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(HANSARD)

Friday, April 5, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 5, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1005)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—JUSTICE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC) moved:

That, given the recent allegations of political interference against the Prime Minister and given that Canadians reject the Prime Minister's excuse for his actions as simply routine government business, the House call on the government to show respect for the rule of law and immediately:

- (a) comply with the letter and spirit of all court orders and requests in relation to the trial of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman;
- (b) provide Vice-Admiral Mark Norman's defence with all records relating to his prosecution, including but not limited to, memos, letters, emails, PIN-to-PIN messages, SMS messages, and handwritten notes, including records that exist on personal electronic devices;
- (c) require all current and former Cabinet ministers and their respective political staff and employees of the Privy Council Office since November 2015 to sign an affidavit affirming that no evidence or records related to the prosecution of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman have been destroyed, and that they have personally complied with all relevant court orders; and
- (d) indemnify Vice-Admiral Mark Norman and provide legal assistance within 30 days of the adoption of this motion for any invoices that are in arrears, and within 30 days of the invoice date for any subsequent invoices.

She said: Madam Speaker, before I begin I want to advise you that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Durham.

This year has been a very troubling one for the rule of law in Canada. Of course the entire country is now familiar, and disgusted, with the disturbing case of the Prime Minister's political interference in the very serious corruption prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. Shockingly, this is not the only case that we know of.

Highly respected and regarded Vice-Admiral Mark Norman is under criminal prosecution for alleged leaks of cabinet documents, and was suspended from his role as the number two officer in Canada's military. This prosecution appears to have been politically motivated and Conservatives have said this since the beginning, but it is not just Conservatives who have this concern.

During preliminary court proceedings in an Ottawa courthouse just a few blocks from here, very serious allegations of political interference in this prosecution have been made. Honestly, we should not be surprised. The Prime Minister said publicly, and before the RCMP even completed its investigation, that it looked like this would be "before the courts".

How in the world would the Prime Minister have known that? As the SNC-Lavalin mess has exposed, the Prime Minister and his government have an obsessive, unhealthy and seemingly corrupt fascination with meddling in criminal prosecutions.

How did this all happen in the first place? Sadly, just like the SNC-Lavalin affair, it all comes down to "Who do you know in the PMO?" Back in November 2015, right after the last election, the Liberals were drunk on power and arrogance, and had one of the first cabinet meetings of the Liberal government. Former Treasury Board president Scott Brison took the unprecedented step of trying to stop or delay the contract with Davie shipyard for a much-needed interim supply ship for the Royal Canadian Navy.

Why would he do that? What was behind that? Scott Brison and other Liberals from the Liberal caucus were looking out for well-connected interests from their own neck of the woods in Atlantic Canada. They wanted the contract changed.

Then there was a leak about it all from someone to CBC reporter James Cudmore, the same James Cudmore who, really interestingly, became employed in the defence minister's office just weeks after this big military scoop. Wow, what a coincidence. The Liberals got very angry and decided that they needed to blame someone.

We have seen the news in recent weeks, recent days in fact, about other government leaks. It is really interesting how these government leaks happen and the result of the government leaks, the response from the Liberal government, depending on what the leak is about, who leaked it and whether it helps or hurts them.

As part of the recent Liberal smear campaign against the former attorney general, we saw that it did not matter whose reputation the Liberals were going to tarnish when they were trying to tarnish her reputation. In fact, we saw, and it was very disturbing and disrespectful to see, the government leaks about applicants to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Business of Supply

There has to be an investigation into how in the world leaks, misinformation and such a disrespectful campaign was allowed to happen against Chief Justice Glenn Joyal of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench, a highly respected individual, not only in Manitoba but across the country. As for the leaks around him, which were not true and which were disrespectful, the government is just saying, "That leak? Oh well, it happened. We'll make sure it never happens again." However, there is no investigation from the current Attorney General.

Let us compare that to another leak. The National Post just ran a story about a PCO leak inquiring into finding the brave soul inside the government who let Canadians know about the \$10.5-million deal cut with convicted terrorist Omar Khadr. That one has the government upset. That was something it wanted to hide. It did not come straight from its offices, apparently. That one, the government is going to get to the bottom of.

We can see how differently the government treats what it calls "leaks", leaks that come from it and leaks that it thinks come from someone else. It would appear that whistle-blowers who blow the whistle on Liberals must be punished, if we read between the lines of what the government is doing.

• (1010)

The leak concerning the supply ship was also investigated. That investigation turned up six separate leaks from the cabinet committee meeting where the issue was discussed, and some 73 people having knowledge of the details of Scott Brison's meddling, yet it was Mark Norman who was charged under the Criminal Code.

Do members know what happened just before those charges were laid and a 30-plus year respected veteran officer of the Canadian Forces was suspended—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I stand as a caution for my friend in terms of the direction that she might be taking in the debate and in some of her current comments. The *sub judice* convention is defined as a practice whereby hon. members refrain from making reference in debate to matters awaiting judicial decisions, whether they are before a criminal court, civil court or a court of record. On page 98 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, it reads as follows:

It is accepted practice that, in the interests of justice and fair play, certain restrictions should be placed on the freedom of Members of Parliament to make reference in the course of debate to matters awaiting judicial decisions, and that such matters should not be the subject of motions or questions in the House.

The member started by talking about the importance of the rule of law. We are concerned that the Conservative opposition could be crossing the line and that is the reason why I raise page 98 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, so that the member could be cautioned as to what it is that she is saying.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): First of all, I want to remind the parliamentary secretary that the motion is in order. I also want to advise the member that I appreciate the caution that he is putting forward, but so far everything has been in order and I will allow the member for Portage—Lisgar to continue.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, maybe that member should have warned his Prime Minister about interfering in a criminal prosecution when he sustained a campaign against the

former attorney general to try to get her to interfere in a criminal proceeding. Maybe he should have put a little attention to that.

Let me get back to what happened just before the charges were laid against Vice-Admiral Mark Norman.

The chief of the defence staff had a meeting and a nice dinner with the Prime Minister's top staff, Katie Telford and Gerald Butts. There they were having a nice dinner, chatting about the criminal charges and planning.

We all know from the SNC-Lavalin scandal that PMO chit-chat about criminal prosecutions is pretty well par for the course in the Liberal PMO. Oddly, the chief of the defence staff seemed to have no notes about the advanced sneak peek he was giving Katie and Gerry. Maybe the Prime Minister's Office kept notes.

Mark Norman is trying to get those notes. He had to subpoena records in the possession of the Prime Minister, Katie Telford, Gerald Butts, Michael Wernick and former PMO issues management director Zita Astravas. It remains to be seen whether he gets them. Sadly, Mark Norman is being forced to fight to get access to his own records. Now, more than two years after being suspended from the Canadian Armed Forces, Vice-Admiral Norman is struggling to get the material he needs to mount his own defence.

Here is the irony of ironies. Gerald Butts, who has resigned from the Prime Minister's Office in the midst of the SNC-Lavalin affair, seems to have full access to all of his records. We have just seen that with emails, texts and very meticulous notes he took, which seem to have been written verbatim and make it appear he may have taped the conversations. He has access to all of it. He is not even working for the PMO anymore, but he has full access to all of it, none of it redacted. Is that not interesting? Gerry Butts, the Prime Minister's best friend, has complete access to his papers for his testimony to the justice committee. However, what about Vice-Admiral Mark Norman? No, there is nothing there. When he did get a 60-page document it was all redacted.

We know why Gerry Butts went to testify. Another interesting fact is that all of these individuals at the PMO have lawyered up with different law firms. In fact, the Prime Minister's communications director defended all of this by invoking a reference to Treasury Board rules. By the way, all of these lawyers are paid for by the taxpayers.

Treasury Board rules do allow for public servants to have access to outside legal advice in respect of work-related issues. However, who has been denied support under the same Treasury Board rules? Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. All of this boggles the mind. Who gets access to documents? PMO buddies and staff who quit in disgrace. Who does not get access to documents? Well-respected veterans from our military, who have served the country with distinction and are being used as scapegoats by the Prime Minister and his office. It is shameful to watch

Canada is a democracy. A corner of our democracy is the rule of law, yet the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office treat criminal prosecutions like a play thing. In one case, the Prime Minister is sandbagging, charging and denying a fair trial to an honourable man all because of political convenience and because he thinks he might have put himself in the way of the interests of a well-connected Liberal-friendly company.

In the other case, we have the Prime Minister sneaking a new get-out-of-jail provision into an omnibus budget bill, then directing the organized badgering, bothering and harassing of the former attorney general and finally firing her. He has put in place someone, yet it all remains to be seen, to do his dirty work for him. We have yet to see what is going to happen and what the current Attorney General is going to do with this DPA for SNC-Lavalin. If it does get a DPA, it is clear that the former attorney general was fired so the current Attorney General would do exactly what the Prime Minister asked for. That is unconscionable. That is what corruption is.

• (1015)

This is all horrible to watch. It is clear that there was a plan to move heaven and earth to protect the interests of well-connected, Liberal-friendly companies. What sort of country do we live in where a powerful Prime Minister, backed up by a powerful backroom of political operatives, can just decide to mobilize the power of the state, the police, the prosecutor, name it, to help friends and punish enemies? That is not Canada. The Conservatives will have none of it.

• (1020)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Portage—Lisgar for starting us off this morning on this important issue. I will start out my comments by underscoring the important contributions that all members of the military have played for the country, including Vice-Admiral Norman.

I take issue with one comment that was made toward the end of the member's comments when she said that there was denial of a fair trial. In fact, it is quite the opposite. My colleague, the parliamentary secretary, mentioned the *sub judice* convention. The reason why that is observed is precisely because we do not want comments in the House to affect the trial fairness of any accused, including Vice-Admiral Norman.

I am struggling to understand the member's impression that trial fairness is not being observed when we have this quote from Kathleen Roussel, the director of Public Prosecutions of Canada. She has said:

Business of Supply

The PPSC has not sought or received instructions in respect of the prosecution of Mr. Norman from the Privy Council Office or any other government department or body.

She continues:

I am confident that our prosecutors, in this and every other case, exercise their discretion independently and free from any political or partisan consideration.

Based on those comments from Kathleen Roussel, could the member please explain why she is concerned about the rule of law in this case?

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, this all began where there was political interference, and it was on the floor of the House when the Prime Minister said that we would see because this would go to court. Before the investigation had even been completed, the Prime Minister showed that clearly he had information and he foresaw that this would go to trial.

As well, we are seeing so much information not being given to Vice-Admiral Norman. I think the concern is that we see a lot of the pattern on this, whether it is the code names or information in documents not being given to the vice-admiral's defence, a pattern which we have seen in previous governments, such as with Kathleen Wynne in Ontario.

If the government has nothing to hide, it could support this motion. There is nothing in here. We are just asking that he has a fair trial and that he gets the documents. We are really concerned about emails and texts being deleted. The Liberals have not answered that and not been clear on it.

If my hon. colleague is not concerned, the Liberals will support our motion.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, when we look at what has been happening for the last several weeks, there has been an increase of concern. Now we are looking deeply at this and I think Canadians want to know what the political interference is and what the accountability measures are.

The NDP has asked repeatedly for a public inquiry into these processes. We believe this should be a transparent process where Canadians are allowed to see what is happening. When I talk to constituents in my riding, I hear very clearly that they want to know that the people who represent them politically do so in an honest way. This is creating a lot of concern.

Could the member speak a bit about what a public inquiry could look like and would the Conservatives agree to support that?

Hon. Candice Bergen: Madam Speaker, my colleague is very right. There is a real concern that the separation of the executive, the legislative and the judiciary is not being respected with the Liberal government. There have been numerous examples. The two we are discussing have taken over and the country is consumed with them. This is clear evidence of political interference in criminal prosecutions by the Liberal government.

Business of Supply

This is not just a matter of the members of the government knowing people and people knowing them so they are just going to meddle a bit in criminal prosecutions. If we do not have strong foundations and strong pillars in our democracy, one of those being that political interference is not allowed in criminal prosecutions, then everything else is a sham.

It is like a house. If a house is built on sand, it will collapse as soon as the storms and trials come. If Canada is built on a type of government where political interference is allowed, everything else, including the rule of law, democracy, our elections, our criminal prosecution and our financial systems, everything we do is all built on a sham. If the actual evidence is that individuals well connected to the powerful politicians can get what they want, it is a sham.

That is why this is so important. We need to get to the bottom of the SNC-Lavalin scandal. The problem is that under this Prime Minister, he is not allowing it to happen. He is shutting down every investigation.

• (1025)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the opposition House leader for bringing this important debate to the floor of the House of Commons. The Liberals are only giving us Friday for debate, so we are here to speak about the Mark Norman affair.

After throwing their colleagues out of caucus, the Liberals want to turn the page on the rule of law scandal that is the SNC-Lavalin affair. Therefore, we are going to turn the page today to another equally egregious scandal also involving the rule of law and Mark Norman.

For Canadians who may not know Vice-Admiral Norman or who have just heard about this case as the Norman scandal, he has given 38 years of service to his country in the Royal Canadian Navy. That is incredible service. His father served in the Canadian Army. Every day of Vice-Admiral Norman's life has either been part of a military family serving Canada or has served Canada in the Royal Canadian Navy.

He commanded HMCS *St. John's*, the best ship in our navy. I sailed on it too, so I am partial. He commanded our Atlantic fleet. He is a commander of the Order of Military Merit. He has the Canadian Forces' Decoration. He is a commander of the U.S. Legion of Merit. He was the vice-chief of defence staff.

However, to the Liberal government, he was a problem, and now he is being set up. It is shameful.

Where does this stem from? Given the events involving the former attorney general in the SNC scandal, if Canadians have any lingering doubt about whether the Prime Minister lives up to his sunny ways rhetoric, they need only look to the Mark Norman affair, which stems from the very first Liberal cabinet meeting.

The Gomery inquiry Liberals were back. Their first chance at the cabinet table, they tried to reverse a naval contract. Scott Brison, who is retired now but has counsel for standing in the Norman affair, tried to change, delay or terminate a \$700-million contract to give our navy a supply ship that was desperately needed after a fire took our final supply ship out of service.

We also know that months later, the intergovernmental affairs minister at the table had to put an ethical screen between himself and the Irving Shipbuilding interest. We know that countless Atlantic Canadian Liberals were very well familiar with the circumstances involving that contract.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am going to refer to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition. On page 99, it clearly cites a rule, to which we must listen. The member opposite has talked about the rule of law—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that I gave the floor to the parliamentary secretary. In order to move this debate forward, we need to listen to what he has to say. If the official opposition has a rebuttal, I will certainly entertain that under a point of order.

At this point, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will refer to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 99, which says:

The *sub judice* convention is important in the conduct of business in the House. It protects the rights of interested parties before the courts, and preserves and maintains the separation and mutual respect between the legislature and the judiciary.

The member opposite knows full well that this is an active court proceeding. I would caution the member opposite with respect to the words he is using. I am sure he would not want to say something inappropriate, given this is an active court case.

• (1030)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I want to remind the member again that the motion is in order and that there is some flexibility within this realm of debate. I still have not seen any portion of the debate that has touched on the concerns the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has raised.

