow minister of industry, science, and economic development. He does fantastic work. He also participates a lot with the work we do in our committee.

Right now we see a lot of the innovation sector look south. We see a lot of red tape being removed in the United States and other countries, a few of which I mentioned in my speech. They are looking for places where the government is out of the way and not controlling everything, like the Liberal government has in the latest IP strategy.

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The solution to a lot of this is to encourage the government to not put in place additional taxes and red tape on small businesses. I spoke with a small business in my community, which employees 15 people. It told me that it had been taxed so much at the federal, provincial, and municipal level that it was having a tough time keeping its employees. It said that it would have to lay off two people, and the owner and general manager would also have to take less salary. The effect of those two people being laid off then trickles down. These two people now will have a difficult time meeting their mortgage. They will probably not own that second car. They probably will not be eating out at the local restaurants and shopping at the other local businesses. These two people will now have to reassess their lives. It points directly to the tax burden that has been put on the business from three levels of government.

To see these innovators and small businesses continually be taxed and stressed to the maximum is certainly something we do not support on this side of the House. When the other side is coming up with strategies such as this, when it is coming up with the proponents focused on the Trans Mountain expansion project, which I also spoke about in my speech, I appeal to the members to ensure they are helping innovators and small businesses, not standing in their way.

• (1245)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here this afternoon, speaking about such a critically important, although I must admit somewhat boring, topic. When the words “intellectual property” are put together in the same sentence, most Canadians would probably be turned off about now.

However, for reasons that have been well expressed already by my colleagues, this area truly is a significant part of Canada's future. We need to ensure that we have harnessed intellectual property and, as I will argue, worked more closely with our universities in order to do so. That, of course, is the thrust of many of the excellent recommendations, all 12 of them, that were made in this report of the industry committee, entitled “Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer: Promoting Best Practices”.

It will not surprise the House that I will say a few things about my riding of Victoria, because we are the home of a number of universities and colleges that have been integrally involved in intellectual property accumulation that has then been transferred to our burgeoning high-tech sector. Many Canadians will be surprised to learn that our main industry, in fact, is high tech, which depends on some of the things that the committee has quite astutely observed and made recommendations upon.

Let me therefore begin by looking at some of the recommendations. I would like to highlight only a couple of them that I think are important. Then I will talk about the situation in my part of the country. Lastly, I will end with something that is rarely talked about in this House but which ties very directly into this issue, and that is the so-called Naylor report.

Let me start with the recommendations that I think are particularly important to the university and college sector.

Recommendation 3 of the industry committee report is that the Government of Canada facilitate access to information relevant to technology transfer for Canadian small and medium enterprises.

Why? It claims “in order to promote collaborations between post-secondary institutions and the private sector, notably for the purpose of the commercialization of academic research.”

Sometimes Canadians think that universities are simply an ivory tower place, and that is so far from the reality that exists today. Many of the discoveries that are happening across our country—and Canadians should be immensely proud of those discoveries and the researchers that are making them—can be commercialized and should be commercialized. It troubles and pains me that so many of our young entrepreneurs think there is no sense in trying to commercialize it in this country and that they should just go down to Silicon Valley or Boston or maybe Ireland, which has become such a high-tech sector in and of itself.

That should not be the future of Canada. We need to keep the best and the brightest who make these discoveries, so we need to provide the protection of intellectual property that is needed to keep them in this country, where they create jobs and a better future for us and our children and grandchildren.

That recommendation deserves some emphasis.

Recommendation 5 reads like this:

...that the Government of Canada consider launching a pilot program designed to provide small businesses access to strategic intellectual property advice.

That will be a challenge thrown directly to the Government of Canada, which I hope they will take up as a pilot project.

The last one that I will focus on is that the committee recommends:

...that the Government of Canada study the opportunity to renew and expand funding allocated to programs supporting technology transfers between post-secondary institutions, (universities, colleges and polytechnics), and Canadian enterprises.

It is abundantly clear that the committee gets it and sees the incredibly important need. However, forgive me if I focus this debate on the community with which I am most familiar, Victoria.

I confess a lot of Canadians do not understand it and have a very unfortunate stereotype about what our community is, thinking of it perhaps as a retirement centre, a government centre, and so forth. That is why I think Canadians need to understand that greater Victoria's technology sector is now a \$4-billion industry, making it the largest industry in the capital regional district. It is \$4 billion. It is the largest industry. I think that will come as a surprise to Canadians. It has been that way since 2007, when it quietly moved up the ranks and hit \$1.6 billion. According to recent studies, for every high-tech job, four other jobs are created.

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•(1250)

Here I need to do a shout-out to Mr. Dan Gunn, who deserves a lot of credit for that. He heads up the Victoria Innovation Advanced Technology and Entrepreneurship Council, which uses an enormous number of very amusing and engaging techniques to engage the young members of that burgeoning high-tech community. He deserves credit for putting it together, creating that umbrella, having fun with people, getting them to collaborate informally at what they call “Fort Tectoria” on Fort Street, and has helped to turn the downtown area into what San Francisco calls “the mission district”, full of entrepreneurs and young people.

A long time ago the Liberal government of British Columbia moved many of the government jobs away. It downsized and moved them to different parts of the province. Those buildings are now increasingly being occupied by 20-year-olds and 30-year-olds who are creating a future.

The law firm I used to be with rented the building where all these computers were just sitting, because the people we took the lease from simply sold their entire business and moved to Silicon Valley, leaving thousands of dollars of material laying around.

That is just one of many start-ups that have been so successful in our community, and we are very proud of them. To return to the point I made earlier, it saddens me that many of them think they have to go abroad to succeed.

I commend the committee for recommending that there be a pilot project to make sure we know how to best harness this future and grow it, as we have done so well in our community.

As I said earlier, the high-tech sector employs a younger group of talent compared to workforces like those in government. It is also very diverse. Moreover, its employees make more money than the average worker in other industries.

How about this? Technology employs about 5% of British Columbia's workforce. That is more than forestry, mining, and oil and gas combined. If I said that to most Canadians in other parts of the country, they would scratch their head and say, “That's not what I understand. That's not the image of British Columbia that appears on TV. It's totally different.”

British Columbia has the University of Victoria, Royal Rhodes University, and Camosun College. It has enormous tech innovation centres that are succeeding. It also has what I think is the most important thing, a commitment in our communities to make this happen.

I salute entirely the report that has been provided.

I promised that I would also refer to the Naylor report. What is the Naylor report? David Naylor is the former president of the University of Toronto. He did a remarkable job for Canadians, and I am here to salute him today.

