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(HANSARD)

Friday, November 2, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 2, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2018, NO. 2

The House resumed from November 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-86, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I should tell you that I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood.

I am delighted to rise in the House today to discuss an important element of Bill C-86, the budget implementation act.

The element I want to talk about is intended to strengthen a measure that we have already discussed, one that is especially important for low-income workers. I am referring to the Canada workers benefit.

With this bill, the government will make it easier for this benefit to reach workers who are entitled to it. Thanks to this bill, everyone who is entitled to the Canada workers benefit will receive it when they file their tax return.

Our government knows that Canadians are working hard to build a better life for themselves and their families. Some low-income Canadians are working two or three jobs. They work really hard. Like all Canadians, these workers deserve to be rewarded for their hard work with a fair chance to succeed.

With budget 2018, our government took a step in that direction. This is one more step towards growing our economy in a way that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

In its most recent budget, our government introduced the new Canada workers benefit, which will come into force in 2019. It is an enhanced version of the working income tax benefit.

This new benefit will put more money in the pockets of low-income workers. It will not only increase benefits for those who received it for their employment income, but also expand the income range to make more workers eligible. For example, with this new benefit, a low-income worker who earns \$15,000 per year will collect up to \$500 more in benefits in 2019 than in 2018.

That is the kind of real help that will benefit over two million Canadians. Most importantly, we believe this measure will lift about 74,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2020. That is not all. In budget 2018, our government also increased the maximum benefit provided through the Canada workers benefit disability supplement by an additional \$160 to offer greater support to Canadians with disabilities who face financial barriers to entering the workforce.

This benefit will also be issued automatically, which is good news.

However, it is possible to do even better. The bill that we are discussing today will make it easier for workers to access the benefits they are entitled to, as our government promised in the last budget.

Accordingly, the bill proposes to make changes that will allow the Canada Revenue Agency to calculate the benefit for any taxpayers who did not apply for it on their income tax return.

It is not a problem if people forget or fail to complete the benefit schedule of their income tax return. The Canada Revenue Agency will still do the calculation. If the person is entitled to the Canada workers benefit, he or she will receive it. Thanks to the CRA's new automatic enrolment system, as of 2019, all those who are entitled to the Canada workers benefit will receive it, whether they applied for it or not. That is very good news for Canadians.

In closing, I would like to point out that this is not the only good news. The Canada workers benefit is just one of many measures to help those who need it most.

There is also the Canada child benefit, a key initiative for strengthening the middle class. Thanks to this measure, nine in 10 families now have more money in their pockets. Over three million Canadian families are entitled to over \$23 billion in annual payments.

Government Orders

●(1010)

This money will help them give their children a good start in life by providing them a safe environment, healthy food, and the opportunity to participate in recreational activities such as music and sports.

The Canada child benefit has helped lift more than half a million people in Canada, including more than 300,000 children, out of poverty. In addition, this benefit has been indexed to cost-of-living increases since July, two years sooner than initially planned.

Another measure is the increase in the guaranteed income supplement for seniors living alone. This increase improves the financial security of nearly 900,000 Canadian seniors, 70% of whom are women. This measure is very much appreciated in my riding, Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

These are excellent examples of smart, responsible investments made by the Government of Canada in the interest of families, communities and the economy. These investments leave more money in the hands of those who need it most, which helps increase Canadians' confidence in what the future has in store for us.

As the economy keeps growing and high-paying jobs are created, our government will continue to ensure that all Canadians share in the success and benefit from it.

This budget implementation bill will help more Canadians who could use a hand up by ensuring that everyone who is entitled to the Canada workers benefit receives this additional assistance.

I want to add that, for my constituents in Rivière-des-Mille-Îles and Canadians across the country, our government has created more than 500,000 full-time jobs since we came to power.

The unemployment rate is at an historic 40-year low. Our plan is working.

In the 2015 election, Canadians had a choice between a plan offering austerity and cuts and our government's plan to invest in the middle class and build an economy that works for everyone. The outcome speaks for itself.

As I said earlier, wages are going up, consumer and business confidence is strong, and Canada's economy is among the highest-performing in the G7. That is no small feat.

Middle-class Canadians see first-hand that our plan is working. By this time next year, a typical family of four will have over \$2,000 more in their pockets. Two thousand dollars is a lot of money to spend in our economy.

Budget 2018 is the next step in our plan. It supports our government's people-oriented approach and will ensure that every Canadian has a real and fair chance at success.

As part of budget 2018, our government continues to work on building an equal, competitive, sustainable and fair Canada. In light of such positive results, I urge all members of the House to vote in favour of this bill.

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member speak about all the expenses and so-called investments the government is making. Certainly the Liberals are good at spending. We have seen that through the last number of budgets. What they are not so good at is balancing the budget.

The member said that Canadians chose the Liberals' plan over our plan. What they did not choose is to continue deficit spending into 2045, with no plan to balance the budget. In fact, the interest costs alone to Canadians are currently \$30 billion. Just think of what we could do with those dollars that are going out the window for interest in terms of investments in infrastructure and health care. We could be investing that money in many other things.

I am concerned about the future. I am concerned about the future for my children and my nine grandchildren and what kind of debt we are leaving them. I am wondering if my colleague has no concern at all about the unbelievable costs we are simply kicking down the road to the next generation, forcing them to pay for the things we should not be spending money on right now.

We should be balancing the budget. We are in a time of economic growth. There is no reason to have deficit spending. Is my colleague not concerned about these things?

●(1015)

[Translation]

Ms. Linda Lapointe: You mentioned your grandchildren as you are a grandfather. I would like to inform members that I have been a grandmother since—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would like to remind the member that she must address the Chair and not the other members.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Madam Speaker, given that the member mentioned his grandchildren, I would like to inform the House that I became a grandmother on Wednesday.

To answer my colleague's question, yes, it is important to think about our grandchildren and to ensure that our economy will be very strong and that things will go well.

Since 2015, we have created 500,000 jobs, the unemployment rate is the lowest it has ever been and the debt-to-GDP ratio is the lowest of the G7 countries.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully as my colleague talked about poverty, families and children, yet there are still 1.2 million children living in poverty in Canada, and 38% of aboriginal children live in poverty. Those statistics have not changed in 10 years. Once again this year, statistics show that, despite the Canada child benefit, there are still 1.2 million children living in poverty. We know everything that has been announced, but we need more than just half-measures to give families the help they need.

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As a member from Quebec, my colleague knows very well that a universal, affordable child care program is the solution to help families. We can give them \$2,000, but if they have to pay \$60 a day for child care, what is the point? In this 851-page bill, there is nothing about child care and nothing about agriculture. There are a lot of things missing from these 851 pages, actually.

Perhaps the member could explain this to me.

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Madam Speaker, my colleague asked a question about children.

Beginning in 2019, the Canada child benefit is going to be indexed annually to the cost of living. That is two years earlier than planned.

Some three million families are receiving \$23 billion in annual benefit payments. This is already helping Canadian families immensely. Our economy is doing well. We have created 500,000 jobs in the last three years. Unemployment has never been so low. The economy is doing well.

I am sympathetic to what my colleague is saying. We are fortunate in Quebec to have more affordable child care, but the Canada child benefit is a measure that is having an impact on all Canadian families.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up where the member for Kitchener—Conestoga left off about expenditures verses being able to actually balance the budget.

Among all the new expenditures that have been discussed, is the member aware that the budget this budget implementation act is attached to predicted that the differential on Alberta crude would shrink to below \$15 a barrel? This has a significant impact on future revenue for the government, and with the failure on pipelines, this has gone up to over \$50 per barrel, not below \$15.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Linda Lapointe: Madam Speaker, my colleague referred to Alberta.

I am going to talk about the price on pollution, which goes hand in hand with economic development. Members on the other side have not talked about this.

I personally believe that we have to provide for future generations. Our government has implemented some measures to ensure that every environmental consideration is taken into account.

[*English*]

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to participate in the debate. At times we do not recognize our blessings in our country for the way things are unfolding. I would like to attribute it all to the government's wisdom, knowledge and political acumen. That is, of course, a critical point. Nevertheless, as a nation, we do have many blessings and many things to be thankful for, and we do not recognize some of the things for which we should be thankful.

For the first part of my speech, I will focus on the issues of trade. The government has signed three trade deals in the past while, the most recent being the CPTPP, an acronym that is challenging at the

best of times. It includes 16 countries, six of which are Asian countries. We only had one previous trade deal with an Asian country, so it is like getting six new trade deals simultaneously. It reduces our dependence on one market. We have seen what our dependence on one market can create for us, which is an unhealthy dependency. The last Conservative questioner talked about the gap between Alberta crude and other oils, and we do sell it at a significant discount because we are dependent entirely on one market for that product.

This is a good deal, and I am glad to see that we ratified it and moved it forward. Ironically, the U.S. is on the outside looking in. We have 16 nations that are now prepared to trade with each other on a fair trade basis, and it is a better situation for us all. In fact, if we are to pursue a trade deal with China, it is probably better that we pursue a trade deal with this collective rather than on an individual basis. There is significance to this trade deal, which has yet to play out.

The second deal was the CETA, which was the European deal. I will give credit where credit is due. The previous government did a lot of the heavy lifting with respect to that deal. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs completed the deal, and it is now in place. Access is something in the order of about 300 million to 400 million people in 20 plus countries. This is, again, a tremendous opportunity for us to diversify our market.

The third deal is the one that got all of the ink, namely, the USMCA. The USMCA deal is always going to be a critical deal for us because of our relationship with the Americans on the North American continent.

If there is a lesson to be learned out of all of these trade deals, it is that we need to lessen our dependence on one market and get into other markets. Hopefully, the combination of these deals will get us into other markets, at least a billion people, possibly as many as two billion people, and in the order of 40 plus countries.

One plus one plus one actually makes more than three, because the collective of being able to ship into and out of North America to Europe and the Pacific nations is of enormous benefit to those businesses that operate out of Canada.

Let me turn now to the state of the economy. As I indicated earlier, we are blessed. There have been some very prescient moves made by the Government of Canada, which have paid off. We have just signed the largest private deal in the history of Canada, the \$40-billion LNG deal. That was done in a way that recognized a lot of the claims by indigenous nations along the length of the pipeline and at the terminus. That is, ultimately, a really good opportunity for western Canada.

• (1020)

On the monetary side of things, inflation is largely under control. That is entirely due to the stewardship of the Bank of Canada. Interest rates are creeping up, which creates some situations where debt, particularly private debt, is at risk, but by and large, the monetary side of things is quite good.

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On the fiscal side of things, we have a fairly robust economy, the top-performing economy in the G7. We have, as I said, the largest private deal ever in Canada in the history of private business. We have historically low unemployment rates. At this point, the economy has created something in the order of 500,000 new jobs in the last three years.

The debt-to-GDP ratio is in a steady state. I, like others, would be keen to see debt reduction, but at the same time, I am concerned about the major issue of growing income inequality. In some respects, the government has rightly attempted to address the issue of growing inequality among Canadians. I think we can all agree that monetary or economic gaps among citizens are to be reduced in as many instances as possible. We started off with the middle-class tax cut, which was a significant reduction in income tax for middle-class Canadians, and in a very courageous political move, we increased the rate for the top 1% of tax filers.

Small business rates have been reduced from 11% down to 9%.

One of the most significant social initiatives ever taken by any government was the Canada child benefit, where nine out of 10 families with children will benefit. Those who need it most get the most. For my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood, which I have the honour to represent, that means \$100 million a year. A lot of kids are growing up in Scarborough—Guildwood and there are also a lot of poor families in Scarborough—Guildwood. The combination of the two means that benefit is of real significance to those families.

That means there is money ending up where we want it to end up, mainly in the hands of people who need it. That money will immediately be returned to the economy in the form of food and clothing purchases, transportation, etc. It gets circulated back as opposed to giving tax breaks to those who possibly do not need them. Those monies generally go into savings. While not exclusively dead money, it is money that is “languid” as opposed to money going into the CCB benefit, which is active. This is all to reduce income inequality in Canada.

Those who want to live the American dream should move to Canada, because the reality is that people move out of the lower quartile of wherever they were born at twice the rate than if they were American. That is significant because it shrinks income inequality among Canadians and when we shrink income inequality among Canadians, we all benefit.

• (1025)

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are certainly very blessed to be in Canada, but I take a little exception to the member talking about how great things are in this country, how the inflation rates are positive and all of these things. My riding and many ridings in Alberta have recently seen food bank usage go up. It is up 50% in the Edmonton area. I am being told by banks that this month people are making the choice between paying their utility bills or paying their car payments. It is a terrible situation right now and it is largely because of the failure to get access to foreign markets for our energy products.

I would ask the member if he has any comment on how we can bring this great economy back to Alberta.

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member asked a legitimate question. Alberta is a resource-based economy and lives and dies on its resources. Ten years ago, Alberta was king of the hill and doing very well, because its resources were in demand. Regrettably, we have not been able to diversify the market, hence the TMX purchase and the attempt to bring some other market into play for the resources that Alberta wishes to sell.

I agree with the member that we should not be selling at a discount. As long as Alberta is selling at a discount and does not have access to other markets, I think that times will more difficult, unnecessarily, for Albertans.

• (1030)

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, talking about the opportunities for Canadians and the security of Canadians is very important. Part of that security, I believe, is pay equity.

The current federal government and its predecessors fought pay equity in terms of women in the public service for decades, and now it is postponed for another three years. Where is the legal support centre for non-union women as recommended in the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force?

In 2004, there was a landmark task force. That was 14 years ago, and as I said, decades before that, there was pushing back against pay equity. I want to know when we will see proper pay equity for all women in this society.

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, the hon. member asked a question in the context of a government that has done more on the feminist concerns than pretty well any government in history, and that includes pay equity. It also includes moving status of women to a department.

These are issues that have been historical injustices. The government has moved massively in redressing these historical injustices, and I hope that in a very short period of time, the hon. member will not need to ask a question such as that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, although we have been debating this omnibus budget bill, many of my colleague's comments related to a false narrative, which has been spread so widely that I am quite certain my hon. colleague does not know it is false, and it is that there is a massive differential that costs Canadians money, because Alberta bitumen does not get the same price on the world market as crude. Of course, the reason it is not worth as much is because it is a solid. It has to be upgraded before it can be sold.

In fact, the Scotiabank report, which is the source of this false claim, ignored the reality. I will point out quickly that 40% of what we export, according to Suncor, is its upgraded synthetic crude. According to Steve Williams, the CEO of Suncor, “We have virtually no exposure to the light/heavy differential.” It is because it is actually getting a premium, because it is selling synthetic crude.

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I ask my hon. colleague, would it not be appropriate, before the federal government puts \$4.5 billion into buying a 65-year-old pipeline and promises \$10 billion more to expand it, that we get an independent assessment of the costs and benefits of embarking on this project? There is not one yet.

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I always appreciate the comments of my hon. colleague, but it seems to be settled at this point that Alberta crude sells at a discount. It does cost more to upgrade it. I agree with that. It does cost more to ship it. I agree with that. However, we are dependent on one market. That is where we sell 98%, 99% of the crude. When we are dependent on one market, we know we are going to be in a vulnerable position when it comes to sale.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Edmonton West.

I have had the honour over the last 10 years to speak to at least some aspect of every budget that has been presented in the House. Therefore, standing here this morning to once again present the views of my amazing constituents in my riding of Red Deer—Mountain View is truly a highlight of this fall session. It is especially memorable because it will be the last time that this type of debate will take place in this chamber for the next decade or more.

I would like to start by reflecting on some of the most important points of the last 10 years.

In the fall of 2008, the global economy as we knew it was collapsing. Global economists were clamouring about how countries were going to need to stimulate their economies by at least 2% GDP, no matter what, and that the consequences of the greatest economic meltdown since the Great Depression could last for years.

What did our government do? Having foreseen tough times ahead, it had reduced the GST from 7% to 5%, which along with other tax-cutting measures nearly covered the prescribed 2% GDP stimulus. Why was that important? Because it put dollars back into the hands of everyday Canadians for them to spend on their priorities.

The second phase of stimulus was related to infrastructure spending, which, amazingly, got out to the municipalities in record time so that it had the effect of keeping contractors employed and even resulted, because of the local economic downturn, in getting many projects done under budget. This is one of the most celebrated stimulus projects ever implemented. Not only that, the temporary home renovation tax credit was a godsend to local businesses.

I remember speaking to a gentleman from the U.S. who was amazed at how such a simple concept had created so much economic activity. It came at a high price, one which did add to the deficit as part of the economic reality of the time, but it also helped us move out of the economic malaise quicker than any other country.

I always like to bring this up when my friends from the Liberal Party crank up their rhetoric about nearly 10 years of our Harper government. I also like to point out that over that 10 years, we only had a majority for four years. Perhaps the Liberals, in a reflective moment, could imagine how much of their agenda would be carried

out if they were in a minority. They might also find they would need to have other voices in their heads other than Butts'.

Alas, what transpired was that the member for Papineau, with his family name and his foul-mouth antics, rose to power as the Liberals' messiah. They chose a leader who did not know the difference between a decimal point and a decibel reading, who spent his time as a backbencher charging charities for speaking fees when he was supposed to be speaking in this chamber and who orchestrated, with an NDP member, fake outrage where he called our then environment minister a name, which I will not repeat, and ran out the door to the press to tell it that the devil made him do it.