I want to go back to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, which states, at page 99:

The practice has evolved so that it is the Speaker who decides what jurisdiction the Chair has over matters *sub judice*. In 1977, the First Report of the Special Committee on the Rights and Immunities of Members recommended that the imposition of the convention should be done with discretion and, when there was any doubt in the mind of the Chair, a presumption should exist in favour of allowing debate and against the application of the convention. Since the presentation of the report, Speakers have followed these guidelines while using discretion.

I will go on to say that in a 2013 ruling, Speaker Scheer addressed these issues. He stated:

As Speaker, I must endeavour to find a balance between the right of the House to debate a matter and the effect that this debate might have. This is particularly important given that the purpose of the *sub judice* convention is to ensure that judicial decisions can be made free of undue influence.

I would suggest that the parliamentary secretary maybe review that portion of the House procedures.

I will allow the debate to continue. The hon. member for Durham.

Business of Supply

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, Canadians watching can see why the Liberals do not want to talk about these issues. They are trying desperately to stop us from raising this case. As I said, many members, including Scott Brison, the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and the member for Halifax West, had long-standing connections that went into questions about that decision. At the very first cabinet meeting, they were interfering with contracts in a way that appeared to be favouring interests some of them later had to declare conflicts with.

There was a news story written at the time about this, which I will quote. It states:

There are also allegations from different high-level sources in those same corners that Irving Shipbuilding Inc., a longtime competitor of Davie, meddled in the decision by sending letters to several cabinet ministers about the deal, an event that in the words of one defence source “tipped over the apple cart.”

Who wrote that story about the attempts by the new Liberal cabinet to interfere with the shipbuilding contract? A CBC reporter, James Cudmore, wrote that on November 20, 2015. What is funny is that there was an early Christmas present for James Cudmore in December of 2015. The Prime Minister's Office offered him a job. I would invite Canadians to go to the CBC website. His last two stories were on Liberal corruption in relation to the shipbuilding contract, and those were his last stories. He was then working for the defence minister. The Prime Minister's Office hired him to silence him. I invite Canadians to look into this.

Canadians now know Gerry and Katie, G and K in a lot of the text messages we have seen. The Prime Minister said to his caucus at the first caucus meeting that anything from Gerry or Katie was the same as coming from him.

Who did management in the PMO put in charge of issues on the shipbuilding crisis caused by their first cabinet meeting? It was a person named Zita Astravas, the go-to person for issues management in the PMO on these issues. How did Gerry and Katie know she would be the right person for the job? It is because they all worked together for Dalton McGuinty.

If Canadians outside Ontario do not know about the Ontario gas plant scandal, that gas plant scandal and the refusal to release information related to the gas plant scandal led to the prorogation of the Ontario legislature, the retirement of Dalton McGuinty and parliamentary proceedings against the attorney general, at the time Chris Bentley, who then left politics. That was the same crew that brought us the \$1-billion gas plant scandal in Ontario. Why was the attorney general in Ontario held in contempt? It was because they used code words to avoid the disclosure of documents on the gas plant, such as “Project Apple” and “Project Vapour”, mysterious words that would not come up when searching emails or trying to disclose documents for ATIs, parliamentary inquiries or lawsuits.

They were all there: Gerry, Katie and Zita. Within months, they were back at it. It was revealed at the Norman trial that the same thing happened to Mark Norman. He was not called Apple or Vapour. He was called “Kracken” or “MN3”. In fact, Ms. Astravas was questioned on the stand as to whether those code words were used, “Kracken” and “MN3”. She was asked by Mark Norman's legal counsel if she discussed this matter with Gerry Butts. Her response was that she could not recall. That is farcical.

Canadians should be outraged. This is worse than the SNC scandal. We may have issues with bad practice by a company, but here is a Canadian who gave three decades of his life to his country, and before that grew up in a family serving the country, who is being hung out to dry. He is not Kracken. He is Mark Norman.

• (1035)

Canadians should be concerned that at the very first cabinet meeting under the Prime Minister, the old Liberal Party was back helping insiders. Four months later, SNC started lobbying. However, in November 2015, mere hours after that lovely stroll up to Rideau Hall with that lovely cabinet, most of whom are now gone and thrown under the bus by the Prime Minister, including Mr. McCallum, Mr. Dion and the friend of ours who now sits on this side, and after all the sunny ways rhetoric, in the first cabinet meeting, the Liberals were back to helping their insider buddies. It is who one knows in the PMO.

Why is this so outrageous? Mark Norman was relieved of command in January 2017. He was not charged with a single charge of breach of trust until March 2018. The Prime Minister said in April 2017 that Mark Norman was going to end up in court. That was a year before charges were laid. The Prime Minister already knew what was coming for Mark Norman. The Liberals' own Privy Council investigation, headed by Michael Wernick, I guess, revealed that 73 people were aware of leaked details from that first cabinet meeting, but only one has been set up as the fall guy.

That is why Conservatives here today are not going to turn the page on the rule of law corruption from the government. We are going to continue to stand up for Mark Norman. I hope Canadians now recognize that the same cabal that gave Ontarians the gas plant scandal, the prorogation of Parliament and the end of Dalton McGuinty's political career moved down the highway and are into the same practices. Canadians should be outraged. It is time to release the Kracken.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Durham shares the same profession as me, not just in this chamber but also as a lawyer, called to the Law Society of Ontario. When something is before the courts, as the issue of the third-party production of documents that relate to Vice-Admiral Norman's ability to marshal a defence is, it is a serious matter. It is before the courts in the province the member for Durham and I share. There is a judge actively deliberating on this very matter we are discussing.

Business of Supply

There is a very important reason parliamentarians are under the rubric and the circumscription of the *sub judice* rule. It is so we do not say things that might unduly influence or be perceived to influence a judge sitting in the province of Ontario deliberating on this very matter.

The rationale is articulated this way:

Members are expected to refrain from discussing matters before the courts, or under judicial consideration, in order to protect those involved in a court action or judicial inquiry against any undue influence through the discussion of the case.... It is deemed improper for a Member, in posing a question, or a Minister in responding to a question, to comment on any matter that is [before the courts].

That quote was actually used by the member for Durham's former colleague, Peter Van Loan. I am just wondering why he does not believe it is applicable in this case.

• (1040)

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, I am glad the parliamentary secretary brought this up, because nothing trumps my privileges as a member in this House, not the *sub judice* rule, nothing at all. I would turn this on him as a member of the bar and as an hon. member. He is an hon. member. I know he is thoughtful. He should be outraged by the actions of his Prime Minister.

In fact, our top legal officer in the country, the former attorney general, told the Prime Minister not to interfere with an ongoing prosecution. It has led to the biggest rule-of-law scandal in the history of this country, so much so that we are raising the case of Mark Norman so that Canadians know that this was another politically motivated case. There is a breach of trust charge at the end of this.

Mark Norman does not own the company building any ships. There is no benefit in this case. It is farcical that it is even in court. I refer him back to his criminal law notes from his first year. He, as a lawyer, should stand up and demand better from the Prime Minister.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, most of this discussion is about a particular case of a member of our armed forces. There are allegations that they are being treated inappropriately and that information is not being disclosed. However, there is a bigger issue here. It is naval ships. I have been in this place for 11 years, and we still have not provided any ships.

The Conservatives had promised that they would build ships, naval ships, but I am deeply concerned about the lack of Coast Guard ships, which would be used to protect our fisheries and marine mammals, particularly in the Arctic, given the threats that will come from climate change.

I wonder if the hon. member could speak to this issue. My initial understanding was that the recommendation was for three ships for the navy. Why is it that all of a sudden it is being reduced to two ships? What, if anything, does this have to do with the fact that we continue to face delays in providing the proper equipment to our armed forces?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Madam Speaker, at the heart of this issue are the ships. What is interesting is that I myself and, I think, the Minister of Transport are likely the only members of this chamber who have sailed operationally with the navy. He later went on to space and I went on to law. His career was more exciting, I think.

However, the ships are at the heart of this issue. In fact, what is so ironic is that Irving Shipbuilding and Seaspan are great companies on either coast that were part of the national shipbuilding program run by Mr. Harper. They are building the future of our combatant fleet and our Arctic vessels, including the polar icebreaker, the *Diefenbaker*. The Davie ship, the *Asterix*, which I would remind people was built on time and on budget, was a modified ship to fill in a capability gap that happened when our supply ship, our last one, had a fire. If our navy does not have the ability to replenish at sea, it is not a true blue-water navy.

For a country that is bounded by three oceans, with the longest coastline of any country in the world, we do need to do more. That is why it is so atrocious that at the very first Liberal cabinet meeting, they were trying to stop the ship.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the next speaker, I just want to remind those who are asking questions and making comments that when there is a shared time of five minutes for questions and comments, I would hope that members would be able to reduce the length of their question in order to allow other people to ask questions.

As well, to prevent more points of order on the same thing, I should have mentioned a while ago that while the *sub judice* convention is important to the conduct of business in the House, it also allows and ensures that there is a balance between the need for a separate impartial judiciary and free speech. That is why I am indicating that if I hear something that is not correct, then I will rule it out of order, but at this point everything has been in order.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by reiterating our respect for all of the men and women of the Canadian Forces, whether they are veterans or still serving today.

The Public Prosecution Service of Canada, PPSC, is a federal government organization that was created on December 12, 2006. The Director of Public Prosecutions Act sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the prosecutors that are authorized to act on his behalf.

Business of Supply

The PPSC fulfills the responsibilities of the Attorney General of Canada in the discharge of his criminal law mandate by prosecuting criminal offences that fall within federal jurisdiction and by contributing to strengthening the criminal justice system. In this regard, the PPSC assumed the role played within the Department of Justice Canada by the former Federal Prosecution Service, FPS. Unlike the FPS, which was part of the Department of Justice, the PPSC is an independent organization, reporting to Parliament through the Attorney General of Canada.

The creation of the PPSC reflected the decision to make transparent the principle of prosecutorial independence. Under the Department of Justice Act, the Attorney General is responsible for the regulation and conduct of all litigation for or against the Crown or any department.

With respect to the conduct of civil matters, the Attorney General does not have exclusive decision-making authority over litigation positions. When it comes to civil litigation, there is often a high degree of policy involved in determining what position, among the available and viable legal arguments, should be taken in a particular case. Civil litigation differs sharply, in this respect, from criminal prosecutions.

When it comes to his role in prosecutions, the Attorney General must act independently, receiving orders from nobody, as an attorney general of England said in 1925. Specifically, he must act independently. The Supreme Court has found this to be a foundational constitutional principle of our democratic form of government.

[English]

The determination of who should be prosecuted for which crimes, which prosecutions should continue and which should not, and what sentences or penalties to seek must all be made solely on the basis of the evidence and with regard to the fair and effective administration of the criminal law. It is, however, still advisable for the Attorney General to inform himself or herself of the relevant context, including the potential consequences of a given prosecution.

The Director of Public Prosecutions Act mandates the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, PPSC, to provide prosecutorial advice to law enforcement agencies and to act as a prosecutor in matters prosecuted by the Attorney General of Canada on behalf of the Crown. In fulfilling this important mandate, the PPSC benefits Canadians in numerous ways: by promoting effective investigations, the rule of law and respect for the rights of Canadians by providing pre-charge legal advice to investigative agencies. It also helps to uphold federal laws through principled and independent decisions by prosecutors and it instills confidence in the administration of justice by conducting prosecutions that result in a judicial determination on the merits of the case. The PPSC reports to Parliament through the Attorney General of Canada.

The Director of Public Prosecutions Act states that the director of public prosecutions, the DPP, acts "...under and on behalf of the Attorney General". The relationship between the attorney general and the director is premised on the principles of respect for the independence of the prosecution function and the need to consult on important matters of general interest.

In 2006, there was a change in the landscape. The Director of Public Prosecutions Act created the independent Public Prosecution Service of Canada, the PPSC, as I have mentioned, and formalized the Attorney General's role in federal prosecutions by giving authority for the initiation and conduct of prosecutions to the director of public prosecutions.

• (1050)

The director acts as the deputy attorney general of Canada in this regard in initiating and conducting federal prosecutions on behalf of the attorney general. In most cases, the Attorney General himself or herself will not be involved in prosecutorial decision-making, although the Director of Public Prosecutions Act requires the director to inform the Attorney General of any prosecution that raises important questions of general interest. Thus, the legislation ensures that the Attorney General will be advised of important criminal cases.

[Translation]

As we know, the Attorney General may issue directives to the director of public prosecutions, which may be general or about specific prosecutions. When a directive is issued, it is issued through a fully transparent process where it is published in the Canada Gazette and made publicly available to all Canadians. As well, a general directive must be preceded by consultation with the director of public prosecutions.

The Attorney General may also, after consulting the director of public prosecutions, assume the conduct of a prosecution. This too is done through a transparent process where the Attorney General must publish notice of the intent to assume conduct of a prosecution in the Canada Gazette.

In terms of seeking the input of others when exercising his directive powers or the power to assume a prosecution under the DPP Act, it is appropriate for the Attorney General to consult with cabinet colleagues before exercising these powers. Often consultations are important in order for the Attorney General to be aware of perspectives that go beyond any particular case.

If he decides to either issue a directive or take over the prosecution, however, the Attorney General must make the final decision himself. Paramount in all of this is that, while an Attorney General may consult his cabinet colleagues about prosecutorial matters, the Attorney General does not take instructions in criminal matters from cabinet colleagues or from anyone else.

The Supreme Court has observed that, when exercising the prosecution function, the Attorney General acts in the public interest. The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada is the chief law officer of the Crown, with a responsibility to act in the public interest. He takes that responsibility very seriously. The notion of the director of public prosecutions' independence relates to the prosecutorial decision-making process and all steps incidental to it. The director of public prosecutions is regarded as an independent officer, exercising quasi-judicial responsibilities.

[English]

Safeguarding the director's independence is the requirement that all instructions from the Attorney General be in writing and be published in the Canada Gazette, which I have mentioned.

Business of Supply

In turn, the director must inform the Attorney General of any prosecution or planned intervention that may raise important questions of general interest, allowing the Attorney General the opportunity to intervene in, or assume the conduct of, a case. Additionally, the PPSC must provide the Attorney General with an annual report for tabling in Parliament.

Prosecutorial independence is a cornerstone of our democracy, reflected in the relationship between the Attorney General of Canada and the director of public prosecutions. Prosecutions of federal offences are carried out by experienced and skilled prosecutors across the country.

Given prosecutorial independence and the *sub judice* rule, which we have heard of already in this morning's debate, this government will not comment specifically on the matter of the charges laid against Vice-Admiral Mark Norman, which is an active prosecution currently ongoing before the Ontario Court of Justice. The criminal trial itself will take place in due course, under the timelines and the deadlines determined by an honourable judge of the Ontario court.

The independence and the impartiality of that trial process must be respected—I cannot underscore that enough—and it must run its course without comment in the House in accord with the *sub judice* rule and the right of an accused to a fair and expeditious hearing.

A third party records application, which for the lawyers in the chamber is also known as an O'Connor application, was commenced by Vice-Admiral Norman's defence counsel in October of last year.

●(1055)

That application is what we call a preliminary proceeding in a criminal hearing. By that application, the Vice-Admiral's defence counsel team was seeking to obtain documents and records of various types from seven government departments or entities where those departments or entities are in possession of such documents. The seven departments or entities are the Prime Minister's Office, the Privy Council Office, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Armed Forces, Public Services and Procurement Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the Department of Justice. All seven departments and entities were served with subpoenas requiring the production of the relevant documents or records to the Ontario Court of Justice.