Last year, he chaired Canada's fundamental science review and produced an enormously important report called “Investing in Canada's Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research”. That report is, as we might expect, very detailed.

One of the things he recommended, which I think dovetails quite nicely with the recommendations I referred to earlier, is that we create a panel to look at Canada's federal research infrastructure and that the Government of Canada by an act of Parliament create what he calls the national advisory council on research and innovation.

After enormous consultation, the committee thought that we needed such a federal statute to create such a council if we were going to have oversight of the federal research and innovation ecosystems around this country. It is obvious how that dovetails with the recommendations the industry committee made. I commend this Parliament to think about whether that act of Parliament ought to be created. I think it should.

Among the responsibilities of that committee would be to advise the Prime Minister and cabinet on federal spending, as well as broad goals and priorities for research and innovation; to improve the coordination and strategic alignment of different elements of federal support for research and innovation; and to evaluate the performance of the extramural research enterprise and so forth and so on.

•(1255)

The report spends an enormous amount of time talking about our proud funding agencies, NSERC, SSHRC, the medical research council, and the funding agencies, but makes very specific recommendations. I am advised that our universities are in broad agreement with the Naylor report, so it would be a win-win for the government to introduce that act of Parliament, and do what Dr. Naylor and his team suggested and get on with the job of harnessing the technology of intellectual property, which I have spoken about and the committee addresses and takes so seriously.

The new economy, the digital economy, is not based on land or money or the resources one normally thinks of, but on information. Technology in a digital economy is harnessing that intellectual property, be it medical research or research into applications on the Internet and the like. If we do not get our hands around how we can preserve and protect that intellectual property, obviously we are not going to thrive in the 21st century. We are not a country anymore of hewers of wood and drawers of water. We are not a country that simply uses the land and the resources provided to us as Canadians as our legacy and our heritage to create a new economy.

Our children are working in jobs many of us do not even understand. My son has a high-tech job that I do not even know what it involves. I am not the only parent in that situation. He does geographic information systems. I do not even know what they are, but all I know is that he is doing well, making money, and staying in Victoria because in our community we have people who do that. It is part of this new economy that I speak of.

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However, if we do not have intellectual property rules that are effective in the 21st century and that understand the technological basis of that new economy, as a Canadian public, we are going to be the losers. Every time I see one of those planes going from the airport in Victoria down to the Bay area, which happens a couple of times a day, I do not know whether to laugh or cry. Many times they are going down to get the financing they need to advance the technology, which I am delighted they do. However, many times, they are going down so that people can take up new jobs in the Bay area, and we are losing that opportunity for our children and grandchildren here.

I commend the industry committee for recognizing the urgent need to get our hands around the preservation of intellectual property, the commercialization of the research it generates and, finally, to get jobs for Canadians, high-paying, family-supporting jobs in technology that will sustain the future of our country.

As for what those jobs are, let me talk about my community and the technology sub-sectors in greater Victoria. I do not think people will believe this. These jobs are in software; performance marketing and ad tech; fintech, which is technology for the finance industry; gaming; virtual reality; aerospace; life sciences; biotech; advanced manufacturing; telecom and wireless; ocean sciences and marine technology; technology services; and clean tech. It goes on and on. Again, not every Canadian knows what each of those words means, but they do know when their daughter or son comes home with a big paycheque from something they are working at. They do not even have to know what the word means. I had to look in the dictionary when my son came home and told me he got a job in this field, because I did not even know what it was. That is a bit disconcerting, but that is the new reality many of us here will understand only too well.

I cannot overemphasize the critical importance of the work this industry committee has done for Canadians. Of course, the question then always turns to this side of the House and whether they get it and if they want to keep Canada on track. I support some of the things the government has done with technology development and innovation. I accept that it has done better than the last government, that there is funding required, and that it has made significant investments in this. It would be disingenuous of me not to recognize and salute that. However, intellectual property preservation, boring though it might sound, is at the root of this. The government needs to figure out with us in this place how we can harness it.

• (1300)

Naylor suggested that we have a statute. I think that is a very good idea. Most university professors and presidents with whom I have spoken accept that as a critical first step to do what has to be done. There is lots of work we can do as Canadians to get on with the job.

I salute this report, I salute the committee, and I say, "Let's do it."

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak to the brilliance of Dr. David Naylor. I was on the governing council at the University of Toronto when he was president. He really is a fantastic individual.

As I heard the member speak about Victoria, it reminded me of our government's investment in superclusters. Whether we are

talking about a supercluster for the ocean, AI, advanced manufacturing, protein, or digital, superclusters gave the opportunity across the country for the most unusual suspects to come together and work together. An unprecedented 450 businesses—300 of them small to medium-sized organizations—60 post-secondary institutions, and 180 other participants came together to create these great clusters of innovation. When we talk about complementing the promotion and protection of IP and jobs and having people stay in Canada, this is one strategy that we have used, among many others, that can help to do so.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague could say whether he believes some of the initiatives we have taken complement this report we are discussing today, and whether we are working hard to ensure that businesses stay in Canada and will continue to grow a very advanced economy here in Canada.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the way for her intervention, recognizing our shared admiration for Dr. Naylor. That is something we would agree on 100%. His contribution to this country is not understood well enough by enough Canadians. On that we agree.

On superclusters, I have heard some skepticism in some circles that the number of superclusters seems to align just perfectly with the different regions of Canada. I hope that they are entirely merit-based. I have no position or opinion on that, because I simply do not know, but I know some have noticed just how miraculous it was that it lined up so perfectly for the government. Nevertheless, the concept of superclusters, which I think is the main point of the member's remarks, is something that one has to accept.

I know that universities now, with the Internet and Skype, are talking to each other in a way that was unprecedented even 10 years ago. It is remarkable to see how modern research is conducted. We collaborate across regions in different sectors, and I think that this success will be built upon by the notion of superclusters. Unfortunately, as always, there are winners and losers, and we hear grumbling from people who were not successful in different parts of the country, but promoting collaboration is key.

The other point, however, that the industry committee talked about is that it is fine to have universities create great ideas, great intellectual property, but the next step involves using intellectual property regimes to harness it, to protect it, to sustain it, and then to see if we can commercialize it in a way that works for Canada and not just places like Silicon Valley.

• (1305)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member on his speech. He took what he calls a boring topic—I do not know if everybody would agree—and made it a lot more enlightening than I did just a few moments earlier, so I commend him on that.

I will ask for the member's thoughts on where he sees, right now, the government's involvement in the intellectual property innovation sector, and to contrast it to what is happening with the low-tax environment in the United States.

