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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, December 13, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 13, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to eight petitions.

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[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 30th report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

[*English*]

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

Mr. Speaker, may I take this opportunity to wish you and yours a merry Christmas and a happy new year, and particularly to compliment the public safety committee, which has worked admirably throughout this entire year.

* * *

MODERN SLAVERY ACT

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-423, An Act respecting the fight against certain forms of modern slavery through the imposition of certain measures and amending the Customs Tariff.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the arc of Judeo-Christian history, the seminal event is the enslavement of the Israelites by the Egyptians,

and the subsequent flight to freedom. That is embedded in the theology and psyche of Jews and Christians alike.

The gospel of Jesus talks about freedom throughout. Of course, unfortunately, the lineup of theology and practice does not always occur. Regrettably, the entire British Empire was built upon the notion of slavery, and its economic underpinnings were slavery.

It took possibly the most significant member of Parliament in the history of Westminster Parliament, namely William Wilberforce, to destroy the underpinnings of the British Empire by destroying slavery.

Unfortunately, slavery is still here. In fact, members will be shocked to know that there are more people enslaved now than there ever were at the height of the Atlantic slave trade.

This bill gives an opportunity for consumers to know whether, in fact, anywhere along the supply chain of the product they are buying or the service they are using, slave or forced labour conditions applied.

I am anticipating that this bill will receive both pan-Canadian support and cross-party support. It is my honour to introduce this bill and my hope that it moves through the process quickly.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

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FAIRNESS FOR ALL CANADIAN TAXPAYERS ACT

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill S-243, An Act to amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act (reporting on unpaid income tax).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to introduce the fairness for all Canadian taxpayers act, measuring the tax gap to fight international tax evasion.

This bill is a common-sense measure that will help ensure accountability to parliamentarians as we fight tax evasion, in particular international tax evasion, something that I am sure is very important to all Canadians. Indeed, I hope I will have the support of all parties in this matter, because I am sure that most parliamentarians would take very seriously the issue of tax evasion and would like to see increased measures to ensure accountability for the agency as it combats international tax evasion and avoidance.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

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PETITIONS

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from the ridings of Kanata—Carleton, Orléans, and Kingston and the Islands. They call on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and reject the Prime Minister's plan to waste taxpayers' money studying a ban on guns that are already banned.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from constituents in my riding of Oshawa that calls on the Prime Minister to defend the freedoms of conscious thought and belief and withdraw the attestation requirement for applicants to the Canada summer jobs program. There have been some changes, but the Liberals still have these requirements and people are very concerned. This is an issue of conscience and rights, and the Prime Minister needs to be told over and over again to do the right thing.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a number of citizens from Oshawa have been writing to me. They are concerned about section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which identifies freedom of conscience, thought and freedom of belief as fundamental freedoms. They say the government must defend the rights of all Canadians, regardless of whether the current government agrees with them. They believe the current government's attestation requiring Canada summer jobs program applicants to hold the same views as the government contravene the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The petitioners call on the government to defend the freedoms of conscience, thought and belief by withdrawing the attestation requirement that still exists for applicants to the Canada summer jobs program.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because front-line domestic violence workers are saving women's lives, and because they are the most underfunded non-profit group in the country, petitioners from Nanaimo, Ladysmith and Ottawa call on the government to recognize the need for reliable, long-term core operations funding. Domestic violence shelters and feminist organizations are struggling to keep the lights on and to keep staff in place. They do not need program funding; they need core operations funding.

The petitioners urge the government to direct federal funding to women's organizations and dedicate the political and financial support they need to keep women in our country alive.

●(1010)

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, similar to others that have been presented, I have a petition from dozens of Canadians who believe the government's attestation requiring Canada summer jobs program applicants to hold the same

views as the government would contravene the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They call upon the Prime Minister to defend the freedoms of conscience, thought and belief by withdrawing the attestation requirement for applicants to the Canada summer jobs program.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 2026.

[Text]

Question No. 2026—**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:**

With regard to the government's decision to resume funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): (a) has the government put in place enhanced due diligence and accountability measures with respect to the educational needs of Palestinian children and youth, and the adopted curriculum; and (b) if the answer in (a) is affirmative, (i) when were the measures established, (ii) what are the measures, (iii) who is responsible within the government for oversight of the implementation of these enhanced due diligence and accountability measures?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

With regard to the government's decision to resume funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, UNRWA, and (a) specifically, Canada exercises enhanced due diligence for all international assistance funding for Palestinians, including UNRWA. All programming and funding mechanisms, including those for the West Bank and Gaza, are thoroughly examined to be consistent with Canadian values and legislation, and to meet the highest standards of accountability.

With regard to (b)(i), Canada has exercised enhanced due diligence and monitored accountability for funding for UNRWA since Canada resumed its support to the UN Agency in 2016.

With regard to (b)(ii), Canada's enhanced due diligence activities include strong anti-terrorism provisions in funding agreements, ongoing oversight, regular site visits, and a systematic screening process.

Routine Proceedings

Canada and UNRWA have agreed to a framework for cooperation that outlines shared commitments and Canada's expectations regarding the implementation of UNRWA's reform initiatives, regular monitoring and reporting, and compliance with Canadian anti-terrorism requirements. This framework for cooperation is publicly available on the Global Affairs Canada Internet site: http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/where-ou/gac_un_unrwa-amc_nu_unrwa.aspx?lang=eng.

Canada's funding also contributes to UNRWA's neutrality activities, which include regular inspections of the agency's facilities by specially trained UNRWA officers who can identify, report, and take action on violations of neutrality; training for UNRWA staff on neutrality, including in social media, and for senior staff on how to carry out effective installation inspections; promotion of students' knowledge and skills reflecting United Nations, UN, values, including human rights, conflict resolution, gender equality and tolerance, through educational activities and materials; and UNRWA's development, distribution and use of additional educational materials, as part of the agency's approach to enable teachers to promote neutrality. This support also builds on funding Canada provided from 2017 to 2019 to hire a neutrality coordinator to monitor activities and respond promptly to allegations of neutrality violations.

This assistance demonstrates how Canada and UNRWA are working together to ensure respect for the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, operational independence and impartiality. This is essential to the effective delivery of its work and to Canada's continued support to UNRWA.

In addition, our funding enables us to be an active member of UNRWA's advisory commission. We continue to work on a regular basis with UNRWA and other donor governments to advance reforms related to governance, effectiveness, monitoring and financial administration. Canada's participation provides an opportunity for oversight, influence and engagement on key issues. Canada will continue to take all allegations of neutrality violations very seriously.

It is a long-standing policy for UNRWA to use the textbooks of the jurisdiction in which UNRWA schools operate. This allows students to sit for local exams. UNRWA has in place a formal framework to review all textbooks and, where needed, provides additional training for teachers to address any problematic issues related to neutrality, bias, gender equality or age appropriateness.

With regard to (b)(iii), monitoring and oversight are conducted by Global Affairs Canada officials and implementing partners. Each funding instrument requires partner organizations, including UNRWA, to provide regular reporting on work plans and activities, financial records, and results achieved. Global Affairs Canada officials reserve the right to request additional information or clarification from partners as needed, to ensure compliance with the terms of funding instruments, to manage risks, to assess results or to obtain further financial details.

Given that UNRWA has operations in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, the Government of Canada officials based across the region closely monitor project activities and results.

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[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 2025 and 2027 to 2029 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2025—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the government's announcement on October 23, 2018, relating to how it will implement a federal carbon tax on provinces that do not want it: what are the government's projected administration costs related to a federal carbon tax for each of the next five years, broken down by type of expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2027—**Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to the February 2018 trip to India taken by the Prime Minister and other ministers: (a) what is the latest total of all costs incurred related to the trip; and (b) what are the details of all contracts and invoices related to the trip which were not previously revealed in the government's response to Q-1835, including (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of goods or services provided, (v) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2028—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the response by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness in question period on October 26, 2018, that a matter was before the courts in response to a question about the date on which James Cudmore was offered a job by the Minister of National Defence: is it the government's position that the matter of the Minister's job offer to James Cudmore is an issue currently before the courts and, if so, what court is currently considering the matter?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2029—**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:**

With regard to the impact of increased fuel cost as a result of the federal carbon tax on the Canadian Forces: (a) what was the total amount spent on fuel by the Canadian Forces in the 2017-18 fiscal year; (b) what is the projected increase in the amount spent on fuel by the Canadian Forces as a result of the carbon tax for each of the next five years; and (c) what are the projected total fuel expenditures for each of the next five years?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]*

BILL C-76—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to the Senate amendment to Bill C-76, an Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make certain consequential amendments, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill; and

That fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration of the Senate amendment of said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so disappointed to see this happen yet again. I believe this is the 50th time the current government has shut down the ability of members of Parliament to speak, in only three short years.

The Liberals came in on this self-righteous platform that they were going to be respecting Parliament and not moving time allocation and not shutting down debate, and this is the 50th time they have done it. They are doing it on a bill that would be rigging the system to help them in the next election. This is unbelievable to see yet again.

We are in our last few days in this beautiful place, which will be shut down for a number of years. This is what the Liberals are leaving us to remember them by as we head off into the Christmas holidays: that this is the 50th time in only three years they are cutting off our ability to speak on behalf of our constituents.

How in the world can these Liberals say they respect Parliament, that they respect democracy and that they respect fairness? If this is their example, we really are in big trouble.

● (1015)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us just be clear what we are debating today. We are debating a technical amendment made in the Senate that was a reflection of an all-party committee in the House of Commons. All political parties put forward this amendment, which would ensure the banning of foreign funding for partisan advertising at all times. This is very simply a technical amendment that would ensure this applies during the election period as well.

There was a drafting error when the amendment was made in the procedure and House affairs committee, and this was an amendment all three political parties put forward. It is something that reflects the spirit of this place, because it is something we all agree on.

That is why we are doing this. We need to make sure this is in place so that we do not have any foreign funding in the upcoming election.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is important to ask the Minister of Democratic Institutions a question about democracy here in the House. Yesterday, there were Liberal members who did not show up to the industry committee because they were told to listen to the Prime Minister's speech. What ended up happening is we did not have quorum, and witnesses had to wait for over an hour.

When we finally reconvened, the Liberal members said they were basically told by the whip to listen to the Prime Minister here in the chamber, instead of attending our committee.

We had people who had flown in and people on video conference for the meeting. The subsequent result was that we could only have five minutes each for rounds of questioning with the witnesses. One of them was Ticketmaster, which I had a particular interest in hearing from with regard to consumer rights and protection.

I would like to ask the Minister of Democratic Institutions why the whip would insist members stay to listen, and why the party would not even send one Liberal member so we could have quorum and hear from witnesses. I would like her to comment on the expenses and time associated with this sham.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, today we are here to talk about Bill C-76 and the proposed elections modernization act. I know this is just as important for the New Democrats as it is for the Liberals. We have had great collaboration working with the members for Skeena—Bulkley Valley and Hamilton Centre. They put forward some great suggestions.

This bill is really a reflection of the hard work of parliamentarians, and particularly the procedure and House affairs committee, which spent the better part of a year studying the recommendations from the CEO of Elections Canada. Eighty-five per cent of those recommendations are in this legislation. It is precisely because of the hard work of parliamentarians on committees, in this place and in the other place that we have what is an excellent bill.

I quote the CEO of Elections Canada, who said, “Bill C-76 remains, overall, an essential piece of legislation”. He has encouraged all parliamentarians to get this done by the time this place rises for the Christmas holidays, to ensure it can be in place for 2019.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be able to be here today on what is one of our last days in this beautiful building.

The government talks about the fact that we are here today looking at drafting errors and correcting drafting errors in its legislation. This is not the first time we have done this. We have done this a dozen different times. The government has written legislation and confidently set it forward, and then it has turned out that there are all kinds of problems and issues and errors in it. I think it is a reflection of the current government's continuing incompetence.

Government Orders

It is not just this one issue. We can look at the things the Liberals promised when they were elected that they have not been able to fulfill or that they have run away from. We have talked a lot about balanced budgets in the last few days in the House and the failure of the government to keep its promises. We are all familiar with the small-business tax hike, the attack on the small-business community, that was only turned back after Canadians across the country spoke up and rebelled against the government. There was the first electoral reform disaster, a commitment the Liberals made and could not keep. Of course, there is the carbon tax, which everyone is familiar with.

Is this rigged election bill really the right way for us to finish our time in this beautiful building before we move out for the Christmas season and for the next years?

•(1020)

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-76 is incredibly important, because it would ensure that all Canadians would have the right to vote. I, for one, on this side of the House, firmly believe that a Canadian citizen has the right to vote, and we should ensure that it is possible. That is why Bill C-76 is important and why it would reverse many of the changes made under the previous government's so-called Fair Elections Act, which Statistics Canada estimated made it so that more than 170,000 Canadians were not able to cast their ballots. I do not think that is right, Canadians do not think that is right, and that is why Bill C-76 is so important.

I would remind my hon. colleague that this is a technical amendment from the other place because of amendments brought forward by all parties in this place at the procedure and House affairs committee. This is an amendment that we all agree on, because it is important to ensure that we do not have foreign funding. I have had great conversations with members of the Conservative Party on the procedure and House affairs committee who did a really good job bringing forward important amendments that have strengthened this bill.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise for what will likely be the last time in this place before it closes for renovations.

I am very sensitive to the irony of getting up on a time allocation motion for a bill having to do with the Canada Elections Act, of all things. Time allocation is something that, in the last Parliament, Liberal members were quick to point out should never be done because the Elections Act is one of the basic instruments of democracy in Canada. It is important that the Elections Act not only not favour one group over another within Parliament but that it not be seen to be doing that. That is why the process around it is so important and why it is so important to get everyone on board.

We have seen, despite the flowery speech from the Prime Minister yesterday about Centre Block and what has happened here, a pattern of disrespect for Parliament. We can think of some of the early indications with respect to Motion No. 6. We can think of the government's treatment of the good work on electoral reform and change done by the Special Committee on Electoral Reform, which was essentially thrown into the wastebasket by the government the day it was delivered. We can think of the super-closure motion on the legislation to legislate Canada Post workers back to work, which undermined not just parliamentary democracy but another form of democracy, which is collective bargaining in the workplace.

The minister is stressing the nature of the technical amendment we are making and the fact that all parties supported it at PROC in the House of Commons, but there is another irony, which is that she is relying on an undemocratic institution, the Senate, having done that work, because the government would not accept that work in the actual democratic House. Why is it that we have to depend on an undemocratic house to get changes to our democratic instruments here in Canada?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I need to clarify something for my hon. colleague. It was actually the intention of the procedure and House affairs committee to include this. There was a drafting error. It is not that the procedure and House affairs committee did not notice this; it is that it was simply a drafting error. It was something brought forward by all members of the committee, including the NDP.

Of course, I am glad to note, as well, that the NDP supported this piece of legislation at third reading in the House. I hope it will do so today, because it is important and it contains elements that both of our parties feel very strongly about. Ultimately, this is about Canadians and Canadians' ability and right to cast their ballots and ensuring that they are doing that in an accessible way.

It is extraordinarily important that we get this done. We are talking about a couple of words that would make sure that there would be no foreign funding for issue advertising during the writ period, something we can all get behind. That was the intention of the amendments brought forward at the procedure and House affairs committee. It is important that we get this done.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this will be the last chance I get to speak in this chamber, at least for a decade, but that is Ottawa time. We never know.

It is ironic that we are speaking on a closure motion. With the changes the minister is bringing forward, she is not fooling anyone. It is being called the election-rigging act.

One thinks of the incompetence over and over again of the government. As we know, there was a horrible announcement in Oshawa. Yesterday workers in Sudbury found out that Bombardier, a Canadian company, has not been successful in bidding on an infrastructure project, and the trains are going to be built in California. It is a testament to the government's incompetence over and over again.

Does the minister really think Canadians are going to be fooled by what the Liberals have brought forward and that Canadians have confidence in the government, when it consistently says one thing and does another?

•(1025)

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the House that it was, in fact, the Conservative Party that filibustered this piece of legislation every step of the way in committee. We would absolutely have preferred to have more time in the House to debate this piece of legislation. However, the Conservative Party made that extraordinarily difficult.

Government Orders

On this side of the House, and I believe we share this with Canadians, we want people to vote. We do not want voter-suppression tactics. We do not want ways to discourage people. It was the highest voter turnout in 2015, because Canadians wanted to get rid of the previous government. That is why so many people came out to vote. They wanted representatives in this place who would fight for their rights, who would stand up for their fundamental charter right to cast their ballots and vote. That is what this government is delivering, that is what is important to Canadians and that is what we are going to ensure will be in place for 2019.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has been very brave about trampling on the charter rights of the labour movement and trampling collective bargaining by railroading through the House, at top speed, back-to-work legislation for postal workers, so that is hard to hear from the democratic reform minister.

The Chief Electoral Officer was very clear with the Liberal government that to put in place changes to the Conservatives' unfair elections act in time for them to be fully implemented for the 2019 election, one year from now, it had to have legislation adopted this past April. It was the day after the deadline set by the Chief Electoral Officer that the Liberal government introduced its bill in the House, completely missing the deadline. Now here we are, 10 months later, ramming it through, again shortening debate and applying time allocation, something the Liberals in opposition said they would never do in the way the Conservatives had.

If the democratic reform minister had actually met the deadline set very clearly by the Chief Electoral Officer, would she be needing to use these undemocratic techniques today to get the Canada Elections Act adopted in time?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise, as I know this is probably the last day for my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith in this place. I have enjoyed working with her over the past few years. She is a tremendous colleague, and I wish her much luck in her future endeavours in British Columbia.

With regard to the bill we are debating today, let me remind the House that, in fact, this legislation was passed at third reading stage in this place at the end of October. We are simply debating a very minor technical amendment that has very important ramifications for the election. The entirety of the bill remains as is. We are adding two words, but it is important to ensure that there is no foreign funding when it comes to issue advertising in our elections, an amendment that was proposed by all parties at the procedure and House affairs committee. It is something we all agree on and that will absolutely strengthen this bill, our democracy and elections in 2019.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me this time, which may be my last time in this wonderful building.

I do not think we see the current government trying to increase the turnout of voters in the next election. Rather, it is trying to enhance its chances to win the next election by rigging the system, which is the way it appears when we look at every element of the bill.

What does the minister say about some non-citizens receiving calls from Liberal candidates saying that they can vote in 2019,

when they are still not citizens? We have had so many complaints at our offices. I would like the minister's comment on that.

• (1030)

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, that is a lot of conjecture coming from the member opposite. This bill absolutely will increase the number of Canadians who will be able to vote, but let me underscore “Canadian”. A Canadian is a citizen. That is very important to remember.

What this bill would do are two very important things. First, it would enable Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to share information with Elections Canada to ensure that non-citizens were not on the voters list. This is an improvement that was not there previously. Second, it would ensure that we would be enabling vouching and that voter information cards could be used for our most vulnerable Canadians who do not have the kind of mainstream identification many Canadians have. This is important. I believe, and I think members across the way would agree, that our most vulnerable Canadians are the ones we need to be voting, because their voices are important when it comes to social policy and decisions we are making in this place.

With respect to the erroneous information the member opposite provided, he is going on a Toronto Sun piece about how Elections Canada sends out voter information cards and ensures that it is cleaning up the voters list. This is a very important thing to correct. Canadian citizens are not able to do this. It was not voter information cards that were sent out; it was voter registration cards. They are not sent to specific individuals. They are sent to households, because there are millions of Canadians who move between elections, and it wants to have—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has indicated many reasons why this is great legislation that will enhance Canada's democracy. What we have seen, whether at first reading, second reading, committee stage, third reading and so on, is that the Conservatives have one objective, which is to prevent this legislation from passing. That is very clear. Those individuals who see this legislation as good legislation should be supporting the government's measures, even with respect to time allocation, to get this through, because if we do not have time allocation, the Conservatives will not allow it to pass.

What would my colleague, the minister responsible, recommend to our New Democratic friends who have supported time allocation in the past? Would she recommend, if they support the legislation, because the Conservatives do not want this to ever come to a vote, that they support time allocation on this bill?

Government Orders

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I would absolutely encourage the New Democrats to support this bill at this stage as well, because we both have principles and objectives here that we think are important for Canadians. I hope they will continue to support the legislation at the other stages.

I am also going to use this opportunity to continue my previous answer, because it is very important that Canadians have the correct information. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have been sending out incorrect information. They have not been telling the truth with respect to this bill. That is really important for Canadians to hear, because this legislation is about ensuring that Canadians have the right and the ability to cast their ballots. It will only be Canadian citizens, as is the case currently, who are able to cast their ballots. If non-Canadian citizens cast ballots, that is an illegal offence, and they will be held to account for it. It is extraordinarily important that we do not fearmonger, that we do not spread misinformation and that we tell the truth when it comes to our elections.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to be more honest on this. She knows full well that voter ID cards are going out across this country to non-citizens. She knows that. Therefore, when she stands up and says that only Canadian citizens can vote, technically that is correct, but she knows that the system is failing Canadians. Our act required that only Canadians would be the ones who voted, and they needed to have ID to show that. However, the Liberals would remove that requirement with this bill.

These voter ID cards are notoriously inaccurate. Everyone knows that. A year ahead of an election, non-citizens are already getting those notices and will be able to vote. Instead of acknowledging there is a problem and addressing it, the minister is misleading Canadians by trying to convince them there is none.