In the course of such third party records applications, parties may call, or what is called subpoena, the witnesses to give evidence about the documents being sought. A witness may confirm potentially relevant documents exist or do not exist. They may provide evidence regarding efforts to locate relevant documents, including why such efforts are or are not successful. This is routine in any proceeding.

Other evidence can also be presented before the court including documents that are already in the possession of the parties to the application. This is something that is fundamental in both civil and criminal proceedings. In a criminal proceeding it goes to the issue of full answer and defence.

Once the evidence is presented to the court and all parties have made their submissions and arguments, it is then the role of the court, in this case the Ontario Court of Justice, to assess the evidence and argument that comes before it. If the court deems it appropriate or necessary, it may issue an order requiring a party to produce

further documents or other evidence. The court may then assess the documents or records produced in response to the third party records application and order relevant records to be disclosed to the defence.

Where parties are responding to a third party records application argue that documents or records produced should not be disclosed either in whole or in part due some privilege claim on their contents, it is again for the court to decide whether such privilege claims should or should not be upheld.

Witnesses, whom I have mentioned, who are called to give evidence in the third party records application are sworn to answer the questions put them by counsel truthfully and to the best of their knowledge. That is a fundamental aspect of how our judicial system and court proceedings operate in this country.

Counsel may raise suggestions or allegations in questions that they put to such witnesses. Such allegations are just that; they are allegations. They have not been proven in court. It is for the court to ultimately decide what evidence to rely on, informing its decision at the appropriate stages of that very proceeding.

Again, there is a third party records application that has been brought, in this very case that is ongoing right now as we speak, by Vice-Admiral Norman's defence counsel. It is currently being deliberated by an honourable judge of the Ontario Court of Justice. That application is subject to the *sub judice* rule as much as the criminal proceeding itself and any other related proceeding that may arise.

It is a matter of public record that in the third party records application, the Vice-Admiral's defence team, counsel for the Attorney General of Canada at the Department of Justice, and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada prosecutors have made their arguments and their submissions before the court. The honourable judge is now assessing those arguments and submissions and will issue a decision in due course. The government is currently providing documents to the judge for her review and will continue to do so as directed by the judge.

The document identification review and production is a thorough one. Overall, the process aims to balance the public interest in disclosing documents with appropriately protecting information that is a cabinet confidence, with privacy concerns and with public interest immunity, and the concept of solicitor-client privilege. To be clear, claiming privilege over documents that discuss strategy is a standard practice in prosecutions as is protecting cabinet confidences.

The government and the Department of Justice counsel are acutely conscious of the interests of the defendant in an expeditious resolution of their criminal trial. This is an important point. The innocence or guilt of an accused is not decided in the course of a third party records application. That is a preliminary matter that takes place before the trial on the merits of the charge.

●(1100)

However, all involved continue to work to ensure that the application is concluded as expeditiously as possible, given the potentially high number of responsive documents to the request.

These efforts, which are ongoing, include searches of government systems and records, and where appropriate, individual's personal accounts and personal devices. Documents are reviewed for likely relevance and potential privilege claims, and provided to the court for its review and decision. Where the court determines a document to be relevant, it will also rule on whether any privilege claims should be upheld.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have four and a half minutes after question period when this returns to the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[Translation]

REP DAY

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was at Laval's École Charles-Perrault to participate in Rep Day, an event organized by CIVIX. I spent some time with Grade 3 students to answer their questions about the role of parliamentarians and how Canada's Parliament works.

One student, Léanne, wrote me to say that she liked when I answered questions, that she was excited to see me and that she would like us to pass a law to stop pollution.

I would like to thank CIVIX's Quebec office for this wonderful, inspiring initiative, École Charles-Perrault for hosting me, and Madame Florence, who welcomed me into her classroom. I would also like to thank Madame Stéphanie, an involved mom, as well as Léanne and all her classmates who wrote to me. I thank them for welcoming me and for being part of the conversation.

* * *

[English]

HALIBURTON BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce recently hosted the 13th annual Business and Community Achievement Awards Gala. The chamber received 127 nominations, celebrating the active and innovative sectors within Haliburton County.

I would like to congratulate all award nominees and recipients, including the following: Dr. Kassie Wright for the Young Professional of the Year Award; Brandi Hewson for the Entrepreneur of the Year Award; the Rotary Club of Haliburton for the Not-for-Profit of the Year Award; Shontel Neville for the Customer First – Employee Award; Haliburton County Chiropractic for the New Business of the Year Award; and Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve for the Tourism and Hospitality Award. Haliburton Solar and Wind took home four awards: the Customer First – Business Award, the Innovation and Creativity Award, the Business Achievement Award and the Skilled Trades and Industry Award. Harvest Haliburton won the County Warden's Award, and Steve Todd received the prestigious Highlander of the Year Award.

Statements by Members

Finally, a special thanks to chamber president Andrea Strano, general manager Jennifer Locke, the sponsors, staff and board of directors for organizing the spectacular event.

* * *

DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the past week, this very room housed 338 women from across the country for Equal Voice's Daughters of the Vote program. Through this program I had the opportunity to speak with Bronwyn Bridges, a young woman from the City of Summerside.

As 338 women of different backgrounds and political affiliations sat in this House, they shared their priorities and vision for Canada's future. With these young women at the forefront of our next generation of leaders, our future is in good hands.

Although, Bronwyn did not express any immediate plans to pursue a political career in our conversation, the qualities she demonstrated would serve her well in this or any other arena.

I congratulate Ms. Bridges for her participation in this program and I thank all 338 women who made their presence known in Ottawa this week.

* * *

ASBESTOS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, today is World Health Day and April 1 to 7 is Global Asbestos Awareness Week.

Exposure to asbestos claims the lives of 2,000 Canadians each year and 200,000 people worldwide. Asbestos is a known carcinogen and there is no safe level of exposure. That is the evidence.

Champions like Saskatoon resident and union activist Jesse Todd have worked tirelessly for years and lobbied our government to eventually, in 2018, ban asbestos and asbestos-containing products in Canada. However, there is still more work to be done. Despite the ban, asbestos is still found in many places where Canadians live, work, play and go to school. Therefore, we must continue our fight for the safe removal and disposal of asbestos from our private and public infrastructure and the elimination of all exemptions to the existing regulations.

I ask members to join me today in raising awareness of the dangers of asbestos exposure and commit to eliminating this health risk for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1105)

THE BUDGET

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, desk-thumping and a filibuster have impeded the opportunity of Prince Edward Islanders to hear just how good budget 2019 is for our province.

Statements by Members

There was \$10 billion in new dollars to tackle the national housing crunch, including in Charlottetown; \$16.5 million from the federal gas tax, going directly to island municipalities for infrastructure; \$50.8 million for public safety housing in Charlottetown to assist those with complex mental, physical and social challenges; and increased operational funding for the Confederation Centre of the Arts, which showcases Canadian talent, including the iconic *Anne of Green Gables*.

To quote the late great Premier Joe Ghiz, Islanders have endured 10 long, hard, lean, mean, miserly, miserable Tory years, but no more. Budget 2019 is very good for the mighty island. Members do not need to take my word for it. They can hop on one of the two new ferries announced in the budget and see for themselves.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, while Liberal elites fawn over the imposition of the carbon tax, everyday Canadians are hurting under this tax grab that will do nothing to clean up our environment.

My constituents work hard every day to make ends meet. They do not need higher gas prices, higher home heating bills and higher grocery prices just so Liberal elites can feel better.

The Liberal carbon tax has raised the price of everything that my constituents do: driving to work, heading to hockey practice or buying groceries to feed their families.

The Conservatives believe in conserving and protecting our environment for future generations. This is why we believe that heavy emitters should do their part, not just every day Canadians. Unfortunately, the government has exempted them from its carbon tax. The truth about the carbon tax is that it is not an environmental plan; it is just a tax grab.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HULL—AYLMER

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, tax season is upon us, and I am pleased to offer free tax clinics for the people of Hull—Aylmer for the second year in a row. During the months of March and April, volunteers and my team have helped nearly 250 modest income earners fill out their tax returns.

I want to thank our volunteers for 2019, namely Suzanne, Lynn, Wilmer, Jocelyn, Pierre, Charles, Albert and Sophie.

[*English*]

I thank them very much for their hard work. Because of them, 250 families in Hull—Aylmer will get benefits such as the Canada child benefit and the working income tax benefit, which will them make ends meet and give them a better chance to improve their lives.

I am very proud to be part of a government that is working as hard as Canadians to help Canadian families.

LABRADOR WINTER GAMES

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to congratulate the athletes, volunteers and sponsors who made the Labrador Winter Games a true success.

The games have been a premier event in Labrador since 1983, and I have fond memories of my times competing as an athlete and of being a spectator. The event continues to be the largest gathering and celebration for sports and culture in Labrador. It is often referred to as the “Olympics of the North” and comprises both modern and traditional sporting events.

In 2019, we saw the first female Labrathon event, an event reserved only for males until now. Women competed in traditional clothing, pulled a komatik on snowshoes and competed to light a fire, saw a log, target shoot and chop a hole through the ice.

I congratulate Nikki Brown-Dyson of Cartwright, the first woman to hold this title at the games. I also acknowledge and ask my colleagues in the House today to join me in congratulating all teams and the team of Happy Valley Goose Bay, which won the cup.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, this week the Liberal carbon tax kicked in, making the price of gas, groceries and home heating more expensive for the people of York—Simcoe and for Canadians all across our great country.

Families, seniors and students are all paying the price for the government's out-of-control spending. The carbon tax means they will have to work even harder just to make ends meet.

Instead of funding environmental policies that will actually help people, like the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund it cancelled, the Liberal government is exempting the worst polluters, while making the average Canadian family pay over \$540 more per year. The people of York—Simcoe have been clear. They want the carbon tax scrapped.

Canada's Conservatives will repeal this tax on everything and put more money back in the pockets of Canadians. We will do all this and ensure the environment is protected for future generations.

Statements by Members

●(1110)

*[Translation]***QUEBEC BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION EVENTS**

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a special event is being held tomorrow evening in my riding, Candiac. About 300 people will attend the 10th annual Soirée Victoire to raise money for breast cancer research and ultimately to find a cure.

Founded by Danielle Simard and Mario Cecchini, the Événements Victoire have been quite the success story. Since 2009, no less than 15 events, including 10 Soirées Victoire, have been organized, raising \$920,000. There is no doubt that with tomorrow's gala we will hit the million-dollar mark. This money will be donated to the Quebec breast cancer foundation. How amazing is that?

This is a great outcome, and I am pleased to announce that these efforts are producing tangible results. Statistics show that if the trend continues, we will have a cure within a generation. Today, 88% of women recover from breast cancer.

In closing, I want to thank Mrs. Simard and Mr. Cecchini for everything they do. They give hope to all women diagnosed with breast cancer.

* * *

*[English]***TERRY FOX RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in 1980, Terry Fox united our country with a vision to one day find a cure for cancer. When his cancer returned, Terry said, "I'm not going to give up. But I might not make it...if I don't, the Marathon of Hope better continue."

Budget 2019 continues Terry's dream by allocating up to \$150 million toward the creation of the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network. The federal government will collaborate with the Terry Fox Research Institute and its partners, who are providing matching funding to link universities and hospitals across Canada to advance the principles of precision medicine and transform how cancer research is done, not only in Canada but around the world.

On April 12, the Terry Fox Research Institute will present its road map to cure cancer by announcing its vision at the exact spot where Terry started his run 39 years ago in Newfoundland. I am extremely proud of this investment to one day realize Terry's dream.

* * *

*[Translation]***ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister can no longer hide the truth about the SNC-Lavalin case.

The Prime Minister says that he has accepted his share of responsibility for the breach of trust, but he is still in power. Two members of his team resigned to deflect attention; one MP was intimidated to the point that she resigned, and two others were expelled because they dared tell the truth.

Any other organization would question his ability to lead. However, the 176 members of the Liberal caucus are following the leader and defending the indefensible. The media have lost patience with the Prime Minister, who used to be their darling.

Following an access to information request, the Privy Council told La Presse that it will not receive a response until November 2019, even though the law provides for a response within 30 days.

Clearly, the Liberals want to prevent the truth from coming out before the election. There is a reason why they are urging senators to adopt Bill C-58, which will let them say that such a request is vexatious or made in bad faith. They hope to bury the truth forever.

* * *

*[English]***YUKON'S MOUNT WOOD**

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Pascale Marceau was born and raised in my riding of Sudbury. Last month, Pascale was the first woman documented to summit Mount Wood in Yukon, Canada's sixth-highest peak at nearly 16,000 feet, in a winter ascent. She embarked on this daring exploit through the Royal Canadian Geographical Society flag expedition.

The fate of Pascale and her partner's climb was threatened by high winds and a storm on the horizon. Through it all, the now Canmore resident was able to circumvent all the obstacles as she remained calm and persisted to finally reach the top and make history. She will now go down in the books as the first woman to summit a major subarctic peak in winter. What an accomplishment.

[Translation]

Pascale, I congratulate you on your perseverance and the passion you have shown with this daring exploit. You have inspired many young people from Sudbury and across Canada, who try to push the limits and achieve the impossible.

Thank you, Pascale, for being an outstanding role model.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Environment Canada report released this week is extremely worrisome. Canada is warming at twice the global average, and things are even worse in the north.

Meanwhile, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development confirmed what we already know: the government is not doing enough to combat climate change. We also learned this week that the Liberals took \$50 million from a green fund to subsidize the oil industry.

Oral Questions

The government cannot keep acting as though nothing is happening. It cannot keep subsidizing the oil industry. It cannot claim to be a champion of the environment and then buy a pipeline with taxpayer money instead of investing heavily in the economy of the future. The environment must be our top priority. Talk is not enough. We need action.

* * *

● (1115)

[English]

HUMBOLDT BRONCOS

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, one year ago, tragedy touched Humboldt, Saskatchewan, our nation and the families and friends of 29 of our own. The Humboldt Broncos accident left a wound that has yet to heal. Perhaps for some, it never truly will.

Our thoughts turn to the families of the players and staff and to the survivors recovering from their injuries, both seen and unseen. To them, we say that they are not forgotten. In the past year, with the attention of the world upon them, they have borne the burden of grief with grace. The grieving most face in private, they have faced in public and they have allowed us to share in their sorrow. None of us can truly understand the weight this placed on their shoulders. Their strength inspired a nation and it continues to inspire.

We have not forgotten. We still remember each of them in our prayers. We still remember Humboldt Strong. Still, we are all Broncos.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on this 95th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force, I am rising to honour the tremendous service and sacrifice of its great women and men. Through two world wars, they have and continue to play a crucial role in defending Canada, our sovereignty and our international security.

At home, these women and men protect our air space through NORAD and conduct vital search and rescue operations. On the world stage, they support NATO operations via air policing missions in Romania. They contribute to international peacekeeping with our helicopters in Mali.