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We are seeing a number of companies, organizations, and innovators looking to the United States and choosing it over Canada. I wonder if maybe he has seen some of that and if he is concerned to see that happening or having the potential to happen at an even greater level.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I think we have a challenge here. The member put his finger on a problem that needs to be addressed and that we ought to look at head-on as Canadians.

I told members how painful it was to see people go to the United States with their ideas and commercialize them there. However, the problem that often arises is more complicated. I have heard so many entrepreneurs tell me that they do not want to go to the United States because there is not a health care system they can afford or depend upon, and they look with pride to the health care system that Canada has. Yes, there are lower taxes, and I do not think that is going to change any time soon, but there are other quality of life factors.

I can speak to my riding of Victoria. When Mr. Gunn sells a high-tech company on relocating to Victoria, he tells me that he is often selling the sizzle and not the steak—that is, he is selling the fact that the quality of life in our community is so extraordinary that people want to live there, even though it might be a little more expensive with taxes, even though they might make a little less, because they have to think of families and so forth. That is the first point.

The second point is new Canadians. When I think of the brain drain from developing countries to the United States and Canada, increasingly those people are not interested in going to the United States, for reasons I need not explain to the House. As a consequence, we could be the beneficiaries of those brains, of that entrepreneurial zeal. Do not get me wrong: we have done a good job, and I am proud of our record with respect to bringing in new Canadians, but we should enhance that.

I was in Pakistan recently, and a number of people told me that because they could not get visas to come here to study, they or their kids went to Australia or the U.K., and even begrudgingly to the United States, because our rules seemed to be hamstringing them. It made me angry, because we could get so much from them and they could contribute as other generations of new Canadians have to our economy, yet we find ways to tie them up in red tape. That is one of the ways we can improve and protect intellectual property and create more jobs for Canadians, new and old alike.

• (1310)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned recommendation 5: “The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider launching a pilot program designed to provide small businesses access to strategic intellectual property advice.”

If I understand correctly, Quebec has already done this. It has launched a program for exactly this, which is called “The First Patent Program”. It has been very successful in Quebec. I was not at the committee for the drafting of the report or the study, but I was interested to know what the committee had heard on the Quebec initiative and if the member opposite is familiar at all with it. I understand the member is from Victoria, which is a long way from Quebec, but since he has given a speech on this topic, I was

wondering if he has any opinions on how the Quebec scenario had gone and if that would have been perhaps an adequate pilot project.

I was disappointed to see in this report that it was a pilot project and was not just assuming a first patent program, much the same as Quebec has.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I did not have the pleasure of serving on the committee, so I am unable to be specific on the merits of the Quebec first patent program, although I understand, as the member correctly pointed out, it has been deemed a success.

The member talked about his disappointment that this is a pilot project, but I do not share his disappointment with the recommendation that the government do a pilot project to provide small businesses access to strategic intellectual property advice. I like pilot projects. I like the fact that people can take a look at it and not use a whole bunch of money to create a permanent program, because if it does not work, we can go and try another one. That is the nature of this high-tech sector. In fact, we do not want to dig in and get locked into something that may not work, or that may work for biotechnology but not very well for ocean research technology, for example. I would not want to be seen as denigrating the committee's excellent report with the notion that a pilot project is somehow less valid. I think it is actually a benefit.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to stand today and speak to this report as well. I know the committee spent a long time doing a study on this.

There is no doubt that the government has a specific role to play in intellectual property. I am an automotive mechanic by trade, and one of the reasons I came here was that I was frustrated, because I often feel that the government gets involved in things that it has no business getting involved in. However, intellectual property is one of the areas in which I think the government definitely has a role to play. I would put it under the honest weights and measures aspect of what the government ought to be doing.

If one has a good idea and develops that idea, one ought to be rewarded for that idea. Often there is a great amount of risk that comes with bringing forward an idea. If the level of risk is there and one is successful in getting that idea brought forward, there should be some reward that comes with that.

I think this is an honourable, righteous, and necessary role for the government to be playing in Canadian society and in the world at large. I know that there are groups in the world that are always on the lookout for good ideas and that try to bring these ideas to market, long before folks here in Canada have the opportunity. Therefore, I am pleased to see that the committee studied this, and I am pleased to see that the report has come out. Overall, the report goes in the right direction on a number of things. What we need to always remember, though, is that necessity is the mother of most invention.

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My colleague's point was that when the government starts to pick winners and losers, that is when we end up in an interesting area. I do think the government has a particular role to play when it comes to intellectual property, but it must always be careful to ensure that it does not pick winners and losers. It must set out a framework. It must set out a series of protections, much the same as we protect all other areas of life in Canada. It is the government's role to protect things. However, as the federal government, we should not necessarily be encouraging one area and not another area. We see that, in some respects, when it comes to particular industries. The government picks winners and definitely tries to stifle others. We see it with the aerospace industry, for example. The government will bend over backward to prop up that particular industry and ensure that it is capitalized, and that sort of thing, whereas in the oil patch, we see very little support. In fact, it wants to phase it out, as the Prime Minister has said.

Coming from northern Alberta, I would say that we have seen major advances in the intellectual property that has come to northern Alberta through necessity, essentially. Northern Alberta is a rugged place. The elements are fairly harsh, yet it is a thriving place. We have significant forestry, farming, and oil patch initiatives going on. When it comes to the government's role in all of those things, it is to manage them in a manner that allows the companies and individuals who are operating up there to protect their good ideas.

One of the things I like to talk about that I have a personal connection to is the fracking industry in northern Alberta. Members might be interested to know that to put one hole in the ground and frack it out in an average fracking operation costs about \$17 million. The interesting part is that \$10 million of that \$17 million, more than half the cost, is for the water that is used. It is not necessarily for the water. It is purely for the trucking costs to get the water from where it is produced at one hole over to another hole. There is a huge cost associated just with using the water, because we do not want to use fresh water. We typically use polluted water from other sources.

• (1315)

For example, in Whitecourt, Alberta, the forestry and pulp industries use a bunch of water. At the end of that, they have a slurry that has been spent, they cannot use it anymore, so they sell that water to the oil patch, which pumps it down the holes when they do a frac. A significant amount of water is needed when that happens. They use that water. That water is not lost; it goes down the hole. They use it to break open the rocks at the bottom. Over the course of the next three years, all of that water will come back up.

Basically what has happened is that they keep using the same water over and over again. Once the water comes back up, they ship it over to the next hole and they start fracking at the next hole.

However, a large amount of water is used, and about 70% of it comes back within the first three months. Then it takes about three years for the rest of the water to come back up the hole. There always needs to be a significant volume of water, which is being trucked around from hole to hole as the fracking is done.