Canadians' right to vote needs to be protected, and that means that only Canadians should be voting. The minister has a bigger responsibility here. I wonder why the Liberals are failing to protect that right of Canadians so that only they are the ones voting for their leaders.

•(1035)

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, there was so much wrong in the member's speech.

First of all, they are voter information cards, and not voter identification cards. They are used to establish residency in conjunction with another piece of identification that confirms identity.

The other part of this, as I literally just said, is that one must be a Canadian citizen in order to cast a ballot. The information that the Conservatives are trying to spread about non-Canadians receiving cards has already been clarified by Elections Canada. In fact, the article in the Toronto Sun that the Conservatives cite had to be corrected, because it did not provide correct information. It is very important that we do not misinform Canadians with regards to voting and that we clarify the information and ensure that we provide truthful information.

It is so important that Canadians are empowered to cast their ballot, because that is their opportunity to decide who will be

representing them here in this place. We need to be honest with the information we are sharing. We absolutely want as many Canadians as possible to cast their ballot in 2019.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on a point that was brought up by the opposition House leader with respect to time allocation. To make the point, I want to go back to the throne speech in November, 2015, just after the sunny ways, which have turned into dark clouds, and the Liberal government's misleading of Canadians about its policies on multiple issues, including this particular one. This is what the Prime Minister wrote in the throne speech delivered by the Governor General:

And to give Canadians a stronger voice in the House of Commons, the Government will promote more open debate and free votes, and reform and strengthen committees.

Also notable are the things the Government will not do: it will not use government ads for partisan purposes; it will not interfere with the work of parliamentary officers; and it will not resort to devices like prorogation and omnibus bills to avoid scrutiny.

We have seen a lot of that happen over the course of this Parliament in this hallowed chamber. Is it not true that the government is using Bill C-76 to mislead Canadians and to rig the next election?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite is confused, because he is recalling Bill C-23 from the previous Parliament that the Conservatives brought in, the so-called Fair Elections Act, which was roundly criticized across the country, indeed, around world, because it used voter suppression tactics seen in other jurisdictions.

It is extraordinarily important that we pass Bill C-76, because I, and I believe many people in the House irrespective of party, hold the principle of Canadians voting dear and believe they should go to the polls and cast their ballots.

On this side of the House, we are not afraid of Canadians going to the polls. We are not afraid of empowering more Canadians to vote. Indeed, that fundamental right is what drives this legislation, and Canadians are at the core and heart of it.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I had an opportunity to visit Winnipeg a couple of years ago, I met a gentleman living in a homeless shelter who wanted to vote for my colleague for Winnipeg Centre. He ended up going to a Money Mart and paying for a photo ID, because he did not have a driver's licence or anything with his photo on it, and he was living in a homeless shelter. To be able to vote for my colleague, he had to pay money that he did not have, because of the legislation the Conservatives brought in.

I wonder if the minister thinks that someone should have to take money out of their own pocket and pay to vote. It shows how dedicated that gentleman was to voting that he spent money he did not have, which he could have used for food or to save to get his own place to live.

•(1040)

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, the question by the hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington is at the core of what Bill C-76 is trying to do. It is trying to ensure dignity for all Canadians when they want to go to cast their ballot.

Government Orders

I do not know about my colleagues, but I have scrutinized at polling stations and seen someone who was going to cast their ballot being refused. It might be someone who just got the courage to vote. Even though voting is a relatively simple thing, it can actually be quite scary and daunting the first time, especially for people who do not feel like they are necessarily included in society. It is extraordinarily important to ensure that people have their dignity and feel empowered to go to vote with confidence.

Section 3 of the charter guarantees our right to vote. That is what this bill is achieving and that is what this bill is protecting and—

The Deputy Speaker: I will try to get two more questions in.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this bill includes hundreds of amendments because it was so deeply flawed. It was all put under time allocation, not just here in the House but also at committee, which the Liberals previously argued vociferously against.

This is not just a historic day as this place begins its final hours before undergoing renovations, but also a day of irony that the last bill passing this chamber is about the foundations of our democracy, how we vote and how our votes are counted.

It also must be somewhat ironic for the minister, because her first act as minister was to fall on her sword for the Prime Minister and break the electoral reform promise. That was the first thing. The last thing the minister will be doing is passing a democratic bill through the House while restricting debate on the bill, which the Liberals said no one should ever do. It is unfortunate. However, the reason for that happening is that there was so much delay. The minister knows that as well as I.

My one question is this. As we look ahead, the Liberals put very little in the bill to protect Canadians against hacking by foreign governments. As we are seeing what is happening with China, Russia and all of these foreign nations right now, does the minister not believe, as her own members at the ethics and information committee believe, that political parties must be subject to privacy laws, not just suggestions or posting something on their websites, but under privacy laws as the Liberals at their own committee agreed just yesterday?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for his hard work on this file. It has been a privilege to work with him. We are here representing Canadians and it is a real honour and privilege to do just that.

In Bill C-76, there are important measures with regard to privacy, as my colleague mentioned, but also with regard to ensuring that there is no foreign funding or foreign interference in our next election. It is integral and imperative that we pass Bill C-76 in order to protect our upcoming election in the next year.

I welcome and congratulate the members of the ethics committee for their excellent report and investigation that garnered international headlines for the good work they did. I am currently reviewing their recommendations and I thank them for that work. As I have always said, I welcome further study on this issue.

I look forward to carrying on this discussion. Members from all parties did truly excellent work and I am sure that we can continue to work together in the future to ensure that we get this right.

The Deputy Speaker: I did say that I would try to get two more questions in, but we have actually run out of time.

That being the case, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1120)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 981)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Gameau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardie

Speaker's Ruling

Harvey
 Hehr
 Holland
 Hutchings
 Joly
 Jordan
 Khalid
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Levitt
 Lockhart
 Ludwig
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Soeurs)
 Monsef
 Morrissey
 Nassif
 Ng
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Paradis
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poissant
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Romanado
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Sangha
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Spengemann
 Tan
 Trudeau
 Vandenbeld
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
 Yip
 Zahid— 167

Hébert
 Hogg
 Housefather
 Iacono
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 LeBouthillier
 Leslie
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 Maloney
 McDonald
 McKay
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
 Momeau
 Murray
 Nault
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Pescholido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Qualtrough
 Rioux
 Rogers
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Vandal
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Young

Kitchen
 Kusie
 Laverdière
 Lobb
 MacGregor
 Malcolmson
 Masse (Windsor West)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Motz
 Nater
 O'Toole
 Quach
 Rempel
 Schmale
 Sorenson
 Ste-Marie
 Stubbs
 Trost
 Viersen
 Warawa
 Waugh
 Weir
 Yurdiga

Kmiec
 Kwan
 Lloyd
 Lukiwski
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 Mathysen
 McColeman
 Moore
 Nantel
 Nicholson
 Paul-Hus
 Reid
 Saroya
 Shields
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Van Kesteren
 Wagantall
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wong
 Zimmer— 98

PAIRED

Members

Cormier Pauzé— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

● (1125)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF MEMBERS—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on December 4, 2018, by the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley concerning certain responses to Oral Questions.

[Translation]

I want to thank the member for having raised the question, as well as the Parliamentary Secretary to Government House Leader and the members for Portage—Lisgar and Timmins—James Bay for their observations.

[English]

The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley maintained that during question period on December 3 and 4, in response to questions about members of the Liberal caucus, the Prime Minister and the government House leader threatened opposition members with legal proceedings if they repeated their allegations outside of the House. He felt that this constituted intimidation that could prevent the opposition from holding the government to account and therefore a violation of his privileges.

[Translation]

For his part, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader reminded members that the privilege of free speech comes with a sense of responsibility for any remarks made. He argued that the question raised was simply a disagreement as to facts.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
 Alleslev
 Arnold
 Bergen
 Bezan
 Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brosseau
 Cannings
 Carrie
 Choquette
 Clarke
 Cullen
 Doherty
 Dubé
 Dusseault
 Eglinski
 Gallant
 Généreux
 Gill
 Godin
 Hardcastle
 Hughes
 Johns
 Julian

Albrecht
 Anderson
 Barlow
 Berthold
 Blaikie
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Brassard
 Calkins
 Caron
 Chong
 Christopherson
 Cooper
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Falk (Provencher)
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Gourde
 Hoback
 Jeneroux
 Jolibois
 Kelly

Government Orders

[English]

I wish to remind the House that members enjoy absolute immunity when speaking during our deliberations. Free speech, a cornerstone of the rights and parliamentary privileges accorded to members is, as explained in citation 75 of the sixth edition of Beauchesne at page 22, "...both the least questioned and the most fundamental right of the Member of Parliament on the floor of the House and in committee."

[Translation]

But while it is essential to the functioning of our parliamentary business, the word "free" cannot be thought to be synonymous with "limitless". Speaker Fraser stated on May 5, 1987, at page 5766 of the Debates:

Such a privilege confers grave responsibilities on those who are protected by it... All Hon. Members are conscious of the care they must exercise in availing themselves of their absolute privilege of freedom of speech. That is why there are long-standing practices and traditions observed in this House to counter the potential for abuse.

[English]

While the allegation in question should call for serious reflection, I do not have the power to comment on the scope of the answers given by the government nor to rule on the disagreement existing between the members as to the interpretation to be given to the facts. Speaker Jerome affirmed this on June 4, 1975, at page 6431 of *Debates*:

...a dispute as to facts, a dispute as to opinions and a dispute as to conclusions to be drawn from an allegation of fact is a matter of debate and not a question of privilege.

[Translation]

The third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, at page 148, makes it clear that my role is rather limited to, and I quote:

...take into account the extent to which the matter complained of infringed upon any Member's ability to perform his or her parliamentary functions...

[English]

In the present case, the member has not demonstrated to the Chair that he was prevented from speaking in parliamentary proceedings and therefore unable to perform his parliamentary duties. Accordingly, I cannot find that there is a prima facie breach of privilege.

That being said, everyone must consider the content of their remarks in the House. Members, of course, have broad freedom of speech, but we must never forget the potential effect of the words spoken during the vigorous debates that animate the House. Self-restraint and the utmost of respect are required in all circumstances.

● (1130)

[Translation]

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP ACT

BILL C-421—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: On Thursday, December 6, 2018, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented its 80th report

to the House. In its report, the committee recommended that Bill C-421, an act to amend the Citizenship Act in regard to the adequate knowledge of French in Quebec, standing in the name of the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, be designated non-votable.

Pursuant to Standing Order 92(4), the member appealed the committee's decision by filing with the Speaker a motion to that effect signed by himself and at least five other members of the House representing a majority of the recognized parties in the House.

[English]

I wish to inform the House that the appeal of the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île in relation to the designation of Bill C-421 meets the requirements of Standing Order 92(4). Accordingly, I direct that a secret ballot be held on Tuesday, January 29 and Wednesday, January 30, 2019, on the following motion:

That Bill C-421, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (adequate knowledge of French in Quebec) be declared votable.

* * *

[Translation]

ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed from December 12 consideration of the motion in relation to the amendment made by the Senate to Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make certain consequential amendments, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

[English]

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley has four minutes remaining in questions and comments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have before us is very positive legislation that will have a positive impact on democracy in Canada.

I know from personal experience, whether it is the voter identification card or many other aspects of the legislation that the minister has brought forward, that it will assist in enabling more participation in elections.

A good majority of the recommendations that were brought forward in from the previous chief electoral officer have been incorporated. This is good legislation. Given the significance of the day, and many have commented that this might even be the last day in this beautiful chamber for the next 10 years, it is appropriate that we are debating this bill. It is positive legislation that will enhance Canada's democracy.

Could the member provide a comment?

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is some history being made, an ironic sense of history, because the Liberals have put the bill under time allocation. When my friend sat in opposition, he said that it was a horrible thing for the then Harper government to do. Yes, it is historical, but it is also ironic.

Government Orders

I said to the government consistently that we needed to put all political parties under privacy laws. That was a recommendation from the Chief Electoral Officer, the Privacy Commissioner and the study that was commissioned by the minister herself of our spy agencies to prevent the threat of foreign hacks into our elections, as happened in the Brexit vote and the recent U.S. federal election. The Liberals ignored all of that and said they wanted to study that threat some more. What a great thing to do with a threat.

This place is historic and it does deserve our respect. Passing a bill this way, with this major flaw missing in the bill's entire composition, is an unfortunate way to commend this place to the renovation nigh for some number of years.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to hear my colleague's thoughts on some of the remarks by the minister today. She made a lot of the fact that what had come back from the Senate was, effectively, a technical amendment, that all parties supported it and that it was a drafting error. She said that the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs had been looking at this issue for a year or more.

As I understand it, PROC did not have this bill for a year. It is a huge bill with a lot in it. It was time allocated in the House and in committee. That kind of rushing to get things done, particularly after the Liberals sat on their hands for over two years in bringing forward some of these important reforms, is exactly the way we end up with technical errors in a bill. When the government tries to ram a huge omnibus bill through the House and committee, that is how these kinds of mistakes are made.

Now we are being told we need to move this through the House quickly. Could my colleague give us a little perspective on the process that has gotten us here?

• (1135)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, how we got here is the problem. The Liberals sat on the bill for hundreds of days and sat on the previous version of the bill for hundreds more days, having wasted almost three years in the process. Elections Canada gave a deadline over 200 days ago for the legislation to pass, so now not all of this bill will be incorporated. That was the problem.

One would think, after the Liberals betrayed their promise on electoral reform, the very next thing they would do to undo the unfair elections act by the Harper government would have been to get on with it, the urgency of now, but they did not.

Now we have the Senate fixing a democratic bill for the House that was passed. It is a shame, unfortunate and entirely due to the lack of any sense of responsibility or urgency on the part of the government.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-76, the elections modernization act, with my esteemed colleagues.

This bill would be a generational change to the Canada Elections Act. Many of the changes proposed in this bill are long overdue and would fulfill long-standing recommendations from the Chief Electoral Officer to adapt the administration of Canada's federal elections to a modern age.

Bill C-76 contains measures on four important themes. First, the bill seeks to make the electoral process more transparent to Canadians. Second, it aims to enhance the accessibility of elections to all Canadians. Third, it would update the Canada Elections Act to adapt to the ways in which our elections have changed. Fourth, it seeks to strengthen the security and integrity of Canadian elections.

I now wish to discuss the themes in greater detail to remind my colleagues of what exactly the bill proposes to do, and how. With the introduction of fixed election dates in 2007, elections can begin in earnest well before the official writ is dropped. To address this, Bill C-76 would introduce a pre-election period. When all political entities know that an election is likely to be held on the third Monday of October in an election year, they are able to spend large sums of money in the medium term right before an election with no regulatory oversight until the drop of the writ. This new pre-election period would introduce limits on political parties and third parties in the months leading up to the writ period.

Bill C-76 would also introduce new requirements on third parties, including spending limits for the pre-election period, reporting on a greater number of activities and the need to register with Elections Canada when spending more than \$500 on partisan activities or election advertising. Additionally, new reporting mechanisms for third parties to occur during the election campaign, rather than after, would ensure Canadians have a clearer look at how these entities spend money before they vote.

The bill would also limit the actual election period to 50 days, which would help us avoid a long-drawn-out campaign like in 2015. Combined with the elimination of a pro-rated increase for spending limits, this bill would save taxpayers money. This bill would also help make the electoral process more accessible for Canadians.

Great care has been used in determining groups of Canadians who may face barriers when exercising their right to vote, including electors with disabilities, electors who have trouble producing identification, electors who are living abroad and electors in the Canadian Armed Forces. New measures in Bill C-76 would aid these specific groups in exercising their franchise, along with improving general accessibility for all Canadians.

The bill would reform many of the provisions allowing for people to vote outside of the polling station, and would redefine what can constitute an accessible polling place. For people who may have trouble producing appropriate identification, Bill C-76 would reintroduce provisions of vouching for an elector's identity or residence. Additionally, the Chief Electoral Officer would be able to approve the voter identification card as proof of residence.

Government Orders

There are appropriate protections in place for these changes, so Canadians would be assured that the security of the election would not be sacrificed. Additionally, changes would be made to allow Canadians who have been living outside of Canada for over five years to vote. Once again, the bill would make the electoral process more accessible for all Canadians. This would include candidates and young Canadians.

Bill C-76 would introduce new expense reimbursements to provide support to candidates with families and candidates with disabilities, or those who may care for someone with a disability. These changes come from the recommendations of the Chief Electoral Officer, and should simplify the administrative hoops that candidates are required to jump through in order to run their campaigns.

• (1140)

Additionally, the bill would enable the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a register of future electors. There are an estimated 1.5 million Canadians aged 14 to 17 who would be able to register with Elections Canada. Once they reach the age of 18, they would seamlessly be transferred to the register of electors and be ready to exercise their right to vote.

I also want to mention that I will be splitting my time with the member for Guelph.

The register of future electors would be totally secure, separate from the established register and completely voluntary. This register would be an excellent way to engage young Canadians and harness interest in politics.

Regarding the administration of the election, Bill C-76 also makes changes that would have an impact throughout the entire delivery of the election. In the past, there was a degree of prescriptiveness, which was necessary, in the Canada Elections Act. However, this prescriptiveness has evolved from a necessity to a detriment. The bill would give the Chief Electoral Officer greater ability to organize the election in a more efficient and fair manner. These changes would impact polling-place procedures and address a number of issues causing long lines at the polls.

Last, Bill C-76 would bolster the security and integrity of our elections. The bill would make it more difficult for third parties to use foreign money during elections without facing penalties. I would also note that there are significant changes to the Commissioner of Canada Elections in this bill. The commissioner would now be a part of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer as has been the case through most of our commissioner's history. This relocation would be accompanied by a new compliance mechanism, an administrative monetary penalties regime, which would allow the commissioner to more efficiently allocate resources and would provide him or her with a mechanism to enforce the Canada Elections Act without invoking criminal penalties. The commissioner would also be given the ability to compel testimony, which would streamline his or her investigation of offences against the act.

This is only a rough outline of what Bill C-76 would accomplish. Canadians enjoy a high degree of confidence in our elections, which is especially important in these fractious times. We are convinced

that Bill C-76 would help retain this high level of confidence in our elections.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I welcome my friend to the debate around this bill. It is very important, of course, and we have all recognized that its passage is likely one of the last bills, if not the last bill, passed out of Parliament.

We were just discussing with some of the committee members on the privacy and ethics committee that they have completed a large study that supplemented the study that the democratic institutions minister herself asked for from our Canadian spy agency, about the threats to our elections. The minister knows this but for Canadians watching, the parties all collect an enormous amount of information about individual Canadians: voting preference, gender, income and all sorts of things to best understand the voter. Parties pursue voters to try to get them to vote a certain way and we can understand why parties want to do that. That is the name of the game. The member's party, after the last election, congratulated itself about how good it was at collecting that data.

Here is the problem. That data is not falling under any restrictions or laws in terms of its protection from foreign actors or from individuals trying to hack that data, as was done with the Democrats and probably the Republicans and as was done in the Brexit scenario with Cambridge Analytica and all the rest.

This bill would do nothing to protect that privacy of Canadians or protect our democracy from that foreign influence from bad actors, domestically or internationally. Is that protection not something we should put in, if we have the research and the study and information available that there is a real and present threat to our democracy? Why do a democracy bill and omit that important piece, if not for partisan interests?

• (1145)

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his work on this committee and on this piece of legislation. I would like to point out that the NDP and my colleagues across the way have been very supportive every step of the way when it comes to the passage of Bill C-76. They were enthusiastic to see the voter identification card being placed back into this legislation. They were happy to see the so-called Fair Elections Act be reversed through this piece of legislation. I am grateful for all the hard work they have done in supporting this legislation.

I understand the worry of my colleague. All has not been lost. I know the minister and our government take foreign interference very seriously and will look into this issue. This bill has made steps toward that. No foreign actors would be allowed to participate financially in our elections and also for all those who are advertising on platforms such as Facebook or any other platforms, all would be made transparent. These are big steps toward transparency in our elections and also in deterring those foreign actors from—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments. The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Government Orders

Mr. Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that change was made to the identification requirements of the so-called Fair Elections Act was to prevent people with insufficient identification voting fraudulently in elections.

I would like to ask the hon. member this. Has there been any documented instance in Canadian history of any significant voter fraud that has had any influence on an election?

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of misinformation and fear raised about this issue. Of course, on all aisles of this House, we want our elections to be safe and integral. However, as a member of the procedure and House affairs committee that passed this piece of legislation and went through over 300 amendments, we failed to see any instances where this was reported. The Chief Electoral Officer also said on record that this was not a concern that he had seen in any past election.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that the last question from a Liberal member to his own colleague seems to disregard the case law on this very fact of voting, voting fraud and voting irregularities. He should speak to his friend from Etobicoke, because there is a leading Supreme Court case on this called *Opitz v. Wrzesnewskyj*. I can say the case name in this House I think. In that case, the Supreme Court of Canada determined there were issues related to irregularities and fraud. At paragraph 43 of the decision it equated them.

I will quote the Supreme Court of Canada for that member, which states:

In associating the word “irregularity” with those words, Parliament must have contemplated mistakes and administrative errors that are serious and capable of undermining the integrity of the electoral process.