On this anniversary, I also want to highlight our commitment to modernizing the Royal Canadian Air Force. We are acquiring 88 modern fighter jets to replace the CF-18 fleet through an open and transparent competition, something the Conservatives could not do in 10 years. This competition will ensure that we get the right aircraft for our air force, and at the right price, while creating job opportunities for Canada's middle class and those working hard to join it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister looked 37 million Canadians in the eye and said, "If anyone, including the former attorney general, had issues with anything they might have experienced in this government or didn't feel that we were living up to the high standards we set for itself, it was her responsibility to come forward, it was their responsibility to come forward, and no one did."

This week the Prime Minister admitted that this statement was false, that in fact his former attorney general looked him in the eye and warned him against politically interfering in the SNC-Lavalin prosecution.

Now that we know the Prime Minister stated this public falsehood, will he allow the ethics committee to investigate what others he might have told in this affair?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we agree that Canadians should be able to hear the truth for themselves. That is exactly why the Prime Minister provided an unprecedented waiver. He waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence to satisfy the parameters that the justice committee put forward.

We recognize that it is important that the justice committee and all committees be able to do their important work, and that is why the members that represent the government on those committees make their own decisions. That is obviously not the approach of the Conservatives.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, former PMO puppet master and best friend to the Prime Minister showed up before the justice committee and claimed that there was no conversation whatsoever about the inappropriateness of the Prime Minister's political interference in the SNC-Lavalin affair in September, in October, in November and in December, yet now we have 41 pages of journal entries, text messages and audio recordings that show there was nothing but conversation about that political interference. It is documented.

Given that this former PMO puppet master lied before the justice committee, will the Liberals allow the ethics committee to investigate what other falsehoods the government might have told?

● (1120)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what is important to note is why this information that the member is referring to is in public. It is because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege, as well as cabinet confidence.

We recognize that Canadians should be able to hear the truth for themselves, and that is why justice committee meetings took place in public. We know that for over five weeks, justice committee members asked for witnesses to appear. We know that witnesses appeared and answered questions to ensure that Canadians could hear for themselves. This information was made public.

Oral Questions

If the Prime Minister had not waived solicitor-client privilege, that would not be the case.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the journal entries, text messages and audio recordings show that at least 12 top government officials, including the Prime Minister himself, interfered in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin, yet only two have appeared. Their appearances were so disastrous that both of them have had to resign from their jobs.

The remaining 10 have not been called upon to answer for the interference we know they engaged in as a result of documented records proving it. Will the government allow the ethics committee to continue an investigation that will bring them all forward?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a redundancy to the questions, as with the information being provided.

It is important to note why that information is being made public. That information is being made public because the Prime Minister acknowledges and recognizes that Canadians should get to hear the truth for themselves. That is exactly why he waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence, so that when witnesses appeared at the justice committee, they would be able to answer and provide the truth to Canadians for Canadians to hear.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, yesterday Liberal Party henchmen leaked information to the media about the former attorney general's so-called conditions for returning to the Liberal caucus, including assurances that her decision on SNC-Lavalin would stand. Yesterday at 10:30 p.m., CBC set the record straight, reporting that the condition was discussed while she was still a minister. That changes everything. This morning, analyst Jonathan Trudeau commented that the Liberals messed up their attempt to spin the story to make the former attorney general look bad.

Why is the government being so gutless?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know the Conservatives keep mixing things up, but they are not interested in listening to testimony.

We know members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights asked to hear from witnesses. The witnesses appeared and testified. Now all the facts are out in the open. The facts are out in the open because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence. This was the first time in Canadian history that a prime minister did so.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is a double standard here. Certain individuals were allowed to testify before the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights twice, but the former attorney general was allowed to testify only once.

Yes, the Prime Minister let the former attorney general talk about certain things, but only regarding a limited time period. With respect to certain delicate situations in particular, the former attorney general was not allowed to speak her truth or talk about how she experienced certain facts.

Why will the government still not allow the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to do its work and really get to the bottom of this Liberal scandal involving SNC-Lavalin?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is not true. The members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights decided themselves to hear from witnesses on this matter and they set the parameters of the discussion. To ensure that witnesses could appear and answer questions, the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence to meet the parameters set by the committee members.

• (1125)

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday the member for Markham—Stouffville reminded us of a very important fact. Despite what the Liberals claim, the independence of the judicial system is at the heart of the scandal involving the Prime Minister's Office.

She said, "I chose the truth. I chose to act on principles that are so important to the future of our country. That's more important than my political career."

Can the Minister of Justice assure us that there will be no political interference in this decision and that he will not reverse the decision made by the director of public prosecutions in favour of a wealthy, well-connected corporation?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

What I can do is share what the two witnesses said about this at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[*English*]

It is the fact that we have institutions, that the prosecution is unfolding as it should. The member for Vancouver Granville went to great lengths to underscore that, in this case and in all cases, the institutions are doing what they should and the rule of law remains intact.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week dozens of women participating in the Daughters of the Vote stood up and turned their backs on the Prime Minister of Canada for his treatment of two former female ministers.

It is about a giant corporation with special access asking for special favours. It is about the Prime Minister and his office interfering with the work of the independent attorney general.

Will the Liberals lodge a public inquiry so Canadians can learn the truth and commit to not using the DPA in this case?

Oral Questions

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Madam Speaker, 338 young women representing the diversity of this country, representing a diverse range of perspectives, took their seats in the House of Commons because our government invested in a partnership to bring them to this place because they belong here, because our country will be stronger when we create spaces for perspectives.

We are proud of their courage and their determination. They spoke about issues like climate change. They spoke about the need to advance gender equality. They want to make sure that they can get paid equally for work of equal value. Everything that we have been doing since day one has been to ensure that they are equal in every way.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I certainly hope that the Liberal government is not taking credit for the important work of Equal Voice.

Highways on most of northern Vancouver Island, much like the rest of rural Canada, do not have cell service. Duncan Moffatt spent seven days trapped in his truck after it went off the road north of Campbell River, surviving off apples and Gatorade. He had a cellphone right next to him, but he was unable to call for help.

This rural highway sees over 4,000 vehicles a day. Lives are on the line.

When will the minister commit to supporting cellular access on Canada's rural highways?

Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we understand the need for better connectivity in rural Canada. We have invested a great deal of money in budget 2019 to make sure that we meet those commitments. Our connect to innovate program has connected over 900 communities across the country.

We will continue to work hard to make sure that rural Canada is not left behind and that we do connect all of these communities so that we can address concerns that we have heard all across the country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Madam Speaker, in spite of their fine words four years ago, the Liberals' inaction and mismanagement have deprived too many families, businesses and communities of the high-speed, wireless Internet access they need. In my own riding, which is just 25 minutes from Montreal, there are still some municipalities that do not have high-speed Internet.

For years now, we have been calling for a Canada-wide strategy to improve Internet access in our communities. The Liberal government needs to show leadership on this issue and listen to these municipalities.

When will the Liberals truly support high-speed Internet access in our regions?

[*English*]

Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have invested in budget 2019 to make sure that we connect every Canadian in this country, as well as businesses, by the year 2030.

We are looking at making sure that connectivity is available in all rural communities. We know how important it is for people to grow businesses and access education and health care. We know that Internet is a critical part of the rural Canadian piece, and we are making sure that we deliver on that promise.

* * *

● (1130)

JUSTICE

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister told Canadians that no one ever raised concerns about his interference in the SNC-Lavalin prosecution, but all the evidence shows that is just not true.

The Prime Minister only allowed the former attorney general to speak about what happened before January 14, the date he moved her out of her role after she had told him to back off repeatedly, but she said they had a series of meetings after that, which led to her resignation, and the Liberals themselves keep leaking information that they will not let her talk about, even as of yesterday.

When will the Liberals take responsibility, end the cover-up and tell Canadians the truth?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what is clear is that the member and the Conservative Party have come to their own conclusions. The reason they are able to speak about this information is that all of the facts are on the table. All of the facts are now public, because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence. This is the first time in the history of our country that this has happened.

I have answered this question on numerous occasions. What is clear is that the Conservatives will do whatever they can so that they do not have to talk about the budget. They will do whatever they can so that Canadians do not notice that they have no plan. However, it is clear that the Conservatives have no plan for the economy and no plan for the environment.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals did not waive all of the restrictions. They say the justice committee did its work on the Prime Minister's interference in the criminal prosecution, but on February 13 the Liberals shut down that investigation. On March 26, the Liberals stopped the ethics committee from holding any hearings at all. The Liberals say that Canadians can have faith in the rule of law, but OECD anti-bribery officials are "concerned" and will "closely monitor" Canada because of the Liberals' actions.

The Prime Minister has contradicted himself many times. No one can believe a word he says. When will Liberals end the cover-up and tell Canadians the truth?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the justice committee met for five weeks, during which they had witnesses appear to provide testimony. All of this information is on the public record. Five weeks is more than any piece of legislation is even studied or scrutinized at committee.

What is interesting is that numerous people were able to appear at committee, but when it came to our budget, which we have just introduced and which will help Canadians from coast to coast to coast, only one Conservative was allowed to speak. It was the member for Carleton. All of a sudden, the Conservatives forgot about rural Canada then.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, it seems the Liberals will do everything they can to avoid talking about the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

According to the Prime Minister, everything there is to say about SNC-Lavalin has already been said. Over the past few days, however, anonymous Liberal sources have been leaking all kinds of information that had not come out before. That is the reality.

Why was that information not disclosed? Because the Prime Minister chose who was going to speak and what they would say.

When will the Prime Minister finally let the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics get to the bottom of his scandal?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the contrary, what I said is the same thing I say in response to every question. The Conservatives have been asking the same question for several weeks now.

The members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights have been examining this file for five weeks. The witnesses appeared before the committee and provided their testimony. We have discussed this matter and we know that Canadians want to hear the truth. That is exactly why the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence.

It is obvious that the Conservatives do not have a plan and do not want to talk about a budget that will help Canadians.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, here are the facts. The Prime Minister is the judge in a case that he is implicated in and he has handed down a sentence. He is judge, party and executioner.

Every day, the Liberals release new information while the former attorney general is still not able to speak to what is in the media. The Prime Minister's charade has gone on long enough. Instead of releasing information to the media, why will the Liberals not let the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics do its job so that we finally get the whole story?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians have the whole story because all the facts are now public. The facts are public because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence.

Every day the member asks to have an emergency debate on farmers and canola, but he never asks any questions about that in question period. He knows full well that Canadians are concerned about the canola situation but he never asks any questions about it in question period because they don't care.

Mr. Luc Berthold: You do not want to have that debate. You are shutting it down.

● (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable had a chance to ask his two questions. He should listen to the answers.

[English]

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I remember at the start of the SNC-Lavalin scandal when the Prime Minister had his press conference and said that, no, there is nothing more to see, it is all good. Then we had all this testimony where all the evidence started to come out, and we have the same situation here.

We have the government House leader doing his beck and call, standing up and saying that, no, there is nothing to see here, yet the former attorney general is still under a gag order, and they are still blocking the ethics committee from doing its work. Why?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to say that I am quite confident being able to share the information and share the facts. The information is all public, because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence. To ensure that people could share their stories, that they were able to appear, is exactly why the Prime Minister provided an unprecedented waiver.

The member might be concerned about my having to answer questions. I have the confidence and the ability to do so. I am okay.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think at some point in time the government House leader might find herself clipped after whatever next tape is going to come out or whatever the PMO staff is going to leak to the media this week. That is what has happened. The PMO is leaking information for a time period that the former attorney general is still under a gag order for, and she is standing up here saying that it is all good, do not worry. It is ridiculous. It like an abrogation of democracy.

Why will the PMO not let the ethics committee do its work?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that member and the Conservatives will talk about hypotheticals. We will talk about the facts. We will talk about the fact that with our plan, 300,000 children have been lifted out of poverty. We will talk about the fact that over 800,000 Canadians are better off today than they were under Stephen Harper and the Conservatives. We will talk about the fact that Canadians have created over 900,000 jobs. We will talk about the fact that more Canadians are working today than have in my lifetime.

The Conservatives will continue to talk about hypotheticals. They will continue to play and do their shenanigans, because they have no plan and no concern for Canadians.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, climate change is having a devastating impact on our rivers and watersheds. In my riding, water levels in the Cowichan River are at a fraction of what they should be, and last year's salmon spawning season could be lost, as many areas with eggs are now above water.

The Liberal government easily found \$4.5 billion for a pipeline, so will the Minister of Fisheries Oceans make the necessary federal infrastructure investments to raise the Cowichan weir and ensure the survival of this critical salmon-supporting watershed?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for that question.

The state of the salmon stocks in British Columbia is of great concern to this government. That is why we created the B.C. salmon fund that was recently announced. That fund will allow us to work with stakeholders, to work with harvesters and to work with environmental groups to find innovative solutions. That is but one example of the many steps that are being taken, all based on science, all based on consultation with indigenous partners and with stakeholders in the community.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canadians were shocked by the horrific conditions facing families in Cat Lake, and this community is desperate for help with the mould and housing crisis. The recent agreement with the government is a new beginning, yet we are hearing reports that an outside consultant is attempting to force the community to pay \$1.2 million. This is money that should be spent on housing and improving the lives of the people.

Will the minister explain the steps the government will take to ensure that those funds go to help the people and not to make some outside consultant a millionaire?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our work has always been focused on supporting the people of Cat Lake. Housing money will go to housing. It is as simple as that. Housing money goes to housing. It is why we signed an agreement with the community and with Windigo First Nations

and no one else. Reports that are coming out now of practices by consultants that other first nation leaders, but also the chief of Cat Lake, are calling parasitic and atrocious are deeply troubling to us, and we will be following through.

* * *

• (1140)

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, information about the judicial appointment process for the Supreme Court of Canada was leaked, and the Liberal government is not taking it seriously.

We all have a duty to safeguard trust in the appointment process as something precious to us. The government is playing a dangerous game and making a mockery of our justice system and our democracy.

The guilty party is in a very small circle of people. Who is it?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are very concerned about the release of details pertaining to the most recent Supreme Court of Canada justice selection process.

The appointment process is sound. It is merit-based and guarantees that our most eminent jurists are included on the short list. Let me reiterate that Canadians should have full confidence in the administration of justice.

[English]

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, when news broke of the Liberals' \$10-million payout to a terrorist, they launched a massive investigation, but when sensitive information was leaked about Judge Glenn Joyal to distract from the SNC scandal, nothing. This information could have only come from the highest levels of the PMO.

The Minister of Justice says he is deeply troubled, but he refuses to launch an investigation. Is that because he already knows the answer? If so, who did it?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will add to the response I just gave in French. We want to underscore that the integrity of the very process we are talking about depends on the confidentiality of all parties involved. As we have said, we are troubled by the publication of personal details about the Supreme Court justice selection process. It is unfair for any of the parties involved to see their names used this way in the media, and it is absolutely wrong to weaponize personal information for political purposes.

Oral Questions

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, when their \$10.5-million payout to a convicted terrorist was leaked, the Liberals immediately launched an investigation that spanned six departments and agencies. When another leak smearing a judge came out, the new Attorney General just put out a tweet. This leak was obviously another damage control exercise to spin the former attorney general's resignation and to generate Liberal backbench support for her eventual caucus expulsion.