It was at that moment that my impression of the member was forged. Therefore, when the Liberal leadership race was on, I would always say that the member for Papineau would not even have made the now transport minister's cabinet. However, no one on that side was a match for the 20-plus page coronation from Maclean's magazine. That adulation, so terribly misplaced, unfortunately continues to this day.

Therefore, here we are, dealing with a budget implementation act that shows just how far the government will go to force its will on the people.

My constituents are concerned about the tax that is being charged on medical marijuana. We are talking the non-THC variety, not the good stuff the PM brags about using. This is an issue that has people rightfully concerned.

The next issue that is so important to Canadians is trade. I have heard it said that our Conservative government had already hit the walk-off home run with both CETA and TPP and that all the PM had to do was to sign the ball, which was proudly presented to him on behalf of an amazing negotiating team. However, he and his cabinet team botched that so badly that our trading partners looked at Canada as being both bizarre and illogical. Thank God we have business people who were, and are, there to carry the day, because this government's political counterparts around the world had no idea what to expect from the government.

My next issue with the bill is the massive debt the Liberals are downloading to my children and grandchildren. We know that the words of the Prime Minister are never to be taken seriously. The path that the government has chosen could not be any more socialist than if the NDP had been victorious in the last election.

• (1035)

The most significant concern I have with the bill, beyond my normal lament as a former hospital board chair that these Liberals have shortchanged our health care system, is what they are doing to our global competitiveness through their insistence on a carbon tax.

Most Canadians see this as something in the future, but there are Canadians who are well on their way to the government's initial goal of a \$50 carbon tax. The one I am most familiar with is my province of Alberta.

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As the real climate leaders in our country, we have been reducing our carbon footprint for years. Long before the present NDP government signed onto the Liberal carbon tax plan, we Albertans were reducing our per unit emissions not just by legislation, but because we felt it was the right thing to do. After all, would having a technology fund that encouraged greenhouse gas reduction with the possibility of selling that technology to places in the world that need the help not be a logical business decision? The federal government said it did not care, that it was its way or the highway, which is what it is now telling those provinces that have chosen to stand up to its tyranny.

What are these numbers? I am going to compare the average Alberta crop land farm, which in the next few months will be paying a \$30 carbon tax, to the average PEI crop land farm, where my good friend, the hon. Minister of Agriculture, is from, and I will use the same figures, recognizing Alberta's reality in our bid for this elusive social licence will be P.E.I.'s reality in a few years.

Using calculations from the agriculture census 2016 and the National Inventory Report 2017, an average Alberta farm of 855 acres at \$25 per tonne equals \$6,631, while in P.E.I., on an average size farm of 323 acres, the cost would be \$5,403. Adding the on-farm energy and transport emissions cost, again from the same reports, there is an additional \$2,030 for Alberta and \$820 for P.E.I. The total for this is \$8,661 for the average Alberta farm and \$6,223 for the average P.E.I. farm.

As I have said, Alberta will soon be paying \$30 per tonne. The reality is that when we hit \$50 per tonne, as is the Liberal government's initial figure, which is of course much lower than what its environmental guru activists envision for any country so inclined, the costs would amount to \$17,332 for Alberta and \$12,446 for P.E.I.

The occupants of the government front bench may not know this, certainly the PM and the finance minister do not know this, but these "tax cheating farmers" do not have the means to pass this cost on to the consumer. It is kind of the situation that exists in agriculture when one buys retail and sells wholesale.

Since I know this will come up, I am looking forward to hearing from the Minister of Agriculture just how much the carbon tax exemption for marked fuel will reduce the costs for farmers. I will be seeking those answers in the weeks ahead.

I was honoured to scrutinize budgets in the past from a prime minister who, as an economist, understood not only Canada's financial realities inside and out, but also how Canada fit into the interrelated financial global markets. I also admire our Conservative team that respectfully and responsibly pursued trade deals where Canada's economic future was always considered first.

I stand with Canada's farmers who are going to be greatly impacted by the government's blindness to the role our men and women of agricultural play in the preservation and conservation of the land that produces the safest high-quality food on the planet.

I am thankful for the privilege of being allowed to speak in the final days of this chamber on a subject about which I and my constituents of Red Deer—Mountain View are so passionate.

● (1040)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the claim that the previous government took steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and was proud of its record. If we look at what happened, there was a global recession and the economy effectively shut down. We can see that as soon as the recession kicks in, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions start to go down and then as soon as the economy starts to come back into gear, the greenhouse gas emissions start to go up again.

The second thing that happened was that Ontario got rid of coal plants, which also made a significant contribution. The Conservatives oppose that. In fact, they want to keep burning coal well into 2060, which is just not good for the planet.

However, the thing that really has struck me is that the Conservatives love this idea that recessions are good for the planet. In fact, they liked it so much they tried it twice when they tried to create a second recession as they were leaving office. Is that really the Conservatives' plan, a rotating set of recessions that unemploy Canadians as a way of getting rid of greenhouse gases? Is that the only plan they have for saving the planet?

● (1045)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, the comment that Canada created the recession of 2008 is the most irresponsible comment I have ever heard. Perhaps the member was not out there wondering how businesses were able to continue, because banks would not even lend to themselves. This was the scenario that had taken place. Maybe in the bubble that the member was in, he did not see any issues. However, the issues that had taken place back in 2008 were serious, and this was global.

For the member to suggest that this was caused by a Conservative government, perhaps he was not listening to the way people around the world were talking about Canada, as being the only one that was able to get to that 2% reduction just on tax and putting money back into people's pockets, then dealing with the situation where infrastructure funding got out, probably to his city as well, as fast as it possibly could.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member was virtually dictating what was no doubt some "hot off the press" Stephen Harper speaking notes.

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It is absolutely amazing the degree to which there were so many falsehoods in the statement. We can talk about trading. He tried to give the impression that the government was not proactive on trade. Who is he trying to kid? We have CETA, TPP, agreements that Stephen Harper did not get over the finish line. If it were not for a progressive government being aggressive on the trade file, it never would have gotten across the goal line. That is not even mentioning the trade agreement with our greatest trading partner, the United States.

Could the hon. member explain why, under Conservative rule, which was 38% of the 150 years Canada has been a Confederation, 75% of the total debt was created by incompetent Conservative governments?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, cleaning up Liberal messes is what we have to do. That is exactly what happened in the old Trudeau era, as that massive debt continued on for years and years. That is how it had to be done.

Let us hope that we get a different government in here in 2019, so we do not have to worry about the rest of that. The member needs to look at the situation. Even the finance department is saying that the trajectory we have with the Liberals could take us to \$1 trillion debt by 2050. Had we continued with the Conservatives' plan, by the same date, we would have been debt free.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, some members come to the House of Commons and bring tremendous experience. Some do not bring experience, but bring a lot of levity. That is why I love the comments from my friend, the member from the Toronto Island airport, who spoke earlier today about coal-fired plants.

I would like my colleague from Alberta to actually talk about the irony of his comments on coal-fired plants. Not only did Dalton McGuinty not meet his intended targets on coal-fired plants, this bill would exempt coal-fired plants from the carbon tax.

Residents in my area of the Durham region, commuters, single seniors, will be paying the carbon tax, and the Liberals are exempting coal-fired plants.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, the hypocrisy under this situation is amazing. I go out to Sheerness, which is close to my hometown in central Alberta, and that coal-fired plant is running full bore. People do not even know it is on. That is the technology we should be selling around the world, instead of shutting it down because of some plans the former Ontario Liberal government thought were important.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on Bill C-86, the budget implementation act, 2018, no. 2. The first one was a disaster, with its out of control spending, massive deficits, and the transparency and accountability killing vote 40 that is famous for being the \$7 billion Liberal slush fund.

Like a sequel to a bad Hollywood movie, it makes us wonder if the first one was so bad, why would we bother with a second? Unfortunately, the government has bothered with a second, and Canadians are going to pay the price.

I want to call the bill the "Demosthenes bill", after an Athenian scholar who said, "why nothing is easier than self-deceit. For what

each man wishes, that he also believes to be true." That sums up the Liberals' belief in their actions so well. They sit and claim they have made record investments across the country, that there is employment growth here and there, that they have this and that national strategy to fix everything. Let us look beyond the hyperbole. Let us look beyond the self-deceit and see what is really going on.

Part 1 of the bill is an omnibus bill with four different parts and 23 different divisions—yes, 23 different divisions. Five different divisions of these 23 amend multiple acts, so even the omnibus bill has omnibuses inside the omnibus.

What does liberal.ca, the website say about omnibus bills? It says:

Stephen Harper has also used omnibus bills to prevent Parliament from properly reviewing and debating proposals. We will...bring an end to this undemocratic practice.

Did it happen? Of course not. It is quite remarkable that the Liberal Party is so obsessed with the previous prime minister. If in every sentence of theirs they do not mention the middle class or feminism, they will mention Harper. It makes me wonder if Liberals go to bed at night and check under the bed for the Harper bogeyman.

We all know omnibus bills are bad, so I want to quote a few members from across the way. Here is one:

This omnibus budget bill is yet another example of Conservatives steam-rolling democracy to force unpopular, non-budgetary measures through Parliament at record speed without the necessary scrutiny.

Who was that? It was the current President of the Treasury Board, the very man behind the vote 40 Liberal slush fund, the largest assault on parliamentary accountability and oversight in history. This again is from the man who puts his hand over his heart and complains about accountability, yet the \$7 billion will not show up in the Public Accounts.

The Public Accounts came out just last week and are detailed to the point of listing a \$4 coffee purchased by a bureaucrat while overseas with the Prime Minister on his trip to Israel. How much of that seven billion dollars is going to be detailed as such? Not one penny. One-third of one billion dollars is set aside for Phoenix, supposedly to fix it. The government is negotiating behind closed doors for a payout of public servants affected by Phoenix, which I will probably support. Is the money going to be used for that? The Liberals will not say and Canadians will never know. All it shows is a lump sum line in the Public Accounts.

I want to mention some other comments on omnibus bills by the other side. The current Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board said:

It is difficult, really, in the time available to do justice to a bill like this, because once again we have a bill that has a huge variety of measures. Some of them are new policy measures and some of them are not even in the budget speech. To actually do justice is very difficult.

Our colleague across the way from Winnipeg North, whom I am sure is going to ask questions about this, said:

Government Orders

When we take a look at this massive budget bill, as I said earlier, the government is making changes to dozens of pieces of legislation through the back door by passing it through a budget implementation bill, when in fact it should be stand-alone legislation.

Omnibus bills are bad, unless one is a Liberal, in which case omnibus bills are good, because they are the good guys.

I want to look at the Liberals' self-deceit about how good the economy is. The Parliamentary Budget Officer recently released his economic and fiscal outlook. I want to talk about the Liberals' self-deceit about their transparency. The PBO has asked repeatedly for access to the request for proposal for the combat ship program that Irving is doing.

● (1050)

Yesterday, we asked the President of the Treasury Board, who oddly is under a dark cloud for his interference on behalf of the Irvings with respect to the shipbuilding program, if he would release the RFP. The PBO has not asked for anything special. His office is allowed to access that information under an act of Parliament. When asked if his department would release it, the President of the Treasury Board said he would have to check with someone else.

In committee, we asked the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility if she would release it. She did not know.

We asked the Minister of National Defence in the committee of the whole if he would release it, and with hand over heart, he replied he did not know.

The PBO says this is going to cost taxpayers \$60 billion. Other insiders say it could cost as much as \$100 billion. Yet the government will not release what is required.

I am going to go back to the economic and fiscal outlook, which notes that the GDP growth rate is actually dropping. Next year it will be 1.8% and the years after that it will drop to 1.5%. That is half of the global GDP growth rate, so we are lagging behind the rest of the world by half. We are behind the U.S. We are behind our allies. We are behind the advanced economies, as noted by the IMF.

The PBO also notes that residential investment is driving our economy, but also expects a significant correction to residential investments in the coming years.

With respect to the labour market report, the PBO notes that workplace participation rate, the number of people who are working, has dropped in percentage terms since the Liberals came to power. Workforce participation by both men and women has dropped under the Liberal government.

Our unemployment rate is at a record low, but we are underperforming our allies. We are underperforming big bad Trump. The Liberal government is doing worse than him. We are underperforming our G7 allies and the other advanced economies. We are below the OECD average. The OECD covers a bunch of basket case countries as well, and we are below the average in terms of unemployment. Well over half of the jobs created in this country this year were in the public service. Public sector employees perform valuable work, but it is not a sustainable path. Canada's unemploy-

ment rate is 49% higher than the U.S. rate right now. We are 29% above the G7 unemployment rate.

From the government, we hear middle class this and middle class that. The PBO notes that when we look at wage gains, wages for in the bottom 10% have actually risen, which is great, and those of the top 10% have risen too, but for those in the middle class, the middle 50%, wage growth in percentage terms has stagnated. Therefore, in regard to everything the Liberals have said about things being great for the middle class, the fact is government has actually done nothing for them. This is more self-deceit.

The government talks a lot about its national housing strategy. I am going to quote from the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy run by the former PBO Kevin Page. This again goes to the self-deceit. The government says it will provide \$40 billion for a national housing strategy. It says it is going to do so much. This is the quote:

There is one concerning tidbit around the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, specifically regarding the back-end-loaded nature of the federal funding. The full 10-year plan outlines \$15.9 billion for the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, yet only \$1.3 billion is budgeted for the first 5 years. And by the end of the 10 years, only \$5.1 billion has been budgeted....

This all begs the question: Where is the proposed \$40 billion National Housing Strategy funding? By following the funding throughout the years and tracking what is "new" money, we have painted a picture of what the NHS looks like apart from the glossy document that accompanied its announcement.

This is what we see again, this self-deceit of the government, which repeats its mantra again and again, but it is only fooling itself.

The budget implementation act no. 2 is a mess and disgrace and will not serve Canadians, just like its forefather, budget implementation act no. 1, did not.

● (1055)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have five minutes for questions and comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

VETERAN

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last Friday I joined Bill Reid at the Appleby GO train station in Burlington as he celebrated his 30th year of singing and pinning poppies on smiling commuters in honour of Remembrance Day. Every year the retired teacher, who served in Belgium during World War II, shares war-time songs and stories with commuters as they line up to be pinned with a poppy.

When Bill first started pinning poppies in 1988, a commuter told him about his father who had been a prisoner of war in Germany and that his dad loved a particular song, but no one in the family knew which song it was. Bill started singing “Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer” and, much to the delight of the commuter, he immediately recognized the song that his dad so loved. Bill also visits seniors homes to provide a short Remembrance Day service for them, complete with classic songs from the blitz.

My thanks to Bill for his service, infectious community spirit and sharing his voice and stories and love of our country.

* * *

LEWIS FARMS RECREATION CENTRE

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, this summer Liberal MPs fanned out across the country to do what the Liberals do best, make funding announcements in Liberal ridings with other people's money. These included billions of tax dollars for things like a sausage factory and a cheese plant in Quebec, a tourist hot spot in New Brunswick that is just an open grassy field and that has been called “a national historic site with no site”, and holding receptions with no purpose other than celebrating previous announcements.

My riding and much of Alberta have been left out, including a project that would benefit people in Edmonton West and the greater community as a whole. The Lewis Farms Recreation Centre is a project that will bring not only a rec centre but eventually a library, school and a park. The project would have a tremendous impact on the entire community, but is at risk due to a lack of funding.

I ask if the member for Edmonton Mill Woods and his colleague for Edmonton Centre would put aside party politics and demand that the government support this project and get the Lewis Farms Recreation Centre built.

* * *

[Translation]

SAINT-BONIFACE UNIVERSITY

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, western Canada's first educational institution was founded 200 years ago. Known then as Collège de Saint-Boniface, its rich history is a testament to the important role it has played in protecting and promoting the French language in Manitoba.

Statements by Members

As a private institution, the college defied the Thornton Act prohibition on French as a language of instruction for over 50 years.

Many eminent members of the Canadian francophonie studied at the college, including Louis Riel.

Now officially known as the Université de Saint-Boniface, USB is still the only French-language university in western Canada, and it welcomes students from around the world.

A big celebration will be held on Thursday, November 8, to honour our francophone institution.

Enjoy the celebration, and long live the Université de Saint-Boniface!

* * *

[English]

SOCIETY OF ORGANIZED SERVICES

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, on Sunday, November 4, a golden jubilee community celebration will be held in Parksville to mark the 50th anniversary of the Society of Organized Services. Known to residents and visitors as the SOS, this beloved agency provides vital social services to communities throughout the Oceanside region on Vancouver Island.

It provides after-school homework assistance for students, meals on wheels for seniors and a homeless prevention program, which has found housing for 44 people at immediate risk of homelessness and has provided one-time crisis housing support for another 10.

The next time members are at the SOS thrift store in Parksville, they should check out their 18,000 square feet of savings and say hello to some of the over 350 selfless individuals who volunteer their time to SOS each year. SOS continues to lead the way in assisting the most vulnerable in our communities and will continue to do so, I am sure, for another 50 years.

* * *

WHALES

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are only 74 southern resident killer whales remaining in the wild. These highly social animals are facing an imminent threat to their survival and recovery. We need to act now to protect them.

Since taking office, we have taken action to protect critical food sources and safeguard habitat. Our government has been working with industry scientists, advocacy groups and indigenous communities to try to reverse the alarming decline of the southern resident killer whale population, because we believe that only by working together can we tackle this problem.