In many ways, fraud or serious irregularities with an election undermine the democratic process. Therefore, I would ask the member this. By enhancing more voting from people with no connection to Canada after many years, and by allowing the voter identification card to be a substitute for the 30-plus types of identification for use, is the government not enshrining more irregularities into the electoral process?

● (1150)

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question so I can clarify the misconception that is being put out there by the Conservatives.

The Chief Electoral Officer has said that there was no significant hike in any voter fraud. Also, disenfranchising over a million people from being able to vote is very serious. On this side, we would much rather that people have the ability to vote in our fair election process than disenfranchising them because of one case that may have happened out there.

Therefore, there is no serious threat of voter fraud. The voter identification card does not replace the need for any other ID. Rather, it is one of two IDs that would be required. Voters would still require photo identification, as well as something with an address. This provides that proof of address. Therefore, it is not the ID needed alone to vote. I feel that is the misconception that has been put out there. Let us have people vote and have their voices heard. This is Canada after all.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to take the floor today to continue the debate on Bill C-76, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make certain consequential amendments, also known as the elections modernization act.

I am speaking on behalf of my constituents in Guelph who are keenly interested in the changes we are putting forward. Guelph has been a centre for electoral fraud in other elections, so they want to see us take the steps necessary to ensure there are fair elections, especially in my riding of Guelph.

I have participated in debates on this bill in other stages in the House and I am very pleased to be able to weigh in after the Senate has had a chance to look at the bill and we are approaching the final periods of debate in this place.

Bill C-76 does many things that would modernize our electoral system, including making it more secure, more transparent and more accessible. The bill builds on recommendations made by the Chief Electoral Officer following the 42nd general election. It was also informed by the study of his recommendations by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which I was pleased to sit in on for some of those meetings.

It is noteworthy that the bill implements over 85% of the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations, and also of note is that the parties were in agreement with our coming forward with what we have in front of us today.

To set the stage for my comments, I would like to quote the former Chief Electoral Officer in his report:

Over the years, amendments to the Act have added new requirements and new rules, with little regard to the overall burden placed on electors, candidates, parties, volunteers and election workers. In the last decade, changes have been made without taking into account the rapidly shifting technological context; we now need to evaluate whether there are better ways to achieve the same results as in the past.

Those words of our former Chief Electoral Officer frame our discussion today. They are a good illustration of the importance of modernizing our electoral process to bring it into the 21st century.

That is why by implementing the recommendations, Bill C-76 would make the electoral process more efficient for all involved while continuing to protect the integrity of our elections. This includes changes that will affect the candidates. I would like to go through some of those measures, which should be of particular interest to the members of the House.

The Chief Electoral Officer indicated that many aspects of the existing nomination process reflect a view of candidacy that is simply out of step with modern approaches. For example, the requirement for a witness to file the nomination documents suggests that the candidate is only reluctantly accepting the nomination. Bill C-76 proposes to modernize the process for prospective candidates.

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First, the changes to the Canada Elections Act proposed in Bill C-76 would allow either the candidate or a witness to file nomination papers. This change corrects an anachronism and at the same time respects tradition by allowing the candidate to choose who is best placed to file these important documents. While on the subject of filing the nomination papers, I would also note that Bill C-76 would make the necessary legislative amendments to allow Elections Canada to develop an electronic portal to allow the documents to be filed electronically.

Since all those present in the House have been candidates, we can all appreciate how these changes will facilitate the nomination process and bring it into the 21st century by taking advantage of available technologies.

Another key change in Bill C-76 that would affect candidates is the removal of the \$1,000 deposit requirement for prospective candidates. In late October 2017, a court in Alberta held that the candidate nomination deposit was unconstitutional. The government did not appeal the decision and Bill C-76 makes the necessary changes to comply with the decision. This would remove a financial impediment to those participating in the electoral process as candidates. It would align perfectly with a central objective of Bill C-76, namely, to make the electoral process more accessible.

• (1155)

There are other changes affecting candidates that I would like to mention.

There is one relating to the parties' endorsements of candidates. Following Bill C-76, registered political parties will be able to provide Elections Canada with a list of all the candidates they are endorsing during the general election. Previously, parties had to do so individually, in each electoral district for each candidate and with individual returning officers. This is a remnant from a time when the elections administration was highly centralized. There is no reason to allow such a burdensome process to continue in the 21st century. Going forward, returning officers will be able to confirm the endorsement of the candidate in the electoral district simply by looking at a global list provided by the registered political parties. These changes are examples of how Bill C-76 would modernize our electoral process.

Another such example relating to candidates deals identification. I believe that many Canadians would be surprised to learn that while they, as electors, are required to show identification to vote, we, as candidates, are not required to do so for the nomination process. This would change with Bill C-76. Respective candidates would be required to provide proof of identification with their nomination papers. This would not limit their ability to use another name by which they are commonly known, such as a nickname. It only means that if they wished to use a name other than the one that is on their identification, they would need to provide evidence that they are, in fact, known by that name. We believe it is reasonable to ask candidates to provide evidence of their identity as a measure to ensure the integrity of our electoral system.

The last series of changes I would like to note is the amendments that Bill C-76 would bring to the treatment of candidates' expenses during the election period. It is noteworthy that these changes have also been made in response to the recommendations of the Chief

Electoral Officer. Most importantly, changes are being made to the reimbursements of candidates for expenses incurred during the election period for child care or the care of a person with a disability. Following the passage of Bill C-76, these expenses would not be counted towards a candidate's spending limit. The candidate would be allowed to use his or her personal funds to cover these expenses, and they would be reimbursed at 90% instead of the current 60%. We believe this will prove to be an important measure that, once again, would make our elections more accessible to a wider range of candidates, including women and people with disabilities.

During the debates on this important proposed legislation, we talked a lot about the measures related to foreign interference, as in fact mentioned in the previous speech, such as identification requirements for electors and other issues coming from offshore.

I am pleased that the debate today has given me the opportunity to discuss some of the lesser known aspects of the elections modernization act. I think we are heading in the right direction. The Senate has made some good suggestions. The committee was very collaborative and came forward with measures that would really improve our electoral process, including the process relating to candidates.

• (1200)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to a theme that my colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley has been pursuing, and I think quite rightly, with respect to the proposed legislation. For all the pomp and ceremony that we hear from government members about the proposed legislation and how great it is going to be, there are two things I find really objectionable about the bill.

One is the fact that it took so long to get the bill, but then in exchange for the time the government took to prepare the bill and get around to debating it, it said to Parliament that it was somehow our job to review a massive piece of legislation in a very short amount of time. I think there is something fundamentally unfair about that. This is not the only time we have seen this happen, but particularly with legislation on how we conduct our election, I think it is wrong. Therefore, we have a process grievance that perhaps the member would care to address.

Furthermore, for all the time the Liberals took, they did not include anything to obligate political parties to protect the privacy of Canadians' personal information, which we know political parties harvest and use for their own purposes. We have seen some recent very high profile abuses of such information, such as for the Brexit vote and the presidential election in the United States.

Therefore, we have this odd contradiction where there is a really important issue that I think Canadians would like to see addressed, but that has not been addressed in the bill, and the fact that the government took an inordinately long time to prepare the bill and then asked Parliament to rush its approval. I wonder how the member justifies that to this place and to Canadians generally.

Government Orders

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, I have heard from the NDP with regard to other pieces of legislation that we move too slowly. The fact is that we have been very thorough in our review of this legislation. The committee was thorough. The Senate has spent time on it. We would rather get this done right instead of quickly. It is important for us to pass this legislation, though, in a timely way so that we can be prepared for the 2019 election.

In terms of transparency, parties are required to publish their transparency policies. The NDP currently does not have a transparency policy that shows who attends its fundraisers. Would the member consider that as his party goes forward?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, this legislation is going to greatly enhance Canada's democracy, and for that reason, the member should be supportive.

The Conservatives on the other hand oppose this legislation. They will do whatever they can to make sure that it never gets passed. We have had first reading, second reading, committee stage and have gone through report stage and third reading. The Senate has dealt with it also.

Maybe just to draw what would be a natural conclusion, would the member not agree that it is time to get the bill passed?

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North. Winnipeg is my home town and I hope to get there over new year's and see some of my friends in that fine city. Maybe we could even have a coffee at his favourite restaurant, where he is at every Saturday morning at 10 o'clock.

We did a thorough analysis of this legislation in a way that would not advantage one party over another. The bill would empower Elections Canada and the Chief Electoral Officer to administer our elections fairly. It would give them the power to prosecute when our elections are not done fairly, and really to take control of our elections out of the political process and have that power as an independent organization.

All members have contributed to this. All members of the committee put this forward, and so has the Senate. Today, we are really only looking at a technical amendment. There is a small part of the technical amendment that just puts a finer point on the pencil to make sure that we have all of the legislative details covered properly before we go into our next election.

We are in the right place and I look forward to the vote.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am still concerned about one aspect of the bill, despite all the time the government has taken to propose amendments to what they had already proposed in Bill C-33 to protect Canadians' privacy.

Even the Privacy Commissioner said that Bill C-76 adds nothing of substance in terms of privacy protection. For instance, this bill still allows parties to sell Canadians' personal information, so it is not covered by the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

Does my colleague not think that we are moving a little too fast with this bill, considering that the government has rejected some significant amendments?

Also, is it not totally ironic that a so-called electoral reform bill is being rushed through the House of Commons—virtually on the last possible day that Parliament gets to debate in this chamber in 2018—and that it is riddled with so many privacy loopholes?

If we move ahead with this bill, it may not even come into effect in time for the next election. Why not take the time to get it right and make absolutely certain that everyone's privacy is protected?

[*English*]

Mr. Lloyd Longfield: Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning of my speech, 85% of what has come forward has been agreed to by the Chief Electoral Officer. This place will be able to do a review going forward after the next election to see whether there are further changes required.

We have introduced transparency and accountability and have modernized the act. We are in a place where we can have a much better election than we had the last time in terms of participation by all groups, including people overseas, and allowing seniors in residences to have multiple people vouch for them so they can participate in the election.

We are way ahead of where we were, but better is always possible.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak for probably the last time in these hallowed halls. It is an honour to stand once again to speak to what has been deemed amendments to Bill C-76. I am going to focus my speech on Bill C-76, which represents yet another failure of the government.

I want to bring Canadians back to day 10 of the 2015 election, when the member for Papineau, who is now the Prime Minister, said that under his government, debate would reign. The Liberals would not resort to Parliamentary trickery or invoke closure on debate, because every Canadian deserves to have a say.

Here we sit today debating a very important piece of legislation. Over 50 times, the government has invoked closure. I have said this a number of times, but this just shows the contempt of the Prime Minister and his team for this House, and indeed, for electors, electors who vote opposition members in. This House is not the Prime Minister's. It is not the Speaker's, and it is not mine. This House belongs to Canadians and those who elected the 338 members of Parliament to be their voices here in Ottawa.

Government Orders

The message the Prime Minister and his team send when they invoke closure is that if members are on the opposition side, their voices really do not matter, and the electors who elected them really do not matter. That is shameful. That is just one broken promise by the Prime Minister and his team. Bill C-76 is yet another broken promise. The Liberal platform in 2015 called for real change. The Liberals talked about omnibus bills, yet here we have another omnibus bill.

The Liberals talk about wanting to get this bill through. It is important that we get it done for the 2019 election. We have heard testimony from all our colleagues on this side of the House that this is because of the Liberals' failure to manage their legislative agenda. They are now at the eleventh hour having to push this through by invoking closure. They want to get this done before we rise. The Liberals said they would never limit debate, yet here we have seen it over 50 times.

The Liberals also talked about being open and transparent. I believe the member for Papineau, now our Prime Minister, said that his government would be the most open and transparent in the history of our country. Have we ever seen the government be open and transparent? It is so open that if one is a Liberal insider, one will get an appointment. If one is a Liberal family member or a former Liberal colleague, one will get a quota, such as the surf clam quota.

● (1210)

Mr. Speaker, if you can sense a little frustration in my voice, it is because I was elected here, and while the national outcome was not what I had hoped for, I came here with the best intentions. I came here with great hope for all of us, the 338 members of Parliament. We all put our names down with the intention of doing good for our country.

We have seen arrogance. It is not from all members on that side. There are good people on that side, but the front bench has let them down and has let Canada down. I am angry, and Canadians are angry.

The Liberals talk about Bill C-76 making things better for voters. I will bring members back to 2015. We had the highest voter turnout in the 2015 election. They said that somehow Prime Minister Harper was trying to suppress voter turnout, that the changes he made to the Elections Act were somehow going to suppress voter turnout, but we had the highest voter turnout. Speaking of voter ID, we increased the number of acceptable pieces of ID for voters. Not everyone has a driver's licence or a passport.

The hon. colleague who spoke just before me said that as candidates, people have to have ID to show that they are who they say they are and that they are not just nicknames they are putting on their candidate forms. I do not know how it works on that side, but on this side of the House, we have to prove who we are. I actually had to have a criminal record check as well. It is unbelievable.

It is funny. When other groups make changes, the Liberals say that it is an attack on democracy, but we heard the parliamentary secretary just a little earlier say that these changes will enhance Canada's democracy. Why is it that when it benefits the Liberals to do something, they say it is enhancing Canada's democracy? It

would do nothing. This bill is another broken promise, another Liberal failure.

My speech today is a compilation of the Liberals' failures, case by case, citing critical examples. I talked about a few just now.

In the 2015 election, there were 114 third-party groups that received foreign funds to campaign to get Prime Minister Harper out. We hear from others saying that we are sowing the seeds of fear and that it is just Conservative rhetoric. However, I offer this, as I did in a previous speech. There is a website called leadnow.ca. Just shortly after the 2015 election, leadnow.ca received an international award for getting Prime Minister Harper out. I have not checked, but I said in my last speech that if one goes to leadnow.ca, and I mentioned that my colleagues were probably googling it, there would be a picture on the site where they were probably receiving the award for getting Prime Minister Harper out. I do not know if it is still going to be there, but that was one of the entities. Bill C-76 does nothing to stop this. The Liberals want to talk about how they are strengthening our electoral process and stopping that foreign interference.

There is a bit of a pattern with the Liberal government and the Prime Minister. They promise big, and they under-deliver.

● (1215)

I want to go back to the speech the Prime Minister gave yesterday about the closure of this House and Centre Block. To me, it spoke to his contempt for this place. Maybe that is what happens when one is raised in the halls of this place. It becomes just another hall, just another building. These are hallowed halls. We look around and think about the history. His words were that this is just another building, just another room.

Thinking back to 2014, when I started my run, I never would have thought that a kid from the Cariboo would end up here. There is not a day I am not honoured to sit among all members of Parliament. I am honoured when I see the flag waving on the Peace Tower and the one over your shoulder, Mr. Speaker. I think of Canadians. I think of the veterans who signed up and of first responders who serve and protect us. They are all our silent sentinels, yet the government and the Prime Minister have failed them.

Let us go back to the Chris Garnier case. This is a convicted murderer who is receiving PTSD benefits from Veterans Affairs but never served a day in his life.

● (1220)

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would ask what the relevance is to Bill C-76 and where the hon. member is going with his comments.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am going to allow the member to take it where he is going to take it. I am sure he will bring it back to the bill. Members have gone off on different tangents but have somehow brought it back, so I will leave it to the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, and we will see where he takes it.

Government Orders

Mr. Todd Doherty: I appreciate your intervention, Mr. Speaker. My colleague across the way should have listened to this debate, as I have, from the very beginning, by all members of Parliament, especially in the last couple of days, because this is our last day in the House. I would challenge my hon. colleague to look through *Hansard* and see if some of the speeches by her own colleagues were relevant throughout. As a matter of fact, I prefaced my comments today by saying that Bill C-76 is yet another Liberal failure and that I would be speaking to the other failures and how they relate to Bill C-76. With that, I will continue.

Let us talk about natural resources and the hundreds of thousands of pipeline workers, softwood lumber workers and forestry workers—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, a member cannot say at the beginning of a speech that it will have a general theme and that the member will not necessarily talk about the debate but instead will talk about the failures and then go through a litany of issues that are completely irrelevant to the legislation. The member knows that. I would ask him to be somewhat relevant. Just because he declared at the beginning of his speech that he wants to talk about a litany of issues does not necessarily mean he can do that, because there is a responsibility to be somewhat relevant.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will leave it to the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George to show us where he is taking it and the relevance of his speech.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-76 is about electoral reform. It is about what we do in the House. It is about how we govern.

Our national economy is directly related to this, how we function. Pipelines and softwood lumber all relate to this. It is, yet, another Liberal failure. We still do not have a softwood lumber agreement. Pipeline workers in Alberta have been told to hang in there.

The Liberals failed miserably with Bill C-76. It is evidenced by the number of amendments offered by committee members, over 330 of them and only a handful were accepted.

It brings me back to, I think it was 2016, when we were pressuring the government to do something with softwood lumber. We were nearing the end of our softwood lumber agreement and our grace period. We were almost to that critical point. We challenged members across the way, at the natural resources committee, to hold an emergency meeting, to bring folks in from the industry and to find a team Canada approach to getting a softwood lumber agreement done. We were told that it was a waste of time and a waste of money.

There are sweeping mill closures, work curtailing and layoffs in my province of British Columbia. That is because government failed to secure rail access to our forestry manufacturers. It has failed to get a new softwood lumber agreement in place. The government has done nothing regarding the unfair tariffs and duties placed on our forestry workers. We are under attack, and the government has done nothing.

I will bring us back to the Prime Minister's very first speech on the world stage. There was no mention of softwood lumber in the minister's mandate letter, no mention of softwood or forestry in the Speech from the Throne. In his very first speech, he said that under his government, Canada would become known more for our resourcefulness, than for our natural resources. It is shocking.

I have talked about how far we have fallen. When someone who crosses our borders illegally, we cannot call it “illegal”, it is “irregular”. That goes to Bill C-76 as well, and I have mentioned it before. It is about that foreign interference and protecting us from those who come in to Canada.

There are so many holes in the bill. That was outlined through the many amendments. As my hon. colleague from Calgary Midnapore offered, there are holes big enough to drive a Mac truck through. This is not dissimilar to the government's leaky border policy. Do members remember the tweet “Welcome to Canada”? What is that costing Canadians? By 2020, that crisis will cost Canadian taxpayers \$1.6 billion.

Let us go back to the deficit and why that is such an issue. It is another promise that was broken by the Prime Minister. He would say anything to get elected and once he was in here it was “I didn't really mean it.” He promised that 2019 would be the final deficit and that the Liberals would return us to surplus in 2019, just in time for the election. Now we know there is another, possibly, \$30 billion added to that.

Bill C-76 could potentially open the door for what proposes to dissuade, instead of taking this opportunity to ensure foreign influence, 114 different foreign-funded groups.

I mentioned veterans. I mentioned first responders. The government has failed them. Earlier this week at a meeting with veterans, the Minister of Veterans Affairs actually used his transition, of retiring from the media to political life, as a way to understand what veterans went through because he assumed it was similar to what he went through, going from the structured life of media. It was unreal.

● (1225)

Let us talk about ethics. The Prime Minister is the first prime minister in the history of our country to be found guilty of an ethics violation. Then there was the finance minister, guilty. Then there was the fisheries minister, guilty. Now there is a Liberal MP, who we are not sure whether he has resigned or not, tied to another minister and some shady land deals, and perhaps money stuff going to other foreign entities. This has been a year of failure.

If I seem a little riled up, it is because I was sent here with great hope for all of us. Sadly, the Prime Minister and his front bench, and then some, are failing Canadians. It is only those of us in the opposition who are doing whatever we can to hold their feet to the fire, yet they say we are calling them names and being divisive. All we are doing is standing up for Canadians. We will continue to do so.

Government Orders

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after that speech, there are so many questions I would love to ask the hon. member. However, I will start with this one and maybe I will get another chance. He keeps talking about foreign funding in our elections. Bill C-76 would eliminate foreign funding from any partisan activities at all times, not just elections, not during the writ, not pre-writ but all times.

This was an amendment brought forward at PROC by the member from this side of the House and the Conservative members voted against it. If they are so concerned about foreign funding, why would they vote against banning foreign funding from partisan activities in the country? I would really love an answer to that.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, as I outlined in my speech, when the Liberals say something, we cannot believe what they say, and that is just another example of—

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the hon. member just said that I lied. He should retract that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): He did not say that directly. I will let him continue with his answer.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I believe the hon. colleague owes me an apology. I clearly did not say she lied.

• (1230)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will leave it to the hon. member. Would she like to apologize?

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: No, Mr. Speaker.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will let the hon. member to continue.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I thought what I would do instead of answering that question, because we know it is untrue, is recognize we have incredible groups of people who help us operate every day here. There are the pages who sit through these speech each and every day. There are the parliamentary security fellows and ladies who stand guard for us. They wear their green hats as they are still without a contract. Again, that is probably another failure from the government. I would like to wish them a merry Christmas and thank them. It is very important as they sit through long hours with us.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Speaker for his indulgence, because over this last few days we have enjoyed, from all sides of the House, this being the last day perhaps that we will be in here. Therefore, my colleague took us through a bit of a walk of different things that have meant a lot to him in this place.

We know next year is an election year. Would the member comment on why the Liberal government now is pushing forward Bill C-76 so quickly, shutting down debate on it now, amendments that have come out? It was asked earlier if anyone could give examples of corruption within the electoral system. The answer is, yes, we can..