Will the Attorney General investigate this leak, or is he too afraid of where it will end?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we underscore that Canadians should have complete confidence in the administration of justice and complete confidence in the selection process used for Supreme Court justices. It is merit-based and it considers Canada's finest jurors for the short list. We have taken great pains to ensure that the hon. Kim Campbell leads up that selection process. We have ensured the bilingualism of Canadian judges. What we will always do is defend that institution and its important role in our democracy and in upholding the rule of law.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals launched a massive investigation into six different departments to find the source of the shameful payout to a convicted terrorist, but when confidential information about an honourable judge is leaked, it is no big deal. This is highly sensitive information that only a handful of people close to the Prime Minister could have known. Why are the Liberals more concerned about protecting the privacy of a convicted terrorist than of a judge who spent his entire life serving Canada?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I indicated, the Department of Justice is deeply troubled by the publication of personal details concerning the recent selection process. What we can state is what has already been stated. The Prime Minister stated that the leak did not come from his office, and the Minister of Justice understands that the leak did not come from the justice minister's office either.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, canola growers are major contributors to our rural communities and to our national economy. It is unacceptable that they are forced to pay the price for Canada's strained relationship with China. The ban on canola imposed by China is hurting western Canada, and Liberals do not seem to get the urgency of stepping up to fix it. Our producers deserve better.

Will the Prime Minister's Office send a trade envoy to China to solve the canola seed ban face to face, yes or no?

• (1145)

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can assure my colleague that this has been a top priority for our government and for me for more than one month now. I am working closely with my counterparts from the

provinces, with industry and with the CFIA. We are having constant conversations with Chinese officials. I have asked for a delegation to go to China, and I expect an answer shortly. I can assure everyone that we are taking this very seriously, and we have the support of the industry.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week, CMHC unveiled its new strategic plan at the 51st annual Canadian Housing & Renewal Association's national congress. The CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness says that the plan has a critical gap. It does nothing to embed the right to housing.

Canadians cannot wait any longer for Liberal talk to turn to action. We have a housing crisis, and the Liberals refuse to solve it. When will they join the NDP and housing experts and finally enshrine the right to housing in law?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government's mandate is about growing the economy, growing the middle class and helping more Canadians join the middle class, and that comes with important actions and investments in housing to make sure that every Canadian has a safe and affordable place to call home. In fact, we have launched the first-ever national housing strategy, a new era for partnership and leadership in Canada, and that comes with the right of every Canadian to be housed decently and appropriately.

* * *

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after a decade of the Harper Conservatives ignoring their needs in favour of boutique tax credits that only benefited the wealthy, our government has introduced measures that ensure that when lower-income workers file their taxes, they will get to keep more of their hard-earned paycheques.

Will the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell the House how the new Canada workers benefit will provide real support to more than two million Canadians who are working hard to join the middle class?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, giving every Canadian a real and fair chance to succeed is at the core of our mandate, and that is why we have introduced the Canada child benefit and the new Canada workers benefit, which is going to automatically enrol two million low-income Canadians, putting more income in their pockets for them to make ends meet. That is why 75,000 of them will be lifted out of poverty, and that is why we are going to continue to work very hard to give all those Canadians working hard to join the middle class the help they need and deserve.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, when Liberal interference in shipbuilding was revealed, the PMO put its top issues person on the case: Zita Astravas. She previously worked with Gerry Butts and Katie Telford in the office of Dalton McGuinty when code words were used to hide the disclosure of documents in the gas plant scandal. Now Ms. Astravas is being questioned about code words used to prevent disclosure in the Mark Norman trial.

Will the defence minister confirm to this House today whether code words were used with respect to the disclosure of documents in the Vice-Admiral Mark Norman affair?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the prosecution in question that has been underscored here is being handled by the PPSC, which operates independently from the Department of Justice and the office of the Attorney General. Counsel to the Attorney General is fulfilling all its obligations before the court with respect to the ongoing third-party records application. It is absolutely improper to comment further on this issue, as the matter is before the courts. The member opposite knows this as a lawyer, and we will not, despite his pleadings, intervene in a matter and fetter the discretion of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, when Gerry Butts was the principal secretary to Dalton McGuinty, code words were used to avoid disclosure of gas plant documents. When Gerry Butts became the principal secretary to the Prime Minister, we now know that code words were used to deprive Mark Norman of the documents he needs to defend himself.

Can the defence minister handle that truth? What was the code word used for the set-up of Mark Norman or did he order the code red on Mark Norman?

• (1150)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me explain this in crystal-clear words. The reason why we observe the *sub judice* convention is that currently in this proceeding, in the Ontario Court of Justice, a judge is deliberating about the records that the member has just raised. We do not want to actually influence or to be seen to be influencing that judge in their deliberations because that would be improper. It is improper for members of the government and improper for any members of this House.

The hon. member knows this, as did his former colleague, the hon. Peter Van Loan, who said, specifically, that members are expected to refrain from discussing such matters. That was the hon. Peter Van Loan. I perhaps urge the member opposite to listen to his former colleague.

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[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals claim to want to protect jobs in Quebec. They say that everything they did in the SNC-Lavalin affair was to protect jobs, but SNC-Lavalin jobs were never in jeopardy, and everyone knows it.

When the Liberals came to power in 2015 they did everything in their power to undermine Davie shipyard and to prevent it from building the *Asterix* and employing 1,000 workers.

Why did the Prime Minister want to cancel this contract?

[*English*]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the issue of this matter, in respect to the important issue of Vice-Admiral Norman, is before the courts. The Ontario Court of Justice presently is deliberating on this very issue. We have an opposition day motion. We now have opposition questions. They are proposing questions that relate to that court process.

The reason why it is improper for both the questions and the responses to touch on that matter is that it could either improperly influence, or be seen to influence, that judge in his or her deliberations. We take the judge's role seriously, as should all members of this House.

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[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, unfortunately my colleague did not listen to my question, which had nothing to do with Vice-Admiral Norman.

In 2015, the Royal Canadian Navy needed a supply ship and the Davie shipyard had the perfect solution. The Conservative Party approved construction of the *Asterix*. Right after the election, however, the Prime Minister and his people did their level best to cancel the project. When we found out that the Liberals were scheming to halt construction of the *Asterix*, we leaned on them and they were forced to sign the contract on November 20, at 5 p.m.

Now they want to punish the person who blew the whistle on their scheme. Why?

Oral Questions

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are proud that we got the ship built. The Harper government certainly never managed as much during the decade it spent chipping away at our armed forces.

We are proud of the Davie shipyard workers who put their collective shoulder to the wheel to provide the Royal Canadian Navy with a supply ship that is doing Canada proud around the world.

We are proud of the Davie shipyard and we are proud to have given it the contract.

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[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Federal Court has ruled a DFO policy of not screening B.C. farmed salmon for a lethal virus that has the potential to infect wild chinook salmon is unlawful. Justice Cecily Strickland ruled that the federal policy unlawfully allows juvenile farmed Atlantic salmon to be transferred into open-net pens without testing them for the virus.

Will the minister finally apply the precautionary approaches dictated by law and test for PRV before transferring farmed fish to open-net pens in our oceans? Will he listen to the courts and protect wild salmon?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague would be well aware of the various measures that have been taken by this government with respect to the protection and preservation of wild salmon in British Columbia. We are well aware of this decision. We are now determining what the next steps are.

However, this government is focused on the preservation of wild salmon stocks in B.C.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members to allow individuals to ask their questions and respond without being interrupted.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government is failing to protect our waterways. According to a new survey released today, nine out of 10 people are worried about the impact of plastic waste on the environment, and 82% believe that the Liberals should be doing more to tackle it. New Democrats passed a unanimous motion on ocean plastics and we announced that we would ban single-use plastics by 2021. While the Liberals are still talking about a national strategy, the EU and India are already taking action to ban single-use plastics.

When are the Liberals going to take plastic pollution seriously and take real action?

• (1155)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad to talk about what we are doing to tackle plastic pollution. We know we have a real problem. If we do not tackle plastic pollution, we will have more plastics, by weight, than fish.

We banned microbeads. In the G7, we created the oceans plastics charter where we have targets internationally. We are supporting developing countries so that they have proper waste management systems. We are also ensuring that in government operations we are eliminating unnecessary single-use plastics. We put suppliers on notice that we will be choosing suppliers that have innovative solutions. Also, we are working with provinces and territories on a zero plastics waste strategy that will be announced in June.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, we know from the SNC scandal that the Prime Minister will politically interfere to protect his friends and will stop at nothing to destroy anyone in his way. Vice-Admiral Mark Norman has been waiting since October for the government to comply with court orders to provide documents from Gerald Butts, Michael Wernick, Katie Telford and Zita Astravas, but the Prime Minister and his staff think they are above the law.

Will the Prime Minister immediately hand over all documents and ensure Mark Norman gets a fair trial?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I have already said in response to the member for Durham, and I will repeat it again, this very matter that has been underscored by the member opposite is currently before the courts. It is important to let that court process unfold. She cited an application that has been made for third party records. That is exactly what has transpired. The Ontario Court of Justice is deliberating on that application. Justice lawyers and counsel for Mr. Norman are participating in that process.

We will not comment on that process because it is improper to do so. We will not interfere politically in a prosecution under the auspices of the Conservative Party's urging.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is not about commenting on a trial. It is about complying with the law to provide the necessary evidence. After relentless stonewalling, a 60-page memo from the former Clerk of the Privy Council, Michael Wernick, was finally delivered to Norman's lawyers, but it was unreadable. It was completely blacked out. Canadians should be worried. If the Prime Minister can prevent a distinguished admiral from getting a fair trial, no one is safe.

Will the Prime Minister immediately hand over all documents with nothing blacked out?

Oral Questions

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will confess absolute incredulity to that question. I agree that trial fairness is pivotal. The notion that we should intervene politically and dictate to an independent prosecution service what should be disclosed is called intervening in that trial. That renders null and void the trial fairness that the member opposite is seeking to uphold. That is not what we will do. That is not what any government or any parliamentarian should seek to do in this process or any other process.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, when news broke of a secret \$10.5-million payment to a self-confessed convicted terrorist, the government launched an investigation spanning six departments to find out who blew the cover-up. When news broke of the Prime Minister trying to interfere in the prosecution of a Liberal-friendly well-connected corporation charged with corruption, he slammed down the justice committee to keep it a secret.

When the Liberals cut the shipping order—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am going to anticipate where that question was going. I believe it was going toward the issue of the Supreme Court appointments process.

What I would say is what I have already said on the record, and that is that we take any disclosure of personal and confidential information very seriously. It is very troubling. Secondly, I would reiterate for Canadians who are watching that they should have the utmost confidence in the process we are using to uphold the administration of justice and the rule of law, and to ensure that the people who are selected for that high office are merit based and are fully eminent and capable of fulfilling that high office in its important function of protecting the rule of law in this country.

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SPORTS

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, sport is fundamental to bringing together a community. All across Canada, we have children involved in recreational sports and every one of them should always feel free to play, coach or participate freely in sport, safely. From her very first day, the Minister of Science and Sport committed to ending abuse, harassment and discrimination at all levels and for all ages in sport.

Can the minister please update the House on the historic measures that she announced last week?

• (1200)

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science and Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the safety of our athletes is our top priority. That is why we have announced two new initiatives, an independent third-party investigative unit and a national toll-free confidential helpline to address abuse, discrimination and harassment. This builds on our

previous work, including putting in place tough new measures for our national sports organizations, signing a declaration with every province and territory on safe sport and creating a universal code of conduct. We must end abuse in sport.

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PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the SNC scandal has shown Canadians exactly what this Prime Minister thinks of people who speak out against corruption and wrongdoing: He fires them.

The new Treasury Board president was at our committee for our unanimous report to update legislation that protects whistle-blowers, a report that the Liberal government promptly threw in the garbage.

Will the Treasury Board president commit now to implementing the recommendations made by the committee and protect Canada's whistle-blowers?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as members know, the previous Conservative government ignored for years the legislative requirement to review the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act. Our government did the right thing and requested that the committee of which the member speaks undertake a review. We, of course, appreciate the committee and its work. It contained useful recommendations to improve the whistle-blowing regime in the federal public sector.

We agree improvements are required. We are taking concrete steps to strengthen the regime to assure whistle-blowers that they have the protections they deserve, unlike Mr. Harper's government. Among them are improved guidance, increased awareness activities and training—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for St. John's East.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the International Energy Agency notes that since 2000, energy efficiency in major economies has actually offset one-third of the rise of energy-intensive activities like heating buildings, industrial processes and transportation. Since most of our energy still comes from greenhouse gas sources, energy efficiency can help us meet our climate change goals while saving money, supporting competitiveness and creating jobs.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources please explain how budget 2019 would promote energy efficiency and help Canada meet our climate change commitments?

Oral Questions

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for St. John's East for his hard work on the committee on natural resources.

Our government is making it easier for Canadians to lower their energy bills while tackling climate change. Through budget 2019, we are investing over \$1 billion to increase energy efficiency at home, at work and in our communities. Not only do these investments reduce emissions, they also create good, well-paying middle-class jobs.

While Conservatives in Ontario are cutting energy-efficiency programs, hurting families and businesses in the province, we are delivering on our commitment and our economy.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, for weeks now, the Prime Minister has said the reason he politically interfered with the independence of our judicial system was potential job losses at SNC-Lavalin in cities and towns across Canada. One of those towns is Port Elgin, Ontario, near the Bruce nuclear facility. People in Port Elgin say they are baffled by the Prime Minister's comments. Even the mayor said, "What we do know locally is that SNC-Lavalin is planning an expansion."

Why can the Prime Minister not just admit that this was not about job losses? It was a pure political play and it was corruption at the highest office of the land.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the information is all public because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence. It also confirms that the justice committee did its important work to ensure that Canadians would be able to access this important information.

What the member has actually just confirmed is that when it comes to these jobs they are throughout the entire country. This is a Canadian company and we have to make sure, as a government, that we always defend our economy and that we defend Canadian jobs. It is unfortunate that the member does not recognize that. It is probably why the Conservatives had such an abysmal record under 10 years of Stephen Harper.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue is failing in her duty. The net was supposed to tighten around the Panama papers fraudsters, but that has not happened. The minister was supposed to hire 1,300 new international taxation auditors, but that has not happened either. She was also supposed to recover \$25 billion from tax havens, but we are still waiting because, again, nothing has happened there.

Since we cannot rely on the minister, can she at least give the information to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, so that he can shed

some light on this and reveal just how complacent the government has been?

● (1205)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the numbers are very clear. The CRA hired 1,300 auditors between January 1, 2016, and January 1, 2019. That is the number I was referring to.

We made historic investments of over \$1 billion in the CRA so that the agency would be better prepared and have the tools it needs to combat tax evasion. Without our investments, the number of auditors at the CRA would have decreased, but instead it has increased and will continue to do so. The net is tightening.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, an American company, AquaBounty, has begun producing genetically modified salmon in Prince Edward Island in order to eventually produce it on an industrial scale.

No one wants giant salmon, or "frankenfish", and no one wants these industrial products on their dinner plates. Too bad, people will wind up eating them anyway, since there is no labelling.

What will it take for the federal government to understand that Quebecers want to know what they are eating?

When will the government finally ensure proper labelling, as most other industrialized countries do—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, all the rules were followed. Both Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency have very specific rules, and all such rules were followed throughout the process.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, every year, Quebec businesses worry that the temporary foreign workers they need will not arrive on time. These business owners pay Service Canada thousands of dollars to ensure that their file is processed quickly, but people on the other end are asleep at the switch.