This week, our government introduced further measures to protect the whales, including the creation of new whale sanctuaries to give them space to live together, to feed and to raise their young. This past summer we also put in place new rules to keep vessels at a safe distance.

Statements by Members

After a decade of lost time under the previous government, I believe we owe it to our kids and grandkids to protect nature and the wildlife that depends on it.

* * *

ALBERTA

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, driving to work in Calgary this morning, these are the stories we hear on the radio. We hear about the impact of the Trans Mountain pipeline delay on the local economy. We hear about how Bill C-69 is killing investment in the energy sector. We hear about how the price differential for oil is killing the energy sector. We hear about stagnant wage growth in the city, and we hear about high unemployment numbers that are continuing.

My constituents and my province need the government to immediately kill Bill C-69. This is a key determinant of investment fleeing the province, and it needs to stop today. It needs to invoke paragraph 92.10(c) of the Constitution to ensure that the Trans Mountain pipeline is completely within federal jurisdiction, and it needs to scrap the carbon tax. Most importantly, the government needs to stop treating Alberta like a colony, whose only purpose is to be milked for equalization payments.

* * *

• (1105)

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I first entered municipal politics in 1998, it was under the leadership of Tyendinaga Township's first female reeve, and Hastings County's first female warden, Margaret Walsh. She has been a great mentor to me and helped shape me into the politician and community activist I am today.

As a rural MP, I have the honour to serve 19 municipalities and one first nation reserve in my riding, and I was proud to see over 30 female councillors or heads of council elected this year out of over 100 positions. This includes Greater Napanee's very first female mayor, Marg Isbester. However, 30% is not nearly enough, and we all need to do our part to set the conditions for more women to want to be engaged in politics, to support them and to vote for them.

I congratulate all the women and men elected, and I look forward to working with them to serve our constituents.

* * *

WAR AMPS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, next week is remembrance week, and this year we mark 100 years since the end of the First World War. As a veteran, I also want to recognize groups that have been helping our veterans. I thank the War Amps for their 100 years, this year, of supporting our veterans.

[Translation]

I would like to thank the War Amps for everything they do for our veterans.

[English]

Before there was a Veterans Affairs Canada, there was the War Amps. In 1918, they were veterans helping one another adapt to their new challenges and advocating for others, and advocate they have. They have led the way. In 1932, they brought together all groups in the National Council of Veteran Associations. In 1962, they began helping child amputees with their CHAMP and Playsafe programs. In 1980, they helped Terry Fox. From POWs to indigenous veterans to the Merchant Navy, they have been at the forefront.

I thank Brian Forbes and his entire War Amps team for 100 years of advocacy for our veterans.

* * *

COMMUNITY HEALTH VAN

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week I had the honour to celebrate with my community the first year of service of the community health van at the Guelph Community Health Centre, which is also home to the overdose prevention site championed by executive director Raechelle Devereaux. The services provided by the community health van and the overdose prevention site are making a meaningful impact on the lives of my constituents.

Since its October 5, 2017, launch, the project has had a total of 3,751 visits. The community health van works with the most vulnerable in our community, reaching out to those experiencing homelessness, struggling with mental health and/or addiction issues, or living in poverty and those with physical health concerns. I was truly humbled by the team of volunteers and staff, led by Colin McVicker of the Sanguen Health Centre, that works through the night to ensure access to treatment that may not otherwise reach those being served by this team.

In Guelph, we are reducing stigma and engaging with the most vulnerable in our community to ensure prevention and access to care.

* * *

[Translation]

MOVEMBER

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, Friday, November 2, is the second day of the Movember campaign.

[English]

The purpose of this campaign is to raise awareness of prostate cancer, testicular cancer, men's mental health and men's suicide prevention. These are important issues for everyone, considering that one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetimes. In addition, three out of four deaths by suicide are men, which results in eight men who die every single day by suicide in this country.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

Clearly, we need to get these issues out in the open in order to break the stigma. I urge all my colleagues to take part in this campaign to raise awareness of men's health issues.

* * *

●(1110)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is 2018, and violence against women is still all too common in our communities. That is why I encourage the members of my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25.

I also want to take this opportunity to commend the team at Hébergement La Passerelle for their compassion, discretion and assiduous care. For 22 years, the shelter has been offering a wide variety of services and a safe haven for women and children fleeing violence.

I urge my constituents to seek more information over the next month and to give generously to this organization, which is vital to our community.

[English]

Finally, I encourage all members of my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, and Canadians across the country, to learn more about what we can do to make our young men allies as we seek to finally end violence against women.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals claim to have a plan to protect the environment. No. What they have is a massive tax hike on everything. Now the Liberals plan to force this tax hike, this hidden one, on Canadians across the country. The Liberals promise that they will return most of the money they collect, but Canadians know the government's record on keeping promises when it comes to taxation and spending. No.

They said they would balance the budget within three years, but under this plan, we may never see it balanced. That promise was just another election gimmick, and so is the carbon tax rebate. Only a Liberal would claim that a new tax will leave more money in our pockets. Canadians see this tax for what it is: another Liberal scheme to finance its massive deficit spending. It will cost people more to heat their homes, feed their families and fill their gas tanks, and it will have a devastating impact on the agricultural sector. It is double taxation. No more carbon tax.

* * *

[Translation]

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I invite all Canadians to take part in one of the many Remembrance Day ceremonies being held all across the country.

This year is especially significant because we are marking the 100th anniversary of Canada's Hundred Days. Canadians made a significant contribution and immense sacrifices during the First World War. Canada's Hundred Days led not only to the end of the First World War, but also to the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918.

Canadians should contact their local legion to find out more about the upcoming ceremonies. In Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, ceremonies will begin this weekend in Alfred, L'Orignal, Vankleek Hill, Casselman, Vars and Apple Hill.

[English]

In fact, I would like to thank all the local legions that year after year ensure that our younger generations never forget the ultimate sacrifice our brave men and women in uniform made so that we can live in peace. I encourage the residents of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell to support their local legions.

* * *

MEL HYMERS

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, "They also serve who only stand and wait."

In this month of remembrance, I pay tribute to Mel Hymers, a friend, a veteran, and an exceptional human being. Mel was an airplane mechanic in the Royal Canadian Air Force, stationed in Newfoundland during the Second World War. He would sometimes say that he did not make a real contribution to the war because he stayed back. However, we know the importance of Mel's contribution. He kept the planes flying and the airmen safe.

Mel's military service was a source of great pride for him. He loved his family, he loved fiddle music and he loved to fly. At 90, Mel was determined to be part of the first manned mission to Mars, and he was approved for the mission by NASA. It was my great honour and privilege to know him.

Mel passed on October 10 at the age of 100, surrounded by his loved ones and listening to violin music.

God speed to Mel. We wish him high flight and that he watch over us from Mars.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, there are many things the Liberal government has failed on: balancing the budget, cutting taxes for the middle class, and maintaining Canada's strong presence on the world stage. What it has not failed on is standing up for the rights of criminals over the rights of victims.

Bill C-75, the Liberal's 300-page omnibus justice reform bill, would water down penalties for very serious crimes. If passed, criminals could be sentenced with as little as a fine for serious offences such as human trafficking, using drugs in the act of sexual assault, and impaired driving causing bodily harm.

Oral Questions

Canadians can always count on the Conservative Party to put the rights of victims before the rights of criminals. That is why we introduced the victim's bill of rights, introduced mandatory minimums and campaigned on life means life legislation.

Today, as the father of Tori Stafford and hundreds of others are outside these walls protesting the Liberal government, I call on the government to put its ideology aside, do the decent thing and stand up for victims of crime.

* * *

• (1115)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, violence against women and girls is a terrible and tragic reality, and it is important to shine a light on this ongoing abuse.

This month marks the London Abused Women's Centre's ninth annual "Shine the Light" campaign. The London, Ontario, organization offers abused and sexually exploited women and girls counselling, advocacy and support in a safe setting. Its "Shine the Light" campaign aims to raise awareness of violence against women and girls by turning communities purple for the month of November.

Our government strongly supports gender equality and condemns any type of violence against women and girls. As Canadians, we need to do more to create a culture of non-violence and respect for women and girls. This month, let us stand in solidarity with victims, their families and loved ones and recognize their courage and survival.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PRIVACY

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, over the past four days, Canadians have been hearing about a massive Liberal overreach into their personal banking information. For four days, the Liberals have been defending it as though accessing line-by-line, transaction-by-transaction details of my mother and father's bank account without their consent is normal behaviour. If foreign governments tried this, they would be accused of hacking into my mom and dad's account. Why do the Liberals think it is okay to hack into Canadian bank accounts and take personal data without their consent?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government takes the privacy of Canadians very seriously, but I need to correct a few things in the hon. member's discourse.

First, this is a pilot project currently in the design stage. No data has been collected to date. It is Statistics Canada that would be gathering the data, not the government.

Statistics Canada's job is precisely to provide good data that is reliable and necessary to meet the needs of all Canadians, all Canadian levels of government, including municipal governments,

the federal government and provincial governments. It has done this for 100 years.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals have been defending this for four days. What a backtrack this is. This is a personal violation of every Canadian. Canadians have no faith or trust in the current Liberal government and how it will use that data. Over the past 19 months, there have been hundreds of thousands of examples of privacy breaches by the Liberal government. Canadians are rightly cynical, and they will not stand for this intrusion into their personal lives. Why are the Liberals supporting this gross violation into the privacy of Canadians?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada as an institution has an exemplary record of gathering the personal information of Canadians. It has been doing it for 100 years, in a safe and secure fashion, and will continue to do so. The reports that Statistics Canada puts out are important to Canadians in all walks of life in terms of how they plan their personal lives. For municipal governments, provincial governments and the federal government to create good policy, and for institutions such as the Bank of Canada, Statistics Canada performs a necessary role. We will continue to defend its ability to do so. It is respecting the privacy of Canadians.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, now the Liberals are hiding behind Statistics Canada when it was their idea to invade Canadian privacy. This is why the personal violation and breach of trust becomes important. If a mom and a dad transfer \$15,000 to their son and daughter-in-law to help with the purchase of their first home, should they expect a call from the government asking them why? Will the government call new Canadians after they transfer money back home to their family in the Philippines, asking what that transfer was for?

The potential for abuse is real. This personal violation of privacy is wrong on every level. Why can the Liberal government not see that?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, no government and no Canadian will have access to the personal information of Canadians. It will end with Statistics Canada, which will keep it in a secure fashion.

What governments do get, what other institutions will get, what other Canadians will get, are Statistics Canada reports, which are relied on by Canadians, by members of Parliament and by other governments across Canada and have been for 100 years.

Statistics Canada has worked with the Privacy Commissioner on this pilot project from the get-go. It will continue to do so in respect of the privacy of Canadians. Canadians do not need to be worried about their information.

Oral Questions

• (1120)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, the situation is very clear to millions of Canadians. Statistics Canada has no business poking around in the personal bank accounts of honest Canadians. That is clear. Pilot project or not, that is a fundamental principle that we, the Conservatives, will defend.

Yes, Statistics Canada has been gathering information for 100 years, but it has been doing so with Canadians' consent and permission.

In this case, Statistics Canada plans to poke around in their bank accounts without their consent. That makes no sense. Why do the Liberals continue to defend the indefensible?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government takes Canadians' privacy very seriously. Let us be clear. This is a pilot project that is still in the design stages. No data have been collected to date.

Statistics Canada's job is to provide the reliable data needed to meet the needs of Canadians, businesses and communities. Statistics Canada has worked and collaborated with the Privacy Commissioner on this pilot project from the get-go, and it will continue to do so.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is news to us that this is a pilot project. Could the government tell the pilot to land the plane? This situation is ridiculous.

What is worse, there could be privacy breaches. We requested information about this. In Canada, during the past 19 months there were more than 1,000 situations where personal information was disclosed.

How can we have faith in this so-called pilot project?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada has been collecting data about Canadians for 100 years in an exemplary manner. Reliable, good quality information is vital to making decisions that actually reflect the needs of Canadians.

Unlike the Conservatives, we believe that facts, not ideology, are a very good starting point for public policy. I know that the Conservatives like to make their decisions based on ideology. However, as a government, we like to base our decisions on the facts.

* * *

[English]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, veterans have fought hard for this country and deserve nothing but respect from our government. When the Liberal government allocated funds for veterans, we expected these funds to be spent. The government is doing what it said it would never do, authorize funds for veterans and fail to use them. The Liberals are not

honouring their promise to respect veterans and to make sure every dime allocated is spent. This is unacceptable.

When will the Liberals show veterans the respect they deserve and make sure every dollar allocated by this House is spent?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our benefits are demand-driven, so whether there are 10 veterans or 10,000 eligible veterans who come forward, they receive benefits. They are based on estimates, and they provide us some guarantees. Whether a veteran comes forward this year or the next year or the year after, we will always have the resources available for veterans. When we took office, we immediately increased financial supports by putting more money in veterans' pockets, increasing mental health supports, delivering on the promises we made to veterans and their families.

[Translation]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Liberals are making promises to our veterans that they cannot even keep. They authorize spending but keep the money.

They left \$80.9 million unspent in 2016, \$183 million in 2017, and \$148.6 million in 2018. Without this money, veterans cannot access the services they are entitled to.

Will the Liberals keep their promise or will they fail our veterans?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, benefits are demand-driven, so whether there are 10 or 10,000 eligible veterans who come forward, they receive benefits. We estimate the number of people who will claim benefits to ensure that the resources are there for these veterans, no matter which year they file their claim.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, for the workers currently on the floor of steel mills in Hamilton or at SMEs in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, the negotiations between the United States, Mexico, and Canada are not just some game to be won.

The unfair U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum are a serious threat to jobs and my region. Workers always need to come first in trade negotiations.

Will the government promise to refuse to sign the agreement as long as the tariffs have not been lifted?

Oral Questions

● (1125)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, these unjustified and illegal tariffs are hurting the American economy, American workers and American consumers of course. The national security excuse is absurd and insulting to Canadians. That is why we have imposed measured tariffs that are perfectly reciprocal. Canada must stand united against these attacks on our workers.

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[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, a report out this week says that over the last 25 years the earth's oceans have retained 60% more heat than scientists had thought. Also this week, a glacier in Antarctica lost a section of ice five times the size of Manhattan, but the Liberals do not seem to get the urgency of climate change. They think following Harper's targets is just fine. Our oceans are warming, our icebergs are melting. We need urgent action now.

Why do the Liberals not ditch their grossly inadequate plan and come up with something consistent with the urgency of climate change?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his concern for a great challenge of our time, and that is the challenge we face in respect of climate change.

The results of the recent IPCC report are not lost on me nor on our government. I was very proud when our government and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change played a key role in facilitating the agreement in Paris that led us to set forth a plan that is going to allow us to make a meaningful difference to reduce our emissions.

We know that after this plan is implemented, we may have to do more after that. I look forward to working with members from all parties to continue to fight this existential challenge.

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PRIVACY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, another day has gone by with the Liberals refusing to actually listen to Canadians. Putting aside the hundreds of pages of privacy breaches by the government, the state does not have the right to monitor law-abiding citizens going about their daily lives, full stop.

Will the Liberals accept that people are rightfully concerned, and end this unprecedented surveillance scheme?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we understand that privacy is important to Canadians. That is why we have taken measures to protect Canadians' privacy in this matter and in a number of different places.

Nobody will have access to the personal nominative information that Canadians give to Statistics Canada. Indeed, Statistics Canada cannot even be compelled to give that information to a court of law. It is protected in their hands.

Statistics Canada has policies and procedures in place to protect the privacy of Canadians, and we need, all Canadians need—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, speaking about privacy, we are talking about millions of records that could potentially impact millions of Canadians, and the Privacy Commissioner is concerned.

Speaking about the Privacy Commissioner, yesterday he said that privacy is not a right to be traded off in exchange for innovation. He also said that the current law allows the government to seek this information without anyone's consent. The information in Canadians' bank accounts belongs to them, not to the Liberals.

Will the government finally listen to Canadians and end this Orwellian program?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me correct something the hon. member is saying. The government is not accessing the nominative data of Canadians; Statistics Canada is for all Canadians to be able to use.

The personal information gets protected. Once the information is processed by Statistics Canada, it is available for the use of municipal governments, provincial governments, the federal government, small businesses, individual Canadians, the Bank of Canada, other institutions and other individuals who have to make economic decisions in their lives based on the best available information.

It is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals just keep saying, "Nothing to see here. Move along, folks."

If there was really nothing to hide, then why did they not just tell Canadians, in the first place, that they were collecting this information? We are talking about things like Canadians' ATM withdrawals, their credit card transactions and their bill payments. The first step to fixing a problem is actually admitting that there is a problem.

Will the Liberals stop trying to sweep this under the carpet and admit that trying to steal Canadians' data without their consent is a real problem?

● (1130)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me once again correct the narrative.

Oral Questions

This was a pilot project that is still in the process of being designed. From the beginning, Statistics Canada has been open to working with the Privacy Commissioner and has in fact had privacy concerns protected from the get-go. It invited the Privacy Commissioner to take a look at what it was doing.

Statistics Canada is going to move ahead with the Privacy Commissioner in order to ensure that the privacy of Canadians is protected. Those are the facts. We take the privacy of Canadians seriously.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, if this was a pilot project, then why did the Privacy Commissioner launch a full investigation?

If the Liberals are so proud of this, they certainly should have been announcing this publicly. The Prime Minister once expressed his admiration for basic dictatorship. Is this where he got the idea to start tracking every purchase that we make?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a bit rich for the other side to try to criticize an institution such as Statistics Canada regarding privacy concerns.