In Edmonton Centre, 10 to 15 years ago, people were taken off the list who had signed their residence as being a law office that the minister worked out of at the time. Thirty-some people had a factory listed as their residence. In fact, Joe Volpe, in his leadership race, had

people on the voters list who were dead and buried. This was the kind of thing we were able to clear up in the last election.

The member talked about pipelines. In the last election, there were anti-pipeline groups, environmental groups, foreign groups from the United States and from Europe that put money not directly to fund certain target ridings for the Liberals, but that went through a Canadian affiliate. For example, there was a group that was listed as Canadian and the money went directly to that Canadian affiliate. As the member noted, in some of these the Liberals were bragging about showing success.

One of the main responsibilities of a democracy is to have integrity that is above reproach when it comes to elections. Maybe the member could comment on why this election is not that, but rather stacks up to the benefit of the Liberals.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague brings up a great point and perhaps I did not touch on it well enough. In 2015, 29 ridings were targeted by foreign funded groups. These ridings were listed as ridings of concern or vulnerable ridings, and my riding was one of them. Of those, 25 of those foreign funded ridings were successful. Obviously, they were not successful in my riding, and I challenge those people to come after me again.

When we talk about foreign funding, the top office has a former president and CEO of one of the foreign funded groups, World Wildlife Fund, is now calling the shots in policy. I have had fishermen and foresters say that to get in to see a minister, they have to go through an NGO and environmental group. That is shocking.

When the Liberals talk about limiting foreign funds, they are probably limiting funds for groups that might help a Conservative or an NDP get elected. However, they definitely are not going to stop foreign funds coming in if it benefits them.

The hon. parliamentary secretary talked about enhancing Canada's democracy. No, it enhances the Liberals' opportunity to get re-elected. That is what they are doing. That is why they need to rush it through.

• (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, based on the content of the speech delivered by the member, I am more inclined to deal with the issue of failure associated to Stephen Harper, which really is no different. He really has not left the Conservative benches. Every day we see remnants of Stephen Harper's policy. There really is no difference between the current leader and Stephen Harper—

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, if you listen closely to my colleague's questions, you can see that they are not even remotely connected to Bill C-76, which is what we are debating. This is a matter of relevance.

Is it possible to check—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In light of what has gone on so far, I will let the hon. member finish his comments. We will see where he is going with that.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it was Stephen Harper's party that violated the election law. Not only is my friend and colleague wrong on his point of order, I wish the Conservative Party would give me the same liberty that we gave its members on the issue.

The Conservatives overspent on an election by hundreds of thousands of dollars and they put it off to appeal after appeal. Then they had a settlement, in which I think they had to pay a fine of \$50,000 for breaking the law. Do members remember the Conservative member of Parliament who had to go to jail because of violations of the Elections Act?

My question to the member is this. The Conservative Party is so determined to prevent this legislation from passing. In the name of being transparent and honest with Canadians, can the Conservative Party tell us why it is that it does not want this legislation passed? What is specifically in this legislation? The Green Party supports it. The NDP supports it. Canadians support this legislation. The current Conservative leadership and the Conservatives have not learned anything in the past few years. Why do they not support good, progressive legislation that is going to enhance our democracy?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, let me remind the Canadians who are listening in of the first Prime Minister who was found guilty of ethics violations, of the Minister of Finance who was found guilty, of the Minister of Fisheries who was found guilty, as well as another minister being investigated now.

Canadians just do not trust what the Liberals are saying anymore. When this gentleman stands up, it is always, "Don't look at us. Remember when that other guy was in? It was always their fault."

The Prime Minister stood in the House yesterday and talked about his plan that he was going to unveil as he got closer to the election. His plan? He has been governing for three years. Why is he just talking about a plan now? These guys have had no plan. They have failed Canadians every step of the way. We are angry and we are not going to take it anymore.

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak to Bill C-76. I want to thank the House for all the discussions we have had today and the good debate.

There are two important topics that I want to discuss in the context of the elections modernization act. First, I would like to look at how the bill would change the public education part of the

Elections Canada mandate; and second, at how the bill would seek to engage young Canadians.

The previous government placed restrictions on the ability of the Chief Electoral Officer to speak to Canadians. The Fair Elections Act restricted the kind of public education campaigns that the Chief Electoral Officer was able to develop. Since that bill, the Chief Electoral Officer has been limited to conducting public education programs with high school and primary school-age children. We are not sure how that made any sense at all.

Our government heard from Canadians during the electoral reform dialogue process that they wanted more done to increase civic literacy and to increase all Canadians' knowledge of democracy. Additionally, the previous Chief Electoral Officer recommended in his mandate to reinstate public education and information campaigns. Specifically, the CEO recommended being given the mandate to implement public education and information programs to make the electoral process better known to the general public, particularly to those persons and groups most likely to experience difficulties in exercising their democratic rights. This is an honourable goal, and our government is proud to support the work of the Chief Electoral Officer in reaching out to those Canadians who may be less likely to participate in Canadian democracy.

The Chief Electoral Officer is the paragon of non-partisan professionalism. We as Canadians should expect nothing less than this professionalism from that office in these public education campaigns. However, Canadians can also be confident that Elections Canada would carry out these education campaigns with as much integrity and fervour as they use in administering each election. The fundamental issue here is that the lack of information may create barriers for Canadians in exercising their voting rights. This measure would help mitigate any potential problems caused by a lack of information or malicious attempts to impair Canadians' ability to exercise their charter rights.

At this point, I would also like to mention I will be splitting my time with the member for Halifax.

Thus, Elections Canada would now be empowered to reach out to all Canadians to relay crucial information about the election. The organization would also be able to tailor certain messages to at-risk groups to help ensure that all Canadians would have the chance to have their voices heard on election day.

Government Orders

I wish to discuss how Bill C-76 would engage young Canadians in Canada's electoral system. Following the 42nd general election, Elections Canada estimated that 57% of eligible Canadians aged 18 to 24 voted. This is over 20% lower than the estimated turnout for Canadians aged 65 to 74. The question of how to engage young people is one that democracies all over the world struggle with. Researchers have shown that voting can be a habit for life. If someone votes in one election, he or she is more likely to vote in subsequent elections. This is why it is important to address young people who are not voting. How can we harness a natural and intense youthful interest in politics and foster it into a lifelong dedication to civic life and engagement?

Bill C-76 introduces a variety of ways to encourage young Canadians to get involved with the next federal election. One measure that was recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer is the preregistration of young Canadians. Preregistration of young Canadians would create a new parallel register to the register of electors: the national register of future electors. Preregistration would be open to Canadians from the ages of 14 to 17 and conducted on a completely voluntary basis. From there, the process is quite simple. Once future electors leave behind their days of youth and don the legal mantle of adulthood at 18 years old, they would then be automatically transferred from the register of future electors to the national register.

• (1240)

The information stored in a register of future electors would be completely safe and inaccessible to anyone other than Elections Canada. The organization would have to comply with appropriate and considerable standards in the Canada Elections Act and in the Privacy Act to protect young Canadians' information. This means that risk and threat assessments would be conducted as necessary. The register of future electors would be kept completely separate from the national register, and so there would be no danger to the data if something were to happen. Additionally, it means that there would be no danger of the data of future electors being included in the national register.

Preregistration would be conducted on a voluntary basis. Parliamentarians of numerous political parties voiced some concern regarding the collection of information about young Canadians and the fact that parental consent would not be required to register. It is important that young Canadians feel comfortable participating in Canadian democracy. The fact of the matter is that some may wish to keep their political affiliation or even knowledge of an interest in politics close to their hearts. However, parents would be encouraged to discuss preregistration with youth. It should also be noted that any young Canadian could remove their information from the register of future electors by contacting Elections Canada.

I wish to stress that these measures would in no way affect the voting age in Canada. The age to vote would remain at 18 years of age. Nonetheless, preregistration is one concrete measure that would help expose more young Canadians to Canadian political life and enhance their civic education.

There is one other measure I will briefly touch upon.

Bill C-76 would also amend the staffing requirements for returning officers to hire election officers. The Canada Elections

Act already enables the Chief Electoral Officer to allow the hiring of 16- and 17-year-olds as election officers. This permission was systematically given at each election, and the CEO has consistently noted that young Canadians have proven to be an excellent pool of workers. This measure would simply crystalize the permission in the Canada Elections Act. One can hardly think of a better way to foster an interest in civic life than by encouraging young Canadians to work during an election.

These changes are just some of the ways that young Canadians would be inspired to take part in Canadian elections. Similarly, I hope all members of this chamber will appreciate the work that Elections Canada and the Chief Electoral Officer would be empowered to undertake in reaching out to all Canadians.

I conclude by saying what an honour it has been to serve in this wonderful institution. I look forward to being in the West Block, but I will definitely miss this House. I thank all members for the wonderful engagement and debate we have had today.

• (1245)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague outlined quite a few measures that Bill C-76 would put in place to ensure that our democracy remains open to all Canadians to be able to vote, would increase their capacity to vote and would increase their engagement from a very early age.

The specific amendments that were brought back from the Senate speak to foreign interference and ensuring that all parties support that there is no foreign interference. As this proposed legislation would strengthen what we do across the country, this additional amendment would protect from foreign interference. Could my hon. colleague speak to the fact that we have all-party support on this, and that this proposed legislation would further engage Canadians and also protect Canadians and our democracy?

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Mr. Speaker, when Bill C-76 was first drafted, it denied foreign interference during writ and pre-writ periods or foreign funding in partisan activities. An amendment from PROC came forward that would now disallow any type of foreign interference partisan activities, no matter when they take place. I think this is really important, because we are all very concerned about what is happening around the world with foreign interference in elections, and we want to make sure that our democracy is protected.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I noticed something the hon. member just did. At the beginning of her answer she said “foreign interference” and then corrected herself to say that Bill C-76 deals with “foreign funding”. However, then she went back and repeated the inference that Bill C-76 stops foreign interference. The reason I want to challenge her on this is that we proposed amendments to the bill that would actually help stop foreign interference. We heard testimony from the Chief Electoral Officer, whose proposed changes the Liberals accept when they agree with him, but which they just ignore when they disagree with him.

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We heard this from the Privacy Commissioner and from the minister's own study, which she had requested that the Canadian spy agency do, asking the very important question of how vulnerable our political system is to foreign interference, particularly through the back door that has been used in the United States and England of hacking into political parties' databases. Why is that so important? It is because those databases are huge and contain enormous amounts of personal information about Canadians. What rules would apply to political parties right now under this bill? The parties would have to put a policy statement on their website somewhere. Is it enforceable? No, it is not. Are there any requirements for what that policy must have in it? No, there are not. Therefore, can parties have vulnerable databases that can be hacked into, and if so, why does this happen? It is because a foreign entity trying to interfere with our elections will then use that data, millions of points of data about how Canadians feel about issues, their gender, age, income and all these important things, to sway them one way or another.

Could the member imagine a foreign government, let us say China to pick one, having a problem with the government of the day, say this government, and then hacking into a political party's database, let us say the Liberals' database, to find all of that rich information about Canadians and those voters who might be inclined to vote Liberal—I do not know why, but let us just say they are so inclined for some reason, because they believe the lies—and then target them not to vote Liberal but Conservative, let us say. That is exactly what happened in the United States and in England. We have these real, living examples of threats to our democracy, which the spy agency of Canada confirmed, and yet Bill C-76 does nothing to prevent these and to protect our democracy. Why not?

• (1250)

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I first have a comment to make before I get to the question. Eighty-seven per cent of the recommendations by the Chief Electoral Officer are included in Bill C-76. My hon. colleague said that we only chose the ones we wanted, but we have included a huge number of good recommendations by the Chief Electoral Officer in this legislation.

In regard to his question about foreign interference, as he well knows, the standing committee on ethics has just released a report. I have been reading it. It is a very good report, with a lot of great recommendations. We recognize how important it is to make sure that we protect Canadians' privacy, and we will be looking closely at and addressing those recommendations shortly.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand to speak for the final time in this particular chamber before it closes for a decade and further discuss the elections modernization act, Bill C-76.

This legislation was introduced in the House of Commons by the Minister of Democratic Institutions on April 30, 2018, and was referred to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs last May.

I was proud to work on this piece of legislation during my time as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, and I commend the work of my colleagues at committee and of the current Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic

Institutions, the very excellent member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

The amendments brought forward by committee have certainly strengthened Bill C-76. The elections modernization act would bring our electoral system into the 21st century and make it more secure, transparent and accessible. These improvements to the Canada Elections Act would contribute to restoring Canadians' trust in their democratic institutions after the debacle of the Conservative government's so-called Fair Elections Act, which we all know was anything but fair.

Today, I will focus on one key component of Bill C-76 that will be implemented for the first time in the next federal election, and that is the pre-election period.

The creation of a fixed date election contributes to a level playing field by providing more certainty to all political parties about the date of the next federal election. However, despite some of the positive aspects we have seen in past elections, a less positive consequence of the fixed date election is the extensive campaigning that begins well before the issuing of the writ, which we all know signals the commencement of the election period.

This is why the Prime Minister mandated the Minister of Democratic Institutions to “Review the limits on the amounts political parties and third parties can spend during elections, and propose measures to ensure that spending between elections is subject to reasonable limits as well.” With Bill C-76, we are delivering on that commitment.

The bill would see the creation of a regulated pre-election period that would begin on June 30 of the year of a fixed date election and would end with the issuing of the writ. The timing is important, since this would capture the core activities leading up to the actual campaign while at the same time not overlapping Parliament's session.

The goal is not to limit Canadians' right to criticize the activities of those who represent them. The pre-election period will include rules that would guide the activities of third parties and political parties during that period.

First and foremost, spending limits will be imposed on third parties and political parties during the pre-election period. Spending limits are important to ensure a level playing field and that all can have their voices heard, and that parties and candidates can get to the starting line in a equitable way.

For political parties, Bill C-76, as amended by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, will set a spending limit of \$1.4 million. When applying the inflation factor, it is estimated that the limit will be approximately \$2 million in the 2019 general election. This limit only applies to partisan advertising. It does not affect other regular activities of a political party.

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The goal of this measure is not to unduly impede the ability of a party to reach out to Canadians and to engage with their ideas. Rather, the it is to allow for a level playing field to avoid a situation in which parties with more resources would be able to monopolize political debate. It will allow all voices to be heard.

While still months away from polling day, these campaigns have a lasting impact on Canadian electors.

With the same objective of limiting the potential harm to our democracy from the extensive and unregulated campaigning in the lead up to the election period, Bill C-76 would also impose a spending limit on third parties. For third parties, the limit would be \$700,000. When adjusted for inflation, it is estimated that it would be about \$1 million in 2019. Third parties will also have a limit of \$7,000 per electoral district, which would be about \$10,000 in 2019 when adjusted for inflation.

• (1255)

In the case of third parties, spending limits will include partisan activities, partisan advertising and election surveys. Take for example a third party that posts a large following with the stated purpose of tossing out select politicians from office, for example, Ontario Proud. Under these rules, third parties like it could not incur more than \$1 million worth of expenses during the pre-election period. Under these rules, third parties like the one I described, could not incur more than \$500,000 worth of expenses during the election period, including advertising and partisan activity like canvassing.

These rules also mean that third parties could not use foreign monies to advertise or carry-out partisan activities. These rules also mean that third parties could not advertise anonymously. Rather, they would have to identify themselves by adding a tag line on partisan advertising in the pre-writ period. Importantly, these rules limit collusion between third parties and any registered party or candidate that would influence its partisan activities.

It is important to note here that we believe that discourse and debate are essential to the democratic process. As such, these rules are aimed at increasing transparency in our elections, not at limiting discourse. These limitations will be enforced equally on third parties, regardless of the party in whose favour they operate.

As the members of the House undoubtedly know, a third party under the Canada Elections Act can be anyone who is not a recognized political entity, such as an individual elector, a non-governmental organization, a corporation, or others. These are all third parties. All of them have a right to share their views with other Canadians. The spending limit that Bill C-76 imposes would ensure that all of these different voices have an opportunity to be heard.

The bill does not just establish spending limits in the pre-election period, but also makes other changes to increase transparency regarding third-party activities. Under the current legislation, third parties are required to report to Elections Canada on their spending in the months following polling day after electors have already cast their votes. That is why Bill C-76 includes new reporting requirements for third parties that are particularly active, for example, those who receive contributions or incur expenses in amounts of \$10,000 or more. These third parties would be required to provide interim reports twice during the pre-election period, first

upon registration and again on September 15. Similarly, the third parties that meet this threshold would also have to provide interim reports during the election period. These reports would be required 21 and seven days, respectively, before polling day.

Elections Canada would be required to publish on its website, in a timely fashion, the reports it receives. These reports will be very beneficial to Canadians. They will increase transparency as to who is trying to influence them before they actually have a chance to cast their votes. This way, Canadian electors will have access to the tools they need to make an informed and responsible decision.

Before I conclude, I would like to note some additional measures in Bill C-76 that would increase the transparency of third party participation in the electoral process.

First, third parties would have to register with Elections Canada during the pre-election period when they reach \$500 in regulated expenses. Currently, that requirement only exists in the election period.

Second, similar to the existing rules regarding political entities, third parties would be required to have a dedicated Canadian bank account for all of the relevant contributions and expenses.

As members can see, Bill C-76 provides a comprehensive regime for the participation of third parties that will contribute to a level playing field, provide greater transparency and, ultimately, make our democracy stronger.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to join you and all members in saying a fond farewell to this storied place and its hallowed halls until its renovation is complete.

• (1300)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish my friend a merry Christmas, and the best to his family as well.

Here is the strange irony of what we are going through in the final hours of this House of Commons in this place. Of course, the House of Commons will continue, but 400 metres that way.

If we think about all the debates that have happened across this floor, where wars have been debated, Canadians have been interned, terrible things have been discussed and hard debates have happened, at the foundation of all that is our democracy, the way we vote and the way we elect people. As the member said, there are all these laudable pieces of this bill that help people vote and allow for better reporting as to what happens.

However, during his speech, part of me was wondering this. If it is such a wonderful bill, why did it take three years for it to get here, and why did it blow right by Elections Canada's deadline to implement many of the things he talked about? That was entirely the Liberals' own choice. In fact, we were banging on the door after they introduced the first version of this bill two years ago, asking them to bring it to the House so we could debate it and get on with it, so that Elections Canada could do its job.

Government Orders

Therefore, that lack of urgency from the Liberals is weird and troubling, and has caused them a whole bunch of problems. We now have this bill passing through the House under time allocation, which means they are shutting down debate and the ability of this House to do what it was built for.

Here is my question. Come the next election, which is less than a year away, will there be reports coming out that there has been a hack of one of the parties' databases? Will there be some sort of foreign interference in our democratic process, where Canadians will rightly be asking their elected representatives what they have done about it to protect them, to make sure they do not have a Donald Trump-style election or a Brexit-style vote? Will there be interference during the election and then, after the fact, once the votes have all been cast, will it be pulled back so we realize that millions of dollars were spent trying to influence Canadians and how they feel about their country with false information and lies, as that is how it is usually done?

As members know, a lie makes its way around the world many times before the truth is up in the morning, and is very difficult to correct with the social media environment we are in. We know all these things because the privacy and ethics committee, which the Liberals sit on, reported more than a year ago that parties should exist under some kind of privacy laws. With all the evidence we now have, does my friend at least agree that that omission from this bill was more than an oversight, and that it was in fact a grave error made by the government?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, with respect to how long it has taken us to get here, we were of course subjected to relentless filibustering, in which the member's own party participated. In fact, I remember knocking on the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley's door, asking him to come quickly with the amendments that he was looking for, so that we could move to clause-by-clause. He was never able to respond to me, and I was never able to move with that member toward clause-by-clause.

In the end, we heard from 56 witnesses at committee. We had 24 hours of study at committee. However, it was ultimately the filibustering, which began in May of 2018, that did not allow us to get to clause-by-clause until four and a half months later, on October 15, a scant month and a half ago. Therefore, we have moved this as quickly as we could in the face of that relentless opposition.

With respect to foreign interference, this bill bans all foreign money from being used in elections at all times, not only in the pre-writ and writ periods, but at all times. It requires organizations selling ad space to not knowingly accept elections advertisements from foreign entities. This is putting social media platforms on notice that we will be their partners as we head into 2019, to make sure their advertising is fair.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am specifically looking at the anti-collusion provisions with respect to having a tag line on all advertising that states it has been approved by the financial agent, whether that advertising comes from inside or outside Canada, through the three periods we are discussing, the pre-electoral and during the election period.

Could the hon. member comment on that?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, the bill will require organizations selling ad space to not knowingly accept elections advertisements from foreign entities. That is in the writ period and in the pre-writ period.

However, it goes further. The member for Guelph may be interested to know that the bill will also require third parties to use a dedicated Canadian bank account for the payment of election-related spending during the pre-writ and writ periods. This will further help us ensure that these rules are being followed.

Additional punishments also exist for third parties who are found guilty of offences related to the use of foreign funds. They could be subjected to a punishment of up to five times the amount of the foreign funds that were used.

The bill goes on to create other administrative penalties, including the ability for the commissioner to compel testimony and seek judicial respite.