Again today, business owners are losing contracts because their application is not processed on time and the workers do not arrive on time. Those who were due to arrive last Monday are still waiting. The bureaucracy in Ottawa is unrelenting. It hinders and constrains businesses here at home.

What will the minister do today, not tomorrow, to ensure that temporary foreign workers arrive immediately?

Routine Proceedings

[English]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, certainly the record numbers of jobs grown by this government since coming to power has had an impact across the country, specifically in Quebec. We recognize that.

I have an interesting read on my night table, *Right Here, Right Now*, a book by former prime minister Stephen Harper. In the book, he admits that they really jiggled up the temporary foreign worker program. We are putting additional resources into the program. We are going to fix it. If we can, we are going to “unjig” it.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Ind.): Madam Speaker, last week in Ottawa, five people died of opioid overdoses, and every day across Canada 11 lives are lost to opioid overdoses. The fastest-growing population requiring hospital care from opioid overdoses is young Canadians aged 15 to 24.

In my own riding, there were nearly 600 emergency department visits for opioid poisonings last year, which is a more than 30% increase over the previous year. Just last week, the town of Bracebridge was looking at declaring a state of emergency.

When will the government start funding treatment to help addicts conquer their dependency on this terrible life-destroying drug?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his concern about this issue. Our government is deeply concerned by the tragic impact of the opioid crisis, and our hearts are with all of those who have loved a lost one.

This is the most significant public health issue in Canada's recent history. We have responded by investing over \$350 million in emergency response, much of it in treatment; restoring harm reduction; and cutting red tape and removing barriers to treatment. This is a medical issue, not a moral one, and we will continue to do all we can to save lives.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1210)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

While I am on my feet, I would like to wish everyone a wonderful weekend.

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, entitled “Canada's Task Force Mali”.

[English]

In doing so, I would like to express, on behalf of the committee, our deep gratitude to all members of the Canadian Armed Forces who have served and are serving with task force Mali, and to all peacekeepers and United Nations civilian staff who served and are serving with MINUSMA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 89th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I would like to move concurrence in the report later this day.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-438, An Act to enact the Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights and to make related amendments to other Acts.

She said: Madam Speaker, I rise today to re-table the Canadian environmental bill of rights. While similar measures have been enacted by some of the provinces and territories, no such law has been enacted at the federal level. The bill would enact into federal domestic law international commitments made decades ago by Canada and measures recommended by the special rapporteur to the UN Human Rights Council.

First, my bill would enshrine the right of Canadians to a healthy, ecologically balanced environment.

Second, it would enshrine the Government of Canada's public trust duty to protect the environment, including legislating and enforcing environmental protection laws.

Third, it would extend to all Canadians the right to hold their government accountable through access to environmental information, participation in decisions impacting their environment and standing to seek judicial intervention where those rights would be denied.

Enactment of this bill has become all the more critical as environmental rights and protections have been eroded and promised reforms have not been forthcoming.

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

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[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 89th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

• (1215)

[English]

PETITIONS

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I present a petition with respect to the anchorages in and around the Southern Gulf Islands near my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

The petitioners note these anchorages were designated without consultation with coastal communities and residents and without consideration of first nation rights and consultation with first nations. Their use has multiplied several-fold and numerous vessels are anchored for extended periods of time, which has resulted in continuous noise levels that are affecting the health of residents and negatively affecting local tourism and the financial health of associated businesses.

Therefore, the residents who have signed this petition call upon the Government of Canada to take all measures possible to reduce and ultimately eliminate the use of commercial freighter anchorage sites throughout the Southern Gulf Islands.

FIREARMS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to table a petition signed by Canadians from across the country who were happy and relieved when our Conservative government got rid of the wasteful and ineffective long-gun registry and then were saddened and dismayed to see the current government introduce legislation in the form of Bill C-71 that once again targets law-abiding gun owners.

Routine Proceedings

These signatures are not just from gun owners; they are from families of hunters and families of people who are using firearms for legitimate purposes in rural areas. These petitions are from Canadians right across the country who want gangs and violence and drugs addressed by legislation, not by targeting law-abiding firearms owners.

I am happy to table this petition and to be able to continue to fight for the rights of law-abiding firearms owners.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar knows very well that she is to speak to the petition itself and not put her own position forward.

CHILDHOOD CANCER

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am honoured today to table a petition on behalf of constituents of my riding of London West.

The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to increase the amount of its childhood cancer research funding by 10%. They show concern towards the fact that childhood cancer is the leading cause of disease-related deaths among Canadian children.

The petition is signed by signatories who have had their lives impacted by childhood cancer.

I would like to thank the advocacy of Kim Vanderschel, who helped to collect these signatures.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present three petitions to the House.

I am happy to table an important petition today on behalf of members of my riding of North Island—Powell River. This petition really speaks to what I talked about earlier today in question period when I spoke about Duncan Moffatt. It includes signatures of people in communities like Port McNeill, Sayward, Campell River, Tahsis, Telegraph Cove, Gold River, Port Hardy, Sointula and Alert Bay.

The petitioners wish to express their concerns to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. Parts of Highway 19 and Highway 19A do not have cellular phone service. This is an important public safety concern, as it is sometimes necessary to travel over 30 minutes to reach an area with cellphone service or a land line to contact 911 in case of an accident or breakdown in need of assistance.

The petitioners request that the Government of Canada intervene with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and our local service provider, Telus, to ensure that there is continuous coverage on the highway to satisfy the need for public safety.

This is a fairly comprehensive list of people.

Routine Proceedings

● (1220)

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, the second petition is signed by people from across Canada.

The petitioners are asking the government to better fund feminist women's organizations. Due to a lack of federal core operating funds, these organizations have been struggling for decades to keep the lights on and the doors open. The petitioners point out that feminist organizations are the most underfunded in Canada's non-profit sector, and yet they are the single most effective means of building better lives for women.

The petitioners ask the government to please take action.

PENSIONS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, the third and final petition that I have today calls for the withdrawal of Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985. I have tabled several of these petitions in the House.

People in my riding are significantly concerned. They want to make sure that their benefits are protected and that pensions are protected.

We hope to see this action taken soon.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to table a petition signed by hundreds of people who visited The Body Shop at the Bayshore shopping mall in my riding.

The petitioners are calling on the House to support Bill S-214 and ban the sale and manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada. The petitioners argue that it is not only cruel but unnecessary, since alternative tests are less expensive and more effective.

I want to thank The Body Shop and all of those who signed this petition.

PENSIONS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise and table a petition on behalf of constituents from Port Alberni, Coombs, Nanoose Bay, Parksville and Qualicum Beach.

The petitioners call on the government to withdraw Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985.

The petitioners point out that during the 2015 federal election, Canadians were clearly promised in writing that defined benefit plans that have already been paid for by employees and pensioners would not be retroactively changed into target benefit plans.

Bill C-27 was tabled by the Minister of Finance. It would permit this change, thereby jeopardizing the retirement income security of Canadians who have negotiated defined benefit plans as a form of deferred wages.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985, and protect their pensions.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2192, 2197, 2198, 2202 to 2208, 2212 to 2218, and 2229.

[Text]

Question No. 2192—**Mr. John Nater:**

With regard to the Aid to Publishers component of the Canada Periodical Fund: what are the details of all grants awarded by the fund since November 4, 2015, including (i) name of the recipient, (ii) date on which the funding was received, (iii) amount received?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the requested information is available on the Government of Canada's website at <https://open.canada.ca/en/search/grants>. Instructions are as follows: open the link, enter "Canada Periodical Fund, Aid to Publishers" in the search field, and select the year.

Question No. 2197—**Mr. Larry Miller:**

With regard to the statement attributed to the spokesperson for the Minister of National Revenue in the Toronto Star in January 2019 that "We have hired over 1,300 auditors": (a) how many of these new auditors are focused solely on off-shore tax evasion; (b) how many of these new auditors are focused solely on Canadian corporate tax evasion; and (c) how many of these new auditors are focused solely on Canadian personal tax evasion?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the CRA's compliance programs focus on size or type of non-compliance and taxpayers often use the interaction between individual and corporate entities to achieve non compliance. For this reason, rigid distinctions between corporate and personal tax evasion cannot be made.

For example, work related to the underground economy would encompass both corporations and individuals. Work related to high net-worth individuals and others involved in tax schemes would encompass individuals who use corporations, trusts and partnerships in their tax planning. In terms of work related to large businesses, the vast majority are publicly traded companies but a small number are trusts, partnerships or privately held corporations. Work related to GST/HST compliance includes a mix of corporations and sole proprietorships. Finally, for work related to small and medium-sized enterprises that have complex transactions, most but not all would be incorporated.

Question No. 2198—**Mr. Larry Miller:**

With regard to the proposed Fair Wages Policy: (a) what is the anticipated cost to taxpayers for its implementation; and (b) what are the findings of any cost analysis done by government departments?

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

Madam Speaker, the cost of a fair wages policy will depend on the scope and requirements of the policy, including the industries affected and the level of wages prescribed, as appropriate. These have not yet been determined and are subject to a ministerial decision that has not yet been taken.

Question No. 2202—Mr. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to the GST/HST: (a) does the government plan to increase the GST/HST; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing the GST/HST was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase the GST/HST, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive and functioning as intended, to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways.

One of the government's first actions was to raise personal income taxes on the wealthiest Canadians in order to cut taxes for the middle class. Over nine million Canadians are benefiting from the reduction of the second personal income tax rate to 20.5% from 22%. Single individuals who benefit are saving an average of \$330 each year, and couples who benefit are saving an average of \$540 each year.

In its first budget, the government introduced the Canada child benefit. Compared with the previous child benefit system, the new Canada child benefit is simpler, much more generous and better targeted to families who need it most. The CCB is also entirely tax free. Nine out of 10 families are receiving more in child benefits than they did under the previous system, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty. A typical middle-class family of four is now receiving, on average, about \$2,000 more per year in support than they did in 2015, as a result of the middle-class tax cut and the Canada child benefit.

To put more money in the pockets of low-income workers, budget 2018 introduced the new Canada workers benefit, or CWB. The CWB is replacing the working income tax benefit beginning in 2019 and will encourage more people to join or stay in the workforce by making the benefit more generous and more accessible.

The government has taken action to implement changes resulting from its wide-ranging review of tax expenditures. This included measures to improve tax relief for caregivers, students and persons with disabilities.

The government reduced the federal small business tax rate from 10.5% in 2017 to 9% in 2019. For small businesses, compared with 2017, this means up to \$7,500 in federal tax savings each year, savings that they can reinvest in purchasing new equipment, developing new products or creating new jobs. As the government reduced the small business rate, it took action to make sure that this low rate is not used by some to gain unfair tax advantages as the expense of others.

In the fall of 2018, the government introduced immediate changes to Canada's corporate tax system that will further support investment, jobs and growth in Canadian businesses, creating opportunities in communities across the country.

In each of its budgets since coming to office, the government has taken action to improve the fairness of the tax system through measures to prevent underground economic activity, tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. In budget 2016 and budget 2017, the government invested about \$1 billion to support the efforts of the Canada Revenue Agency in this area. These investments are expected to add over \$5 billion in additional federal revenues over six years. Budget 2018 announced additional funding of \$90.6 million over five years to support the CRA in its continued efforts to ensure taxpayer compliance.

The government has also taken action to close tax loopholes that result in unfair tax advantages for some at the expense of others. More broadly, the government has engaged with international partners on an ongoing basis to combat aggressive international tax avoidance, including through enhanced sharing of information between tax authorities.

Going forward, the government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2203—Mr. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to personal income tax rates: (a) does the government plan to increase personal income tax rates; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing personal income tax rates was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase personal income tax rates, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive and functioning as intended, to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways.

Routine Proceedings

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Going forward, the government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2204—Mr. Pierre Poilievre:

With regard to the small business tax rate: (a) does the government plan to raise or restore the small business tax rate; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of raising or restoring the small business tax rate was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase the small business tax rate, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive and functioning as intended, to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways.

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Routine Proceedings

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The government has also taken action to close tax loopholes that result in unfair tax advantages for some at the expense of others. More broadly, the government has engaged with international partners on an ongoing basis to combat aggressive international tax avoidance, including through enhanced sharing of information between tax authorities.

Going forward, the government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2205—**Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to the small business deduction: (a) does the government plan to eliminate the small business deduction; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of eliminating the small business deduction was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to eliminate the small business deduction, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive and functioning as intended, to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways.

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Routine Proceedings

In each of its budgets since coming to office, the government has taken action to improve the fairness of the tax system through measures to prevent underground economic activity, tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. In budget 2016 and budget 2017, the government invested about \$1 billion to support the efforts of the Canada Revenue Agency in this area. These investments are expected to add over \$5 billion in additional federal revenues over six years. Budget 2018 announced additional funding of \$90.6 million over five years to support the CRA in its continued efforts to ensure taxpayer compliance.

The government has also taken action to close tax loopholes that result in unfair tax advantages for some at the expense of others. More broadly, the government has engaged with international partners on an ongoing basis to combat aggressive international tax avoidance, including through enhanced sharing of information between tax authorities.

Going forward, the government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2206—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to corporate tax rates: (a) does the government plan to increase corporate tax rates; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing corporate tax rates was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase corporate tax rates, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive and functioning as intended, to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways.

One of the government's first actions was to raise personal income taxes on the wealthiest Canadians in order to cut taxes for the middle class. Over nine million Canadians are benefiting from the reduction of the second personal income tax rate to 20.5% from 22%. Single individuals who benefit are saving an average of \$330 each year, and couples who benefit are saving an average of \$540 each year.

In its first budget, the government introduced the Canada child benefit. Compared with the previous child benefit system, the new Canada child benefit is simpler, much more generous and better targeted to families who need it most. The CCB is also entirely tax free. Nine out of 10 families are receiving more in child benefits than they did under the previous system, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty. A typical middle-class family of four is now receiving, on average, about \$2,000 more per year in support than they did in 2015, as a result of the middle-class tax cut and the Canada child benefit.

To put more money in the pockets of low-income workers, budget 2018 introduced the new Canada workers benefit, or CWB. The CWB is replacing the working income tax benefit beginning in 2019 and will encourage more people to join or stay in the workforce by making the benefit more generous and more accessible.

The government has taken action to implement changes resulting from its wide-ranging review of tax expenditures. This included measures to improve tax relief for caregivers, students and persons with disabilities.

The government reduced the federal small business tax rate from 10.5% in 2017 to 9% in 2019. For small businesses, compared with 2017, this means up to \$7,500 in federal tax savings each year, savings that they can reinvest in purchasing new equipment, developing new products or creating new jobs. As the government reduced the small business rate, it took action to make sure that this low rate is not used by some to gain unfair tax advantages as the expense of others.

In the fall of 2018, the government introduced immediate changes to Canada's corporate tax system that will further support investment, jobs and growth in Canadian businesses, creating opportunities in communities across the country.

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Going forward, the government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

*Routine Proceedings*Question No. 2207—**Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to Employment Insurance (EI) premiums: (a) does the government plan to raise EI premiums; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing EI premiums was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase EI premiums, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, regarding part (a), the Government of Canada does not set the EI premium rate. The EI premium rate is set by the Canada Employment Insurance Commission according to a seven-year break-even mechanism, based on forecasts and estimates of the EI senior actuary. This rate is designed to ensure a cumulative balance of zero in the EI operating account over a seven-year time horizon.