Fracking sounds like a harsh word, and a lot of people wonder what actually happens. The best way it has been described is that it is like blowing into a balloon that has a pinprick in it. When the balloon is fully deflated, everything looks normal. As the balloon is

blown into, the hole in the balloon gets larger and larger, so someone has to blow faster to keep the balloon expanding until finally a point is reached where someone can blow really fast into a balloon and all the air leaks out of the hole because it keeps getting larger and larger.

That is essentially what happens during a frac. The water is pumped down the hole very fast, and the water squeezes into microscopic cracks in the rock. The water forces those cracks open, and tiny pieces of sand are sent out with the water. When the pressure is released, the water backs up out of the hole and leaves the sand behind. The sand holds the rocks open to allow the natural gas and oil to come back out.

Due to the amount of water that is needed and the cost, and as I said earlier more than half of the cost of a particular hole is just the water, there have been huge innovations in how to reduce the amount of water because of the benefits to it. If the amount of water needed can be reduced, that could mean less trucking, these holes could be produced cheaper, and it is in the best interests of everybody to ensure our water can be used for agriculture, for example.

Just on that point, the vast majority of industrial water use in Alberta is in the agricultural industry. The oil patch only accounts for 1% of all use of industrial water.

My personal connection to that is that my uncle works in the oil patch. He has a company that heats water. The company started out in the building construction industry, melting the frost out of the ground so people could pour basements during the winter. It was kind of an innovative thing that came about in the boom times, in 2004-06, when it could not build houses fast enough. When workers were heating the ground to get the frost out so it could dig a hole to pour the basement, he got the idea to get into the business of heating the ground.

The company then developed a technology that is fairly innovative. It does not use a boiler. It has a different way of heating the water. It has a patent on that, which has served it well. The company has branched into heating for the oil patch. It just started out, as we can imagine, with this large volume of water that is used for fracking, which happens at all times of the year. That cannot be left to freeze. It sits in tanks. If it freezes, then the tanks would rupture, and there would be a real problem.

Then what happened was it started talking with the folks, telling them that if the water was at a different temperature as it went down the hole, maybe less amounts of water could be used. The company has discovered, and has patented this idea as well, that as it does the frac, it actually heats the water up as it goes down the hole. Apparently that makes the water more slippery and it goes down the hole faster. It allows the frac to be done in a shorter amount of time, hence using less water. That, in and of itself, was interesting.

• (1320)

It has caused them to use much less chemical in the water, and it has also reduced the amount of water needed. That is an innovation that is happening in northern Alberta. It is an innovation that is happening just because of necessity, and it is interesting to see.

Private Members' Business

My hon. colleague from the NDP talked a lot about how the universities are playing a big role in that, and I would say that they are in this case as well. My uncle's company has partnered with the University of Alberta, and they are in constant contact getting the physics and mathematics of it organized. My uncle's company is doing business out in the real world. People often say, "This seems to work, but we do not know why. Can you help us figure out why it works? Are there any tweaks we can make on it?" I would say that our universities play a significant role in this as well.

We often talk about the commercialization aspect, and that is what this entire report is talking about: how we can take those ideas and make them viable in the real world. That is an important aspect, but in its recent rollout on intellectual property, the government missed the whole piece on the first patent.

I was talking with my uncle about that. The first patent was a hurdle to get over. These people had no idea what they were up against. They had not even thought about it. They were just trying to heat up water, and they were not thinking that maybe they were the first people to think of it and perhaps there was a patent. Once they had made it through that hurdle of patenting the first thing, suddenly the next patent was a lot easier. They were thinking, "Hey, this is an idea. Nobody else seems to be doing this. Maybe it is a patentable idea." Their patents are now being used all over the world. They are operating all over North America, up in Alaska and down in Colorado. They have set up shops in both of those places. That speaks more to the record of the current government in terms of taxation and not championing the oil patch. They are definitely still thriving. They are working in Alberta, but also in the United States.

Recommendation 9 in the report talks about a tool kit for Canadian technology transfer. This is based on the work that has been done in the United Kingdom. I know that the United Kingdom and Canada were built on the same basic framework of the system of law, so the tool box built in the U.K. is definitely something we should look at bringing into Canada.

One thing that is interesting is that oftentimes universities, on the public dime, create a good idea but there is no good mechanism for that good idea, that intellectual property, to be transferred to a corporation or a commercial interest. That is where this tool kit comes in. It would be interesting to look at how that tool kit worked in the U.K., to ensure that we have a good transfer of great ideas from universities into the so-called real world, where they could be used to make all of our lives better. That is probably the thing we all need to remember.

My hon. colleague from the NDP was talking about these jobs that we do not even understand yet. Perhaps we do not necessarily know what his son does on a day-to-day basis, but it is a geology technology that is being used there. It sounds to me as if he is probably involved in mining or something like that, whether it be copper mines, the oil patch, or whatever.

In my opinion, the economy always comes back to food, clothing, and shelter. Those are the three basic necessities for all of humanity. To make all of our lives better, we want to be able to get our food cheaply and make sure that it is healthy. We want to be able to live in a place where we want to live. We want to find shelter and we want to be clothed. All those things drive the economy.

● (1325)

The member's son worked in geology technology. I know that is a big part of northern Alberta. For example, when I was a mechanic, I did an oil change on a customer's truck. He also had a Viper, so I will always remember him as one of the few customers we had with a Dodge Viper. His job was to estimate how much gravel was in a certain gravel bank when there was to be a gravel pit development. He had to estimate what kind of gravel potential was there so that the government could understand what kind of royalty revenue it could anticipate from that project.

One of the things that he used was a drone to take measurements of the land. He said that using this new drone technology allowed him do three or four times more work in a year. The drone in and of itself is very cool, and we have all seen the camera, but it is the software that takes the measurements through the camera that makes it immense. I am sure that this technology as well as being developed in northern Alberta—

● (1330)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Frank Baylis): The member for Peace River—Westlock will have three minutes left on his discussion when we resume on this fascinating topic.

[*Translation*]

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CONTROLLED DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES ACT

The House resumed from April 18 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.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is difficult sometimes to pick up a speech where one left off several weeks ago. However, I am going to do my best to do so and will begin by commenting on the first hour of debate on this bill.

I am not sure why or how this came about, but many speakers tried to confuse the intent of this bill with those of Bill C-45 or Bill C-46, though it has nothing to do with them. Nothing in this bill has to do with arguments for or against the legalization or decriminalization of recreational marijuana. This bill has absolutely nothing to do with the discussions on those bills dealing with those questions. This bill is completely unrelated. This bill deals with the existing regime for medical marijuana, and medical marijuana only.