It was in fact their government, under Vic Toews, that tried to have everyone tell Vic Toews what they were doing every day. "Tell Vic everything."

That was the Conservative government trying to do that. In this case, it is not our government; it is not any government gathering information. It is Statistics Canada. It does it reasonably and effectively, protecting the privacy of Canadians.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal government will be collecting personal financial and banking information without consent from Canadians. That includes seniors, moms and small businesses in my community of Oshawa. This is not automated information. It includes debit and credit transactions, bill payments and mortgage payments. Even trips to Tim Hortons and Oshawa Generals games will be handed over to the leaky Liberal government, line by line, without the knowledge or consent of Canadians.

Will the big brother Liberal government do the right thing and respect the privacy of Canadians instead of incorporating them into the plot of 1984?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. The government will not have access to this information. The first thing Statistics Canada does is to scrub all of the personal information from the data so it becomes anonymous. Then it repackages that data for a variety of different Canadians to use in a variety of different ways.

It is not a question of surveillance. Statistics Canada has an exemplary reputation in Canada. It is seen as a leader around the world in statistical gathering and statistical methods. It will continue to do this to the highest standard and to the highest standard of privacy.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, here is the deal. We have Canadians who are having their bank accounts

snooped through by the government. We are talking about transaction records. We are talking about bill payments. We are talking about bank balances. We are talking about social insurance numbers.

Now the parliamentary secretary is saying, "Don't worry, Canadians. We're not keeping it. We're sharing it. We're repackaging it. We're giving it away as a gift, so don't worry, Canadians. It's okay that we're collecting your personal data." In what world is that okay?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as a government, we rely on data. Other Canadians rely on data, the Bank of Canada, small businesses, other levels of Canadian government and municipal governments.

For 100 years, Statistics Canada has done that job of collecting the data of Canadians and of making it available for Canadians to use to make better decisions. This is not a surveillance exercise. This is an exercise in providing Canadians with the information they need to run their lives.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canadians are appalled to learn that Statistics Canada plans to access their detailed personal banking information. They were never consulted and did not consent.

Like Apple or Facebook, the Liberal government is failing a fundamental principle of consent for privacy. Building a massive database of personal banking information without telling anyone is just wrong. This banking data breach is only the tip of the spear of the new Liberal census Canada scheme. It is not a pilot project; it is the actual new regime the Liberals put in place.

Will the government halt this data collection from running wild until it is investigated, there are consultations and consent is obtained?

•(1135)

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his work on the INDU committee. I share the hon. member's concern with the privacy of Canadians. Some of the information that Statistics Canada will gather is interesting to that side of the House. For example, in 2017, Statistics Canada reported that Canadians were spending more than 30% of their income on housing. That led us to develop a social housing policy in Canada that would address the issue.

It is those kinds of statistics and data that will help Canadians of all stripes.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, now that the Liberals have their new agreement, millions of tonnes of American chicken, eggs and turkey are about to flood the Canadian market.

Pierre-Luc Leblanc, president of Éleveurs de volailles du Québec, the provincial poultry farmers' association, says it may seem like no big deal now, but over the next five to 10 years, it will put poultry producers in a precarious position. This agreement came as a surprise and a disappointment to poultry farmers, and they are asking the government for compensation.

Here is my question on their behalf for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Prime Minister: When they will listen to farmers?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have defended our supply management system against the Americans' aggressive attempts to dismantle it.

Market access is similar to the changes the Conservatives negotiated in the TPP. On Monday, the minister announced the creation of working groups comprised of dairy, egg and poultry farmers, and we are committed to fully and fairly supporting them to ensure their success.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government admits that its new carbon tax will add at least 11¢ a litre to Canadians when they gas up their cars. However, a government analysis, quietly posted online this week, shows that after the next election, the Liberals plan to increase that tax even further. How much? Well, an earlier ministerial briefing note said that it would have to go up six times as high as the government currently admits. One UN report cited today by the government says that it will have to be 100 times higher than the government is currently admitting.

Will the government today confirm it will not increase the tax after the election?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, climate change is real and those of us in the House who have a platform have a responsibility to do something about it. We campaigned on a commitment to protect the environment and grow the economy at the same time. Part of our plan to protect the environment includes putting a price on pollution that is going to actually see polluters pay more and make middle-class families better off.

I am curious when the Conservatives are actually going to come up with their plan. So far as I can see, their only plan to date is to make pollution free again.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal plan does make pollution free for large polluters. They do not pay the tax.

However, I go back to the question. The government admits that it will increase taxes on gas per litre by 11¢, but a document released this week says that in 2022, after the election is over, it plans to increase it further. One ministerial briefing note says that it will have to go up six times what the government promises. That is 60¢ a litre. A UN report cited by the government says that it will have to go up 100 times more than the government admits, \$10 a litre in new taxes.

Will the government confirm whether it will increase the tax further?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, we were elected on a commitment to protect the environment and grow the economy at the same time. We have been transparent with our plan to put a price on pollution that will increase over time to being \$50 a tonne by 2020.

Again, I am curious why the Conservatives refuse to put forward a plan. Instead of actually coming forward with productive ideas in the conversation, they seem committed to adopting the approach taken by Doug Ford in Ontario, which is to do absolutely nothing.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have asked twice now whether the 11¢-a-litre tax the government promised is the final price. Twice the member has refused to answer. That suggests the government has a hidden agenda to increase the tax even more than it already has admitted. This document released this week does not even talk about increased rebates, just increased taxes.

Will the parliamentary secretary confirm if the tax will ever go above 11¢ a litre for gas?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, part of our plan to protect the environment, which is essential for those of us in government to take seriously, is to put a price on pollution that is increasing to \$50 a tonne by 2022. This is going to have the impact of putting more money into the pockets of middle-class families.

I am extraordinarily disappointed that the Conservatives seem committed to campaign in 2019 on a promise to take money from their constituents so they can make pollution free again.

● (1140)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): I am going to keep on this, Madam Speaker. I think we have them on run here.

He refuses to answer the question. He said that by 2022, the Liberals will have a price of \$50 a tonne, which is 11¢ a litre for a litre of gas. I have asked, given the evidence, whether they plan to increase it further if they are re-elected. He keeps dodging.

Will he end the hidden agenda and confirm, yes or no, whether the tax will rise above 11¢ a litre for gas?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, we have to take protecting the environment seriously. The only plan we put in place is the one we have been telling Canadians about for a significant period of time now, which is to have the price on pollution that we have laid out in public leading up to 2022.

Oral Questions

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that all the revenues generated from this are going back to the citizens who live in the provinces where it is collected and it is going to put more money into the pockets of middle-class families.

One final time, I am pleased to share that I am disappointed that the Conservatives seem committed to campaigning on a promise to take that money from their constituents to make pollution free again.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canada Post's targeting of vulnerable postal workers is shameful. First it cut off short-term disability payments, then long-term disability payments. Then it went after people's maternity leave benefits. This is a morally bankrupt tactic by Canada Post and so far the government has chosen to be complicit. Cutting benefits is not good faith collective bargaining.

What is the government doing to stop this brutal assault on workers' rights and encourage Canada Post to bargain in good faith?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we understand absolutely the impact the work disruption is having on employees and their families. That is why our government has been encouraging both sides to reach a fair agreement as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, when a strike occurs, the expiry of the collective agreement affects some of the benefits of Canada Post employees, but not all. I will give an example. Prescription drugs will continue for employees.

I can assure the House that employees will maintain full access to their EI benefits, which include maternity and parental benefits. Canada Post has put in place a request for a compassionate grounds exception to this. It is taking those requests seriously and addressing them very quickly.

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PENSIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, I do not know how many times we need to stand in the House to make the government understand that our workers' pensions are vulnerable under bankruptcy laws. Steelworkers are disappointed to see the lack of will from the seniors minister to take action. She has not taken their livelihood or their years of hard work seriously. They deserve better.

Now that three years have passed, could she tell us what she is waiting for? When will the minister get to work to change the bankruptcy laws and stand up for workers and retirees? This is the right thing to do.

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the accusations made by the member are completely inaccurate and wrong. There is not a file that is closer to my heart than this one. From the day I was elected, I have been working on this. As the daughter of a proud steelworker and a lifelong Hamiltonian, this file is extremely important.

Consultations have and will continue to take place. In our 2018 budget, as well as my mandate letter, I have been tasked with this. I have consulted and I will continue to consult. The member knows this is a decades old problem and it is our government that will solve it. No matter what misinformation he gives, it will not stop me or our government.

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SPORT

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is hockey season and kids of all ages in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, in fact across the whole country, are buying new gear and hitting the ice. As a hockey dad, I know very well that parents want to make sure their kids are safe and I know that concussions are of great concern to them.

Could the Minister of Science and Sport please tell us what our government is doing to make sports in Canada safer and to perhaps reduce concussions?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science and Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government takes sport-related concussions very seriously. Far too many youths and athletes experience concussions during sport and recreation activities. That is why we have released the new Canadian guideline on concussion in sport and are working to harmonize an approach on concussion awareness, prevention, detection, management and surveillance.

We are pleased that Parliament's health committee has created a subcommittee to study concussions. We look forward to its work and its report.

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● (1145)

[Translation]

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Border Security is not aware that the number of illegal migrants in Canada is going up, which is odd considering that his officials and policy advisers have the RCMP's figures at their disposal. Even the media has confirmed the facts. For two years now, we have been saying that urgent, responsible action is needed. Either the minister is getting bad advice or he is simply incompetent.

Do we need to do the minister's job for him, or is he finally going to take action?

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth) and to the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would say that incompetence is cutting \$400 million from border services and thinking it would not affect results.

Oral Questions

I must inform my hon. colleague that we have invested \$173 million to ensure that we have the resources in place to get the job done right. In August and September, the numbers were down compared to last year's figures. We hope the same will happen in October. This clearly shows that our plan is working.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, if they had not created the problem, there would be no need to reinvest the money.

The situation is much worse than that. The Liberals boast about reinvesting in borders services, but the union president, Jean-Pierre Fortin, seems very surprised by what the minister is saying because, to date, not a single penny has found its way down to our border officers. The money is there. It is somewhere in the sky, in the department, but it has not made its way down to the ground.

Can the Liberals give us an intelligent answer? They need to stop saying that we made cuts and tell us where their money is.

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth) and to the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Madam Speaker, here are the facts. We invested \$173 million to better manage the situation. Over \$7 million of that money is in place to ensure that failed asylum claimants leave Canada. We are managing the situation properly. That is what Canadians expect from us, and that is exactly what we are doing.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, in possibly one of the worst interviews ever given, yesterday the Minister of Immigration once again angrily called his Ontario provincial counterpart several inappropriate names after she requested federal support to pay for the social welfare costs of the Prime Minister's #WelcometoCanada illegal border crossers. When pressed on what evidence he had to support the name he called her, he got even angrier and doubled-down.

Will the minister apologize for his name calling and shameful disregard for all Ontario taxpayers?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has been going around the country to talk to Canadians about how much immigration matters to them and their local communities. Canadians have been asking for immigration as an important tool to address labour market shortages, as well as to bring in much-needed skills.

After three years in opposition, my hon. colleague has finally discovered the importance of talking to Canadians about immigration. With all the blocking of people she has done on Twitter, I hope this will be the last way she can communicate with Canadians.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): I will take that as a no, Madam Speaker, but let me try again.

I am not sure if the minister watched that interview, but he really should, because it was really a hot mess. However, this is not about his lack of media training. This is about positive federal-provincial relationships to come up with good public policy solutions.

Will the minister humble himself and apologize to one of the strongest women I know, Lisa MacLeod, for his shameful, inappropriate name calling and outburst?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is important to note that immigration continues to be a tool for Canadians to address labour market shortages. We rely on immigration to make sure we continue to be a leader in the G7 in terms of ensuring that investment follows talent. We have attracted a huge number of skilled labour through the global skills strategy and the changes we have made to the express entry system.

The announcements that we made yesterday about our new multi-year plan will ensure that Canada continues to prosper through immigration, a lesson that the party opposite should learn.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, Vancouver Aquarium research just warned that climate change threatens our coast even more than before. Climate plans fall well short of what is needed. Oceans are warming and sea levels are rising much faster than anticipated. Alarm bells are ringing for our coast, but the government just bought a leaky old pipeline.

The government just called this an existential crisis. Is the government not embarrassed to still be using Harper's discredited climate change targets?

• (1150)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise once again to offer a response on the important issue of climate change.

I am aware of the evidence that the hon. member opposite cites and take this problem very seriously.

We played an integral role at the Paris conference in achieving an agreement that would meaningfully move the needle in the fight against climate change.

In order to implement our plan domestically and reach our targets, we are putting a price on pollution. We are investing in clean energy. We are helping small businesses become more efficient.

It is a pleasure to be part of this government that takes this threat seriously. We have to work to grow the economy at the same time.

I am pleased to work with the member across the aisle to move the needle forward on both of these initiatives.

Oral Questions

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, revelations of the staggering scale of liabilities in the hundreds of billions for the cleanup of mines and well sites has stunned Canadians. However, for those who have long called for full disclosure of the true cost of reclamation of industrial sites in advance of project approvals, this comes as no surprise. The federal government holds the power to prevent downloading of this massive liability.

I call on the government to act now on Alberta's demands, amend the federal bankruptcy and creditor laws and give higher priority to environmental cleanup to end the downloading of liability to Canadians.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is critical for Canada's resources to be developed in a sustainable way so that economic growth and environmental protections go hand in hand.

Provinces manage their own environmental liabilities. They are responsible for having the tools to mitigate potential risks associated with upstream oil and gas development. Our government works with provinces and territories to support their regulatory regimes and share best practices.

In budget 2017, we made a \$30 million investment in support of Alberta's efforts to advance the reclamation of orphan wells. While this important task remains with the province, we have been able to show our support.

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ETHICS

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board has tried to downplay his ties to Irving, claiming that he was only copied on one letter. According to the lobbyist registry, he has met with Irving 16 times in the past two and a half years.

Does the President of the Treasury Board still want to claim that he has had little contact with Irving, or perhaps his meetings with the Irvings were just part of a pilot project?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, I presume the hon. gentleman's question relates to the issues presently before the courts. There is an outstanding legal proceeding before the courts and between the prosecution and Vice-Admiral Norman. The parties to that proceeding will seek disclosure of documents. That is routine. If any of those relevant documents are in the possession of the government, the government will provide them to the court, but it is up to the court to decide and not the House of Commons. The court will determine how to apply any rules with respect to privilege or confidence.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, it sounds like he has confirmed that the President of the Treasury Board is part of the court action. The President of the Treasury Board claims that he interfered with the Davie ship deal as part of his job to oversee spending. At committee yesterday, he was not able to name one other contract that he thought was part of his job to review, not even the failed Phoenix pay system.

Why did he only interfere with the Davie deal, and what is he trying to hide?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, again, the tactic being employed by the opposition is to drive by with smears and innuendoes. That is the very reason we have the *sub judice* rule in the House of Commons that members of Parliament should not ask questions and ministers should not answer questions that could somehow impinge upon an outstanding court proceeding. The court will determine what documents are relevant. The court will determine what rules of privilege and confidence apply. The court has the jurisdiction in this matter.

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JUSTICE

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, Liberals always put criminals ahead of victims and law-abiding Canadians. Tori Stafford's killer was transferred from jail to a healing lodge on their watch. Today, her loved ones are gathering to call for action, demanding that child killers be kept behind bars, not in healing lodges without fences. However, so far the Liberals refuse to act. Canadians are outraged about it.

What is taking so long, and when will the Liberals actually do the right thing and put Tori's killer back behind bars where she belongs?

● (1155)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all members of the House share the deep angst of the families who have tragically lost children to crime. That is why I asked for a thorough review by the corrections commissioner to ensure that long-standing policy in these matters has been followed, and to reassess the appropriateness of those policies to determine that they are, in fact, the right ones. The report was made available late yesterday. I am reviewing it at the moment. We all want this system to be as good as it can possibly be for the protection of the public.

* * *

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour announced changes to the Canada Labour Code. We have all heard the stories of Sears workers. In my riding, Vimy, the layoffs also affected our community. Middle-class workers in Vimy felt they were not well served by Conservative policies, which only benefited the wealthy.

Could the parliamentary secretary tell the House what these announcements mean for middle-class Canadians in my riding?

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Vimy for her hard work on behalf of those Sears workers. It was great. We can all agree here in the House that Canadians benefit when there is growth in the economy. Where we differ here from the Conservative opposition is that we do not believe any growth should take place on the backs of workers. We want workers to get a fair shake in this country, and that is why we announced yesterday the doubling of benefits in the wage earner protection program. That will benefit her Sears workers. I am proud to be part of a government that takes action for Canadian workers.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, this week we learned that the Liberal government would give a carbon tax exemption to New Brunswick's Belledune coal facility. Now, the Liberals have admitted that their carbon tax on large emitters will kill jobs, but the fact is that this carbon tax is already costing jobs in my community.

Why does the Liberal government give exemptions to Liberal ridings while punishing hard-working Canadians?