In accordance with legislation, the EI premium rate for 2020 will be announced on or before September 14, 2019, and will take into account any new EI initiatives announced by July 22, 2019, as well as projections of key economic indicators.

Regarding part (b), the Government of Canada does not set the EI premium rate. The EI premium rate is set by the Canada Employment Insurance Commission.

Employment Insurance premiums are set according to a transparent mechanism that ensures that premium rates remain stable, and that premium revenues are used only to fund EI program expenditures. To calculate the seven-year break-even rate, the actuary relies on information provided by the minister of ESDC on forecast administration costs, planned spending under EI part II, the cost of new or temporary measures, and the most recent available balance of the EI operating account. The Minister of Finance provides information that includes the current available forecast values of the economic variables relevant to the preparation of actuarial forecasts and estimates for the EI account.

Regarding part (c), the Government of Canada does not set the EI premium rate. The EI premium rate is set by the Canada Employment Insurance Commission.

Question No. 2208—**Mr. Bob Saroya:**

With regard to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) premiums: (a) does the government plan to raise CPP premiums; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing CPP premiums was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase CPP premiums, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government has been working with provinces and territories to enhance the Canada pension plan, or CPP, to ensure that future generations of Canadians can count on a strong public pension system in their retirement years. Canada's finance ministers came together in Ottawa on December 21, 2015, and agreed to begin discussions on a modest, fully funded and phased-in enhancement of the CPP. These discussions included issues such as the impact on contribution rates. After months of co-operative work with provinces and territories, finance ministers met in Vancouver on June 20, 2016, and agreed in principle to an expansion of the CPP starting January 1, 2019, that would increase the income replacement from one-quarter to one-third of pensionable

earnings and increase the maximum amount of income subject to CPP by 14%.

To ensure that these changes are affordable for businesses and Canadians, the agreement included three measures: introducing a long and gradual seven-year phase-in starting on January 1, 2019, that would allow more time for businesses to adjust; enhancing the Canada workers benefit to offset the impact of increased contributions on low-income workers; and providing a tax deduction, instead of a tax credit, for employee contributions associated with the CPP enhancement in order to avoid increasing the after-tax cost of savings for Canadians.

A news release provided the signed agreement by federal and provincial ministers and background on the agreement in principle to enhance the CPP.

In advance of the tabling of federal legislation implementing the agreement in principle, Bill C-26, the government released a comprehensive technical paper summarizing the economic and policy analysis and providing more details on the design of the CPP enhancement. In addition, and as required by legislation, the chief actuary of Canada prepared a report assessing the financial sustainability and other financing implications of the legislative changes in Bill C-26. The report from the chief actuary confirmed that the CPP enhancement is sustainable at the legislative contribution rates set out in Bill C-26.

For more information, members should consult the following documents: the news release from the December 2015 finance ministers' meeting, found at <https://www.fin.gc.ca/n15/15-089-eng.asp>; the news release from the June 2016 finance ministers' meeting, found at <https://www.fin.gc.ca/n16/16-081-eng.asp>; the background on the Canada pension plan enhancement, found at https://www.fin.gc.ca/n16/data/16-113_3-eng.asp; the 28th Actuarial Report on the Canada pension plan, found at <http://www.osfi-bsif.gc.ca/Eng/Docs/Cpp28.pdf>; the news release on the Canada pension plan enhancement legislation, Bill C-26, found at <https://www.fin.gc.ca/n17/17-010-eng.asp>; the news release announcing that Manitoba agrees to the Canada pension plan enhancement, found at <https://www.fin.gc.ca/n16/16-088-eng.asp>; and Bill No. 149, An Act to Enhance the Quebec Pension Plan, found at <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-149-41-1.html?appelant=MC>.

*Routine Proceedings*Question No. 2212—**Mr. Kerry Diotte:**

With regard to a real estate speculation tax at the federal level: (a) does the government plan to implement a real estate speculation tax at the federal level; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of implementing a real estate speculation tax at the federal level was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to implement a real estate speculation tax at the federal level, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive, and functioning as intended to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the Government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways:

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In its first budget, the Government introduced the Canada Child Benefit. Compared to the previous child benefit system, the new Canada Child Benefit is simpler, much more generous, and better targeted to families who need it most. The CCB is also entirely tax-free. Nine out of 10 families are receiving more in child benefits than they did under the previous system, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty. A typical middle class family of four is now receiving, on average, about \$2,000 more per year in support than they did in 2015, as a result of the middle class tax cut and the Canada Child Benefit.

To put more money in the pockets of low-income workers, Budget 2018 introduced the new Canada Workers Benefit (CWB). The CWB is replacing the Working Income Tax Benefit beginning in 2019, and will encourage more people to join or stay in the workforce by making the benefit more generous and more accessible.

The Government has taken action to implement changes resulting from its wide-ranging review of tax expenditures. This included measures to improve tax relief for caregivers, students, and persons with disabilities.

The Government reduced the federal small business tax rate from 10.5% in 2017 to 9% in 2019. For small businesses, compared to 2017, this means up to \$7,500 in federal tax savings each year—savings that they can reinvest in purchasing new equipment, developing new products, or creating new jobs. As the Government reduced the small business rate, it took action to make sure that this low rate is not used by some to gain unfair tax advantages as the expense of others.

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Going forward, the Government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2213—**Mr. Kerry Diotte:**

With regard to the federal carbon tax or price on carbon: (a) does the government plan to increase the federal carbon tax or price on carbon above \$50 per tonne of emissions; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing the federal carbon tax or price on carbon above \$50 per tonne of emissions was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan of increasing the federal carbon tax or price on carbon above \$50 per tonne of emissions, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive, and functioning as intended to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the Government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways

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*Routine Proceedings*Question No. 2214—**Mr. Kerry Diotte:**

In its first budget, the Government introduced the Canada Child Benefit. Compared to the previous child benefit system, the new Canada Child Benefit is simpler, much more generous, and better targeted to families who need it most. The CCB is also entirely tax-free. Nine out of 10 families are receiving more in child benefits than they did under the previous system, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty. A typical middle class family of four is now receiving, on average, about \$2,000 more per year in support than they did in 2015, as a result of the middle class tax cut and the Canada Child Benefit.

To put more money in the pockets of low-income workers, Budget 2018 introduced the new Canada Workers Benefit (CWB). The CWB is replacing the Working Income Tax Benefit beginning in 2019, and will encourage more people to join or stay in the workforce by making the benefit more generous and more accessible.

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Going forward, the Government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

With regard to an inheritance tax at the federal level: (a) does the government plan to implement an inheritance tax at the federal level; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of implementing an inheritance tax at the federal level was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to implement an inheritance tax at the federal level, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive, and functioning as intended to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the Government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways

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Going forward, the Government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2215—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to level of the federal excise tax on gasoline or diesel fuel: (a) does the government plan to increase the level of the federal excise tax on gasoline or diesel fuel; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing the level of the federal excise tax on gasoline or diesel fuel was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase the level of the federal excise tax on gasoline or diesel fuel, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive, and functioning as intended to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the Government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways

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In its first budget, the Government introduced the Canada Child Benefit. Compared to the previous child benefit system, the new Canada Child Benefit is simpler, much more generous, and better targeted to families who need it most. The CCB is also entirely tax-free. Nine out of 10 families are receiving more in child benefits than they did under the previous system, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty. A typical middle class family of four is now receiving, on average, about \$2,000 more per year in support than they did in 2015, as a result of the middle class tax cut and the Canada Child Benefit.

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Going forward, the Government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2216—**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:**

With regard to the revenue that was raised or lost as a result of changes to the federal income tax that took effect on January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increased or lost revenue as a result of changes to federal income tax that took effect on January 1, 2016, was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (b) do any supporting documents exist about the revenue that was raised or lost as a result of changes to federal income tax that took effect on January 1, 2016, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government is committed to the objective of an economy that works for everyone. In keeping with this objective, the Government's focus since coming to office in 2015 has been to reduce taxes and increase support for the middle class and those who are working hard to join it.

One of the Government's first actions was to raise personal income taxes on the wealthiest Canadians in order to cut taxes for the middle class. Over nine million Canadians are benefitting from the reduction of the second personal income tax rate to 20.5% from 22%. Single individuals who benefit are saving an average of \$330 each year, and couples who benefit are saving an average of \$540 each year.

The Government has been transparent in estimating the revenue impacts of these measures. On December 7, 2015, when these measures were first proposed, the Department of Finance published a backgrounder on its website: https://www.fin.gc.ca/n15/data/15-086_1-eng.asp. Table 2 of this backgrounder (Fiscal Cost of Proposed Tax Changes) provides a detailed breakdown of the estimated \$8.2 billion revenue impact of the two federal personal income tax rate changes from 2015-16 to 2020-21. A footnote to Table 2 states that the estimates of the revenue gain from introducing a 33-per-cent rate on taxable income above \$200,000 assume that those affected would respond by slightly reducing their taxable income on an ongoing basis.

In estimating the ongoing revenue impacts associated with the changes to the federal personal income tax rate structure, the Department of Finance has taken a prudent approach that reflects Canadian and international research on how individuals at different income levels respond to changes in tax rates.

Raising taxes on the wealthiest one per cent in order to cut them for the middle class has been a key step towards the Government's goal of improving the fairness of the tax system and ensuring that the benefits of growth are shared among all Canadians. Measures like the middle class tax cut and the Canada Child Benefit have provided Canadian families with more money to save, invest, and spend in their communities. Families receiving the Canada Child Benefit are

getting \$6,800 on average this year. These and other measures introduced by the Government to support the middle class and those who are working hard to join it are driving higher levels of Canadian consumer and business confidence and supporting wage growth.

Going forward, the Government will continue to be guided by the objective of ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are widely shared.

Question No. 2217—**Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:**

With regard to raising additional government revenue and potential sources: (a) does the government plan to increase government revenue; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of increasing government revenue was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to increase government revenue, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive, and functioning as intended to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the Government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways

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In its first budget, the Government introduced the Canada Child Benefit. Compared to the previous child benefit system, the new Canada Child Benefit is simpler, much more generous, and better targeted to families who need it most. The CCB is also entirely tax-free. Nine out of 10 families are receiving more in child benefits than they did under the previous system, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty. A typical middle class family of four is now receiving, on average, about \$2,000 more per year in support than they did in 2015, as a result of the middle class tax cut and the Canada Child Benefit.

To put more money in the pockets of low-income workers, Budget 2018 introduced the new Canada Workers Benefit (CWB). The CWB is replacing the Working Income Tax Benefit beginning in 2019, and will encourage more people to join or stay in the workforce by making the benefit more generous and more accessible.

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In the fall of 2018, the Government introduced immediate changes to Canada's corporate tax system that will further support investment, jobs and growth in Canadian businesses, creating opportunities in communities across the country.

In each of its budgets since coming to office, the Government has taken action to improve the fairness of the tax system through measures to prevent underground economic activity, tax evasion, and aggressive tax avoidance. In Budget 2016 and Budget 2017, the Government invested about \$1 billion to support the efforts of the Canada Revenue Agency in this area. These investments are expected to add over \$5 billion in additional federal revenues over six years. Budget 2018 announced additional funding of \$90.6 million over five years to support the CRA in its continued efforts to ensure taxpayer compliance.

The Government has also taken action to close tax loopholes that result in unfair tax advantages for some at the expense of others. More broadly, the Government has engaged with international partners on an ongoing basis to combat aggressive international tax avoidance, including through enhanced sharing of information between tax authorities.

Going forward, the Government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2218—Mr. Dave Van Kesteren:

With regard to the capital gains tax exemption: (a) does the government plan to reduce or remove the capital gains tax exemption; (b) what are the details of any discussions or meetings where the possibility of reducing or removing the capital gains tax exemption was discussed, including (i) date, (ii) participants and location; and (c) do any supporting documents exist about any plan to remove or reduce the capital gains tax exemption, including but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair, efficient, competitive, and functioning as intended to make sure that our economy is working for the middle class and all Canadians. While it would not be appropriate to speculate on future tax policy decisions, the Government's record demonstrates that it has delivered on this commitment in many ways

One of the Government's first actions was to raise personal income taxes on the wealthiest Canadians in order to cut taxes for the middle class. Over nine million Canadians are benefitting from the reduction of the second personal income tax rate to 20.5% from

22%. Single individuals who benefit are saving an average of \$330 each year, and couples who benefit are saving an average of \$540 each year.

In its first budget, the Government introduced the Canada Child Benefit. Compared to the previous child benefit system, the new Canada Child Benefit is simpler, much more generous, and better targeted to families who need it most. The CCB is also entirely tax-free. Nine out of 10 families are receiving more in child benefits than they did under the previous system, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty. A typical middle class family of four is now receiving, on average, about \$2,000 more per year in support than they did in 2015, as a result of the middle class tax cut and the Canada Child Benefit.

To put more money in the pockets of low-income workers, Budget 2018 introduced the new Canada Workers Benefit (CWB). The CWB is replacing the Working Income Tax Benefit beginning in 2019, and will encourage more people to join or stay in the workforce by making the benefit more generous and more accessible.

The Government has taken action to implement changes resulting from its wide-ranging review of tax expenditures. This included measures to improve tax relief for caregivers, students, and persons with disabilities.

The Government reduced the federal small business tax rate from 10.5% in 2017 to 9% in 2019. For small businesses, compared to 2017, this means up to \$7,500 in federal tax savings each year—savings that they can reinvest in purchasing new equipment, developing new products, or creating new jobs. As the Government reduced the small business rate, it took action to make sure that this low rate is not used by some to gain unfair tax advantages as the expense of others.

In the fall of 2018, the Government introduced immediate changes to Canada's corporate tax system that will further support investment, jobs and growth in Canadian businesses, creating opportunities in communities across the country.

Routine Proceedings

In each of its budgets since coming to office, the Government has taken action to improve the fairness of the tax system through measures to prevent underground economic activity, tax evasion, and aggressive tax avoidance. In Budget 2016 and Budget 2017, the Government invested about \$1 billion to support the efforts of the Canada Revenue Agency in this area. These investments are expected to add over \$5 billion in additional federal revenues over six years. Budget 2018 announced additional funding of \$90.6 million over five years to support the CRA in its continued efforts to ensure taxpayer compliance.

The Government has also taken action to close tax loopholes that result in unfair tax advantages for some at the expense of others. More broadly, the Government has engaged with international partners on an ongoing basis to combat aggressive international tax avoidance, including through enhanced sharing of information between tax authorities.

Going forward, the Government's tax policy agenda will continue to be guided by the objective of a fair tax system that benefits the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Question No. 2229—Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:

With regard to the funding granted under the Investing in Canada plan, since March 2016: (a) what applications were initially approved by Infrastructure Canada officials but then rejected by the Office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities; and (b) what requests were initially rejected by Infrastructure Canada officials but then approved by the Office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities?