* * *

● (1305)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House:

a) at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions today, the notice of motion for the production of papers P-15, standing on the Order Paper in the name of the member for Perth—Wellington, be called, the question be put and, if a recorded division is requested, the bells to call in the members shall not ring and the recorded division shall be taken immediately;

b) following the disposal of P-15, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion respecting the Senate amendment to Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make certain consequential amendments, be put forthwith and successively and that any recorded division requested be taken immediately;

c) following the disposal of Bill C-76, the sitting shall be suspended until such time as the Chair may reconvene the sitting for the sole purpose of attending a Royal Assent ceremony;

d) immediately upon the return from the Royal Assent ceremony, the House shall adjourn until Monday, January 28, 2019, provided that, for the purposes of any Standing Order, it shall be deemed to have been adjourned pursuant to Standing Order 28 and be deemed to have sat on Friday, December 14, 2018.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*Translation*]

ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion in relation to the amendment made by the Senate to Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make certain consequential amendments, and of the amendment.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour and privilege to be chosen, among the 338 members of Parliament, to speak today on the last day we will be sitting in this building, the Centre Block, in the House of Commons, in our wonderful Parliament, in our great federation.

Before I go any further and talk a bit about Centre Block, I should say that I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, one of my esteemed colleagues, whose riding is quite close to my own. We share a border, between Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval and Beauport. I am very happy to work with him on various issues that affect our respective constituents.

I would like to wish a very merry Christmas to everyone in Beauport—Limoilou who is watching us right now or who might watch this evening on Facebook, Twitter or other social media. I wish everyone a wonderful time with their family, and I hope they take some time to rest and relax. That is important. This season can be a time to focus a little more on ourselves and our families, and to spend time together, to catch up and to rest up. I wish all my constituents the very best for 2019. Of course we will be seeing one another next week in our riding. I will be in my office and out in the community all week. I invite all my constituents to the Christmas party I am hosting on Wednesday, December 19, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., at my office, which is located at 2000 Sanfaçon Avenue. Refreshments will be served and we will celebrate Christmas together. Over 200 people attended the event last year. I hope to see just as many people out this year. Merry Christmas and happy new year to everyone.

Today I want to talk about Bill C-76. I think this is the third time I speak to this bill. This is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak at all three readings of the same bill, and I am delighted I have been able to do so.

This is somewhat ironic, because we have every reason to feel nostalgic today. The Centre Block of the House of Commons has been the centre of Canadian democracy since 1916, or rather, since its reconstruction, which was completed in 1920 after the fire. We have been sitting in this place for over a century, for 102 years. We serve to ensure the well-being of our constituents and to discuss democracy, to discuss legislation and the issues that matter to our country every day.

Today, rather ironically, we are discussing Bill C-76, which seeks to amend the Canada Elections Act. This is the legislation that sets the guidelines, standards, conditions and guarantees by which we, the 338 members of Parliament, were elected by constituents to sit here in the House of Commons. It is an interesting bill that we are discussing on our last day here, but this situation is indeed somewhat ironic, as my NDP colleague so rightly said in his question to the

parliamentary secretary. He asked why, if this bill is so important to the Liberals, they waited until the last minute to rush it through after three years in power. The same version appeared in Bill C-33 in 2015-16, and the Liberals delayed implementation of that bill.

Since we are talking about Bill C-76, which affects the Elections Act and democracy, I must say I find it a shame that only six out of the 200 amendments the Conservatives proposed in committee were accepted.

We have concrete grievances based on real concerns and even the opinion of the majority. I will share with the House some of the surveys I have here. I just want to take a minute to say to all those watching us on CPAC or elsewhere right now, that it has been my dream ever since I was 15 to serve Canadians first and foremost. That is why I enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces. That is why I dreamed of becoming an MP since I was 15. In 2015, I had the exceptional honour of earning the confidence of the majority of the 92,000 constituents of Beauport—Limoilou. I would like to tell them that, in my view, the House of Commons represents the opposite of what the Prime Minister said yesterday. He said it was just a room.

I did not like that because the House of Commons, which will close for renovations for 15 years in a few days, is not just a room, as the Prime Minister said. I find it unfortunate that he used that term. It is the chamber of the people. That is why it is green. The colour green represents the people and the colour red represents aristocracy. Hence the Senate chamber is red.

● (1310)

I hope I am not mistaken. Perhaps the parliamentary guides could talk to me about this.

It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister said that it is not the centre of democracy, because that is not true. I will explain to Canadians why it is wrong to say that Parliament is not the centre of democracy.

The Prime Minister was right when he said that democracy resides everywhere, whether in protests in the streets, meetings of political associations or union meetings. Of course, democracy happens there. However, the centre of democracy is here, because it is here that elected members sit and vote on the laws that govern absolutely everything in the country. It is also here that we can even change Canada's Constitution. The country's Constitution cannot be changed anywhere else or as part of political debates by a political association or a protest. No, it can only be done here or in the other legislative assemblies of the provinces in Canada. It is only in those places that we can make amendments and change how democracy works or deal with problems to address current issues. Yes, by definition, in a practical manner, the centre of democracy is right here. It is not, as the Prime Minister said, just a room like so many others. No, it is the House of Commons.

Government Orders

Just briefly, before I get back to Bill C-76, I want to talk about the six sculptures on the east wall. The first represents civil law; the second, freedom of speech; the third, the Senate; the fourth, the governor general; the fifth, Confederation; and the sixth, the vote. On the west wall, there are sculptures representing bilingualism, education, the House of Commons, taxation—it says “IMPÔT — TAX” up top—criminal law and, lastly, communications. Those sculptures are here because we are at the centre of democracy. The 12 sculptures represent elements of how our federation works.

With respect to Bill C-67, we have three main complaints.

First, Bill C-76 would make it possible for a Canadian to use a voter card as their only document at a polling station. To be clear, the voter card is the paper people get for registering as an eligible voter. From now on, the Liberals will let people vote using that card only. Currently, and until this bill is passed, voters have to present a piece of identification to vote.

There are risks in letting people vote without an ID card like a driver's licence, health card or passport. First, in 2015, the information on over one million voter identification cards was incorrect. That is a major concern. Second, it is easy to vote with a card displaying incorrect information. That creates a significant problem. It is serious. We need to make sure that voting remains a protected, powerful and serious privilege in Canada.

Our second concern—and this is why we have no choice but to vote against the bill and what upsets me the most personally—is that the government is going to allow Canadians who live outside the country to vote, regardless of how long they have been living abroad. There used to be a five-year limit. In Australia, it is six years. Many countries have limits.

Now, the Liberals want to allow 1.4 million Canadians who live abroad to participate in Canadian elections, even if they have not lived in Canada for 20 or 30 years. They will even be allowed to choose what riding they want to vote in.

Do the Liberals realize the incredible power they are giving to Canadian citizens who have not lived in Canada for 20 years? Those individuals could potentially choose a riding where the polls indicate that the race is very close and change which party is chosen to govern.

Our third concern about this bill is that the Liberals want to prevent third parties, such as labour groups, from accepting money from individuals or groups outside the country during the pre-writ period.

● (1315)

That is good, but there is nothing stopping this from happening before the pre-writ period. People will be able to take in money and receive money from groups outside the country before the start of the pre-writ period.

I thank all Canadians who are watching us for their trust. I look forward to seeing them in the riding next week.

[English]

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, I also saw myself as a member of Parliament from the

time I was about 15 years old, so it is an honour to be here today speaking to this elections act.

The hon. member mentioned a couple of things I want to clear the record on. First of all, the Canadian charter guarantees Canadians the right to vote. It does not say that one has to live in Canada. It is a charter right to be able to vote. That is really important to recognize.

Second, he called it a voter identification card. It is not. It is a voter information card. All it is is proof of residence that must be used with another piece of ID. Those are really important things to make sure people understand. This is not a card we would get in the mail that could be used as identification. It would still have to be used with something else.

In the previous election, there were so many people who were not able to vote because they did not have something with their address on it. I am going to use as an example a senior woman who lives with her husband and does not get a bill in her name, because bills come in her husband's name. She does not drive and does not have another piece of ID. This would just be an information card that could be provided with another piece of ID so someone could vote. It is really important that we make those clarifications.

The hon. member had some great comments about the building, and that is wonderful. I really appreciate his speech on the history. However, I think it is important to make the point that when we are talking about bills we have put forward we actually stick to the facts.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to know the member opposite had the same dream as I did, starting at age 15. I am glad to see that she went all the way to realizing this dream. Good for her. Marvellous.

The Liberals speak about this bill as if it is something fundamental, so why did they wait three years? We are three years into their mandate right now, three years of failures. We have three years of failure on the border, where we have almost 100,000 illegal border crossings happening right now. There is huge financial pressure on provincial governments to deal with this crisis. We have three years of failure concerning deficits. They promised that they would run a small \$10-billion deficit, and now the Parliamentary Budget Officer, an institution created by Mr. Harper, something we should never forget, who brings accountability to the government every day he acts, has informed us this week that the deficit is way larger than what was announced two weeks ago. It will be about \$26 billion just for 2018-19.

I completely disagree with the member. Yes, the right to vote is fundamental. However, the responsibility of the government is to make sure that voting is respected and protected for everyone.

Government Orders

• (1320)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his reflections on this place. Democracy is an idea more than a location, but it definitely is a location when we look at this magnificent building we have been able to work in over the past 100 years. Some of us have been here almost that long. I am on my first term.

The member mentioned a concern about what happens at the voting stations themselves. In Guelph, in 2011, the Conservatives tried to physically take the voting station away from the University of Guelph while the election was going on. We were unable to prosecute because of the lack of powers the Chief Electoral Officer had. This legislation before us today would give the Chief Electoral Officer the power to prosecute. Does the hon. member think that is a great idea?

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, as I said, from day one we contributed to this bill. We proposed over 200 amendments, and only six of them were accepted. It is disappointing to see that now the Liberals will be going forward without the acceptance of all members. We are talking about a bill that would have an impact on future elections. We should require all members to stand behind such an important bill. We think it should have been a must for the government to accept many more of our amendments.

Yes, with respect to what the member just told us, if those kinds of situations happened during the last election, which was completely unacceptable, why not give more powers to the election directorate if we are able to? Why was the government so negative toward all the other amendments we brought forward?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou, with whom I have had the privilege of sharing some good times in the House of Commons.

We just learned that there will be votes after question period. This is probably the last sitting day of 2018, and the last one in this chamber. As my colleague said, this is not just a room; it is a place that has borne witness to our democracy for more than 100 years. There was a fire here in 1916, but Parliament was rebuilt. I have a lot of appreciation for the institutions, so it makes me emotional, and I feel a twinge of sadness, as I rise today to speak to Bill C-76.

Two of my colleagues opposite said that they had dreamed of becoming members of Parliament since they were 15 years old, but my dream started at the age of six. I am following in the footsteps of my grandfather, who sat here. I feel a great deal of emotion speaking today. He was a member of a party, the Social Credit Party of Canada, which unfortunately no longer exists. I am proud to say that in 1962, Louis-Philippe-Antoine Bélanger was the member of Parliament for the Côte-de-Beaupré region.

It is no easy task to be a member of Parliament, and we take this very seriously. If you were to ask the 338 members of Parliament, they would say that they work very hard and make many sacrifices. With the holidays approaching, we will soon return to our ridings and our families, who share us with the Canadian people. I want to sincerely thank my wife, Isabelle, and my children, Charles-Antoine

and Anne-Frédérique, for sharing me with the people of Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. As a father, I say this with a great deal of emotion.

Now, let us get down to the business at hand, Bill C-76, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make certain consequential amendments. Yesterday, in her speech, the minister touted that her bill defends democracy. This morning, by moving a motion, notice of which was given yesterday, the government expedited the process and limited the speaking time of opposition members before proceeding. Is that democratic? On this side, we would say that it is muzzling people who have something to say and arguments to make with a view to improving the bill.

What we are hearing today is that the passage of this bill is being expedited. The Liberals have been in power for three years and suddenly decided to move quickly. What a surprise, 2019 is an election year. I will say no more.

This government is full of paradoxes. Democracy does not seem to be in the current Liberal government's vocabulary. In 2015, during the election campaign, this government promised a balanced budget in 2019. We—the Conservatives, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois—were campaigning against the Liberals and, in some ridings, people believed them. They believed their election promise that they would balance the budget in 2019 after incurring modest deficits in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who made some more adjustments this week, projects a deficit of roughly \$100 billion, I repeat, \$100 billion, over four years, even though we are in a favourable economic position.

These are extremely important elements, because this is about democracy. The Liberals asked Canadians to vote for them in the election, but now that they are in power with a majority of seats, they are not keeping their word. Is this democracy?

I can keep going. The Liberals promised that the 2015 election would be the last time the current system would be used, but they did not end up changing anything. Was that a calculated decision? I keep asking questions, but they go unanswered.

• (1325)

Did they decide they would be better off leaving the system untouched instead of keeping their election promise? This is another broken promise.

In addition, they promised to protect supply management. That is not what they did with the U.S. President and the Mexican President. They created a breach. Now almost 3% of the market is wide open.

Government Orders

We have stricter standards than the United States. I think that is a good thing, because Canadians' health is important. Our farmers are subject to standards that are much more costly to meet. The government opened up the market without requiring that the U.S. adopt the same standards as Canada, yet it sees no problem. Everything is peachy. How can the Liberals look their voters in the eye after this? In a few hours, we will be going back to our ridings. I wonder how they are going to look voters straight in the eye and be okay with what they have been doing for the past three years.

I would like to talk about an unusual little promise they made. This is another example of them not delivering on their promises. It is a small promise, but I think it is significant to the people involved. They promised to bring back letter carriers. They said they would undo everything the Conservatives did and they would bring back letter carriers. Where are the letter carriers? They are not back. We still have community mailboxes. Let us not forget that the mayor of Montreal destroyed a concrete slab foundation with a jackhammer. They capitalized on that, showed a lack of respect for voters, and they want to talk about democracy?

As I was saying, this morning we voted on a time allocation motion. That means limited speaking time. Since April 2016, I have voted against 35 time allocation motions on 25 bills. Is that what they call democracy? I am sorry, but we do not have the same definition of democracy.

Democracy is about respecting people, having differing opinions, allowing the opposition parties to present arguments in order to improve legislation. That is what our parliamentary system is about and what it allows us to do; otherwise, we are wasting our time. If our ability to speak is restricted, if members are not allowed to express their opinions, that is a dictatorship. That is unacceptable. When the members opposite talk about democracy and say that implementing Bill C-76 will improve the process, that raises some pretty big questions for me.

As for the ID card, it just makes sense that everyone should identify themselves in a way that is consistent. We have a social insurance system, we have a driver's licence system in each province, we have a passport system. Anyone who travels abroad must identify themselves. It is about monitoring, which is reasonable. All Canadians and all Quebecers are proud to have a Canadian passport.

Meanwhile, when Canadians go to a polling station, they will be able to show up with just a printed card. If any mistakes are made when those cards are sent out, anyone could take the card and claim to have the right to vote. It is dangerous.

I have to say that I do not believe the Liberal government when it says it is acting in the best interests of Canadians. Who can tell me anything this government has really done in the best interests of Canadians since it was elected? I have not received an answer. I ask the question because, at some point, I have to wonder whether I am being a little biased or partisan. I have asked my constituents the same question, for they are very sensible and intelligent people. Unfortunately, they have reached the same conclusion as me.

What we have is a rock star who goes around the world for his own personal gain, forgetting that the primary mandate of any prime

minister and any responsible government is to look after the affairs of Canadians. I have a lot more I would like to say, but I am running out of time.

● (1330)

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone in Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier health, happiness and a joyful holiday. Let's meet again in 2019 with a fair and equitable electoral system.

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague very closely.

I am privileged to be a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, where we studied Bill C-76, a bill to modernize elections administration by making the electoral process more transparent, accessible and secure. The study took a long time because there was a lot of obstruction.

Although I completely disagree with my colleague opposite, I would like to hear what he has to say about the following facts. From now on, it will be easier for Canadians abroad—be they members of the armed forces, public servants with Global Affairs Canada, or RCMP officers—to participate in the voting process via mail-in ballot. That means one million voters will now have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote, a fundamental right enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. I do not think she listened to my speech because I did not say anything about that.

Bills to improve legislation often contain good things and other not so good things. In this case, showing respect for those who serve our nation abroad and making it easier for them to vote is a good thing. However, that does not mean that we should be less vigilant when it comes to security, accessibility and transparency.

I agree with my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles that we should make it easier for our workers and representatives abroad to participate in the electoral process. However, I would like her to ask me other questions because I have a lot of things to say.

● (1335)

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has basically failed at everything it has done. When we talk about electoral reform, its approach was a complete failure. The Liberals came in with a set agenda and found out from Canadians that they did not want anything to do with it. The Liberals backed off on that.

With respect to their financial commitments, the government has completely turned its back on the commitments made in 2015. We have talked a lot about the balanced budget over the last few days and how the deficits continue to climb and climb. We can look at the attacks on the small business community over the last year. The government for some reason has decided it does not like small business owners and refers to them as tax cheats. We have looked at the immigration system over the last couple days. The Liberals have lost control of that as well. Taxpayers are spending over \$1 billion now because of an inability to control an immigration system that was in good shape when it was turned over to them.

Government Orders

Communities are very upset with respect to firearms. We have carbon tax that will add billions of dollars to the expenses of Canadians. When it comes to bills, legislation has to be fixed again and again. I find it ironic we are speaking to one today that has had so many problems and had numerous amendments. The general perception is that it gives the Liberals an advantage in the next election.

Does the member think we should be discussing this history of incompetence as we close out our final hours in this place? The focus seems to be on the incompetence of the Liberals and their capacity for self-delusion and for trying to manipulate the system so it works for them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Cypress Hills—Grasslands. I am wondering the same thing. I think that the government is ramming this through. This is yet another example of the amateurism, and I emphasize the word amateurism, of this government, which is always improvising.

As we said, the illegal migrant situation is going to cost \$1.1 billion. Yesterday, the government had its chequebook out and was giving out \$25,000 for those who are living at the camp at Roxham Road, \$10,000 for those who live a little further away, etc. It is unacceptable.

Fortunately, 2019 is just around the corner, and it is an election year. Canadians will finally be able to vote in a responsible government.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in a beautiful building that has so much meaning to Canadians from all regions of our country. It is such a privilege to be an elected representative. We know today will be our last sitting day. When I think of some of the institutions we have in Canada, number one on the list for me is the Parliament Building. This is the centre of our democracy. I appreciated the words yesterday from the Prime Minister.

It is significant that we are debating another aspect of democracy on our last sitting day in this beautiful room inside the Parliament Building. It is about democracy and how wonderful Canada is, which I and many others would argue is the best country in the world. We owe it to the individuals who have fought the wars. We owe it to the individuals who have filled this chamber. Most important, we owe it to Canadians from coast to coast who recognize the importance of our democracy, who get out and get engaged, whether they are volunteers, candidates or contributors, whomever they might be.

It is such a touching day that this will be our last day inside this hall. Perhaps I might be afforded an opportunity, depending on my constituents and my family, to give another speech inside this chamber 10 years from now. It is tough to say, but I do look forward to the future.

As this will be the last time I rise this year, I would give my thanks to some special people, including the individuals who record everything that is said. We call them our Hansard people. I also

thank the individuals up in the TV room. For those who have never been in the TV room, it is quite the grouping up there. They do a fantastic job in ensuring we all look relatively well in our presentations and in delivering our speeches. My thanks go to the individuals who provide the security of this building and this chamber; to the table officers for the fine work they do in supporting members of Parliament, including you, Mr. Speaker; to the individuals such as our pages who play a very important role for all of us members of Parliament. I expect some speeches are a bit more challenging than others to listen to, but at the end of it, we do appreciate the efforts of the pages. I thank our support staff as well. We have amazing individuals who participate in our House leadership teams, from the ministers and the staff who are there to provide us often the type of speaking notes that are necessary in order to participate and be engaged in the debates.

So many individuals contribute to the functionality of this place. I extend my thanks, and also on behalf of many, if not all, members, and express how much I truly appreciate them.

Having said that, I want to get to the core of the issue. Having listened to the debate so far, there are many things that come to mind. In listening to what members have said, I sometimes wonder whether we are even debating Bill C-76. Someone posed a question as to what the government had actually achieved over the last three years. Others have talked about specific things that have occurred in the last three years. Then there has been some discussion from the Conservatives in regard to Bill C-76, and that is where I would like to start.

A few years back, when I was sitting in opposition, we had Stephen Harper's Fair Elections Act, as the Conservatives called it. In opposition, we called it the "unfair elections act".

● (1340)

I remember that individuals, stakeholders and Canadians from coast to coast to coast recognized the many flaws in Stephen Harper's attempt to reform our elections. People were greatly discouraged. We made a commitment to make changes to our Canada Elections Act and that is what we are talking about today.

When I reflect on the days we debated it when we were in opposition, there was something in common with today. Back then, those in opposition to the Conservative legislation included the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party, the Green Party, political stakeholders and individuals who followed politics from virtually every region of our country. Letters were written, appealing to prime minister Stephen Harper at the time not to move forward on a number of fronts. In its presentations to committee, there was no doubt that Elections Canada felt very frustrated because the government seemed to disregard it. Elections Canada, as an institution, is recognized around the world as an agency that performs exceptionally well when it comes to democracy. The Conservative government had no real respect for Elections Canada.

Government Orders

It is somewhat offensive to hear Conservative members talk about how, through this legislation, we are trying to jig the election in any way whatsoever. It is misinformation and that is something Conservatives are fairly good at, that Conservative spin, and it does not have to be truthful. They continue to spin things even though they are not true. They are often very misleading, and I am being generous when I say “very misleading”.