Private Members' Business

I hope that today, as we resume debate on this bill, we will confine discussion and debate to the subject matter of the bill, which is the home cultivation of medical marijuana that has been prescribed. Under the current regime for medical marijuana, a patient with a prescription is permitted to cultivate marijuana in their home. This bill does not reject their doing so or argue that a person should not be able to do that with a prescription.

What this bill addresses is the issue of landlord consent. This is important because it is well known that home cultivation of marijuana can damage property and create health hazards. It varies from province to province.

In British Columbia, for example, a person might be permitted to grow marijuana to fill three prescriptions in their home, two for the residents of a home, plus a prescription for a non-resident of a property. If a person combines three prescriptions, and if these are particularly heavy dose prescriptions of up to, and in excess sometimes, of 10 grams a day, the number of plants required to fill such large prescriptions if combined are quite numerous, in some cases perhaps more than 100 plants.

Putting 100 plants in one home raises a number of health considerations. I know that many members have a background or history in local government and know that from their time, as municipal government representatives, this is something that had to be dealt with when there was widespread illegal home cultivation. The grow ops that sprang up as a result presented an enormous challenge to municipalities, law enforcement, and health authorities in dealing with the health consequences of growing too much organic matter in an enclosed indoor space. Therefore, mould and toxins are important considerations.

If a person owns their own home and wishes to grow 100 plants, and has the legal prescriptions to do so, no problem. If a person is a tenant and their landlord permits them to do so, no problem. However, if a person's landlord is not even aware of such cultivation in a home and it results in the destruction of the property, this is a tremendous problem for landlords, and a tremendous disincentive for either the development of, or investment in, rental property. If a prospective landlord has to exist in a climate in which they do not know if a tenant can destroy their property through excessive cultivation, they may choose not to even invest in that property.

● (1335)

We know this is a tremendous issue that all municipal and law enforcement people have been aware of, but it is also an issue in the real estate and mortgage industries. I spent my career, before running in the last election, in the mortgage business. In the mortgage business, once a property has been flagged as having been used for the cultivation of marijuana, that property is stigmatized to the point that it is unmortgageable and unmarketable.

Many lending institutions generally say that they would never lend on a property that had been used to cultivate marijuana. If there was a certificate of remediation, they might say that under a certain set of other strong criteria, they might perhaps lend on the property, but my experience over 20 years as a mortgage broker is that no lender will ever accept a mortgage application on a property formerly used for the cultivation of marijuana. They will find a way

to kill it. They will render the property unmarketable and unmortgageable, and perhaps uninsurable.

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to rise to speak to Bill C-330, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. This private member's bill proposes to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act to allow regulations to be made that would require written consent from landlords in the event that their tenants were producing or selling a controlled substance within leased space. If applicable, Bill C-330 would also establish a mandatory requirement for the Minister of Health to report back to Parliament on an annual basis to explain why such regulations had not been made.

As my colleagues know, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act is a legal framework for the control of substances that can alter mental processes and that may produce harm to individuals or society when diverted to an illegal market. Under this act, it is illegal to conduct certain activities with respect to controlled substances or precursors, unless authorized by regulation or granted by an exemption.

If I may, I will take the opportunity to correct an issue of language. My colleague and friend across the aisle, in his remarks, referred frequently to a prescription for medical marijuana. I want to take the opportunity to clarify, if I may, that there is no such thing as a prescription for medical marijuana. It is, in fact, an authorization, which provides for an exemption under the current criminal prohibition, as directed by the courts in the Allard decision, and as incorporated into regulations under the new ACMPR regulations.

The Controlled Drugs and Substances Act includes broad authorities that enable the government to strictly regulate the production and sale of controlled substances.

I would like to articulate a number of the reasons the government is unable to support Bill C-330. When introducing the bill on December 14, the member for Kamloops-Thompson-Cariboo indicated that it sought to address concerns from landlords about tenants growing cannabis for medical purposes in leased premises. Bill C-330 could, in fact, have implications for a number of parties that are regulated under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act who operate within leased facilities. This could include, for example, licensed producers of cannabis for medical purposes and licensed producers and dealers of other controlled substances.

If a licensed producer or dealer of a controlled substance is operating in a commercially rented facility, the lease agreement will typically include details on the specific activities that are taking place within the facility, making the landlord aware that controlled substances are being produced there. The landlord would, therefore, consent by way of approving the lease.

Private Members' Business

To obtain a federal licence to commercially produce cannabis for medical purposes in cases in which the applicant is not the owner of the site, an application must be accompanied by a declaration by the owner of the site consenting to its use for the proposed activity, and like federally licensed producers and dealers of controlled substances, including licensed producers of cannabis for medical purposes, individuals authorized to produce cannabis for their own medical use are subject to regulations under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Cannabis for medical purposes is regulated under the Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations.

These regulations aim to provide reasonable access to cannabis for medical purposes for Canadians who have received an authorization from their health care practitioners. Under these regulations, Canadians can legally cultivate a determined amount of cannabis for their own medical use or designate someone to produce it for them. These regulations contain landlord consent requirements applicable to personal and designated production if the production site is not the ordinary place of residence of the applicant or the designated producer, and the site is not owned by them.

Finally, as members of this House also know, Bill C-45, the cannabis act, is currently before the other place. This act would create a strict framework to control and regulate the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis using a public health approach, in which public health and public safety objectives would be at the forefront. Should it receive royal assent, cannabis would no longer be regulated under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Regulations with respect to cannabis, for both medical and non-medical purposes, would be enacted under the cannabis act, and this would include the landlord consent requirements that currently apply to cannabis for medical purposes, about which I have previously spoken.

• (1340)

Under this new legal framework, adults would be permitted to legally possess and purchase limited amounts of cannabis through a government-licensed retailer. Subject to applicable provincial, territorial, and municipal rules, adults may also be allowed to cultivate up to four plants at their place of residence.

Allowing for the cultivation of a small number of cannabis plants at home supports the government's objective to displace the illicit market. It is a reasonable way to allow adults to cultivate cannabis for their own personal use, while prohibiting any commercialization and sale of that which is produced for personal use and which prohibits large-scale grow ops, which will attract the criminal sanctions contained within that bill.

The approach our government is taking with respect to home cultivation is consistent with the advice we received from the task force on cannabis legalization and regulation and with the approach that has been taken by most jurisdictions in the United States that have legalized and regulated cannabis for non-medical purposes.