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we look forward to working with the Government of New Brunswick to protect our environment and grow our economy. New Brunswickers, like all Canadians, know that we need to take action on climate change. That is something my Conservative friends have not yet realized. We will continue to work with the Government of New Brunswick and our Liberal New Brunswick caucus, which we are very proud of, to promote clean growth, to strengthen the middle class and to continue to deliver for all Canadians.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government knows the importance of taking action to protect our species and wildlife. That is why this week we are taking unprecedented new measures to further help the recovery of B.C. southern resident killer whales. The new measures include \$143 million invested in critical steps to protect this west coast icon.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment please further explain the steps the government is taking to protect our southern resident killer whales?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells for raising this important issue and his advocacy to protect this iconic species.

We take our role to protect the southern resident killer whale very seriously, and that is why I was incredibly proud to stand beside the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans this week to announce new measures to protect this species.

These measures include an investment of \$61.5 million, which includes funding to support marine habitat restoration. Importantly, we will also be strengthening controls on five harmful contaminants that we know have an impact on this species when their food resource is scarce and interfere with their reproduction.

We are going to continue to protect nature and wildlife that these species depend upon.

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CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue keeps claiming that service is her priority, yet under her watch, service continues to get even worse, despite the budget increase. She has been picking on single parents, she has not reviewed all of the disability tax credits she took away, she has taken no meaningful action on offshore tax avoidance and evasion, wait times are getting longer and the call centre is still a disaster.

Will the minister stop claiming that service is her priority and start delivering service to Canadians?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague opposite is comparing apples and oranges. Fighting tax evasion, especially abroad, is a priority for our government, as is service to Canadians. The Conservatives are in no position to lecture this side of the House considering the cuts made to the Canada Revenue Agency when they were in power.

We are working on it. People will receive the credits and benefits to which they are entitled.

* * *

●(1200)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have some big news. Yesterday, the government announced that Davie will not get to build a single ship. Instead, starting in 2021, it is getting just one maintenance contract worth less than 2% of the shipbuilding strategy.

Thanks to delays at Irving and Seaspan, the *Asterix* is the only ship the government has received. Davie, the best shipyard in America, delivered that ship on time and on budget. However, despite the success of the *Asterix*, the government has been slow to award it the *Obelix* contract, yet it can offer risk-free guarantees to the wealthy Irving corporation.

Could the minister explain why he is so intent on undermining Davie? Why the fixation?

Oral Questions

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Madam Speaker, of course we recognize Davie's excellent work. Yesterday, we announced that part of a contract worth \$7 billion would go to Davie. This summer, we committed \$610 million for the purchase and conversion of three icebreakers. We are continuing to work with Davie. The Minister of National Defence has determined that there is no operational need for a second ship. We are continuing to work on shipbuilding in Canada.

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GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is still only 2% of the contract.

We learned this week that after governors general have completed their mandates, during which they are grossly overpaid to eat canapés on the taxpayers' dime, their office expenses are paid for life.

Adrienne Clarkson alone is still costing us over \$100,000 a year, even a decade after her retirement.

Will the government give a detailed account of all the expenses reimbursed to all governors general, especially before Michaëlle Jean gets wind of this scheme?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians can be proud to be represented by such inspiring, dynamic governors general. They provide a great service to Canada, and that is why they continue to be supported throughout the years after they have left. Clearly, Canadians expect transparency and accountability when public money is spent. We will carefully examine the support arrangements to ensure that best practices are being followed and that Canadians' expectations are being met.

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, that was some mighty fine kowtowing. We already know that governors generals do not really do anything. Why should taxpayers have to pay for this?

It is unbelievable that they can claim office expenses for the rest of their lives. It is even more unbelievable that these aristocrats do not even have to disclose where the money is spent.

The Prime Minister said that he expected greater transparency.

Will he open the books instead of opening his wallet for these freeloading carpetbaggers?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I just said, we are very proud of our Governor General, who represents our country. We are reviewing the spending policy to ensure that it meets the degree of transparency that Canadians expect.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, a month from today, the climate negotiations will begin in full at COP24. The agenda will be the IPCC report on 1.5° and a review of every government's actions and whether we are on track. We know that some countries have done a huge amount, but collectively, we are off course. We are headed for the risk of global extinction. This is not a joke. We are running out of time. We have one chance, and one chance only. Can Canada show leadership and go, accepting the target of 45% by 2030, or do we give up on our children?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her work on this file over the past number of decades.

This is a threat we need to take extraordinarily seriously. I have read through the IPCC report and know that we need to take action and take action immediately.

We campaigned on a commitment to protect the environment. That included putting a price on pollution, and a number of other measures. We played a key role in facilitating the agreement in Paris, and our government is committed to making our targets. If we need to do more after that, I would be pleased to continue to work with the hon. member to protect our environment for our kids and grandkids.

* * *

● (1205)

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF IMMIGRATION LEVELS PLAN

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to address the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill on October 31, 2018.

This past Wednesday, I tabled the annual report on immigration, 2018. My intention was to table this report during routine proceedings, under the rubric of tabling of documents. However, given events in the House, this was not possible. Following question period that day, there were a number of questions of privilege and points of order on a multitude of issues, which in turn delayed the start of routine proceedings.

The video of the House proceedings for that day shows that I rose on a point of order at 3:41 p.m. to table the report. However, I did not get the floor. At 3:59 p.m., I rose again for a second time and was allowed by the Speaker to duly table the report in the House. All this added to the confusion. Unfortunately, an item contained in the said report was provided to a member of the media before the report was officially tabled in the House of Commons.

Madam Speaker, I assure you and all hon. colleagues that I take this matter very seriously. There was absolutely no ill will and no intention to attack the dignity of this House. I assume full responsibility for this unfortunate incident, and I can assure the House that I have taken steps to ensure that the appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent such an occurrence in the future.

Points of Order

Out of respect for the House, and to each and every member of Parliament who sits in this chamber, I offer my unreserved apology.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, for the record, I would like my question of privilege to stand for the following reason. As I read into the record when I made the additional information and submission on the question of privilege, the conversation my staff member had with the reporter stated that the information was provided so they could get a story under the wire. What this means, of course, is that I was going to be asked for comment on a 43-page document at the end of a news cycle with no time to be able to respond to it, nor any other members in this place if they wanted to do the same.

While the minister can stand and apologize, it is still incumbent upon the Speaker to ensure that this does not happen. As I have stated, there have been many instances in this Parliament when the government has been repeatedly found to have done the exact same thing.

My problem is that it is all well and good for the minister to stand up here because he was caught, but the reality is that I was still in a position where I was being asked for comment by a journalist who had been given information prior to the House being able to consider it. That is wrong. It is not right. Frankly, I do not think the amount of time spent on points of order or whatnot in the House should be given any consideration in terms of the fact that I still did not have the ability to comment on that particular piece of business that was put before the House that day.

At some point in time, and with the deepest respect, the office of the Speaker has to rule consistently on the fact that the rights of members need to be put before the rights of any other person in the public in terms of being able to review information or matters before the House. This is in alignment with several of the decisions, previous rulings or comments that have been made by the Speaker in this Parliament and in previous Parliaments.

This should not be happening across any flavour of government at any time. The rights of the members here should be sovereign. Madam Speaker, I ask you to consider that particular principle above the minister's contrition today.

ALLEGED PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF IMMIGRATION LEVELS PLAN—
SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the hon. Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship for his explanation and apology regarding the circumstances of his tabling the document entitled "2018 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration" two days ago, and I thank the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill for the additional comments she has just made.

The question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill that same day was an important reminder that all members are entitled to receive timely and accurate information. She reinforced this again today. The Chair was concerned about the member's assertion that the report was released to the media before it was tabled in the House. As a result, members of the House found themselves in the position of having to play catch-up with members of the media.

●(1210)

[*Translation*]

In this case, however, I appreciate the minister's apology and, as practice and precedent dictate, I am bound to accept his word. Trusting that the minister, and indeed all other members of the government, will be more cautious in how they release information in the future, I consider this matter to be closed. I thank all hon. members for their attention.

[*English*]

I thank all members for their attention and for contributing on this matter.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Madam Speaker, on a point of order. Earlier today in question period, I stood and asked a question on a very important issue about bankruptcy laws.

The seniors minister responded to me that I was giving misinformation or false information. I take offence to that. I strongly encourage the minister to retract that statement and apologize for making that statement about my integrity and character.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the information and the concerns the member has brought forward. I will certainly do a review of that, because I did not quite hear it at that time. Therefore, I will get back to the member regarding this, if necessary.

PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to note that there have been several instances in this Parliament when the Chair has ruled in instances when the government has very clearly provided information to the media ahead of members of Parliament.

I guess my question for the Chair is this. At what point will the Chair consider a member's privilege to be breached when there is a clear instance? There have been many times when the Chair has essentially given the government a slap on the wrist for the same instance. When the Chair says he or she is deeply concerned, but the behaviour keeps repeating itself, one actually wonders if any change will occur or if a precedent has been set by the Chair, now that there have been so many rulings when the Chair has been deeply concerned, that it is okay for the member's privilege to be violated.

I am just wondering, for clarification, given the number of times in this particular Parliament that this particular Speaker has said she is concerned about the government's actions in this regard but has not referred it to PROC or perhaps any other study for review, if the Chair has now ruled that this is now an acceptable precedent.

That is something for all members in this place to understand. Where does the Chair draw the line? I strongly believe that my privilege was violated, and I strongly believe that the Chair has already said that we should be concerned that the government is doing this. However, at what point is there censure? At what point does the behaviour change?

Routine Proceedings

I would argue that this is the role of the Chair. The role of the Chair is to maintain order and to uphold the privilege of members in this place. There seems to be a pattern where the behaviour is occurring but there is no censure. I am wondering now if a precedent has formally been set that it is okay for the government to provide information to the media prior to this House having a chance to review it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Once again, I appreciate the additional information and the concerns being raised. I cannot presume what could happen in the future. We are working on what has happened at this point. The ruling has been made. There have been previous rulings on this as well.

I would take the government at its word that it will ensure that in the future, the information will be provided to parliamentarians prior to it being released to the media.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill, and then that will be it. We have had the conversation on this.

• (1215)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, just to clarify the question I asked, the question was whether the Chair has now set a precedent. Given that there have been several instances in this Parliament when the Chair has, in fact, said that there was a clear instance of the government providing information to the media and that she was deeply concerned, but she decided not to provide censure, I am wondering not about future actions but about what precedent has been set.

Is it now okay? Is the Chair now saying, given her, once again, looking over the actions of the government, that she has formally set a precedent and that it is okay for the government to give information to the media prior to members in this House being able to review it? That is deeply concerning.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I again thank the member for raising her concerns and they are duly noted. I will not comment on the ruling itself.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 31 petitions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 22nd report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights concerning Bill C-75, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal

Justice Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

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

* * *

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC) moved:

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security that, during its consideration of Bill C-83, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another Act, the Committee be granted the power to expand the scope of the Bill in order to forbid those convicted of the murder of a child from serving any portion of their sentence in a healing lodge.

He said: Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Durham.

This morning, we moved a motion that we consider to be very important. I would like to give a brief overview of Bill C-83, which seeks to change inmates' conditions, since the motion is very closely related to the bill. Bill C-83 seeks to eliminate the use of administrative segregation in correctional facilities and replace it with structured intervention units, to use prescribed body scanners, to establish parameters for access to health care, and to formalize exceptions for indigenous offenders.

This bill obviously contains some reasonable measures that are worth considering. We should all consider how we can change and improve the overall prison program. However, we have a problem in that regard.

Everyone agrees that a criminal has to serve their lawful sentence, but we cannot allow penitentiaries to become five-star Hilton hotels. Otherwise, there will be no incentive for individuals to give up their life of crime.

After our initial reading of the bill, we are not only disappointed, but also discouraged to see that this government is still working to help criminals instead of thinking of the victims.

Three weeks ago, we asked the Prime Minister and his team why they transferred a child murderer to a healing lodge instead of keeping her behind bars at a maximum-security penitentiary. The Prime Minister was either incapable of answering the question or unwilling to do so. On this lovely, rainy Friday on Parliament Hill, hundreds of people are outside asking the same question. They do not understand why this child murderer is at a healing lodge in Saskatchewan.

I gave notice of this motion at the beginning of the week, and it just so happens that, on Wednesday, October 31, Global News published an article by Abigail Bimman about the brother of murderer Terri-Lynne McClintic. Her own brother is disgusted by what is going on. He says his sister is not indigenous, that she manipulated the system, and that she should be sent back to a maximum-security penitentiary to serve her sentence. Her brother says his sister "is no more indigenous than I am green from the planet Mars".

Routine Proceedings

This case has been the subject of much debate here in the House of Commons. The government accused us of raising a sensitive issue and said we should not take advantage of the death of a police officer, but I believe Canadians understand that the Liberal government's position was untenable. It is unacceptable for a child killer who claims to be indigenous to be sent to an indigenous healing lodge. To be clear, healing lodges are minimum-security facilities. There is no security, so people can come and go and do as they please, even if they do not have that right. A child killer should not be in a place like that.

I believe that what our motion is calling for is very reasonable because Canadians believe that child killers should not be held in healing centres or minimum-security prisons. They should serve their sentence in maximum-security penitentiaries.

Furthermore, we just learned that the Minister of Public Safety received a report from Correctional Service Canada regarding its investigation of the circumstances surrounding the transfer of Ms. McClintic from a maximum-security prison to a healing centre. I am therefore asking the minister to table this report at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security so we can consult it, read the recommendations concerning Bill C-83 and ensure they are implemented.

At some point, there must be some common sense in this country. Unacceptable things are happening. I know it is not that easy to govern a country. We will be in that position next year, but in the meantime it is the Liberals' job.

All we are doing is proposing a few things to help keep the country running smoothly and ensure that Canadians continue to trust our justice system and believe that criminals will have to face consequences. Giving criminals a chance to live a good life while leaving victims to cope with sadness and sorrow is simply unacceptable.

•(1220)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is really encouraging that we have the report now from the commissioner. I understand that individuals will be going over the report. In time, we will get some sort of an official response. However, I wanted to raise the issue. This is the reason why it was important that we actually had the study.

To go back to the days when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, for example, we saw literally dozens of murderers who had gone through the system and went to healing lodges. Sadly, over a dozen victims of those murderers were children.

To me this should not be a political issue. It is indeed a process, and the Minister of Public Safety has now asked the commissioner to provide a report. That report is coming and we need to have that report.

Would the member not agree that with the sorts of tragedies we have seen, not just one but many, it is time to finally review it and wait to hear what we have coming in the future from the minister on this very important issue?

•(1225)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, if this situation happened under a Conservative government, it is equally deplorable. At the time, we were not able to correct the situation, but now there is new legislation and we do have the opportunity to amend it in order to ensure that this never happens again and that child murderers cannot be transferred to healing centres. The Liberals need to stop looking back at the previous government. We must look forward. We are in a position to fix the situation today, and we need to do so immediately.

[English]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the term “healing lodge” is being used by the hon. member opposite when, really, we are looking at a medium-security prison facility. We are transferring from one medium-security facility to another medium-security facility.

The question is whether the medium-security facility currently being used for cases like this is sufficient. That is what we will be hearing back from the minister when he reports to the House.

Would the member acknowledge that this is a medium-security facility and not a lodge or a place where people would go for vacations?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, that is not true at all. Ms. McClintic is currently housed at Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge in Saskatchewan. It is not a medium or minimum-security facility. It is a healing lodge. There is a minimum-security prison in my riding. It has guards, and the inmates cannot get out. A healing lodge like the one where Ms. McClintic is staying is totally different. It does not even have security at the doors.

[English]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join my friend, the hon. MP for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, in this important debate with respect to Bill C-83 and sentencing in Canada.

It concerns me that the government, like on many things, has a communications plan rather than a plan to actually lead, and this is an example. In fact, the deputy House leader for the Liberals is referring to a report from the Commissioner of Correctional Service Canada that was provided to the government just mere minutes before a protest on Parliament Hill, which was organized by people from the community of Tori Stafford, the young woman who was killed by Terri-Lynne McClintic and her partner.

We have seen the comments from Rodney Stafford, her father, and the outrage with the transfer of Ms. McClintic to a healing lodge in Saskatchewan. However, just in time for this protest, the Liberals have the report. Members will recall that they defended this decision and in fact their recently appointed commissioner defended the decision herself. Her decision was wrong, and it is up to ministers of the government to recognize that. I am hoping the commissioner is listening to my remarks, because I will inform her why I think the decision was wrong.

Routine Proceedings

I have not read her report today. I am working off her comments after defending the decision to sort of support the government's inaction. I will use the government's own material to prove my point.

I learned a lot about restorative justice principles in law school at Dalhousie and restorative justice can be used in certain circumstances. However, the case of Ms. McClintic is not one of those. In fact, her own family has questioned whether she is of indigenous background.

However, leaving that aside, on the website of the Department of Justice, it says that the first principle of restorative justice recognizes "Crime is Fundamentally a Violation of People and Interpersonal Relationships...Victims and the community have been harmed and are in need of restoration."

It starts with a reflection on the victim. In this case, the victim, Tori Stafford, a child, was lured away by Ms. McClintic and horribly killed. I do not want to get into the details. They have been recounted several times. However, restorative justice starts with an examination of the victim and the crime. This is the worst crime. The victim and her family have suffered the most horrendous circumstances imaginable under our Criminal Code. This is not a crime of poverty or circumstance. This was a premeditated act. The vision of Ms. McClintic luring young Tori Stafford away was caught on videotape. It is seared in the minds of people from that part of Ontario. The ministers involved here should review that tape and the file. The Commissioner of Correctional Service Canada should review it as well.