The legislation before us today is supported by other political entities. It is only the Conservative Party that does not want this legislation to pass. It has gone through first and second reading, it went to committee, it came back at report stage and had third reading in the House. Then it went to the Senate, where it was thoroughly debated again and all sorts of stakeholders made presentations. A relatively minor technical amendment was made and now it is back before the House. The Conservatives, once again, have taken the approach that, without the government applying time allocation, this bill will never see the light of day.

Let there be no doubt that at every stage of the bill in Parliament, the Conservative official opposition, which I would argue is still spearheaded by Stephen Harper himself, at least one would think that, continues to frustrate the House, attempting to ensure that Bill C-76 never sees the light of day. I suggest that is most tragic. Bill C-76 would enhance democracy in Canada. It would enable more people to participate in the democratic process. Ministers, parliamentary secretaries, many members and even some New Democrats have stood in their places and talked about the importance of this legislation becoming the law of the land. The reason is that at the end of the day, it would improve the system.

• (1345)

People who might be following this debate should be aware that if the government did not bring in time allocation on this motion, it would not pass. The Conservatives have no intention of seeing this proposed legislation pass. They talk about this being a historic day and, yes, this is a historic day, as it is the last day we will have debate inside this chamber. However, it is somewhat disingenuous to refer to the government's desire to use time allocation in order to fulfill a commitment to Canadians in making these changes, because the Conservatives do not want to see this bill pass.

We made a commitment in the last federal election to pass this legislation. In fact, there is wide support for it, and for a very good reason. We can take a look at some of the things the bill would do, such as the treatment of expenses related to the provision of care. This would be of great benefit for those individuals with children going through an election where there are spending caps. Under the bill, candidates would be able to have care provided, which would not be applied under the spending cap, and a healthy percentage of that cost would be rebated. This is widely supported in every area for anyone who talks about improving democracy, not only in Canada but in the world.

There are many aspects of this proposed legislation that would make our democratic system better. For example, there is assistance for electors with disabilities, transfer certificates for electors with disabilities, enhanced voting at home opportunities and level access for polling places. The bill would allow for pilot projects to be conducted through the Chief Electoral Officer and refers to costs to

accommodate electors with disabilities. There are things within the proposed legislation that would enhance democracy for members of the Canadian Forces. It would revise who is entitled to vote under division 2, again with the idea of enhancing our democracy. It would put new voting integrity measures into place. There are requirements to provide service numbers with respect to the Canadian Forces. There is a lengthy list of actions that would be put into place as a direct result of this proposed legislation.

One of the issues when Stephen Harper brought in electoral reform was the voter identification card. The card was a valuable piece of identification that could be used with other identification in order to enable a person to vote. The Conservatives got rid of that. There was widespread objection to the Conservative government at the time for getting rid of it. Bill C-76 would reinstate it, with the support of organizations such as Elections Canada; many stakeholders; political parties including the Greens, New Democrats, and obviously the Liberals; and others. We are doing that because we recognize the value of enhancing our democratic system.

Bill C-76 is good legislation. I do not understand why the Conservative Party does not support the bill.

• (1350)

I would invite people to listen to what the Conservatives said today in addressing Bill C-76. I would suggest that 50% of the time, or more, they did not focus on the legislation. Rather, they talked about the last three years and they used the words “failure after failure”. Let us talk about the last three years.

One of the very first speeches I gave was on the first piece of legislation our government introduced in this beautiful chamber. We are talking about the last one today. The first one dealt with the tax breaks for Canada's middle class. Not only are the Conservatives voting against Bill C-76, they also voted against that tax break for Canada's middle class.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my colleagues are right. One would think they would be somewhat shamed.

When we talk about this whole idea of what has happened in the past three years, let me tell my Conservative friends across the way—

• (1355)

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would be remiss if I were not to point out the fact that perhaps my colleague might have strayed a bit from the relevance of the topic at hand. I would invite him to come back to the topic. Especially since this may or may not be the last speech given in this place for the next 15 years. He might want to make it relevant, and perhaps wish everyone a very merry Christmas.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): As I mentioned earlier, hon. members do deviate and go on different courses, but sometimes they come back and make a lot of sense, and make it work. Therefore, I will leave it to the hon. parliamentary secretary.

However, this is my last chance, so I would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy holiday.

Statements by Members

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, people are chewing up my time here. I have a lot to say. This is my last speech this year.

I would ask my friend to talk to the member for Cariboo—Prince George about the issue of relevance on this particular bill, and I do wish her a very merry Christmas.

Conservative after Conservative stood in their place and wanted to talk about what has happened in the last three years. That is what I want to spend my last three minutes on, because there have been lots of wonderful things in the last three years. There was the break for Canada's middle class, and what about that special tax on Canada's wealthiest 1%? That is something the Conservatives voted against.

On many occasions I have talked about the Canada child benefit increase and how that has lifted tens of thousands of children out of poverty. What about the guaranteed income supplement? It has lifted tens of thousands of seniors out of poverty. What about a government that has worked with other governments to achieve agreements, such as a price on pollution? Only the Conservatives, and they brought it up today in their speeches, believe that there should not be a price on pollution, and we still await their plan. What about the agreement between the provinces and territories on the CPP, which will put more money in the pockets of individuals when they start retiring in the years ahead? What about the reduction from age 67 back to 65 to collect OAS? I would also mention the hundreds of millions of dollars in historic investments in Canada's infrastructure that our government has put into place.

Our government has done more in the last three years than Stephen Harper did in 10 years. Our government, by working with Canadians in every region of our country, has generated over 700,000 jobs. We have an economy that is doing far better than most countries within the G7.

The Speaker: Order, order. The time for debate has expired.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. We are down to the very last moments of the member's speech. This is his last chance in this House for the next decade to get back on topic under discussion.

The Speaker: He does not have another chance because the time for debate has, in fact, expired.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Sorry. The time is up.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons has said a word or two in this place, and I suspect he might in the next location.

ROYAL ASSENT

[English]

The Speaker: Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

December 13, 2018

Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 13th day of December, 2018, at 4:30 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills of law.

Yours sincerely,

Assunta Di Lorenzo

Secretary to the Governor General and Herald Chancellor

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the House may know, a couple of weeks ago I celebrated the 30th anniversary of my first election to this chamber.

I have been thrown in. I have been thrown out. I have been recycled. I have changed parties a few times. But I have had an incredible experience in this chamber and to think that this is the last day is really hard to take.

My first seat was over here. My seatmate was Kim Campbell. She ended up being one of the six prime ministers I have served under. I have sat over there. I have sat in the seat of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I have sat everywhere. There is not a bad seat in the House.

In my last seat, when I was an independent, I sat directly between the NDP and the Liberals in the very back row and I got to know the very distinguished member for Papineau. That resulted in my sitting in this seat.

I have seen members of Parliament from all parties do great things in this chamber and I am very proud to have been a part of all of that. No doubt I will not be back in this Chamber again, so I would like to thank everyone for the experience.

Merry Christmas to everybody. Have a good one.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles gave me the opportunity to represent them in the House of Commons.

I rise almost every single day on behalf of the 95,000 constituents of my riding to question the government or to vote, as Richard Marceau, Daniel Petit and Anne-Marie Day did before me.

For more than 100 years, men and women from across Canada, of different political stripes, have debated long hours in this place to give a voice to millions of Canadians. Votes took us into the First and Second World Wars. Others have ushered in major free trade agreements, and so on.

Statements by Members

Indeed, the House may be just a building, but this building has a soul, the soul of the many great Canadians who have marked our history. I am extremely humbled and honoured to be part of a long line of MPs for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, who each represented their constituents in their own way.

For this last member's statement in this building, I cannot emphasize enough my respect for the institution of the House of Commons. My voice will soon resonate in the new building for the benefit of Canadians and especially the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

* * *

EMD CONSTRUCTION—BATIMO

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today. We have come to the last members' statements, so it is a pleasure to be here in the House.

In November, a very exciting company in my riding called EMD Construction—Batimo received two prizes at the most recent gala for the prestigious U.S.A. & Americas Property Awards. These awards are part of the renowned International Property Awards, which recognize outstanding architecture and design in real estate projects and highlight the success of property management companies around the world.

EMD—Batimo was awarded best Canadian residential development for the Chartwell L'Envol project in Cap-Rouge, in the Quebec City area. It is the first Canadian developer to receive a prestigious honour for a retirement residence. These are people from my riding of Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, so I am incredibly proud. Congratulations to the team at EMD Construction—Batimo. It is a thriving company.

I also want to take a moment to wish all my colleagues in the House and everyone patiently watching us on TV a merry Christmas and a very happy new year. I wish everyone peace and good health, and I hope everyone gets to spend some quality time with their family and friends.

* * *

●(1405)

BY-ELECTION IN OUTREMONT

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the holidays approaching, lots of people are expecting a gift from the Prime Minister, a by-election in Outremont.

In October, the Prime Minister decided that over 300,000 Canadians, including the citizens of Outremont, did not need a voice in Parliament. All people have the right to an elected representative to defend their interests. We have an outstanding candidate in Outremont, a friend of mine, Julia Sanchez. She is an extraordinary woman whose involvement internationally and on environmental issues I know well. Knowing what she has accomplished in those arenas, I know she will do an exceptional job of representing the people of Outremont and defending their interests.

This holiday season, the Prime Minister should give the people of Outremont the gift of a by-election so that Julia Sanchez can join the NDP caucus in Ottawa.

[English]

VENEZUELA

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure for me to rise on our last day in Centre Block to make a statement.

On behalf of the Latin American community in my riding of Davenport and right across the country, I would like to put a spotlight on the continuing deterioration of the state of affairs in Venezuela

Almost 3 million Venezuelans have fled to surrounding countries, causing one of the largest migrations in the history of Latin America and putting an enormous strain on local services in countries such as Peru, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Argentina.

There is a humanitarian crisis, with millions of Venezuelans lacking access to food, medicines, and other basic necessities of life. Then there are the human rights abuses, the extrajudicial killings, the violent crackdowns on protesters, activists and journalists.

Canada has condemned the role of the current regime in the ongoing political and economic crisis and has imposed economic sanctions on officials, and we were one of the first countries in the Americas to denounce the human rights situation.

We will continue to be vigilant to what is happening in Venezuela.

* * *

YAZIDI COMMUNITY

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): The Yazidi community is currently observing the Three Day Fast of December. Fasting occurs from dawn until sunset, and in the evening family and friends hold feasts and engage in prayer. This is a time when Yazidis connect with the divine, celebrate blessings, and pray for peace. Tomorrow, Yazidis will hold the Feast of Ezi. Who knows when we next meet in here, 10 years hence. Maybe we will see Canada's first Yazidi member of Parliament.

The resilience of this community and their traditions is nothing short of a miracle. When evil tried to stamp out this people, they have persevered. Despite so many threats to their existence, Yazidis continue to celebrate their respect for peace and universal well-being for all of humanity.

I would like to say to all Yazidis on behalf of all of us in this place, “*Eida Wa Piroz Be*”.

To all Canadians Merry Christmas, happy holidays, peace and good health.

*Statements by Members***CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME**

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): M. Speaker, I rise today to shed light on a medical condition that affects over 800,000 Canadians. Myalgic encephalomyelitis, commonly referred to as “chronic fatigue syndrome” and fibromyalgia, or ME/FM, is a debilitating physical condition that can severely limit a person's ability to carry out ordinary daily activities. Unlike other conditions, those suffering very real physical symptoms, including incapacitating pain, are frequently stigmatized, told that it is in their head and denied basic supports that others with disabilities are entitled to. Poverty and social isolation often follow.

Global research on the causes, diagnostics and possible treatment of this condition are nearing potential breakthroughs, and yet there is no funding for research here in Canada.

I want to thank my constituent, Margaret Parlor, and the National ME/FM Action Network for their tireless advocacy in raising awareness of this issue.

* * *

CHRISTMAS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, family, faith, traditions, time spent among friends, togetherness and celebrating the gift of life are all aspects of the holiday season that we cherish. I feel so blessed to have amazing colleagues on all sides of the House representing this beautiful country, and the hard-working Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

It is an honour for me to serve all Canadians. This holiday season, let's take the time to reflect on everything we have accomplished this year and show our love to everyone around us.

● (1410)

[*English*]

Let us embrace the spirit of giving and always look out for opportunities to help those who are less fortunate in our society.

From my family and I, our warm wishes to everyone here and to all Canadians for a very merry Christmas and happy new year.

[*Translation*]

Merry Christmas, everyone.

[*Member spoke in Italian*]

* * *

[*English*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has now voted down motions to study the impact on the Canadian automotive industry and economy of the GM plant closure in Oshawa not once, not twice, but three times. First at the industry committee, the Liberals failed us. Then, at the international trade committee, the Liberals failed us again. Finally, yesterday in the House, the Liberals failed Canadians by not supporting our motion

calling on the industry committee to study the GM plant closure with stakeholders as soon as possible.

I have asked repeatedly in the House about when the Prime Minister will release his plan to help the affected workers. Again, we have heard nothing. Colleagues can understand the confusion among Canadians when the Prime Minister says he wants to work to find a solution, and yet the Liberals will not let parliamentarians take action to keep jobs in Oshawa and Canada, to work with stakeholders and to provide recommendations to the government. The Liberals continue to fail the people of Oshawa and all Canadians.

* * *

SAINT JOHN—ROTHESAY

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is a time to reflect upon the year that has passed and give a hand to those most in need in our communities. Today, I rise to reflect upon two ways our government is giving a hand to those most in need in Saint John—Rothesay.

This fall, I was thrilled to make an announcement of something that had been three years in the making: nearly \$2.7 million in federal funding for the Saint John Human Development Council's UYES! project. This funding will help give 183 at-risk youth in our community the opportunity to acquire the job skills they need to find gainful employment.

I am also thrilled to announce that over 7,000 families in Saint John—Rothesay are benefiting from an average Canada child benefit payment of \$670 a month. These investments in progressive social programs will help lift thousands of my constituents out of poverty and ensure that more families in our community have roofs over their heads and food on their tables at every passing Christmas.

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HORIZON HOUSING

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have some good news to share with everyone. Because of our national housing strategy, kids with disabilities are finding places to live in their communities to build their lives. As members are aware, one in seven Canadians has a disability. However, many of these Canadian kids are growing up in hospitals because they do not have the supports they need. We are dealing with that. In fact, at the Horizon Housing Society's Glamorgan project in Calgary, there is a supportive living area that allows these kids to grow up in a home environment with the nursing care and support they need. Clearly, this is some good news for the holiday season, kids with disabilities being able to build their lives outside of a hospital. I am certain that everyone will agree that this is a game changer for kids with disabilities in this country.

I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the session is coming to an end, it is 2018 and thousands of Canadians still do not have access to broadband Internet.

In 2016, the CRTC stated that access to broadband Internet services is vital to Canada's economic, social, democratic and cultural fabric. All Canadians must have access to high-speed Internet.

The Auditor General reported that this Liberal government launched the connect to innovate program in 2016 to expand Internet access but forgot to implement the program. Oops. They once again spent taxpayers' money. Rural residents have the same rights as urban residents.

This holiday season, I would ask this government to commit to providing high-speed Internet to rural residents. This is no longer the *Green Acres* era. Our rural areas deserve better.

In closing, I would like to wish the citizens of the most beautiful riding in Canada, Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, much happiness and health. I look forward to serving you in 2019.

* * *

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the time in this magnificent place counting down from months to weeks to days and now hours, I want to take this moment to thank the residents of Orléans for entrusting me to be their voice on the Hill. I also most especially want to thank those who serve our country, both in and out of uniform, and your staff, Mr. Speaker, the clerks, the pages, the translators, the RCMP, the Parliamentary Protective Service, the people who work in the restaurant, and those who make our lives so much easier and focused on getting the job done.

● (1415)

[Translation]

Let us continue to reflect the values that define Canadians and to be generous and kind to our fellow citizens and to visitors from around the world.

[English]

With that, I wish my friends on both sides of the aisle a merry Christmas and best wishes for a great new year.

* * *

LEADER OF THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over this holiday season, Jagmeet Singh will be knocking on doors throughout Burnaby South. I hope the Prime Minister will stop playing games with the by-election and allow voters to choose their representative.

Jagmeet Singh has a very compelling family story. He had to make his own way in the world and took care of his family when his father fell ill. Because of his experiences at a time of record

inequality and a profound family debt crisis, Jagmeet Singh believes in investing in people, families and communities. He represents a change from the same old, same old story we see in Ottawa.

Jagmeet Singh has shown courage throughout his life. He grew up facing racism and turned that challenge into strength and compassion. He fundamentally believes that we need to build a better Canada, a Canada where everyone matters and where no one is left behind.

I look forward to the day when voters can choose to have Jagmeet Singh speak up on behalf of Burnaby South and all Canadians here in Ottawa on the floor of the House of Commons.

* * *

OPIOIDS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opioid crisis in Canada is killing more people than homicide, suicide and traffic accidents combined. The statistics are alarming: 8,000 Canadians have died from this crisis, and 11 Canadians are dying each day.

At the take-note debate on Monday evening, my colleague from Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte spoke about the tragic impact the opioid crisis is having on our city of Barrie, Ontario. He spoke about the 38 deaths in 2017 alone, the 38 lives that have been lost and the families that have been decimated. Our community is reeling trying to solve this crisis. It is all hands on deck.

Unbelievably, during the debate, while the member was referring to the 38 deaths, a microphone clearly picked up the Liberal government House leader saying, "Oh that's it? That's not so bad, is it?" One death in this national crisis is too many, and for the Liberal government House leader to dismiss the deaths of 38 people in Barrie as, "Oh that's it? That's not so bad, is it?", is unacceptable, repugnant and morally reprehensible.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on August 15, 1988, I came to Ottawa to serve as a parliamentary page. It was the first time I had the privilege of setting foot on the green carpet of the House of Commons.

Little did I know that 27 years later, I would have the privilege of representing my constituents in the House of Commons as the member for Hull—Aylmer.

I must admit that I was a huge politics nerd from a very early age. I was a Hansard subscriber at age 14. Who does that?

[English]

At the time, I was reading the great debates that were happening in the House. I came to know these people I never met but came to know through Hansard, the Joe Clarks, the Nelson Riises and the George Bakers, their wit and intelligence coming through.

Oral Questions

Aside from having the great privilege of being a page, what I will take from this chamber is an emotional time that happened here, and that was when Mauril Bélanger took the Speaker's chair.

We are not owners of this House. We are just stewards. We are just passing through. Let us take care of it while workers take care of this building over the next 10 years.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

HEALTH

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opioid crisis is heartbreaking and tragic. In the first half of this year, more than 2,000 Canadians died as a result of this epidemic. Opioid deaths affect Canadians of all backgrounds; rich, poor, people from rural or urban areas, all are affected. This is a national crisis, and the government needs to take action immediately, before the situation gets even worse.

Does the government realize how urgent this situation is, and does it take the opioid crisis seriously?

• (1420)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in a national public health crisis when it comes to the opioid epidemic, and our government is taking it extremely seriously. We are treating this as a public health issue and not a criminal one. Unlike the Harper Conservatives, we have restored harm reduction as a key pillar of our strategy. We believe in supervised consumption sites and overdose prevention sites, because we recognize that they save lives. We continue to work with the provinces and territories, and we will do all we can to turn the tide on this national public health crisis.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, when we were debating about the crisis, we heard some heart-wrenching stories of lives lost, including the loss of 38 lives in Barrie, Ontario. Unbelievably, when the Liberals responded to hearing of these 38 deaths, the Liberal House leader could be heard saying, "Oh, that's it? That's not so bad, is it?" These heartless and cruel comments were incredibly hurtful to the thousands who have suffered because of this crisis.

Why in the world would the Liberal House leader say this, and will she stand in this House and apologize?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue for me. It is for my community. I know it is for all members in this place. My comments were not intended to diminish the seriousness of this. In the Waterloo region, we have seen 85 people lose their lives. On this issue, if I have offended anyone, I can promise I have no problem apologizing. I apologize.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do thank the House leader for that apology, but unfortunately, it cannot erase the damage and the hurt that has been done.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. opposition House leader has the floor.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, thousands of families have suffered greatly as a result of this crisis, and cruel comments like those only make things worse, and they cannot undo the damage done.

The question for the House leader is this. How could she say that, what did she mean by those comments, and is this the way the Liberal cabinet talks about this crisis when the doors are closed and it thinks nobody is listening?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was a really serious debate we had on Monday. We had members from both sides ask for an emergency debate. It was denied. All parties worked together to ensure that members could put themselves on the record. This is a very serious issue. I was part of that debate, and I too shared a story. It impacts my community, as it impacts every community across this country. It is a national crisis. We do need to do more. I can assure members that is what we are doing.

As I have said to the member, and I will say to all members in this place and anyone who took my comments to be intended as something they were not, I apologize.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday evening, after a moving speech about the opioid crisis, the member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte told us that 38 people had died in Barrie, leaving their families and loved ones mourning their futile deaths due to the opioid crisis.

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons then said, oh, is that all? That is not so bad, is it?

That is outrageous. I would go so far as to say that remark was totally unacceptable.

Could the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons explain to us why she said that?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are facing a public health crisis, with the opioid crisis. Our government is working hard with all of its provincial and territorial partners, as well as with all the municipalities.