Provinces and territories have the authority and can assess the need for additional restrictions within their jurisdictions, and they will be responsible for enforcing those rules. In fact, some provinces have already chosen to incorporate such restrictions in their proposed legislation, and I will give some examples.

New Brunswick would require a locked enclosure around outdoor cultivation and a separate locked space for any indoor cultivation.

Alberta has proposed that all cultivation will take place only indoors and it will allow landlords and strata councils to restrict cannabis cultivation.

Nova Scotia has recently proposed to provide landlords with the ability to ban the smoking and growing of cannabis within rental units.

These are just a few examples of how provincial legislation would be used and relied upon to establish rules that are tailored to each province.

Additionally, each municipality has the ability, through its zoning and bylaw jurisdictions, to enact additional regulations to control and to ensure this conduct is done in a way which is safe and socially responsible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsor of the bill for providing us with an opportunity to debate this important matter.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to join the debate today on Bill C-330, introduced by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

What does this bill purport to do? Bill C-330 would be making an amendment to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, specifically section 55. Section 55 of that act lists all the areas where the Governor in Council is able to make regulations for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of the act. What the bill would do is insert a new clause under paragraph 55(1)(g). Paragraph 55(1)(g) allows the Governor in Council to make regulations “respecting the premises, processes or conditions for the production or sale of any controlled substance or any class thereof, and deeming such premises, processes or conditions to be or not to be suitable for the purposes of the regulations”.

The proposed paragraph 55(1)(g.1) that the member wants to insert through this bill would require persons or classes of persons who intend to produce or sell any controlled substances to obtain the written consent of the landlord, and it would prescribe the manner and form in which that consent is to be obtained and the conditions under which it must be renewed. That is what this bill is purporting to insert into the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

I have a few problems with this bill because I think it oversteps its bounds in a few areas, and I will walk the House through them.

Private Members' Business

I will start off with the Allard decision rendered by the Federal Court a few years ago, which was in response to the previous Conservative government's regulations that dealt with medical cannabis and the authorizations included therein. The new access to cannabis for medical purposes regulation was the Liberal government's response to the Federal Court of Canada's February 2016 decision. In that decision, the court found that the requirement for individuals to get their cannabis only from licensed producers, which was the regime for medicinal cannabis imposed by the previous Harper government, violated the liberty and security rights protected by section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I feel this bill would be inserting another impediment to the constitutional and charter-protected rights of patients to access medicinal cannabis. If the federal government is going to insert itself, through this law, by basically mandating that written consent would have to be authorized by a landlord, the courts could reasonably see that as an impediment and a contradiction of the spirit of the ruling rendered by the Federal Court in 2016. That is my number one reason.

As I walk the House through this, I think the big problem is that this bill would very clearly insert itself into provincial jurisdiction. If we look at section 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867, specifically subsection 13, it is very clear that provincial jurisdiction over property and civil rights is there for all to see. Provincial jurisdiction over that area has been reaffirmed by the courts on numerous occasions, and I know provincial governments are very quick to assert their right in this particular area if they suspect any federal intrusion.

Property and civil rights can cover a whole range of issues, and I think that was the intent of the Fathers of Confederation. They wanted matters of a merely local or private nature, basically property and civil rights, to be included under provincial jurisdiction. Canada is a very big and very diverse country, and from British Columbia to Manitoba to Prince Edward Island we have various different local cultures. The provinces need to be authorized to make laws that fit the local cultures in each of those provinces. I feel that by trying to legislate how written consent has to be informed in the relationship between a tenant and a landlord, Bill C-330 would be very clearly inserting a federal power into an area defined under property and civil rights.

● (1345)

The very clearly written Allard decision by the Federal Court on a section 7 protected right for access to medical cannabis for patients who require it, and the fact this is very clearly an area of provincial jurisdiction are two clear reasons why I think the House should vote against this bill.

I would also like to talk a little about the federal criminal law power, because it is another thing we have to talk about with respect to this particular bill.

In previous rulings, the Supreme Court of Canada has held that a valid criminal law requires, first, a prohibition; second, a penalty; third, a criminal law purpose, such as peace, order, security, morality, and health. If I look at the aim of Bill C-330, I do not think it really matches the requirements of a federal criminal law power. If we look

at the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, that is very much what it concerns. It tries to prohibit or to limit certain types of behaviour.

We know that the bill is being discussed in the context of medicinal cannabis, because recreational cannabis, as was rightly pointed out by the government side, will come under a new regime once Bill C-45 receives royal assent. However, I think that a federal bill that aims to become a statute but inserts itself into property and civil rights is not a valid exercise of the federal criminal law power. That is a third point that we have to be aware of when discussing the bill.

While I talk about this, let there be no illusion that I don't have sympathy for landlords who are going through this. I think every member of Parliament has had landlords approach them who have valid concerns about how their properties are being managed. I would say to them that, for most of the issues, the provincial governments will be responsible for regulating these kinds of contracts in their residential tenancy acts and so forth. I know that the Government of British Columbia has come forward with some proposals specifically with reference to when Bill C-45 is implemented. The member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo is quite right to be suspicious of Health Canada's inspection regime, because I do not think Health Canada has allocated enough resources or is carrying out enough inspections to ensure that licence holders are complying with the terms of their licences.

I have brought this very same issue to the attention of the Minister of Health. I wrote her a letter on behalf of constituents a few years ago, and I did get a response. I will read from that letter from the health minister, because I think we need to keep the pressure on the health minister to live up to her obligations. Part of her response reads:

The Department has taken measures to ensure that Canadians are well informed about the rules and their responsibilities to help them comply with the new regulations [the ACMPR]. We have also emphasized the need to comply with all relevant provincial, territorial and municipal laws, including local by-laws about zoning, electrical and fire safety, as well as all related inspection and remediation requirements. We have also outlined on our website precautions Canadians can take to reduce risks to their health and safety.

I will be following up with the Minister of Health, because I still think there are some very real gaps. Obviously, from the feedback I have heard from constituents, the actions of Health Canada thus far do need some improvement. I hope that the parliamentary secretary is listening to my concerns, because I will be following up on them.

I think it is a question of resources and commitment that we need to take up with the health minister. When we look at the minister's response, she has outlined "provincial, territorial and municipal laws". She acknowledges that this is an area of provincial concern and jurisdiction; hence, lending more credence to the argument that Bill C-330 kind of falls outside the scope of what we are able to do.