As a primer, they can look at the Department of Justice's own materials on restorative justice. They should also look to section 718 of the Criminal Code, which outlines sentencing and the sentencing principles and purpose. I invite all Canadians to read it. This is the underpinning of our justice system, particularly when it comes to a crime committed against one Canadian by another, and in this case, a child.

The purpose of sentencing is found in section 718 of the Criminal Code. Some of my Liberal friends in the House are lawyers. They may think back to criminal law at law school. I refer them back there. I refer the commissioner there as well.

What are the purposes of sentencing? First is denunciation of conduct. The killing of a child deserves the highest denunciation possible. Second is deterrence, deterrence for the worst of crimes, violence against other people in our civilized society. Separation of offenders is the third purpose, which is for the protection of the public, when someone involved with the worst of crimes should be a high priority. The fourth is rehabilitation. That is where we want to not give up on anyone. The fifth is reparation, which is to make amends to the victims and the people impacted. The final purpose of sentencing is promotion of responsibility.

• (1230)

Ms. McClintic is responsible for her role in the death of Tori Stafford. She should be making reparations, both on a restorative level and on a Criminal Code level, for that crime. She must be separated from the public for her involvement in the worst of crimes.

We must have deterrence and we must have denunciation. In the worst of crimes, those take precedence over rehabilitation. Those

take precedence over transferring someone to a healing lodge. A healing lodge is really designed for restorative justice principles for people who have committed crimes because of their circumstance in life, because of poverty, or because of higher instances of incarceration of indigenous peoples. I support healing lodges, but not for child murderers.

Let us continue from section 718 of the Criminal Code to sections 718.1 and 718.2. It begins with the principle that a sentence must be proportionate to the nature of the offence. I remind everyone, and the commissioner of corrections, that this is the worst crime our society faces. There is no need for a balancing test.

In my view, the proportionate nature of the offence means that Ms. McClintic should serve her entire sentence in a maximum-security prison. Certainly the restorative healing lodge approach, generally saved for indigenous offenders, should not be available for first and second degree murder cases. This should be a policy that is brought to the chamber immediately. That is what Canadians expect.

There is no way under the Criminal Code, under Justice Canada's principles of restorative justice that could defend the transfer of Ms. McClintic to a healing lodge. There is no way to defend it. What is more troubling than the decision itself, and the Liberals' shell game of having a report from the commissioner show up on the day that people are protesting on Parliament Hill, is that this is another example of a government that is actually impotent to act. There is an organization chart. The minister is at the top of that department. The Prime Minister is responsible for each minister. We see countless cases where there is an inability to take action and acknowledge errors made by departments.

The Statistics Canada stats grab that is going on right now, which Canadians find obscene, is when the minister responsible should say "Statistics Canada, hands off." When Veterans Affairs finds out that a convicted murderer who developed PTSD from killing a police officer in Nova Scotia, a murderer who never served, is receiving funding that is for our veterans, that is a mistake and it should be rectified. Ms. McClintic is probably the best example of a mistake that should be rectified. There is no excuse for it.

I would like the commissioner of corrections to go through the same analysis I just did, Section 718 of the Criminal Code and the principles of restorative justice, and give me one reason why Ms. McClintic should be transferred to a healing lodge. It is time for the Liberals to step up and show some leadership. Our job in the House as the loyal opposition is to bring the concerns of Canadians to this Parliament. In fact, I applaud the Canadians who were braving the rain and cold today to bring their outrage in the transfer of Ms. McClintic to the steps of Parliament Hill.

Routine Proceedings

The trouble is that we have Liberal government ministers who are impotent to act. They act like they are powerless. It is because the job, the image and the car mean more to them than the actual responsibility they have. In this case, it is undermining confidence in our judicial system, in our corrections system. I have yet to see one iota of a response to why this should happen. The Liberals should take ownership, remove Ms. McClintic and ban any further transfers of anyone who took a life to a healing lodge like this.

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am disappointed in my colleague and friend across the way and the stand he is trying to position this in terms of politics. Sadly, this case tears at the hearts of all Canadians.

Even when Stephen Harper was the Prime Minister of Canada, dozens of murderers were transferred over to these healing lodges. They were child killers also. That is true.

This is the reason why the minister is doing the responsible thing. We understand the heartbreak and the horror of family members and Canadians on this. That was why we asked the commissioner to do the review. The minister has that review today. Would the member not, at the very least, recognize that the government needs to do the review? We are doing the review and now we will wait to see what actions are taken.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I do consider my colleague across the way a friend, and I will believe him in this circumstance if he tables any name or case where someone convicted of first or second degree murder was transferred to a healing lodge. I do not think there are such names. If there are, I will stand corrected. If it happened under the Conservative government, it was wrong then. That is ownership of something.

I do not believe the member's facts are right. There might be a manslaughter case, where the circumstances are of someone in a drinking situation getting into a fight. If that person was from circumstances of impoverished means or was an indigenous offender, that is when restorative justice could be explored. I do not think there was a case, certainly not of someone who killed a child. I will correct myself on the record if the member tables any of those names.

However, as I said, it is beside the point. When Canadians, especially family members of someone impacted, bring this to the attention of the chamber, it is our priority to fix it. It happened when Stephen Harper found out that child killer Clifford Olson was receiving old age security, OAS. The Conservative government took the time to pass a bill to change the law to stop that. When something happened under our watch that was inappropriate and that was undermining public confidence, we stood up, agreed and changed it. That is what I want the Liberals to do.

• (1240)

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order to table the government's responses to Order Paper Questions Nos. 1895 to 1911.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it seems that the opposition is bent on making this as political as possible

when in fact Correctional Service Canada has this under consideration.

My previous question about healing lodges was answered in a way that was not accurate. Of the nine healing lodges that we have in Canada, two of them accept medium-security inmates. What we are discussing today is one of those two. Correctional Service Canada worked within the guidelines it was given. Our minister has asked, first, how the decisions were made; and second, whether the process was correct. The minister now has that report, which he will consider and bring back to the House.

Apart from the grandstanding that going on, I was hoping to discuss the budget today. I have a speech on the budget. The budget is a very important document before our House. Instead of doing that, we are interrupting our discussions on the budget to get into something that is being considered and will be coming back to the House in due time.

We are looking at a transfer between two medium-security facilities. Maybe the hon. member could comment on that.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I am sorry to inform the member for Guelph that some politics happen in this chamber. I get a kick out of the fact that whenever we say something that is uncomfortable for the Liberals, we are being partisan. That is indeed our role. The member wants to speak not on the budget, but on the 850-page budget implementation act that his party screamed about if we ever had budget bills that big. He will get his time.

I will come to Guelph in the week after next and ask people in the coffee shops what they think about the McClintic case. I was very clear in my remarks that the policy should be no first or second degree murderers at a healing lodge.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the member's motion regarding Bill C-83, which the House has already voted on and passed at second reading.

The hon. member for Durham just mentioned that sometimes politics gets done in this place, and I would argue that the only thing being done by the Conservative Party right now is playing politics.

I cannot imagine what the family of Tori Stafford has gone through or any family that has lost a child in this manner. My heart goes out to all families who have lost children to crime.

Routine Proceedings

I will start by discussing Bill C-83 and some concerns that have been raised about the working conditions of those working in corrections. It is challenging work. From guards to parole officers, program staff to medical professionals, corrections employees work hard, around the clock and in challenging environments to keep our institutions safe and in support of effective rehabilitation, which ultimately protects Canadian communities. They represent a professional workforce of nearly 18,000 employees, all engaged in the success of the corrections system and the fulfilment of Correctional Service Canada's mandate. That is complemented by some 6,000 volunteers in institutions and communities, not to mention elders, chaplains and the many other unsung heroes working in corrections. I want to assure all of those individuals that as we study Bill C-83 at committee, their voices will be heard and we will be listening to them.

Regarding the transfer referred to in this motion, when it came to the attention of the Minister of Public Safety, he asked the commissioner of corrections to review the transfer decision and the long-standing policies in place, which existed prior to our becoming government, that led to the decision, to ensure that they remain appropriate or to recommend if they need updating. As the Minister of Public Safety indicated in the House, he received the report from the commissioner of corrections late yesterday, a report that came with several policy options for him to consider. The minister is studying the report carefully and has said that if there are any changes that need to be made to these long-standing policies, they will be made in the near future.

In the meantime, the public safety committee is expected to begin its study of Bill C-83 next week. This transformational piece of legislation will eliminate segregation in Canadian corrections facilities, but is unrelated to the issue of this particular transfer. Through Bill C-83, the government is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring that we not only have the tools to make guilty parties accountable for breaking the law, but also create an environment that fosters rehabilitation so there are fewer repeat offenders, fewer victims and, ultimately, safer communities.

Virtually everyone in federal custody is eventually going to be released. It is in the best interests of public safety to ensure that when offenders are released, they are well prepared to participate meaningfully in society and that they are unlikely to reoffend. That is why we are strengthening the federal corrections system and aligning it with the latest evidence and best practices so that offenders are rehabilitated and better prepared to eventually re-enter our communities.

Bill C-83 would replace the long-standing practice of using segregation and replace it with the use of structured intervention units, or SIUs. This is a bold new approach to federal corrections. An offender may be placed in an SIU when there are reasonable grounds to believe that they pose a risk to the safety of any person, including themselves, or the security of the institution. It will protect the safety of staff and those in their custody by allowing offenders to be separated as required, while ensuring that those offenders receive effective rehabilitative programming, as well as interventions and mental health support. These things are not in place right now but we would put them in place with Bill C-83.

Currently, placement in segregation basically suspends all interventions and programming for an offender. The offender is essentially kept isolated from everyone. In a structured intervention unit, on the other hand, the offender will have a minimum of four hours outside of their cell and a minimum of two hours of meaningful interactions with other people, including staff, volunteers, visitors, elders, chaplains and other compatible inmates. They will have access to structured interventions to address the underlying behaviour that led to their placement in the SIU. These will include programs and mental health care tailored to their needs. It is a system that will allow for the protection of inmates, staff and the institution while ensuring that the time an inmate spends there does not interrupt his or her rehabilitative programming. Make no mistake, rehabilitative programming is essential to ensure that when the person is released from corrections, they will be able to live a life free of crime.

● (1245)

We will ensure that the correctional service has the resources it needs to ensure the safe and secure management of offenders within the SIU while delivering all of the important programming and allowing for visitations.

In addition, the new system will be subject to a robust internal review process. By the fifth working day after movement to an SIU, the warden will determine if the inmate should remain there, taking into account factors such as the inmate's correctional plan and medical condition. If the inmate remains in the SIU, subsequent reviews will happen after 30 days by the warden and every 30 days thereafter by the commissioner of corrections.

Reviews can be triggered by a medical professional at any time, and will be strengthened by the fact that Bill C-83 also enshrines in law for the first time the principle that health care professionals within the corrections system must have the autonomy to exercise their own medical judgment. As recommended by the Ashley Smith inquest, it would create a system of patient advocates who will help ensure that people get the medical treatment they need.

Bill C-83 would also enshrine in law the principle that offender management decisions must involve consideration of systemic and background factors related to indigenous offenders. These amendments are based on the 1999 Gladue case and reflect what the Supreme Court has found to be the constitutional right of an indigenous offender.

Routine Proceedings

The bill would also improve support for victims. Currently, victims may attend a parole hearing of the perpetrator of the crime. Alternatively, victims can request audio recordings of the parole hearing if they are unable to attend. Unfortunately, due to a glitch in the existing act, if a victim attends in person, he or she is not able to receive an audio recording. We have heard from victims that parole hearings can be such an emotional time that afterward the victim often cannot remember the full details of what transpired. Bill C-83 would ensure that even if the victim attends in person, he or she will be able to get a copy of the recording.

The legislation would also allow CSC to use body scanners for the first time. These scanners are a less invasive way of searching inmates and visitors to a penitentiary while ensuring that correctional staff have the tools they need to detect and prevent contraband.

During Stephen Harper's time in office there were many inmates in healing lodges who had committed very serious crimes. In fact, dozens were convicted of murder and at least 14 were convicted in cases in which the victims were children. They were sent to healing lodges under the Harper government because, apparently, the Harper government understood that healing lodges were in the interest of rehabilitation and public safety. I would like to read a quote from the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, who said, “Healing lodges developed in collaboration with aboriginal communities provide supportive healing and reintegration environments.”

In our country, we rely on our courts to deliver sentences and the corrections system to supervise offenders, to uphold public safety and to rehabilitate those in their care. We do not have a vigilante system in Canada. We do not allow public opinion or political rhetoric to determine the penalties dealt to individual offenders. Yet the opposition has been playing political games with this case and our entire justice system during the past weeks.

Let us be clear. There is no doubt that this offender should be in prison. There is no doubt that she remains in prison. The facts of the case are well known and they shake us to the core. She was tried and sentenced to life without eligibility for parole for 25 years. She has been in the custody of Correctional Services Canada since sentencing. Let me reiterate that she is still in prison and continues to be supervised while incarcerated and will remain under supervision for the rest of her life.

● (1250)

Neither the Minister of Public Safety nor the House has the ability to overturn the decision on where that individual offender should be serving her sentence. To make the public believe that we do is irresponsible for the opposition, and I, for one, do not want to live in a country where our justice and corrections systems rely on political rhetoric and public opinion in their decision-making processes.

Recently, we had the new commissioner of corrections at the public safety committee. She stated several times, just as the Minister of Public Safety has done here as well, that she was asked to review the circumstances surrounding this transfer decision, as well as the long-standing policies regarding transfers in general. As I mentioned earlier, the Minister of Public Safety received the commissioner's report late yesterday and is in the process of reviewing it.

Both of committees that I sit on, the status of women and public safety committees, tabled reports in June on the corrections system and, in particular, on indigenous people in corrections. The public safety committee's report was unanimous in calling for additional funding for healing lodges. Members from all parties heard from witnesses and agreed that healing lodges were doing excellent work and should be expanded and supported. The Conservative members of the committee agreed with us that they play an integral role in our corrections system. The status of women committee also recommended additional funding for healing lodges and heard extensive testimony on their benefits.

I wonder how many on the opposition benches have actually visited a women's medium-security institute or healing lodge. I have visited both. I suspect most people, including those in the House, expect prison to look more like what they see on television and in movies. They might be surprised to see what a medium-security institute like Grand Valley actually looks like.

Let me be clear. A healing lodge is still a secure corrections facility. Perhaps if it were called a women's indigenous corrections facility, we would not even be debating this issue, nor having the motion before us today. It is not a spa. It is not a summer camp. There are no luxury linens. Prisoners must follow the rules if they want to stay there.

A healing lodge is different from what Canadians might expect a prison to look like, but these institutions are also very different in their outcomes for prisoners, and in turn, better for Canadians and public safety in the long run. In fact, I would argue that is why the Harper Conservatives sent individuals who had been convicted of murder to healing lodges, because they recognized the benefits for offenders when they spend time in these institutions.

Claire Carefoot, executive director of the Buffalo Sage Wellness House, an Edmonton healing lodge, has 29 years of experience in corrections. She appeared before the public safety committee during our study, and stated:

It's not a get-out-of-jail-free [card].... We have the same kind of supervision and restrictions they have in a prison. Only we're doing it in a healing way... they have to accept responsibility for their offences, for their victims, and they have to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.

Our government knows that a corrections system focused on accountability rather than simple retribution is better for corrections outcomes and, therefore, better for the public safety of all Canadians. We know that taking a rehabilitative approach is the best way to protect the public safety of Canadians. I think Canadians would agree that when people leave prison, we do not want them to commit a violent crime. It is not in the interests of public safety.

Routine Proceedings

As we know, regardless of the length of their sentence, the vast majority of those incarcerated in our system will be released from prison at some point. They may very well move into our neighbourhoods. What kind of person do we want released from prison at the end of his or her sentence living next door to us? I feel strongly that, regardless of our feelings, public safety is best served when we take steps to prevent violent recidivism.

I mentioned the fact that the previous government sent individuals who had committed murder and individuals who had committed crimes against children to healing lodges.

• (1255)

I would argue that is the problem with the Conservative Party today. It has no moral centre. It has no principles around which to build policies. Conservatives simply swing from one issue to the next, with no sense of cohesion or principles to guide them. Almost every issue or policy that the Conservatives supported in government is one that they have a knee-jerk reaction to while in opposition.

It is the reason the member for Beauce has left the Conservative Party and founded a new Conservative movement. He says that today's Conservative Party of Canada has become "morally corrupt", and that Canadians need a new coherent Conservative—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I just want to remind the members of the opposition that they will have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments. I would ask them to stop heckling.

The hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington has the floor.

• (1300)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the member for Beauce has called the Conservative Party of Canada "morally corrupt" and has said that Canadians need a new coherent Conservative option to vote for.

As just one recent example, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women recently completed a committee report that recommended:

That the Government of Canada ensure access to healing lodges for Indigenous female offenders with a medium security classification.

It also called for expanding the number of healing lodges.

The Conservative members of the committee did issue a dissenting report, however they made no mention of this recommendation, and in fact solely focused on social impact bonds. I would take from the dissenting report that the Conservatives tabled in the House that they agreed with our recommendation on access to healing lodges.

Meanwhile, other Conservative MPs, including members of the status of women committee, have spent the past month demonizing the use of healing lodges. The ability for Conservatives to speak out of both sides of their mouth on any given issue may make them feel nimble while debating in the Ottawa bubble, but it is very confusing to everyday Canadians who cannot tell if the Conservative Party actually stands for anything anymore.