In budget 2018, we made an investment of over \$230 million. We want to make sure we have the resources on the ground to help people seeking counselling services, and we are going to do everything in our power to ensure that these services are set up.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even one death is one too many.

The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is completely lacking in compassion. The opioid crisis is serious, but does she realize just how serious it is? Does she have an inkling of the devastating effects of those 38 deaths on the families of the deceased?

Oral Questions

Will the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons repeat what she said and explain why she thinks 38 deaths are not so bad?

• (1425)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we are deeply concerned about the opioid crisis. It is ultimately a public health crisis.

Our government is treating it like a public health crisis and not like a criminal problem. We continue to work with the provinces and territories to make sure that we can get resources on the ground where they are needed.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely. We continue to work with all our partners. The numbers released this week are not just numbers; these are human beings—mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. We are all concerned about this tragedy.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister tries to make us believe that the contract given by VIA Rail for a German company to build trains in the U.S. is the best thing that can happen, we can feel a collective facepalm from Canadians. They know it makes no sense. They know the Liberals lie down when it comes to the time to protect Canadian jobs.

The U.S. demands that at least 65% of the work of a public transportation tender has to be local and that final assembly has to be done on its territory. China has similar provisions.

The Liberals could have given Bombardier the possibility of a final offer and they refused to do it. Why do they not care about protecting Canadian jobs?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question many times, so I will approach it differently.

People taking new trains within the Quebec City–Windsor corridor will benefit from improved comfort, enhanced accessibility, better safety and cleaner travel. On top of this, with today's deal, Siemens aims to provide Canadian content of more than 20% in supplies and services.

The NDP says one thing in the House, but behind closed doors it admits that our trade deals work for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I dare the Minister of Transport to go to La Pocatière and say that to Bombardier workers.

The United States requires guarantees of local content in bids for public transportation. China requires guarantees of local content in bids for public transportation. Here, the government says that we can do nothing and our hands are tied because of trade agreements. What a crock. The members of the Liberal caucus are worthless.

Mr. Pierre Nantel: They are cowards.

Mr. Guy Caron: They have no clout. The United States requires a minimum of 65% local content and requires that the final assembly be carried out in the U.S.

Why do the Liberals cave when the time comes to stand up for Canadian interests?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP clearly has no idea how a trade agreement works.

Speaking of Bombardier, we should talk about the \$500-million AZUR contract awarded to La Pocatière.

Why does the NDP not point out that we have spent \$154 million for VIA Rail in La Pocatière and that we have awarded contracts to CAD, in Montreal and Gaspé? These contracts were awarded in Quebec. The NDP has never mentioned those.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert not to shout when someone else has the floor and, also, not to shout at all in the House.

The Hon. member for Sherbrooke.

* * *

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, two years after the Panama papers scandal, the Liberals have yet to do anything to tackle international tax evasion.

If someone earns \$35,000 a year and owes \$200 to the government, the CRA is super efficient. However, if someone hides millions of dollars in tax havens, the agency is unable to do anything at all and drags its feet.

The minister may say that her plan is working, but in the past three years she has had nothing to show Canadians. There have been no convictions, no charges and no recoveries related to international tax evasion.

Why do the Liberals always let the rich off the hook so easily?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the report by the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada confirms that the ill-considered cuts to the agency by the Harper government had devastating consequences.

Thanks to investments of more than \$1 billion in the fight against tax evasion, our government has given the agency the resources it needed. Under our leadership, it hired 1,300 new auditors. We have done twice as many audits in three years as the Harper government did in 10 years.

Our plan is working and we are starting to see the results.

Oral Questions

•(1430)

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): What rubbish, Mr. Speaker. No charges have been laid. When regular people claim something on their taxes, they are given only 90 days to prove that it is a legal claim. It has been two years since the Panama papers revealed that many of the richest people in Canada had been stashing billions of dollars in illegal offshore tax havens, and still not a single charge has been laid. That is like playing Monopoly where the richest always get a get-out-of-jail-free card.

This Christmas, instead of going after everyday people all the time, why does the Prime Minister not tell his minister to go after illegal offshore tax havens for a change?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in our last three budgets, we invested over \$1 billion to give the Canada Revenue Agency the tools it needs to go after tax cheats.

With respect to the Panama papers, the CRA identified over 3,000 offshore entities associated with over 2,600 beneficial owners that have some link to Canada. The CRA has risk assessed over 80% of them. We also chose to tighten the rules for the voluntary disclosures program. The net is tightening.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I would remind the member for New Westminster—Burnaby that he had his chance to speak, and now it is time to listen.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the net is tightening, but the deficit is certainly getting bigger.

Two days ago, the Parliamentary Budget Officer sounded the alarm once again: the next deficit could be as high as \$30 billion.

Let us review the facts. Three years ago, these people were elected on a promise that there would be no deficit in 2019. A year ago, a \$10-billion deficit was forecast. Six weeks ago, it was \$20 billion. Now we are up to \$30 billion.

The Liberals have completely lost control of the public purse.

My question is very simple. When will we return to a balanced budget?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Louis-Saint-Laurent for giving me the opportunity to answer a question in this august chamber one last time before the holidays and the closing of Centre Block.

My colleague for Louis-Saint-Laurent is a history buff. He knows that in 2006, the Conservative government inherited the best fiscal position of any incoming government. The Conservatives were

given impressive surpluses, but it took them only two years to squander those surpluses that the Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien Liberal governments had left them.

The Conservatives are all about rhetoric and posturing. In 10 years, they gave Canadians the worst growth since the Second World War. We will take no lessons from that side of the House.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Louis-Hébert.

One does not need a history degree to know that three years ago Canada was the first country in the G7 to recover from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. That is the Conservative record, and we are proud of it.

As for the members opposite, they have been spending non-stop. They have completely lost control of the public purse. To make matters worse, they simply laugh it off when we tell them that they are going to rack up a \$30-billion deficit.

I am giving the member for Louis-Hébert another chance to give Canadians a real answer, since this might be the last time he rises in the House this year. When will the Liberals balance the budget?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of history, the reason why Canada weathered the 2008 financial crisis relatively well is mainly that Paul Martin said no to Stephen Harper when he asked him to deregulate Canada's financial industry.

Despite all that, the Conservatives racked up \$150 billion in debt and led us into a technical recession in 2015. Once again, Canadians had to bring in a Liberal government to clean up the Conservative government's mess. We created 800,000 jobs and lifted 300,000 people out of poverty. We have the strongest growth in the G7 and our debt-to-GDP ratio is on a downward track.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would also ask the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier not to shout when someone else has the floor.

[English]

The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians decided based on a promise that the Prime Minister made to balance the budget.

The other day the International Monetary Fund warned industrialized countries to “fix the roof while the sun shines” as the stars and clouds quickly amass over the global economy. However, the Prime Minister is doing the opposite. He continues to spend money we do not have with reckless abandon, which will ultimately lead to severe cuts of critical services when we need them the most.

When will the Prime Minister do the right thing, brace our economy for the storm and balance the budget?

Oral Questions

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that now she is on that side, she knows a thing or two about cutting services. It is the Conservatives' side that cut services to veterans and cut pay specialists that led to the Phoenix pay system. It is their side that sent cheques to families of millionaires. That was their focus.

I understand that they tried to cut their way to prosperity. It failed. We have taken a different approach that has been working for the last three years and that is working for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

• (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also really like history. During the financial crisis between 2008 and 2015, we released \$80 billion from our economic action plan, we safeguarded 250,000 jobs and we posted the best performance of the OECD.

In 2015, the Prime Minister could not have been clearer when he said that the budget would be balanced in 2019. Not only did that not happen—which makes it a broken promise—but also the Liberals have no idea when the budget will be balanced. No government since 1867 has ever been so irresponsible with the public purse.

When will we see a balanced budget?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no Conservative government since 1946 has posted a worse economic performance than Stephen Harper's Conservative government, which the member is so passionately defending.

I invite him to review his history and check his facts. Under the Conservative government, Canada had the worst export growth in 69 years, as well as the worst job growth, because the Conservative approach failed. It focused on the wealthy by sending cheques to millionaires' families and increasing TFSA limits for the wealthy, thanks to boutique tax credits.

We took a completely different approach, which is working. We are reducing inequality and investing in Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the early 2000s, the Conservative government paid off \$40 billion of debt because we foresaw the difficult times that were ahead in the global economy.

By contrast, while the sun is shining in the global economy, the Liberal government is piling up record debt. Now Citigroup has produced a report saying that Canada is “flashing red warning lights” with respect to government debt. We go into this storm ahead more exposed now than ever before.

When will the budget be balanced?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know something of the era to which the gentleman was referring.

In 2006, the Conservative government inherited nine consecutive Liberal surpluses. It inherited \$100 billion in fiscal flexibility. In less

than two years, the Conservatives blew it all. Through reckless fiscal policy, it eliminated all the surplus and put the country back into deficit again, before, not because of, there was a recession in 2008. The recession made it worse.

The Speaker: Order, please. We all know it will get very quiet here soon, but perhaps not soon enough.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that member is very upset, because that was back in the era where he helped defeat his government by bungling his way into an RCMP investigation of the income trusts.

In the first two years before the global economic crisis, the Conservative government paid off \$40 billion of debt, which buffered us against the trouble which was ahead. We came out of the global recession before everyone else, and created a million jobs.

Why are the Liberals piling up so much debt now—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I note the hon. gentleman omits the outcome of the investigation, which was complete vindication.

The Conservatives created the deficit before there was a recession. The recession made it worse, but they invented the deficit all by themselves and they never balanced the books ever again. The Conservatives added \$150 billion in new debt. They put 216,000 more people on the unemployment rolls.

* * *

• (1440)

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking of the deficit, let's talk about the environmental deficit.

Everyone knows that Canada will fall well short of its greenhouse gas reduction targets. According to an IPCC report, if Canada wanted to limit global warming to 1.5°C, it would have to double the planned reductions.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that we were running out of time. He thinks that failing to act would be not only immoral, but also suicidal.

What are the Liberals waiting for? Will they stop posturing and actually do something about climate change?

[English]

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that takes the threat posed by climate change seriously. I am even prouder to see that we are actually taking action to put our commitment during the last election campaign into reality.

Oral Questions

We are putting a price on pollution, which is going to bring emissions down and leave families better off. We are investing historically in Canada's public transit system, which will have a significant effect on emissions reduction. We are investing in green infrastructure and clean technology. Importantly, we are phasing out coal to get to a place where 90% of our electricity will be generated by renewable resources by 2030, which is 30 years ahead of when the Conservatives planned to reach this goal.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, auditors general and the United Nations have expressed concern that Canada is in danger of missing its 2030 Paris target by a wide margin. Canada is in no position to be asking others to act. Given weak greenhouse gas reduction targets and a growing number of provinces renegeing on their measures, it has become evident that the much-touted pan-Canadian framework is just a legal fiction.

Instead of calling on other nations to act, will the government take concrete measures now to ensure Canada does its part?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the member that our government is working with Canadians as we transition to a clean energy future. We have a very serious plan to do our work at home while we are taking a leadership role on the international stage. That plan includes phasing out coal and, as I mentioned before, getting to 90% of our electricity generated from renewable resources by 2030.

We are also improving public transit. We are investing in energy efficiency, with \$56 million in my province of Nova Scotia alone. We are putting people to work in the green economy and bringing our emissions down at the same time.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, air force Captain Kimberly Fawcett was deployed twice to Afghanistan. Now she is fighting the Liberals to pay for her prosthetic limb. She lost her limb in an accident that killed her infant son Keiran. Captain Fawcett was carrying out her family care plan with the approval of her commanding officer. She defended our country in Afghanistan, but the military and Veterans Affairs say they will not pay for her prosthesis.

When will the Liberals do the right thing and cover the costs related to her injury?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank Captain Fawcett for her service to our country. Our hearts go out to her for the loss she has suffered. We are committed to making sure she gets the support she needs, including for the prosthetic leg.

Due to the complexity of the decisions made some time ago, this file is very complex. However, we will not only make sure that she has the right support, but we will work through that complexity to make sure we do right by her.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the minister finally

decided to settle this case, but Captain Fawcett had to go to court to demand justice.

Why did the Minister of Defence, who has known about this for several months, wait for the case to end up in court and for the media to pick up the story before addressing the problem?

• (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are going to make sure that Captain Fawcett gets the support she needs. However, as I stated, the decisions made when the Harper government was in power have made this file extremely complex. I have spoken to members opposite about this.

We have committed to and are working through the complexity of the file to make sure she has the support she needs.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kimberly Fawcett is a veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces who is in court fighting the Liberals for support for her prosthetic limbs.

I spoke to the Minister of National Defence about the Fawcett case this summer, but yesterday he told Global News that he was just becoming aware of the matter. The minister knows that is not true.

It is not complex. He should do the right thing. Captain Fawcett did her duty for Canada. It is time for the minister to do his duty to her.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will make it very clear. The question I received was about learning about the prosthetic leg. Yes, I learned about it yesterday. Obviously, we have been talking about this file for some time and have been working through it before, as the hon. member mentioned.

However, if he wants to turn this into a partisan issue, where were he and his leadership at a time when the Conservatives were in government and could have done something about this?

We will get something done, because that is what Captain Fawcett deserves.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was not partisan when I reached out to the minister four months ago to resolve this case. We spoke about this in September. He said he was seized with it. He stood with the Prime Minister and said he would never see a veteran go to court for benefits. The government is paying for the benefits of a murderer, but it is hanging Captain Fawcett out to dry.

When will the veterans in that caucus step up and fight for our military members?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke to the member opposite over the summer. In fact, even yesterday I reached out to him to ask for his help in reaching out to Captain Fawcett so we can get more information. I appreciate his support in that.

What is concerning to me is that we have been working in trying to resolve this together, but if the member wants to make this a partisan issue, why did he not take action at a time when he had the authority to do so as minister of veterans affairs?

We will get this done.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact that Canada is asking for a five-judge panel to fight a battle that the Nuu-chah-nulth nations have already won rather than translate that win into meaningful benefits for them, renders words of reconciliation hollow. This is no way for the government to treat its so-called most important relationship.

The Nuu-chah-nulth nations have a right to catch and sell fish in their own territories and are asking that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice live up to their words of reconciliation.

Will the minister cease her efforts to have a five-judge panel appointed for this appeal right now?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are certainly working collaboratively with the Ahousaht nations on the court decision in terms of working towards implementation of the decision of the court. The hon. member should know that the appeal of that decision is actually from the first nations, not from the government.

We are working collaboratively to address the issue. We will continue to do so and ensure that we meet our obligations under the court decision.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada has resumed deportations to Haiti, despite the violence in that country.

Haitians have been deported from my riding and from Montreal, Quebec City and elsewhere, even though Haiti is extremely dangerous. The government must immediately declare a moratorium on deportations to Haiti to avoid putting these people's lives in jeopardy. This government must show some humanity. It cannot remain silent in the face of this violence.

When will the minister impose a moratorium on deportations to Haiti?

• (1450)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government certainly shares the concern that has been expressed by the hon. member with respect to the situation in Haiti, which is flexible, fluid and subject to constant change.

Obviously the decision to remove someone from Canada to another country is never taken lightly. It is taken with due care and consideration, and due process as well. If the circumstances are not

appropriate for the removal to be done safely, then the removal will not be undertaken.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CETA has been in effect for one year and has had an enormous impact on Canada and specifically my home riding of New Brunswick Southwest.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade Diversification please update the House on how this agreement has benefited our seafood exporters?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for New Brunswick Southwest for her advocacy on behalf of fishers and seafood exporters.

I am happy to tell her that because of CETA, 96% of the EU tariffs on fish and seafood have been eliminated, and the remaining 4% will be phased out over the coming years.

The EU is Atlantic Canada's third-largest market for fish and seafood. Thanks to CETA, Atlantic fish and seafood now has a significant competitive advantage in Europe compared to U.S. exports. For example, according to the Lobster Council of Canada, lobster exports to Spain grew by 345%.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear the Prime Minister does not understand the struggles of everyday Canadians. More than 100,000 unemployed energy workers are struggling to pay their mortgages, heat their homes and buy Christmas presents for their families. The Prime Minister's solution to this crisis is empty words, higher taxes and more unemployment.

Canadian energy workers do not want EI cheques; they want paycheques. They do not want handouts; they want jobs. Will the Prime Minister get these people back to work? Will he scrap his "no pipelines" Bill C-69?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have and always will stand with the energy sector and the Canadians who work in that sector. We have approved Enbridge Line 3, which will add more capacity to carry our oil to the U.S. We are moving forward with the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in the right way, responding to the issues that OERD has identified. We are supporting Keystone XL. All this is being done at the same time as we are supporting workers in time of need through EI benefits.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Albertans want jobs, not handouts. Isaac Laboucan of the Woodland Cree First Nation was in Ottawa this week, voicing his opposition to the Prime Minister's shipping ban. The Prime Minister's ban hamstringing indigenous communities and is the only oil shipping moratorium in Canada. It is just another example of Liberal arrogance.

Oral Questions

The first nations want the Prime Minister to stop his “Liberals know best” approach. When will the Prime Minister get out of the way of the indigenous people instead of supporting American oil interests, and abandon his disastrous shipping ban?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think only a disconnected politician would call EI a handout. It is an earned benefit that workers have fought to have.

We are proud of our record. In the last month, 36,500 new jobs were created in Alberta. That is a gain of 71,100 full-time jobs since 2015 in Alberta. Yes, we need to do more, and we will deliver more.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like leaders of hundreds of other indigenous communities, Blood Tribe Chief Roy Fox says most Treaty 7 chiefs strongly oppose Bill C-69 “for its likely devastating impact on our ability to support our community members”.

A Guelph University professor says Bill C-69 “conflicts with the goals of timeliness and transparency, not to mention fairness”, while the pipeline association says it expects timelines to be longer. Martha Hall Findlay says it will increase political influence.

This is all the exact opposite of everything the Liberals claim, so will they scrap their “no more pipelines” Bill C-69 before it is too late?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the diversity of opinion among indigenous communities on how we develop and transport our resources. We are trying to fix a system that was broken in 2012 when the previous government brought in changes that gutted environmental regulations, destroyed the protection for water and fish, and took away the ability of Canadians to participate in the regulatory process.

We are putting a better system in place that allows good projects to move forward in a quicker way.

* * *

•(1455)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when Abdullahi Hashi Farah was detained a year ago after illegally entering Canada from the United States, he confessed to being part of a notorious Somali outlaw gang and had an outstanding arrest warrant. In spite of this, the government allowed him to go free in our community and claim he was fleeing persecution. He was recently arrested as a suspect in armed robberies that he allegedly committed after his release in Canada.

Will the Prime Minister review and fix his failed screening processes?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone who comes into this country is subject to vigorous background screening. The information in this case was not available to the IRB when it made the decision, but the man in question has been in custody since June. He is currently being held pending detention. That detention and removal will take place early in the new year.

PENSIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals failed to protect workers' pensions and Canadian consumers. Under their watch, rich executives and American hedge fund owners have been profiting from Sears' bankruptcy, while Canadians are left behind.

Sears workers and retirees are forced to fight in court to receive their hard-earned pensions. Now consumers are being told the warranties they purchased at Sears will not be delivered, but they have to pay for them, and if they refuse to pay, they get a bad credit rating.

This is wrong, and the government knows it. Why are the Liberals refusing to protect Canadian workers and consumers from greedy, rich corporations?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his work with respect not only to issues at Sears, but on pensions more broadly. The member opposite knows full well when it comes to pensions, our government has taken a leadership role in advancing that issue. We have talked about supporting retirement security for Canadians. We have brought forward measures with respect to CPP by strengthening CPP. We have also expanded the wage earner protection program.

In the 2018 budget we were very clear that we are going to provide a whole-of-government solution to deal with this issue, to learn from the lessons from Sears and to make sure that these lessons are not repeated going forward.

* * *

CANADA POST

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, the Prime Minister is attending an event on gender equality and women's economic participation, yet his unconstitutional Bill C-89 forced rural and suburban mail carriers back to work for less pay than their male counterparts, this despite an arbitrator's award for pay equity that continues to be ignored by Canada Post.

The Prime Minister talks a good game, but actions speak louder than words. Back-to-work legislation forced postal workers back into inequality. What is so feminist about that?

Oral Questions

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did everything we could to support Canada Post and its members and workers to get a deal. We appointed a federal mediation service at least a year before the talks ended. We appointed a special mediator. We reappointed a special mediator. We moved forward with legislation. We have legislation that is fair and balanced, that takes into account needs of the workers and the concerns they raised as well as the financial sustainability of the corporation. We look forward to the arbitrator's work.

* * *

SCIENCE

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Liberals promised to treat scientists with respect, but last week, scientists in the Networks of Centres of Excellence found out about funding cuts in a newspaper article. The Stem Cell Network is working on cures for diabetes, blood cancers and heart disease. Their funding runs out in three months and they have been told that is it. They have been funded since 2001, for the last 17 years. How is telling scientists about funding cuts in a newspaper article treating them with respect?