Private Members' Business

I will conclude by saying that while I cannot support Bill C-330, I will respect the intent behind it. I know that the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has identified a problem and is trying to take action to solve it. However, I just do not think that Bill C-330 is the answer. I think that we need to keep the pressure up on Health Canada and the Minister of Health to ensure that the inspection regime is running as well as it possibly can.

• (1350)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, allow me to read the following headline in *The Vancouver Sun*: “Marijuana grow-op cost \$135,000 in damages: B.C. property owner.” The article says:

A Coquitlam woman says she has incurred \$135,000 in damage to her rental property due to a medical marijuana grow-op licensed by Health Canada without her knowledge or consent.

That is what we are discussing today.

I would like to thank the Conservative member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo who has come forward to defend the thousands of Canadians who rely on rental properties as a source of income and even retirement. I know people in my constituency for whom a rental property is not just a little extra money. It is not even just an investment. It is a pension plan. Middle-class people who do not have corporate or government plans often build and/or purchase rental properties in order to generate enough income and equity upon which to retire.

It is a win-win when they do that because they provide more affordable housing in our communities. However, the prospect that some may use those properties to host medical or other recreational marijuana growth within the house is threatening the value of the important asset in which the landlord has invested.

This threat is very real. Damage from grow ops in a residence can include the following: mould, humidity damage, electrical wire tampering, wall damage, floor damage, ventilation damage, plant and smoke smell and odours. These damages can effectively destroy the value of a house and make it impossible to resell and, ironically, make it uninhabitable for the person who originally started the grow op in the first place.

If such damage is allowed to occur in the rental properties of the nation, we will have fewer rental properties. When the supply goes down, the price goes up. The result being rental housing becomes less affordable for those people who need it the most.

What I like most about the bill is that it is so straightforward. The whole bill can be read in one page. The bill itself is really one paragraph, and I will read it:

...requiring 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, and prescribing the manner and form in which that consent is to be obtained and the conditions under which it must be renewed;

It is very simple. If people want to grow marijuana in a house that they rent, they need the permission of the property owner. That is a basic article of property rights. If people are going to do something with someone else's property, his or her permission is needed. It is very simple. Most of the best things in life are simple, and that is

why we have a bill, thankfully and mercifully, written in one paragraph with a simple aim and an obvious outcome.

If Bill C-330, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, targeting the growing and use of legalized for the production of marijuana for medical use as well as the potential forthcoming requests for business space to sell marijuana, passes, it will require the consent of landlords to tenants if those tenants are going to use the property for the production of marijuana.

We know landlords are aware of the very serious risks that could befall them if they should rent a property to someone who plans to use that same property for the production and use of medical or other forms of marijuana.

• (1355)

Unfortunately, the bill does not have the jurisdictional reach to touch upon recreational marijuana. However, that said, such an example set in the medical space at a federal level may act as an encouragement for provinces to use landlord and tenant legislation to address recreational marijuana as well. That is why Bill C-330 is the best approach to providing landlords the assurance they need. It does not require the creation of unwarranted and unnecessary government bureaucracy to manage this area. It simply requires that landlords give permission to their tenants to use their property for the production and sale of marijuana. Simply put, if the landlord approves of this behaviour in his or her property, he or she will provide a written, signed, and legal consent form to the tenant to engage in these activities. If the landlord does not provide the written, signed, and legal consent, the tenant cannot engage in the production of marijuana on the property. It is very straightforward. If the tenants proceed to do so, they will be in violation of their leasing agreement and the landlord will be able to remove the tenants. In other words, the landlord has ownership of the property and he or she deserves to know if someone is using the property in a potentially destructive manner, and if he or she refuses permission, he or she should have the ability to impose that decision because it is his or her property. This is not unfair to tenants; it is simply logical. If tenants are unhappy with those lease conditions, they are afforded the ability to find new housing and re-enter the housing market in accordance with their province's legislative conditions. Again, it is landlords across the country who take the inherent risk and associated cost of mortgaging and maintaining rental properties, and they must be provided this basic protection.

As I have noted, marijuana production and sales are going to rapidly change over the next several years. As a result, we need to change the legislative framework in which that happens to ensure that all Canadians are protected and that everyone acts with respect for each other's property. Some will argue that medical marijuana is necessary, and I am not here to dispute that. That is not the point of this debate. I am simply here to suggest that property owners should have the autonomy and authority to protect their property against damage.

Private Members' Business

Some people have suggested that this could simply be regulated at a provincial level. That is not true, because in the case of medical marijuana, a federal licence is extended to the person producing it, and that federal licence may have overriding power over landlord-tenant rules and over other contractual obligations. That is why we need a very simple clause inserted into the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act that would protect our landlords against this problem.

The government, I gather, might not support this particular legislation. I would urge the government, for political reasons, to consider otherwise. Normally the Liberals do not take political advice from me, but I will implore them, just once, to do so. If they refuse, I predict that they will regret that refusal when the time comes. That time in the next election will be when the situations just described will be unfolding. I do not think Liberal MPs will want to meet landlords and entrepreneurs who have lost tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of dollars of their net worth because somebody used their property as a grow op without their permission. Let us stand up for our entrepreneurs; let us stand up for the pensions of private individuals who are trying to save for the future; and let us stand up for the availability of affordable private housing by requiring consent for anyone attempting to grow marijuana at a property that does not belong to her or him.

● (1400)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Carleton's intervention on this private member's bill. It goes to the heart of what we do here as members of Parliament. Our role is to represent the interests of our communities, to establish safe, respectful communities where business people can do business in a way that is honourable, communities where we have neighbourhoods where people care for each other and respect each other's property.

We heard the member for Carleton talk about a *Vancouver Sun* article about a landlord who lost \$135,000 because of a grow op in the home he was renting out. Let me read some other headlines: from the CBC, "Landlords fear property values will go up in smoke with marijuana legalization"; from the *Toronto Star*, "Ontario landlords want right to ban pot in rentals immediately after legalization"; from the CBC, "Landlord pays high price for renter's medical marijuana grow-op". Here is another one, from the *Financial Post*: "Pot's no party for Canadian landlords wary of marijuana fumes and steamy grow-ops".

There is a real problem in communities across our country. This has nothing to do with the legalization of marijuana in Canada. What it has to do with is that we now have in Canada a regime of medical marijuana in which those who are deemed to qualify to use marijuana for medical purposes can either purchase it or grow it themselves. When a landlord is leasing out his or her property, whether it is a single family home, a townhouse, or perhaps an apartment within an apartment building, currently the landlord has no ability to place conditions and restrictions on the tenant not to use that property for the purposes of growing or selling marijuana. Of course, what happens is that, unbeknownst to the landlord who has leased this property, the tenant is using his or her medical marijuana licence to grow plants. Tenants are entitled to grow up to 15 plants of their own if they are using about three grams per day, but they are

also entitled to have three other users growing on their property. We can imagine how big this problem can get, especially if it is an apartment.