While the Conservative Party continues to play games, trying to slow down any piece of legislation that would be good for Canada, good for Canadians and good for public safety, as Bill C-83 is, we on this side of the House remain focused squarely on governing this great country. That is why I will not be supporting the member's motion.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member across from me said a few things that I would like to seek some clarification on.

One of the things that she said is that the Conservatives lack a moral compass, a "moral centre" was her term. This is interesting to me because I have had the opportunity to work with this member for a number of years now on the Standing Committee for the Status of Women.

There, I brought forward a motion in the spring with regard to ISIS militants being brought into Canada. There is proof that these individuals are being brought here by the Liberal government, that they are being moved into Toronto and that they have access to public transportation systems. These are men who have committed atrocious crimes overseas. They have kidnapped women, they have raped women and they have likely murdered women. Now they are here in Canada, engaging with the Canadian public.

I brought forward a motion at this committee, asking for a study to be done with regard to the impact that this decision might have on Yazidi women who are being brought over from northern Iraq in order to find a safe haven here in Canada.

Now, what did the committee say to this? The member opposite, when I brought forward the motion, said that she did not think this was a real issue. It does not deserve to be studied. Only weeks later, a Yazidi woman was on a bus in Toronto, and came face to face with her ISIS perpetrator. I would like the hon. member across from me to do the hon. thing, and actually admit that it is them, it is the government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately I do have to allow for other questions.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I have no idea what that question has to do with the motion before us today on Bill C-83, but I am happy to respond to it.

Our government has brought over more than 1,200 Yazidi refugees. How many did the Conservatives bring over? Three. This side of the House is providing mental health services for those Yazidi refugees. What did the other side of the House do? It removed health services for refugees in Canada. Not only that—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. The member across the way yelled across the floor to stop yelling, which is definitely out of order. Also, I am sitting right in front of the member and I am finding it very difficult to hear her because of the heckling by my colleagues across the way.

I would ask that the member who made the accusation be asked to apologize and that the Conservative members contain themselves so that we can hear what members have to say inside this House.

Routine Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the members that, yes, the heckling was starting up again. They may not like what they hear for an answer. The next time questions and comments come about, members can use that opportunity to stand up and ask questions and comments. I ask the official opposition to please not yell across and to please stop the heckling.

The hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington has a few seconds left to finish up her thought.

• (1305)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, instead of focusing on political rhetoric and gamesmanship, I am going to focus on what the government is doing to protect the safety of Canadians. I am extremely proud of what our government has done at the public safety committee.

I look forward to working with opposition members from the New Democratic Party and the Conservative Party as we study this bill. However, this motion is not in order. It is far beyond the scope of the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was going well until she indirectly called the Conservatives corrupt. Who got reprimanded by the Ethics Commissioner? The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. Who was behind the sponsorship scandal? The Liberals. Before my colleague accuses the Conservatives of being corrupt, I would advise her to tread carefully because her own party is not above reproach.

My colleague also said that we have not visited healing lodges. The Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security had a trip planned, but the Liberals decided that we would not go visit the healing lodges. Maybe it was because they did not want us to see how those places really operate. Maybe they did not want us to see the conditions in which these people are "incarcerated".

I wonder if we could stop playing petty politics and look at the real issues. It does not matter if there were cases during the time of the Harper government where people may have ended up in healing lodges. The ministers in office at the time may not have been aware. On both our side and theirs, we still do not have the information.

If they do become aware, does my colleague believe that child murderers should be allowed to go there, instead of a federal penitentiary like Donnacona?

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I remind the hon. member that any member of Parliament can visit a prison or a healing lodge. That is what I have done. I took a trip to Edmonton to visit healing lodges and the Edmonton Institute for Women and Edmonton maximum-security. I also went to Saskatoon and visited a healing lodge there and the Regional Psychiatric Centre. I have been to Stony Mountain. None of those were with the public safety committee.

Therefore, if the hon. member wishes to visit those facilities, he is more than welcome to, as is any member of this House at any time.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I did visit a correctional facility, the Grand Valley Institution for Women. I saw the professionalism of the care that Correctional Services Canada provides as well as the goals around rehabilitation and education within the facility. I saw various levels of security within that institute of high-security, medium-security and lower-security areas. There were complex treatments being done by professionals and now we are being asked to intervene on their behalf, as if a member of Parliament has more skill in determining what the best care is for prisoners.

Could the hon. member comment on the role of members of Parliament in providing policy and guidance and the role of our Correctional Services Canada professionals in providing care?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, that is exactly what I was saying in my speech.

I think it is important to recognize that the commissioner of corrections has prepared a report. She has reviewed these decisions. It is with the Minister of Public Safety now. If there are changes to be made, it will be done in a reasoned and reasonable way, based on the information that the minister has received from the commissioner of corrections.

That is the right way to do things, rather than playing politics with a particular case.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, to my friend for Oakville North—Burlington, I think it is really important to distinguish between how individuals in this place act and their own moral compass, and the lack of morality that is found in every group of spin doctors to any political party in this country, where the goal is always to try to find divisions and try to score points.

In the 41st Parliament, when we debated mandatory minimums, I was always making the point to government members that there was absolutely no single empirical study that justified mandatory minimums. The response was always that it was a shame that member cares more about criminals than innocent victims. That is a narrative designed for fundraising and it has less to do with a lack of a moral compass than with the reality of too much power in the hands of political parties in this chamber, where we should be about our constituents and not about the next election.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if there was a question there. I think it was a comment.

I have the utmost respect for the hon. member across the way. I appreciate what she says, and she is absolutely right. I know I have been outspoken on some of these issues, including on mandatory minimums, because there is no evidence whatsoever that they reduce crime or make Canadians safer. I take her comments with all due respect and appreciate her intervention.

• (1310)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member began her speech by suggesting that the opposition just brings unnecessary partisanship into all of its speeches, and then went on to castigate the motives of members and to talk about how the Conservatives have no moral compass and all of these kinds of things.

Routine Proceedings

The purpose of this motion is to ensure that ministers take responsibility for their departments. That is what we are here to do, and if that is partisanship maybe we need a little more of it, not less. We need the government to start taking responsibility for its departments.

Does she not see the sense of irony in merely criticizing anyone who does not just lie down and agree with them that they are being unnecessarily partisan?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, the minister has taken responsibility. That is why he has asked for a report from the commissioner of corrections. What the hon. member is suggesting would be like the minister of fisheries going out to build wharves.

The Minister of Public Safety has absolutely taken responsibility. Corrections Canada has prepared a report. The minister is reviewing it. That is the right way we should be doing things, not a knee-jerk reaction because it is going to be able to raise fundraising dollars.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will pick up on the last question. The member tries to give the impression that the government has not done a good job on this file. I would like to make it very clear to those who might be following the debate just what the government has done. In order to appreciate what the government has done, one needs to have a better sense of what has been happening over the last 10 years.

I would emphasize what I believe is uniformly felt across all regions of our country. No one in this country could ever imagine how horrific the actions against little Tori were. I think I speak on behalf of anyone who has a heart and understands what a parent or family members have to go through mentally and physically when something horrific takes place against a child. I cannot imagine the pain and agony. In my heart, and I know I am not unique, all of us in the chamber extend our sympathies and empathy to the family. Having said that, sadly, it is not the first time that has happened in Canada.

I had the opportunity to ask a question, trying to provide a little history. A past Conservative administration decided that we should move from correctional facilities to healing centres, which would be part of the medium-security correctional facilities. I believe these healing centres were brought in a Conservative administration.

Indeed, let us fast forward to when Stephen Harper was prime minister. If we listen to the Conservatives, we would think this situation were truly unique, as if children have not been murdered in the past and murderers have not been put into healing centres in the past. We know that is not true. Even when Stephen Harper was prime minister, we know there were murderers in medium-security facilities who were transferred to healing centres, dozens of them. Not one, two or three, but literally dozens of murderers have gone into these healing centres. This was when Stephen Harper was prime minister.

We often hear about some of the worst crimes in society, such as terrorist acts, but what ranks very high for me are child murders. These are horrific and I want there to be consequences for that crime. So do my constituents and a vast majority, 90%-plus, of Canadians.

●(1315)

Do members know that child killers were sent to healing lodges while Stephen Harper was prime minister? If we follow the debate on this issue, we would never believe that to be the case, but that is the reality. Child murderers, even under Stephen Harper, went to healing lodges. We did not hear any Conservatives jump up at that time asking why it was happening. No one condemned Stephen Harper and the minister responsible. It was implied earlier that maybe they did not know about it. That excuse does not cut it.

I listen to many members of the opposition yell from their seats how horrific it is and how irresponsible we were by not taking action, as they point fingers at the member for Regina—Wascana, the Minister of Public Safety, for not taking action. Here is a reality check: Even though Stephen Harper and the Conservatives did not take any action, this minister and this government have taken the most appropriate action of all. We created a dialogue with the commissioner of corrections and asked the commissioner to review the policy and to come back to the government with some recommendations. That is the responsible approach to dealing with this issue.

I understand that yesterday the commissioner brought forward that report. I suspect that the minister, knowing he is one of the hardest working members in the chamber, will go through that report in great detail. I know this government as a whole understands and appreciates the very important role that our civil servants play in providing the services that we receive from Correctional Service Canada. We will factor in what those professionals have to say, because good government does that. Good government respects the fine work that our civil servants do for Canadians as a whole.

Knowing the Minister of Public Safety, his primary concern is the safety of Canadians. I believe that is the priority of this government. We have seen that in the legislation we debated, namely Bill C-83, which I will soon get to. For now, let us realize that unlike the former government under which we know that child murderers went to healing centres, we are looking at ways to improve government policy. This is one of the files that no doubt will be taken into great consideration as we try to ensure that we have the confidence of Canadians as we move forward on this.

●(1320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Durham has a point of order.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I hate to interrupt my friend in full rhetorical flight, but he keeps referring to cases of child murderers at the time of the Harper government. This is germane to the current debate because after I asked him to table such cases, a minister stood and tabled documents that would have implied to many people watching this debate at home that those documents were in fact the cases I had asked him to table. They were not. They were answers to previously table questions. I would like the member who keeps referring to this to undertake to table the cases he mentioned.

Routine Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I understand that this is a very important and very sensitive issue. The point that the member raised is not a point of order, but a point of debate. I would suggest that if he has questions to ask and comments to make, he do so during the questions and comments period.

I would ask other members of the official opposition and the government members not to yell back and forth during the debate so that we can allow the parliamentary secretary to finish his speech. He still has nine minutes and 25 seconds.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my friend rose on a point of order. He wants to hear the names of other murderers.

Well, it was not that long ago when member after member of the Conservative caucus stood in the chamber, and in great detail, talked about Tori Stafford and that horrific incident, which revolted many Canadians. One of the reasons many members on this side of the House were so upset with members of the official opposition was because of the way they were dealing with this issue.

For the sake of argument, let us say that the Conservatives had a change of mind on policy. When in government, when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, there were child murderers going to healing lodges, and they did not oppose it then. However, let us say that they had a road to Damascus experience. Now they are in opposition, and now we want to cut them some slack, and they want to see a change in policy. Even with that, I do not believe it justifies the graphic descriptions that were being given day in and day out by the official opposition.

Now those members want more names of these child killers tabled. Is it so they can again look at these cases and reveal the graphic details? Is that what they want?

At the end of the day, this is about good governance and policy that addresses the issues Canadians truly care about. That is why the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada was asked to do the job she did. As I have indicated, that report has now been brought to the attention of the minister responsible. I can assure members of this House that the report will be gone through and we will see something that can provide assurance to Canadians that we do have the victims in our hearts and that we are respectful of our civil servants. We believe that we need to have a policy that delivers on what the public expectations are of the government of the day.

I made reference to Bill C-83, and my colleague made reference to it in her speech. The reason I want to bring this up is that often, the Conservatives try to give the impression that they are about the victims, as if they are the ones who protect the interests of the victims. Well, we have seen legislation brought in by this government that enshrines victims' rights in legislation. We have seen other aspects that are important.

For example, my colleague made reference to audio tapes. There are many crimes that are so horrific that when a perpetrator in jail goes before a parole board, and the victim wants to attend the hearing, we would allow the victim to be provided an audio tape of what takes place, because one can only imagine what a victim goes through when sitting in that Parole Board hearing.

There is a different mentality between the Stephen Harper Conservatives and this government when it comes to justice. I will give the Conservatives that. We truly believe that there are certain actions the government can take that will ensure that we have fewer victims in the future. That is a reality that often escapes my Conservative friends across the way.

• (1325)

Bill C-83 is a good example of that. Within the bill are reforms to the legislation that would enable programming, such as mental health care services and others, to be made available to individuals leaving our prison system. That is important. Unlike the image the Conservatives try to give Canadians, that once people go to jail, each and every one of them is so bad that they should stay in jail forever, the reality is that a vast majority will come out and they will be in our communities. We need to ensure—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I hate to interrupt the member, however, 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. The hon. parliamentary secretary will have three minutes the next time this motion comes to the floor of the House of Commons.

Hon. Diane Finley: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Given the unfortunate adjournment of the debate on the motion to authorize the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to expand the scope of Bill C-83 in order to forbid those convicted of the murder of a child from serving any portion of their sentence in a healing lodge, given that the minister just announced in question period that he had received recommendations from the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada relating to the transfer of Terri-Lynne McClintic from prison to a healing lodge in Saskatchewan and given that members in this place did not have the opportunity to vote on this very important motion, I believe it is incumbent to allow the House the opportunity to take a position on the motion and to give the public safety committee the required authority to consider any recommendations that the commissioner has to offer and to amend Bill C-83 accordingly.

To this effect, there have been consultations and I hope that should you seek it, Madam Speaker, you would find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion: That Motion No. 1082, listed on the Order Paper today under the rubric "Motions", in the name of the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, proposing to authorize the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security to expand the scope of Bill C-83, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another act in order to forbid those convicted of the murder of a child from serving any portion of his or her sentence in a healing lodge be deemed adopted.

• (1330)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[Translation]***STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES,
SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS
OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of Motion No. 192, which calls on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to conduct a study on episodic disabilities and potential legislative and policy changes that would support people with these disabilities.

As a New Democrat, I am pleased to support this worthwhile initiative, which shows that we can set political differences aside to stand up for what is important to our fellow Canadians in need. I think it is essential we gain a better understanding of the needs of people with episodic disabilities to get a better idea of how workers interact with income support programs over time.

We must learn which policies are working and which ones are not, in order to improve government support at all levels. Episodic disabilities must be part of the disability legislative framework so that our laws finally provide for assistance to people with episodic disabilities. A growing number of Canadians are living with episodic disabilities such as multiple sclerosis, cancer, HIV, diabetes and some forms of mental illness.

Here are some numbers: over four million Canadians suffer from arthritis, and an estimated 100,000 of our fellow citizens live with multiple sclerosis. Those are just two examples among many, but I think they paint a picture of the huge number of people affected by an episodic disability.

People living with episodic disabilities face many problems related to income and employment. They experience recurrent periods of poor health, so it is harder for them to work at all, let alone full time. Most people living with an episodic disability have to rely on health insurance and disability benefits, but the strict policies and definitions governing those benefit programs make it difficult for many people to participate in the labour market when they are healthy enough to do so.

An episodic disability is characterized by varying periods and degrees of good and poor health. These periods are unpredictable, and some individuals live with both permanent and episodic disabilities. People with this type of disability can participate in the workforce on an intermittent and unpredictable basis. Lack of day-to-day stability makes it difficult for them to work and to access health benefits.

However, the system as it currently operates does not help them. We must push for an in-depth study by the committee in order to have a report on the situation, create an effective action plan and resolve this problem. Insurance companies, government benefits and legislation tend to focus on permanent disabilities and ignore episodic disabilities and the resulting problems. Consequently, health care providers are often ill-equipped to meet the needs of people living with this type of disability.

Income support may be suspended during periods when the person's health seems to improve, and more often than not, getting it reinstated can be difficult. This often results in serious financial problems. Moreover, people living with episodic disabilities find it difficult to obtain the supports reserved for people with disabilities.

Episodic disabilities are often invisible and, by their very nature, unpredictable. This means that it may be difficult to access programs designed around the premise that disabilities must be the result of a stable illness. For Francisco Ibanez-Carrasco, an expert specializing in HIV research in Toronto, current programs were designed for people with permanent disabilities.

● (1335)

These programs do not meet the needs of persons living with episodic disabilities. The status quo means many people with an episodic disability will continue to live in financial insecurity and poverty.

This is an urgent situation. We are talking about several million people who are living in a quasi legal vacuum that leaves them all alone to cope with the unique challenges they face in the labour market. Acknowledging these challenges has to be the first step in helping people suffering from episodic disabilities.

Raising awareness among employers and the general public would help improve the quality of life of persons living with these disabilities. Several initiatives have already been developed. The Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation offers online courses on episodic disabilities.

There are a number of other organizations dedicated to persons with specific disabilities that also provide training or information that can be useful for raising awareness about the unique needs of persons living with episodic disabilities. Dr. David Grossman of the College of Family Physicians of Canada said:

My patient is feeling better right now and would like to return to work. But if he returns, he will be cut off from his long-term disability benefits. He has decided not to return to work because the fear is too great.