● (1500)

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science and Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague in his new role. Our government is committed to science, research and evidence-based decision-making. That is why we have made the largest investment in research in Canadian history of \$4 billion. This historic investment includes the creation of the new frontiers in research fund, which will support research that will accelerate the pace of discovery and help quality of life and the economy. We will take no lessons from the Conservatives who cut scientists—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs will please come to order. I know he is having a good time, but he should wait until after the House adjourns for that.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while approving the dumping of hundreds of millions of litres of raw sewage into our rivers and streams, the Minister of Environment seems intent on shuttering industry in my province. We know she is close to signing a caribou protection deal with the province of British Columbia without even consulting the mayors and regional districts. This deal will kill jobs and put families out of work. In 100 Mile House, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Mackenzie, Prince George, Fraser-Fort George, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, Vanderhoof, Pouce Coupe and Williams Lake, these mayors just want a seat at the table. Why is the minister ignoring them?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Conservatives' new-found interest in nature and conservation after 10 years when they slashed budgets. The fact is that in our last federal budget, we had the largest single investment in

nature and conservation in the history of our country. The threats facing the boreal and Southern Mountain caribou in British Columbia is a very serious problem that we need to address. We are moving forward with a plan to work with the provinces, take the feedback of industry and, importantly, engage indigenous peoples to ensure that our kids and grandkids can see these pieces of Canada for generations to come.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Department of National Defence accidentally revealed to the public accounts committee the transfer of the aerospace engineering test establishment from Cold Lake to Ottawa. Despite claims to the contrary, neither the member of Parliament, nor the MLA nor the mayor of Cold Lake was briefed or consulted on the impact of this move, which will see the loss of many high-paying jobs. This is just the latest in the Liberal government's agenda to hurt Alberta every way it can.

To the Minister of National Defence: why this attack on Alberta jobs?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Cold Lake plays an important role in our NORAD missions and we are increasing our investments to make sure that it continues to play a very important role in this. Unlike the Conservatives, whose 65 jets that they wanted to purchase would not have met our commitments, we are investing in the armed forces with 88 jets, plus an interim purchase that will also benefit and which will mean more increases.

I would like to ask my colleague if they are still against the interim purchases, because it will bring jobs and more benefits to Cold Lake.

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot that after he asks a question, he is not supposed to keep talking.

The hon. member for Egmont.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been working hard and making significant progress to remove barriers for persons with disabilities and to build a truly inclusive and accessible Canada. Could the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility please update the House on our government's progress?

Oral Questions

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month, with the unanimous consent of the House, we passed Bill C-81, the most significant advancement in disability rights since the charter. With Bill C-81, we are creating a system to identify and remove barriers proactively so that all Canadians, regardless of their disability, can fully participate in society. Canada also recently acceded to the optional protocol for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, further strengthening the rights of Canadians with disabilities. We are acting, we are working with the disability community and we are going to build a truly inclusive and accessible Canada.

* * *

• (1505)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 2018 will go down in history as the year when the Prime Minister, his ministers and the Liberal members representing rural areas failed to defend Canada's supply-managed farmers.

Between dairy concessions, loss of sovereignty and export limits, farmers were literally sacrificed because the Liberals were too incompetent to negotiate with the Americans.

The milk lottery is the Liberals' latest idea for compensating farmers, but the deadline to apply is in early January.

Is the government willing to give farmers more time, or will this be yet another show of incompetence on supply management?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to get a question like this from the hon. member, whose previous government cut \$700 million from the agricultural envelope. They cut research, innovation and everything else they could cut in the agricultural sector to try to balance the books. We have defended and are going to continue to defend the supply management system in this country. We have indicated quite clearly that we fully and fairly support our supply-managed farmers. This government has supported and will continue to support the agricultural sector.

* * *

[Translation]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, access to high-speed Internet is a priority issue for the people of Berthier—Maskinongé, especially for residents living on the Point-du-Jour Nord concession in Lavaltrie.

Like the 2 million Canadians who do not have affordable, reliable Internet access, residents like Gilles Auclair and Sylvie Legault do not even have Internet service that meets the CRTC's minimum standards. The Liberals need to do more for our rural regions.

When is the government finally going to bridge the digital divide in the regions and take meaningful action to ensure that they get affordable high-speed Internet service?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question.

Our government understands the importance of high-speed Internet access. That is why we came up with the connect to innovate program. This program is going to create many opportunities for the regions, especially rural regions. We will keep investing in the regions.

[English]

We are going to make sure we address the digital divide, as we have done with the connect to innovate program.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the fall economic update, our government announced the social finance fund, which will help businesses and charitable organizations bridge the gap between business and philanthropy.

Organizations such as the McConnell Foundation say that this fund will enable us to generate economic growth while addressing urgent social challenges.

This being our last day in the House, would the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell us more about the social finance fund?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Edmonton Centre and congratulate him on working so hard for his community.

He is right. Just a few days ago, in part in response to the extraordinary work of the social innovation co-creation steering group, we announced a brand-new \$750-million social finance fund that will create 100,000 jobs and inject \$2 billion into our economy over the next 10 years.

This plan is part of a bigger plan to support our middle class and help more families join the middle class.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Shawn Rehn murdered Constable David Wynn while out on bail because his extensive criminal history was not presented at the bail hearing. Now, due to a loophole with the Liberals' judicial referral hearing process, it could not be presented because it would not be entered into CPIC, the national police database, in the first place.

I wrote to the Minister of Justice about this issue. What action is the minister taking to close this dangerous loophole?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have received the correspondence from my hon. colleague across the way and I will take great care in reviewing that correspondence. The letter is speaking with respect to a bill that we introduced, Bill C-75, which seeks to reform the Criminal Code and improve efficiencies and effectiveness.

We are making changes to bail reform. We are looking at administration of justice offences to address delays, with the underlying emphasis on public safety, ensuring we respect victims and ensuring we have an efficient and effective criminal justice system. I look forward to having further conversations with the hon. member.

* * *

● (1510)

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail is taking \$1 billion of our money to get their trains built in California, when we could get them built in La Pocatière.

The Liberals are literally watching the train go by. Bombardier came back twice with two competitive offers and with the support of the Government of Quebec. Ottawa did not even consider them. It is a slap in the face to Bombardier and our workers.

Who in the government is so determined to have trains built in California, trains that will travel through Quebec and can be built in Quebec?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just say that people who take the train in the Quebec-Windsor corridor will enjoy better accessibility, improved comfort, safer trains and cleaner operations. Maintenance of these new trains will be done by VIA Rail at its facilities in Toronto and Montreal.

I would add that we have also provided more than \$150 million to have part of VIA Rail's current fleet renovated in La Pocatière, Montréal and the Gaspé region. That work will be done by 300 workers in Quebec.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does this mean that those trains will be more comfortable than the ones that would have been built in La Pocatière? That is nonsense.

Bombardier won a train contract in the United States this year. Seventy per cent of production will be carried out in the U.S. Bombardier just won a contract in China and, yes, the trains will be built in China. When Bombardier signs a contract with Germany, the trains are built in Germany.

Why is it that only Ottawa is unable to require local production from multinationals when our taxpayers are footing the bill?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Bloc Québécois does not understand our obligations under free trade agreements.

VIA Rail, a Crown corporation, put out a tender and three companies bid on it. The company selected made the best offer with

the best availability, best price and best product. That is how things work. The criteria were very well detailed beforehand and a decision was made. That is how it works.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the problem lies precisely with the bid criteria.

When it comes to Crown corporations, the government needs to consider the economic benefits. It is as simple as that.

Every time that we see the new VIA Rail trains going by, we will remember that good jobs in the regions are not important enough to the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount.

I am amazed that not one single Liberal from Quebec is standing up for the workers in La Pocatière.

What is the point of voting for MPs who use our tax money to fund jobs abroad?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that La Pocatière is getting \$500 million for the AZUR train contract.

It is also important to remember that we need to spend taxpayers' money responsibly. That is an obligation that we have. In this case, VIA Rail chose the best product in terms of cost, quality and availability. Taxpayers expect us to spend their money responsibly.

[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order on a matter of a minister misleading this House. When I raised the issue of the failed screening of Abdullahi Hashi Farah, the minister told the House that officials did not have information about Mr. Farah's criminal past prior to rendering a decision. However, a CBC article published this morning reported that Mr. Farah confessed to having an extensive criminal history prior.

Given this, I would like the minister to apologize to the House and to commit to a review of the government's failed screening processes.

The Speaker: That does sound like debate. I do not see the minister rising.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order emanating from earlier in the week, when I attempted to table the Liberal platform. Unfortunately, some members on the other side thought I was tabling another platform. It is their platform.

I ask for unanimous consent to show that the Liberals promised a balanced budget in 2019.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

● (1515)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, in a moment, I will be seeking the consent of the House for a motion.

Routine Proceedings

Because the abandoned vessel legislation, which would prevent oil spills and pollution on the coast, is ready to go, and because the amendments proposed by the Senate would add the additional protection of ensuring that any efforts to remove abandoned vessels would not disturb war graves of men and women who served this country, I am hopeful that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move that the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-64, an act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations, be now read a second time and concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

(Motion P-15. On the Order: Routine Proceedings:)

December 5, 2018—member for Perth—Wellington—That an Order of the House do issue for a copy of the guest list for the reception which occurred at the residence of the High Commissioner of Canada in India, in New Delhi, on February 22, 2018.

The Speaker: The question is on the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1520)

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

(*Division No. 982*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Alleslev	Anderson
Arnold	Barlow
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brosseau

Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cooper
Cullen	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk (Provencher)
Finley	Gallant
Garrison	Genius
Gladiu	Godin
Gourde	Hardcastle
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Julian	Kelly
Kitchen	Kusie
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lavardière
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Martel
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
Moore	Motz
Nantel	Nater
Nicholson	O'Toole
Paul-Hus	Poillievre
Quach	Reid
Rempel	Sansoucy
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Van Kesteren	Viersen
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Weir	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 97	

NAYS

Members

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Ayoub
Bagnell
Baylis
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Caesar-Chavannes
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Dabrusin
DeCoursey
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry
Gameau
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Hajdu
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hutchings
Joly
Jordan
Khalid

Government Orders

Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Medicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	Murray
Morrissey	Nault
Nassif	Oliphant
O'Connell	O'Regan
Oliver	Paradis
Ouellette	Peterson
Peschisolido	Philpott
Petitpas Taylor	Poissant
Picard	Rioux
Qualtrough	Rogers
Robillard	Rudd
Romanado	Rusnak
Ruimy	Saini
Sahota	Sangha
Sajjan	Scarpaleggia
Sarai	Schulte
Schiefke	Shanahan
Serré	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sheehan	Simms
Sikand	Sorbara
Sohi	Tabbara
Spengemann	Tassi
Tan	Vandenbeld
Vandal	Virani
Vaughan	Wilkinson
Whalen	Wrzesnewskyj
Wilson-Raybould	Young
Yip	
Zahid— 163	

PAIRED

Members

Cormier

Pauzé— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1525)

*[Translation]***ELECTIONS MODERNIZATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion in relation to the amendment made by the Senate to Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make certain consequential amendments, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the House will now proceed to the taking of the division on the motion to concur in the Senate amendment to Bill C-76.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion, the nays have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

● (1530)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 983)***YEAS**

Members

Aboutaif	Albrecht
Anderson	Arnold
Barlow	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Brassard	Carrie
Chong	Clarke
Cooper	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Eglinski	Falk (Provencher)
Finley	Gallant
Genus	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kusie	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwsky	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	O'Toole
Poilievre	Reid
Rempel	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Ste-Marie
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Trost	Van Kesteren
Viersen	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Yurdiga
Zimmer— 67	

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Bennett	Benson
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brisson
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Choquette	Christopherson
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal

Government Orders

Dhillon	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseauit	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Hajdu
Hardcastle	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hutchings
Iacono	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Khalid
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamouroux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Laverdière
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malcolmson
Maloney	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	McCrimmon
May (Cambridge)	McGuinty
McDonald	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McKay	Mendès
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mihychuk
Mendicino	
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	
Monsef	Morrissey
Moore	Nassif
Murray	O'Connell
Nault	Oliver
Oliphant	Ouellette
O'Regan	Peschisolido
Paradis	Petitpas Taylor
Peterson	Picard
Philpott	Quach
Poissant	Rioux
Qualtrough	Rogers
Robillard	Rudd
Romanado	Rusnak
Ruimy	Saini
Sahota	Sangha
Sajjan	Sarai
Sansoucy	Schiefke
Scarpaleggia	Serré
Schulte	Sheehan
Shanahan	Sikand
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sohi
Simms	Spengemann
Sorbara	Tan
Tabbara	Vandal
Tassi	Vaughan
Vandenbeld	Weir
Virani	Wilkinson
Whalen	Wrzesnewskyj
Wilson-Raybould	Young
Yip	
Zahid— 189	

PAIRED

Members

Cormier

Pauzé— 2

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.*[English]*

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.**Some hon. members:** No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please say nay.**Some hon. members:** Nay.**The Speaker:** In my opinion the yeas have it.*And five or more members having risen:*

The Speaker: The hon. chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Mark Holland: Merry Christmas, Mr. Speaker. In the spirit of the season, I think if you seek it you would find consent to apply the result of the previous vote to this vote, with Liberal members voting joyously in favour.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Merry Christmas, Mr. Speaker. The Conservatives agree to apply, and will be voting yes.

[Translation]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I also want to wish everyone a merry Christmas. The NDP agrees to apply the vote and will vote yes.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois members agree to apply the vote, and I will vote in favour of the motion.

[English]

Mr. Erin Weir: Merry Christmas, Mr. Speaker. The CCF agrees to apply, and will vote yes.

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

*(Division No. 984)***YEAS**

Members

Abouttaif	Albrecht
Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Arnold
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Baylis	Bennett
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Brosseau

Caesar-Chavannes
 Caron
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chong
 Christopherson
 Cooper
 Cuzner
 Damoff
 Dhaliwal
 Diotte
 Dreeshen
 Dubé
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Dzerowicz
 Eglinski
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Fergus
 Finley
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Freeland
 Fuhr
 Garneau
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Goldsmith-Jones
 Gould
 Graham
 Hardcastle
 Harvey
 Hehr
 Hogg
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Jeneroux
 Joly
 Jordan
 Julian
 Khalid
 Kusie
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 LeBlanc
 Lefebvre
 Levitt
 Lloyd
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 Lukiwski
 MacGregor
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Malcolmsen
 Martel
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 Mathysen
 May (Cambridge)
 McColeman
 McDonald
 McKay
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
 Monsef
 Moore
 Motz
 Nassif
 Nault
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 O'Toole
 Paradis
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Rempel

Cannings
 Carrie
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Champagne
 Choquette
 Clarke
 Cullen
 Dabrusin
 DeCoursey
 Dhillon
 Doherty
 Drouin
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Easter
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Eyking
 Falk (Provencher)
 Fillmore
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fragiskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fry
 Gallant
 Garrison
 Gerretsen
 Godin
 Goodale
 Gourde
 Hajdu
 Hardie
 Hébert
 Hoback
 Holland
 Hughes
 Iacono
 Johns
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Kelly
 Kitchen
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
 Laverdière
 Lebouthillier
 Leslie
 Lightbound
 Lobb
 Long
 Ludwig
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacKenzie
 Maguire
 Maloney
 Masse (Windsor West)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McCrimmon
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Nater
 Nicholson
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Ouellette
 Paul-Hus
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poilievre
 Quach
 Reid
 Rioux

Privilege

Robillard
 Romanado
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sansoucy
 Saroya
 Schiefke
 Schulte
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Sorbara
 Spengemann
 Ste-Marie
 Stubbs
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Trost
 Vandal
 Vaughan
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Rogers
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Sangha
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Schmale
 Serré
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sopuck
 Sorenson
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Tan
 Tilson
 Van Kesteren
 Vandenbeld
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Weir
 Wilkinson
 Wrzesniewskij
 Young
 Zahid

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Pauzé — 2

The Speaker: *Joyeuses fêtes*, merry Christmas and happy new year to all.

I declare the motion carried.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

MEMBER FOR SAINT-LÉONARD—SAINT-MICHEL

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on an important question of privilege pursuant to Standing Order 48(1). I very much appreciate that members are keen to return to their constituencies and families. However, I think this question of privilege will be of interest to some members.

Recently, of course, you will well know that the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel stood in this place to defend his previous absences from Parliament, and you gave us a ruling earlier this week.

We were looking over the member's comments, which were at times passing strange. However, importantly, in the midst of those comments, he likely misled Parliament. If the member were found to be in a prima facie breach of privilege, it would lead to the very serious charge of contempt of Parliament if the members of the procedure and House affairs committee were indeed to find it so.

In response to the question of his long absence from Parliament, the member gave a speech in which he, in defending his behaviour, declared something. He said, "I am not collecting a salary from the House of Commons." He repeated this assertion many times in his speech. You referred to it, actually, in your own ruling.

Privilege

Just by circumstance, a fellow colleague, another member of Parliament, had written to your office about the possibilities of such a procedure when a member of Parliament who is still occupying a seat foregoes salary, as the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel claims he has done. The good officials who work on behalf of all of us wrote her back and, in quoting the Parliament of Canada Act, said, “The Parliament of Canada Act is clear in our obligation to make payment until a member retires or resigns.”

Therefore, what the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel said as part of his justification in defending his eight-month absence from the House of Commons, that he has not been receiving a salary, is factually impossible, as you will now know.

One is either a member of Parliament or not. If one is a member of Parliament, one will receive a salary. If that is true, as the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel spoke in this place, I assume he is still a member of Parliament and has been for some months. He did not retire. He did not resign. He is still receiving a salary.

I am very happy to submit for your consideration the documentation I have in hand.

We also know that the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition, states:

Misleading a Minister or a Member has also been considered a form of obstruction and thus a prima facie breach of privilege.

Also, at page 141 of the 19th edition of Erskine May, *Parliamentary Practice*, it states:

Conspiracy to deceive either House or any committees of either House will also be treated as a breach of privilege.

It is of some historical moment and some sense of irony that as this place begins to shut down, a Liberal member stood in this place and said what he did. There is much that divides us here, there are a few things that unite us, and one of the things that unite us is to try our level best, regardless of partisan interests, to maintain the respect and dignity of this place. When members come before us, when members take their place, and knowingly mislead the House, it is the obligation of all members to call that member of Parliament to account.

We listened very carefully to the words of the member from Montreal, who told us last spring he was resigning, then did not. He then returned the same day of your ruling to give an impassioned, and sometimes somewhat coherent speech, as to why he could not have been here, that other work took him away, and yet he still received his pay. He still received the benefits of being a member of Parliament, despite the fact he never showed up for a day of work.

Most Canadians who were watching that were offended. They will be further offended if they find out that in the argument for and justification of that absence, the member then misled the House by suggesting that he had not received his pay, and yet we found from the House of Commons administration itself that that is not a possibility. He is entitled to his own opinions and his own so-called work ethic, but he is not entitled to his own facts. The facts of this matter are clear.

We present this to you humbly, on the last day this House convenes, so that you may in fact find a prima facie case, in which

case we will move the privilege motion, accordingly, with great enthusiasm.

• (1535)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for raising this question of privilege, which I will consider, examine the situation and the record, and come back to the House on it in due course, obviously in West Block when we meet there.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I said this yesterday at 6 p.m., but there were not many people in the House then.

I would once again like to thank all those who work with us and who make us look so good in the House: security guards, the people who make good food for us every day, the people at the table, and, of course, you, Mr. Speaker, and everyone who works with you, as well as the pages. I would also like to thank my colleagues of all stripes for their work. I do not mean to forget anyone, but I am sure I have.

Happy holidays to all. Take care and get some rest.

The Speaker: I thank the member for Hochelaga.

[*English*]

Before I go to the hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, let me make sure that we do not forget the folks who have been working hard to prepare the West Block and who will be working on this building, and also those who will be doing the move, which will be a big job over the next number of weeks.

The hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask that you will indulge us when we return to this place, or to the next place, to return to the question of privilege brought by the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. We appreciate his well-documented research. We support what he said. We would request the right to come back and to add to that. All members of Parliament should be concerned about what has been drawn to our attention through these words. They are very serious allegations. We believe there is a possibility we may need to add to them.

The Speaker: I see no problem with that. Of course, we expect it to be done in short order after the House resumes in the new location.

It being 3:42 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today the sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair for the sole purpose of royal assent.

Best wishes to all and thanks especially to all the people who look after us and do such a great job in this place, especially these guys.

SITTING SUSPENDED

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 3:42 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 4:43 p.m.)

ROYAL ASSENT

A message was delivered by the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

● (1655)

[*Translation*]

And being returned to the Commons chamber:

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that, when the House went up to the Senate chamber, Her Excellency the Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Royal Assent

Bill C-47, An Act to amend the Export and Import Permits Act and the Criminal Code (amendments permitting the accession to the Arms Trade Treaty and other amendments)—Chapter No. 26.

Bill C-86, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures—Chapter No. 27.

Bill C-90, An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019—Chapter No. 28.

Bill C-51, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Department of Justice Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act—Chapter No. 29.

Bill C-21, An Act to amend the Customs Act—Chapter No. 30.

Bill C-76, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other acts and to make certain consequential amendments—Chapter No. 31.

● (1700)

[*English*]

We are now about to leave this beautiful chamber and this magnificent edifice, this building that means so much to all of us and to all Canadians. Long may it stand.

Pursuant to an order made earlier this day, the House stands adjourned until Monday, January 28, 2019, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 5 p.m.)

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ROYAL ASSENT

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