We have heard many pleas from Canadians across the country, and Bill C-330 would finally put in place a landlord's right to place restrictions and conditions when leasing the property to a tenant. These are restrictions that relate to the use, sale, production, and growth of marijuana on that property.

I want to commend the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for an amazing job in moving this bill forward. She represents her community very well. Her community reflects the challenges that communities across our country have faced for many years. Illegal grow ops and medical grow ops are causing no end of problems for the communities in which these facilities are located.

I can share the experience of my own community. Abbotsford is a beautiful community, nestled between Mount Baker on one side and the Fraser River on the other. It is the largest farm gate revenue producer in British Columbia. It is a prosperous community. It is also the most generous community in the country, by a country mile, by the way. That is what Stats Canada says.

This is a great community to live in, but it has had a few challenges. One of the biggest challenges has been illegal marijuana grow ops, and now that has been followed by medical grow ops. Essentially, people who have an authorization to grow medical marijuana on their property, and for others as well, are now effectively operating commercial grow ops on a smaller scale within neighbourhoods.

● (1405)

These are not commercial buildings. These are not industrial buildings. These are residential communities. These grow ops are surrounded by families with young children. They have to put up with the oppressive smell, the stench of marijuana plants as they grow. I have smelled it many times. I have had friends who have had these challenges.

I used to be on city council in Abbotsford. Day after day residents would come to council and ask us what we were doing to shut down these illegal operations, these operations that should not have been there and were causing such grief within our broader neighbourhood. All we could tell them was that our police authorities, our building inspectors, and our fire department were doing their very best.

Under privacy laws, the locations of these medical grow ops cannot be disclosed, so our law enforcement officials do not really know where they are. Any locations are generally complaint-driven, and the options available for municipal authorities to shut down these grow ops are extremely limited.

Can members imagine living next to one of these buildings or one of these homes, smelling the odour of marijuana and knowing that nothing can be done about it? My colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has brought forward a common sense bill that at least would allow landlords to address the issue of these grow ops that are causing no end of grief within our communities.

Private Members' Business

There is also a landlord's perspective. Imagine being a landlord with a 50-suite apartment building. Most of the apartment dwellers are law-abiding and do things in accordance with the law. Even if they do have authorization to purchase medical marijuana, they do so in small quantities. They do not grow a large number of plants within their apartment.

However, there is that one tenant who did not disclose in advance to the landlord his or her intention to grow many plants within their unit. Suddenly the surrounding residents want to know what is going on in the building.

A cascading effect takes place here. Now the landlord has a problem, because he may not be able to get rid of the tenant, and even if he is able to do so, what happens next? He likely will have thousands upon thousands of dollars in damages. He will have to bring in people to fix the damage within that unit. If he is renting out a house, imagine how expensive that could be. Members may have read about the house that had \$135,000 worth of damage as a result of a grow op in the place.

It gets worse.

The municipality comes out to inspect the property and discovers it has been a grow op. That fact has to be registered against the title. Anybody who wants to purchase that home will not be interested, because it was a former grow op and they will be concerned about health problems.

The mortgage company is made aware of this. The landlord wants to renew the mortgage but is suddenly told by the bank that it cannot take the risk. The landlord goes to insure the property against fire and other perils, but the insurer says that unfortunately it cannot be renewed because the property was used as a grow op.

The landlord has an apartment that has to be remediated as a result of all the damages caused by the grow op, and all of his tenants are leaving the building. The landlord loses rent, is unable to insure the building, and is no longer able to mortgage the property.

We can see the cascading effects when legislation that is perhaps well intentioned ends up being abused within Canada.

Bill C-330 is a remedy for landlords. It is a remedy for neighbourhoods.

• (1410)

It would not solve all the problems with grow ops across Canada. We have recreational marijuana close to being legalized in Canada. That is going to create many other problems, but at least one remedy is being brought forward. I strongly support Bill C-330.

• (1415)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear to me and many others in the chamber that we have a very serious problem. It is a serious problem that has been created by the federal government, and it is up to the federal government to fix this problem.

It has been argued that the provinces and municipalities need to create their own regulations, but let me remind everyone that when this is a medical authorization, federal rules supersede it. To suggest that we have landlord consent in regulations, as this bill would,

would enable the provinces and territories across this country to build in some basic protections for landlords.

I want to refer back to a person who came to me. Over the years, I have seen many headlines, and many people have approached me. There was one in particular who came to me who was crying. He had a rental property. Someone lived downstairs and a family lived upstairs.

First, the municipality is not allowed to know that there is an authorization for medical marijuana, which means no fire inspections, no electrical inspections, and no inspections to make sure it is done properly. Because of privacy rights, Health Canada is not authorized to tell municipalities.

This landlord found out that there was a grow op in his home. The immediate thing that happened, just as my colleague said, is that his insurance was cancelled. He could not get insurance for his property. The tenant on the main floor produced his authorization and said, "I'm sorry, but I have every right to grow my plants for my medical needs." The tenants upstairs, who had a young baby, said they would not stay because they were worried about the health of their child and the risks.

Here was someone who had put his savings aside to create a nest egg in his retirement, and he was being slowly destroyed. To be frank, it is Health Canada and the federal government that created the situation for this to happen.

The Liberals like to say that they have to provide access for medical purposes. That is their argument. What did they do last week? In the budget bill, there is an excise tax for recreational purposes. They said they were going to apply an excise tax to medical marijuana. How is that providing ready access for medical purposes that they say they are responsible for? Applying an excise tax would actually make it more unaffordable for people to buy their medical prescriptions. There are many ways the Liberal government could provide access without destroying people's lives across this country.

There has been a lot of razzle-dazzle. As people have talked about this bill, they have tried to mix it up with the recreational regime. I can understand that people watching or reading the debate might be a little confused about recreational and medical and what each is doing.

This is quite simple. Health Canada's authorization is for medical purposes. It can allow sometimes 100 plants if someone has a big prescription and is growing it for a few people. It can happen in a landlord's home, who cannot do anything about it.

If this is not the answer, the Liberals need to support it, and perhaps the committee could find a way to massage the bill in a way that would create an answer to this serious problem. If members vote no and then look at the hard-working people in their ridings who have had their homes destroyed, they should be ashamed of themselves and will have to answer for that in the next election.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

Private Members' Business

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 30, 2018, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 2:20 p.m., this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:20 p.m.)

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