Getting back to work is very important to these individuals. If they cannot get back to work, it can lead to feelings of failure. It is time to ensure that all workers with episodic disabilities are able to work and have a sense of pride.

In Canada, in the case of many income support programs for people with disabilities, the disability must be stable. For example, to qualify for Canada pension plan disability benefits, a person has to have a severe and prolonged disability. When people go back to work within 12 months, their disability does not meet the criteria of a prolonged disability.

Under the current system, a person with an episodic disability will not have contributed enough at work to qualify for benefits.

Private Members' Business

To qualify for EI sickness benefits, which are never provided on a part-time basis, a person must be completely unable to work.

Provincial income support programs for people with disabilities are often restricted to people with long-term disabilities. Meanwhile, short-term disability insurance may not allow a person with an episodic disability enough time off to recover. In order to qualify for long-term disability insurance, the person has to be completely disabled.

People living with an episodic disability are therefore always in limbo. For many years, they have been calling for more flexibility regarding the payment of disability and EI benefits so that they can better cope with their periods of illness and periods of work when their health improves.

In closing, I hope that, following my speech, all of my colleagues will vote in favour of Motion No. 192.

• (1340)

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak to my hon. colleague's motion this afternoon. It is a private members' motion, Motion No. 192, put forward by my friend and colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Simply put, private members' Motion No. 192 would work to advance government policy to ensure that persons living with episodic diseases like MS are given the supports they need and deserve. Who does not deserve to be treated equally? I am very glad to be wearing my MS band, which I got at a fundraiser a couple of weeks ago in my riding of Barrie—Innisfil.

Before I continue, I would like to thank the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake for his passion and hard work on this very important initiative, and for sharing his story and how much this means to his family. I would also like to thank the MS Society, which has partnered with my colleague to help construct this private member's motion. Every day, the MS Society works tirelessly to find a cure and advocate for the 77,000 Canadians affected by this terrible disease.

Private members' Motion No. 192 has the potential to make a positive impact on not only the lives of people living with episodic diseases, but their families as well. This motion would also bring about much needed awareness about episodic diseases. As I have learned after listening to my colleague, MS is not the only disease classified as episodic. The list includes diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Awareness is an important step in finding a cure.

In June of this year, the government tabled Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada. Although it offers some help to strengthen support for Canadians with disabilities, it will take time to pass, and time is critical to people living with these terrible diseases. We are waiting for what amendments would be added moving forward, but welcome amendments that would address the needs of those affected by episodic diseases.

Private members' Motion No. 192 will offer parliamentarians a perspective on how people with episodic disabilities live their lives, and how their families are affected by these diseases. MS alone

affects 77,000 Canadians, which is one in 385 Canadians. Every 77 seconds, someone is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in Canada. It is surprising to know Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world. It is often referred to as "Canada's Disease". Sixty per cent of adults diagnosed are between the ages of 20 and 49, and women are three times more likely to be diagnosed than men and MS, along with all other episodic diseases, has a lasting impact on the lives of so many.

In my riding of Barrie—Innisfil, my constituents have taken leadership in the fight against MS. The Mandarin MS Walk is one of the largest walks in the country, bringing together hundreds of participants and raising hundreds of thousands of dollars. This year alone, it raised \$200,000. I am very pleased to have attended this year's event, as I do every year with my colleague from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte

This past weekend, I was at a fundraiser and bought this band at the Two of a Kind Craft Market put on by the Simcoe Muskoka chapter of the MS Society of Canada. It is simply amazing to see what the constituents in my riding are doing, and their leadership should not go unnoticed. It is why I have taken the time to mention them today. The time spent and money raised by these initiatives are proof that Canadians are taking action, and so should their parliamentarians.

Now, besides recognizing that episodic diseases take a toll on a person's body, we must remember that these diseases also take a toll on the lives of family members and their way of life. Many of those living with these diseases and their families are treated differently. Finding work is hard due to the unpredictability of the disease. Access to resources such as student assistance and apprenticeship programs is hampered, and supports for families are minimal at this time.

Private member's Motion No. 192 is an opportunity to right these wrongs and fix these deficiencies. As the official opposition, we want to see, and will support, a realistic strategy to break down the barriers facing people with disabilities.

• (1345)

I, as well as my other hon. colleagues, believe that everyone, whether disabled or not, deserves to participate fully in all aspects of life, but we must keep in mind that different diseases affect people differently. We have to be mindful that legislation like Bill C-81 must not be a one-size-fits-all solution and that episodic diseases are, in fact, diseases.

Private Members' Business

The objectives of private member's Motion No. 192 are simple, as my hon. colleague mentioned when he introduced it. It would create better employment supports for people living with episodic disabilities. It would work to improve economic conditions for those living with episodic diseases. It would allow for better treatment, improve and raise the standard of care they receive, improve housing and ensure the government is investing in ways to find a cure for these diseases.

As I said earlier, and I echo my hon. colleagues, we must act now to get this passed. People affected by MS and diseases like it sometimes wait weeks, months or even years to get the treatment or care they need. I have received several letters and emails on this issue and a common denominator is time, and some people just do not have it.

Let us take action today to ensure the playing ground is even for all Canadians. Everyone deserves the chance to contribute to their community and their country and I hope that everyone in the chamber will stand together, along with the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, in voting in favour of this motion.

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in the second hour of debate on the motion introduced by my hon. colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. His personal story of his wife's battle with MS is truly gripping and we all take it very seriously.

This motion proposes that the House of Commons instruct the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, or HUMA in short, to study the issue of episodic disabilities to ensure the people who live with these disabilities are adequately protected and that there is equity in government policy.

First, it is important to understand that a person can simultaneously live with both permanent and episodic disabilities. Every disability is different. What sets an episodic disability apart is that, unlike disabilities that may have more consistent and predictable impacts on daily living, an episodic disability is marked by fluctuating periods and degrees of illness and wellness. Episodic disabilities are often life-long and chronic conditions. It is difficult to predict when episodes of disability will occur, how severe they will be and how long they will last.

Because episodic disabilities can be unpredictable, people with these types of conditions may face particular barriers to their social and economic participation. For example, they face barriers to employment and they are often ineligible for benefits and services, including those provided by the Government of Canada. As a result, people with episodic disabilities may be vulnerable to experiencing income insecurity. Our government recognizes that current programs and policies for people with disabilities are generally based on an understanding of disability as a continuous state, rather than one that fluctuates over time. We also recognize that programs and policies do not always meet the specific needs of people with episodic disabilities, so we need to obtain a better understanding of the socio-demographic, economic and disability-related characteristics of Canadians who experience episodic disabilities in order to better

meet their needs and eliminate the barriers they face to full participation.

Advancing the economic and social inclusion of people with episodic disabilities aligns with our government's commitment to ensuring a more accessible and inclusive Canada. On June 20, we tabled in Parliament Bill C-81, the accessible Canada act. This proposed legislation would proactively identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in areas under federal jurisdiction. New requirements in priority areas such as employment, developed in co-operation with partners and Canadians with disabilities, would help to ensure that all Canadians can fully participate in their communities and workplaces.

As I said during the first hour of debate, Bill C-81 is inclusive of episodic disabilities. In defining a disability, Bill C-81 specifically recognizes impairments or functional limitations that are episodic in nature. With Bill C-81, we would transform how we think about accessibility and ensure that in working toward the realization of a barrier-free Canada, we are inclusive of all people with disabilities, including people with episodic disabilities. We know there is more we can do to advance the inclusion of Canadians with episodic disabilities, particularly with regard to improving their financial security.

Let us not forget that many supports and services for people with episodic disabilities fall primarily within the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial governments. Employers also play a key role in advancing the financial well-being of people with episodic disabilities, through the provision of flexible work arrangements as well as other accommodations and supports. We need to work together, then, to support and advance the inclusion of people with episodic disabilities.

● (1350)

The findings of a HUMA study could assist in identifying realistic solutions. They could also shed light on emerging ideas and best practices in advancing the inclusion of people with episodic disabilities.

Therefore, we support the motion of the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake to give instruction to the HUMA committee to study the needs of persons with episodic disabilities. We support it because it works toward our government's aim to create a truly accessible Canada where all Canadians have an equal opportunity to succeed, have the same rights and obligations, and are equal participants in society.

Let me remind the House that our government has taken significant action to enhance federal programs in place to support people with disabilities. For example, the Canada Labour Code was amended to provide employees with the right to request flexible work arrangements, such as flexible start and finish times, and the ability to work from home. This could be beneficial to an employee with an episodic disability.

Private Members' Business

The Government of Canada is also committed to filling knowledge gaps around the experiences of people with episodic disabilities. The Statistics Canada 2017 Canadian survey on disability is the first national survey to contain questions aimed at identifying people with episodic disabilities. It will provide valuable information to be used by governments, disability organizations and other stakeholders. Results are expected to be released in the near future.

Our government also supports people with disabilities, including episodic disabilities, through initiatives such as the labour market development agreements and the opportunities fund for persons with disabilities. Moreover, we have been working with the provinces and territories toward Canada's accession to the optional protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

These measures, in addition to Bill C-81, will help our government lead the way to real improvements to inclusion and accessibility in Canada.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that our government supports the motion before us today. Given HUMA's busy agenda over the coming months, we propose that an amendment be made to the motion to allow more time for the completion of a comprehensive study. Instead of February 2019, we suggest that the committee be required to report its findings to the House of Commons by May 16, 2019.

This is an important topic, and we should give the HUMA committee the time it needs to get this right. Our government remains committed to upholding and safeguarding the rights of all people with disabilities, including episodic disabilities, to enable them to reach their full potential.

• (1355)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House and to have the opportunity to show my support for Motion M-192.

I join my hon. colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake in calling on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to provide the House with concrete policy recommendations to ensure that persons with episodic disabilities caused by, among other things, diseases such as multiple sclerosis are adequately protected to ensure equity in government policy to support Canadians across the country.

This topic is something that is quite close to my heart because of individuals within my own family who deal with episodic disabilities. I have watched the impact this has had day in and day out on their ability to function in daily life. There is certainly much more that could be done on their behalf.

Canadians living with a disability, whether mental or physical, have made a lot of progress with regard to fighting for equal access to all aspects of Canadian life. Under the late hon. Jim Flaherty, great progress was made with regard to equal benefits for those who live with a disability. That said, there are still gaps. The current government has promised to address those gaps. It has been slow in

doing so. Nevertheless, I think that there is still an opportunity to move forward and to work collaboratively.

Canadians who do not live with a disability or regularly interact with those who do may not consider or appreciate the daily challenges faced by these individuals. There are numerous barriers in Canadian life that should be addressed.

Today our focus is on those who live with an episodic disability. I am talking about a long-term disorder that has periods of good health, and then that good health is disrupted by periods of poor health or disability. The period of time during which a person faces that ill health or that disability could range anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of months to a year or maybe more. Even with excellent medical management and care, people may face these tumultuous times of ill health in a way that is unexpected or that they are unable to predict.

Episodic disabilities impact thousands of Canadians. Multiple sclerosis is the most common, and it has been discussed here today. This disease impacts 77,000 Canadians. Our country has one of the highest prevalence rates in the entire world. As legislators, we certainly have the opportunity to address this, and I hope we do so.

It is important to note that these conditions have a negative impact on workforce participation and income security. These Canadians are struggling with a disease that affects their everyday lives and the ability to provide for themselves. With all the medical challenges these folks face, it is incumbent upon this place to try to alleviate any additional barriers they might face in daily life.

Canadians living with disabilities do not wish to be held back by their conditions. They want to participate in as much as possible. They want to live full and productive lives, like every other Canadian citizen, but oftentimes, they face roadblocks, and many of them come from the bureaucracy of government, such as roadblocks having to do with paperwork for improving different things with regard to their disability and their needs. I would think it would be our desire as a House to make sure that those processes are streamlined.

Motion M-192 was put forward by my colleague, the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. The intent of the motion is to strengthen and inform Bill C-81, which is the accessible Canada act, put forward by the current government.

The information gathered from the committee study the motion calls for will be imperative in the application of the proposed government legislation. The two would go hand in hand.

With this motion, it will be the first time legislation and policy will be looked at through an episodic disabilities lens. This is really important. Motion M-192 will look at the challenges individuals with this type of disability face on a day-to-day basis, and it will put forward recommendations for policy change. I am talking about episodic disabilities such as MS, which I mentioned earlier, but I am also talking about things like HIV, cancer, epilepsy, Crohn's disease, diabetes, and arthritis. These are all diseases that should be considered when we think about episodic disabilities.

Private Members' Business

Some will say that the government's Bill C-81 would address these issues in time and that perhaps we should just wait. Time is critical. Canadians living with an episodic disability very much look forward to changes that will improve their quality of life. They want to see those changes come about as quickly as possible.

● (1400)

Bill C-81 will take some time to pass through this place, whereas right now we have the opportunity to send a motion to committee to begin a study, to call forward witnesses, to hear from experts across the country and to begin addressing this issue today.

As my colleagues in the House said before, it is up to the Canadian government to stand up for people who are fighting MS and other episodic conditions. We need to take action and it is incumbent upon us to make this a priority.

Because MS is the most prevalent, I would like to take a moment to address that condition specifically.

Typically, MS is diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 40. These are crucial years in the growth and advancement of a person's life. These are the years in which people go to school. These are the years where they get an education, they start a career, they raise a family. A teen student with MS may struggle with holding a pen. An individual who has MS and is a mechanic might have a hard time using tools effectively. An individual who is a researcher and needs to use different scientific material or a computer might find that difficult to do when he or she has an episodic condition.

These are real Canadians with daily struggles and it is sometimes difficult for the rest of us to understand what that might look like if we have never had that experience before.

Unfortunately, when it comes to providing financial support to those who live with a disability, bureaucrats often take a black and white approach. For people applying for a benefit, bureaucrats look at their applications and say "Either you can work or you cannot work". However, there needs to be some middle ground where there is some flexibility. Many of these individuals wish to work. They want to contribute to society. They like what they do and they want to use their skills, their talents and abilities in an effective way. However, sometimes they are not able to do that for a week, a month or sometimes longer. Provisions need to be made for these individuals who find themselves in these unique situations.

Today we have the opportunity to support the motion brought forward by my colleague, calling for a study and to look at this closely to ensure these individuals, particularly those individuals who live with these conditions, are provided with helpful policies.

At this point, I would like to note the fact that this really does have an impact on how these individuals live their daily lives and the types of resources they have available to them. None of us wants to go without an income. None of us wants to live a life that is less than what we see others live. Unfortunately, many of these individuals who have an episodic disability find themselves in that place.

It is my request of the House to support this motion. I believe the members on this side are unified on this. I believe we have the government's support. I very much look forward to this going to committee and being looked at with the utmost integrity and then

having us move forward toward change. We have the opportunity to stand and speak out on behalf of the most vulnerable.

● (1405)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I move:

That Motion No. 192 be amended to change the words "February 2019" with the words "May 16, 2019".

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to inform hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 93(3) no amendment may be proposed to a private member's motion or the motion for second reading of a private member's bill unless the sponsor of the item indicates his or her consent.

[*Translation*]

Therefore, I ask the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake if he consents to this amendment being moved.

[*English*]

Mr. David Yurdiga: Yes, Madam Speaker.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has five minutes for right of reply.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank everyone who spoke today in support of private member's Motion No. 192, a motion to create equity for Canadians living with episodic disabilities. I am so blessed to have the support of such incredible colleagues in the House of Commons today.

Over the past few weeks, I have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support I have received from tens of thousands of Canadians across Canada. I have heard from mothers, fathers, siblings and friends of Canadians suffering from episodic disabilities. I heard from countless organizations, like the MS Society of Canada, pledging their support for this motion. I have heard from so many of my fellow members of Parliament, senators and senior government officials, which shows how far-reaching this issue truly is. Most importantly, I have heard from thousands of sufferers of episodic disabilities in Canada, all of whom have inspired me to push even further on this incredibly important issue.

As members know, my wife Kathy suffers from multiple sclerosis, an autoimmune disease of the central nervous system, affecting the brain and spinal cord. It causes symptoms such as extreme fatigue, lack of coordination, weakness, tingling, impaired sensation, vision problems and the list goes on. Like most episodic disabilities, MS changes the lives of all of those impacted.

Episodic disabilities are also known as hidden disabilities. They are not easily seen, but are most definitely felt by the sufferer. These disabilities affect the vision, hearing, memory, mobility, flexibility, dexterity, pain and psychological conditions of an individual. Episodic disabilities include, but are not limited to, cancer, HIV, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, diabetes and the list goes on.

Private Members' Business

For too long, Canadians with episodic disabilities have not been properly recognized by government legislation. The unpredictable nature of their disabilities has made it almost impossible for these Canadians to have equal access to jobs, resources, treatments and even basic equality in government legislation. According to Statistics Canada, there are more than five million Canadians living with some form of disability. These disabilities affect the freedom, independence and quality of life of those who are affected and, sadly, over 200,000 of these disabled persons are children and youth.

I will do everything I can to advance the quality of life for those living with episodic disabilities with this motion and in the future. Once again, I thank everyone here today who has supported this motion and all Canadians who have reached out to tell their stories. We all know it is time to take action. It is time to vote yes and pass private member's Motion No. 192.

It is time to stand up for Canadians everywhere who are suffering from episodic disabilities. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive Canada where our compassion breaks down barriers for people living with disabilities of all kinds.

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Amendment agreed to)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 2:14 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:14 p.m.)

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