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with regard to the funding granted under the Investing in Canada plan, since March 2016: (a) There were no instances where an application was initially approved by Infrastructure Canada officials, but then rejected by the office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

(b) The LaHave River Straight Pipe Remediation project in Nova Scotia.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 1720, originally tabled on June 14, 2018, and the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2193 to 2196, 2199 to 2201, 2209 to 2211, 2219 to 2228, and 2230 to 2245 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1720—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to government advertisements (ads) launched on Facebook since January 1, 2016: (a) how many ads have been launched by month and what were the corresponding campaigns for each (ie. employment insurance, citizenship services, tax credits, grants, etc.); (b) how long was each ad active for online; (c) what were the

insights for each ad launched, including (i) how many people were reached by each ad, (ii) what percentage of women and men were reached by each ad, (iii) what were the age group ranges used for each ad, (iv) what were the federal, provincial, or municipal regions targeted by each ad, (v) were specific interests, pages, or likes included in the targeting of the ads, broken down by ad; and (d) who in the department or Minister's office receives or has access to the data gathered in the insights of these ads?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2193—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to government expenditures with Nesta Holding Company Ltd. or companies owned in whole or in part by Nesta Holding Company since January 1, 2016, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity, : (a) what are the total expenditures, broken down by company; (b) what are the details of each expenditure, including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) company, (iv) description of goods or services, (v) quantity, (vi) price per unit, (vii) file number, if applicable; and (c) on what date did the Chief Executive Officer of Invest in Canada Hub formally resign from the Board of Directors of Nesta Holding Company?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2194—Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to the government's plan to create a "critical election incident public protocol" group for the 2019 election: (a) what specific safeguards are in place to ensure that political staff in ministerial offices, including in the Office of the Prime Minister, do not influence any members of the group; (b) will there be a prohibition on communication during the writ period between members of the group and ministers or their exempt staff; and (c) if no prohibition exists, why is the government allowing communication between ministers or their exempt staff and members of the group?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2195—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to "code names" used by the Department of National Defence: what are the code names used for the (i) Chief of Defence Staff, (ii) Minister of National Defence, (iii) various members of the Minister of National Defence's exempt staff, broken down by individual, (iv) Prime Minister, (v) various members of the Office of the Prime Minister, broken down by individual, (vi) other ministers, broken down by minister, (vii) Clerk of the Privy Council, (viii) Vice-Chief of Defence Staff, (ix) Judge Advocate General, (x) Chief of Military Personnel, (xi) National Defence and Canadian Forces Ombudsman, (xii) Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, (xiii) Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, (xiv) Commander of the Canadian Army, (xv) Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command, (xvi) Director of Staff of the Strategic Joint Staff, (xvii) Canadian Armed Forces Chief Warrant Officer?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2196—Mr. Larry Miller:

With regard to advertisement spending since January 1, 2018: (a) how much has been spent on advertisements originating from U.S. companies, broken down by each expenditure and medium (i.e. print or digital); and (b) how much has been spent on advertisements originating from Canadian companies, broken down by each expenditure and medium (i.e. print or digital)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2199—Mr. Larry Miller:

With regard to Bill C-344, An Act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (community benefit): (a) what is the anticipated cost to taxpayers for its implementation; and (b) what are the findings of any cost analysis done by government departments?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2200—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Timmins—James Bay, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Timmins—James Bay that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Timmins—James Bay by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (i.e. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program they received funding under, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2201—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to federal employment in the federal electoral district of Timmins—James Bay, broken down by department, municipality, and year since 2004: how many federal government employees are based in the above-named electoral district?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2209—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to water advisories, both boil-water or other water advisories, in Indigenous communities: (a) in addition to the online government website list, how many have been added since January 1, 2016; (b) of those added, how many are still under an advisory; (c) what is the complete list of Indigenous communities currently under a water advisory in addition to the online government website list, broken down by region, including new additions; (d) of the communities in (c), which communities are receiving direct assistance from the federal government to lift the advisory; and (e) of the communities in (d), what type of assistance is being provided by the federal government, broken down by (i) name of the program or initiative, (ii) funding amount if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2210—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the subsidies credited for electric vehicles and charging stations since January 1, 2016: (a) how much has been credited to Canadians; and (b) what is the breakdown of these credits by province and city?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2211—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to government advertisements (ads) launched on Facebook since January 1, 2018: (a) how many ads have been launched by month and what were the corresponding campaigns for each (e.g. Employment Insurance, citizenship services, tax credits, grants, etc.); (b) for how long was each ad active online; (c) what were the insights for each ad launched, including (i) how many people were reached by each ad, (ii) what percentage of women and men were reached by each ad, (iii) what were the age-group ranges used for each ad, (iv) what were the federal, provincial, or municipal regions targeted by each ad, including postal codes, if applicable; and (d) who in the department or Minister's office receives or has access to the data gathered in the insights of these ads?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2219—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to federal spending within the electoral district of Perth—Wellington for each fiscal year from 2015-16 to 2017-18: what is the list of grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded by the government, broken down by (i) department and agency, (ii) municipality, (iii) name of recipient, (iv) amount received, (v) program under which the spending was made, (vi) date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2220—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to abbreviations, code names and code words used by departments or agencies: (a) what is the complete list of abbreviations, code names and code words used by departments and agencies in communication between the department or agencies and the minister's office; and (b) for each abbreviation, code name or code word in (a), whom or to what does it represent or refer?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2221—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to expenditures related to Twitter since January 1, 2016, broken down by department and agency: what are the details of all such expenditures, including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) topic and tweet that was promoted, if known, (iv) description of goods or services provided, if different than a promoted tweet?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2222—Mr. Guy Lauzon:

With regard to the new steel and aluminum tariffs which the government started collecting in 2018: (a) how much has the government collected to date; (b) of the tariffs collected to date, how much has been distributed back to Canadian steel and aluminum companies, as of present; and (c) what is the complete list of recipients of the funding in (b), including the amount each recipient received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2223—Mr. Guy Caron:

With regard to government advertising for oil pipeline projects, including approved projects and projects in the evaluation phase, since November 4, 2015: what is the total amount spent on advertising, broken down by (i) year, (ii) pipeline project, (iii) department, (iv) advertising platform, (v) supplier?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2224—Mr. Dane Lloyd:

With regard to government interactions with and expenditures related to Canada 2020: (a) what are the details of any roles or expenditures the following organizations have in relation to the "Canada Food Brand Project" being put on by Canada 2020, (i) Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, (ii) Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada, (iii) Farm Credit Canada, (iv) National Research Council of Canada; (b) how much did each organization listed in (a) pay Canada 2020 to be listed as a "participant" or "partner" for the project; and (c) what are the details of any other expenditures the organizations in (a) had with Canada 2020 since November 4, 2015, including (i) total, (ii) purpose, (iii) date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2225—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the backlog in security assessments for individuals seeking asylum, since January 1, 2016, and broken down by month: what was the number of individuals in Canada seeking asylum who had not yet received a security assessment?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2226—Mr. Arnold Viersen:

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, since December 2015 and broken down by month: (a) how many individuals were issued a removal order; (b) of the individuals in (a), how many were still in Canada; (c) of the individuals in (a), how many left Canada; (d) how many individuals were issued a deportation order; (e) of the individuals in (d), how many remain in Canada; (f) how many individuals were deported; (g) how many individuals seeking asylum were scheduled to appear at an Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) hearing; (h) how many individuals seeking asylum appeared at an IRB hearing; (i) how many individuals seeking asylum failed to appear at an IRB hearing; and (j) how many individuals seeking asylum have not had their IRB hearing?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2227—Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:**

With regard to Employment Insurance (EI), for 2017 and 2018, broken down by year: (a) what was the volume of EI applications in total and broken down by (i) region and province where the claim originated, (ii) the number of claims accepted and the number of claims rejected, (iii) month; (b) what was the average EI application processing time in total and broken down by (i) region and province where the claim originated, (ii) month; (c) how many applications waited more than 28 days for a decision and, for these applications, what was the average wait time for a decision, in total and broken down by (i) region and province where claim originated, (ii) month; (d) what was the volume of calls to EI call centres in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) region and province; (e) what was the number of calls to EI call centres that received a high-volume message in total and broken down by (i) month, (ii) region and province; (f) what were the national service-level standards for calls answered by an agent at EI call centres, broken down by month; (g) what were the actual service-level standards achieved by EI call centres for calls answered by an agent, broken down by (i) month, (ii) region and province; (h) what were the service standards for call backs from EI processing staff, broken down by month; (i) what were the service standards achieved by EI processing staff for call backs, broken down by (i) month, (ii) region and province; (j) what was the average number of days for a call back by EI processing staff, broken down by (i) month, (ii) region and province; (k) what were the number and percentage of term employees and indeterminate employees working at EI call centres and processing centres; (l) what was the rate of sick leave use among EI call centre and processing centre employees; (m) what was the number of EI call centre and processing centre employees on long-term disability; (n) what was the number of overtime hours worked by call centre employees; (o) who authored the report on EI processing for which the former Parliamentary Secretary for Employment and Social Development was credited; (p) what are the details of the Table of Contents for the report; (q) will the government make the report public; (r) how many complaints did the Office of Client Satisfaction receive, broken down by (i) month, (ii) region and province where the complaint originated; (s) how long on average did a complaint take to be investigated and resolved, broken down by month; and (t) what were the major themes of the complaints received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2228—Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2230—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Vancouver East, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved, (viii) when was funding disbursed; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Vancouver East that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Vancouver East by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii)

program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved, (v) when was the funding disbursed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2231—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the government's consultations that occurred in development of the new national anti-racism strategy: (a) how many took place; (b) when did they take place; (c) where did they take place; (d) what are the details of the participants, including (i) name, (ii) occupation, (iii) dates of the meetings they attended, (iv) from which province or territory that the group or individual originated, (v) whether the group or individual was invited or petitioned to appear; (e) what was the total cost incurred by the government to hold these consultations; (f) when did the consultations begin; and (g) what is the scheduled date of the final consultation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2232—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to international adoption since 2013: (a) from what countries are the children coming; (b) how many children are coming from each country, broken down by year; (c) how many children were accepted and how many were rejected, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin, (iii) province or territory of destination; (d) which of the countries of origin practise Sharia Law; (e) how many countries of origin have an Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada office; (f) from what countries does Canada currently have a moratorium on international adoptions and how long have they been in place; (g) what is the average processing time for an international adoption, broken down by (i) year, (ii) country of origin, (iii) province or territory of destination; (h) since 2013, what is the yearly breakdown of the number of international adoptions in Canada; (i) how many applications are currently waiting to be processed, broken down by (i) country of origin, (ii) province or territory of destination; (j) which other departments oversee international adoption; and (k) how many staff of the departments in (j) have been assigned specifically to processing international adoption applications?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2233—Mrs. Carol Hughes:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2234—Ms. Georgina Jolibois:

With regards to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 57: (a) broken down by department, what initiatives and programs has the government started since January 2015 to provide education to federal public servants on the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations; (b) which of those programs and initiatives in (a) use skill-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism; (c) broken down by department, how much funding has been provided to initiate the programs in (a); and (d) broken down by department, what measures of success has the government put in place to determine the effectiveness of the programs and initiatives in (a)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2235—Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to delays in processing Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) requests by the Cabinet Confidentiality Legal Unit in the Privy Council Office (PCO) as a result of members of the unit being assigned to work on an ongoing court case rather than on ATIP requests: (a) how many PCO employees in the Cabinet Confidentiality Legal Unit have been assigned to work on documents related to an ongoing court case; (b) what is the average additional delay this is causing to ATIP requests; (c) did the PCO get permission from the Access to Information Commissioner prior to taking this action, which is causing massive delays in ATIP processing and, if not, why; (d) on what date did PCO notify the Access to Information Commissioner that it was causing this delay; (e) how many employees in the Cabinet Confidentiality Legal Unit are left working full time on ATIP requests and have not been tasked in full or in part to working on the ongoing court case; (f) what is the current estimated backlog of ATIP requests waiting to be processed by the Cabinet Confidentiality Legal Unit for (i) requests received by PCO, (ii) requests received by other departments and agencies consulting PCO; and (g) for the requests in (f), what is the (i) shortest, (ii) median, (iii) longest total processing time, from receipt of the ATIP request to the documents being delivered to the requestor?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2236—Mr. Robert Sopuck:

With regard to the development of the new Canada Food Guide: what scientific evidence formed the basis of the decisions to (i) advise Canadians to choose protein foods that come from plants more often, (ii) advise Canadians, in recommending they choose protein foods that come from plants more often, that the benefits of eating more plant-based proteins are greater than the overall benefits of consuming more of the unique nutrient packages found in meat-based proteins, even though the latter include nutrients not as easily accessed from many plant-based proteins such as iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and essential amino acids, (iii) advise Canadians to eat only lower-fat dairy products despite evidence that some products that are higher in fats can provide health benefits?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2237—Mr. Deepak Ohrai:

With regard to the processing times for refugees applications from outside of Canada: (a) broken down by country, what is the current processing time for applicants under the program for (i) government-assisted refugees, (ii) privately sponsored refugees; (b) what are the historical processing times for the applicants in (a), broken down by month since January 1, 2016; (c) what is the current number of privately sponsored refugee applications which are awaiting processing; and (d) how many of the applications in (c) are for Yazidi applicants?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2238—Mr. Matthew Dubé:

With regard to federal spending in the current constituency of Beloeil—Chambly and the former constituency of Chambly—Borduas, for the fiscal years of 2011-12 to 2018-19: what are the details of all federal government expenditures, including grants, contributions, loans and investments to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2239—Mr. Matthew Dubé:

With regard to federal spending in the current constituency of Beloeil—Chambly and the former constituency of Chambly—Borduas, for the calendar years of 2011 to 2018: what are the details of all federal government expenditures, including grants, contributions, loans and investments to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2240—Mr. David Sweet:

With regard to the government's announced intention to merge the Oshawa Port Authority and the Hamilton Port Authority: (a) what is the rationale for merging the organizations; (b) what are the details of any stakeholder consultations conducted on the proposed merger, including (i) date, (ii) organizations consulted, (iii) government participants; (c) which organizations consulted were in favour of the merger and which organizations were against the merger; and (d) did the government conduct an economic analysis related to merging the organizations and, if so, what are the details of the analysis, including the results?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2241—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) fleet, the Offshore Oceanographic Science Vessels and the procurement of new ships through the National Shipbuilding Strategy: (a) since the program's inception in 2010, what are the total expenditures, broken down by fiscal year, related to (i) program costs, (ii) major Crown project office costs, (iii) the technical services subcontracts; (b) for each item in (a), what are the details of each expenditure, including (i) amount, (ii) details of the project, (iii) name of organization, company or department providing the service, (iv) date of expenditure; (v) was a competitive bid undertaken to provide the service; (c) what steps has the government taken to ensure that the program remains on time and on budget as promised in previous reports to Parliament, since the inception of the National Shipbuilding Strategy to present; (d) if steps have been taken, what are the details of such steps, broken down by individual steps; (e) since 2014, has the CCG, the Department of Finance, Public Services and Procurement Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Department of National Defence or the Privy Council Office received any warnings or concerns related to (i) the state of the CCG fleet, (ii) risks related to operating older vessels in the fleet, (iii) risks related to harm that could be caused in the marine environment, (iv) costs of each ship as part of the CCG fleet, (v) mitigation steps being considered to address operating an older and riskier fleet; (f) regarding all concerns or warnings raised in (e), (i) who were the top three officials in the department who received the warnings and concerns, (ii) on what date were the warnings received, (iii) what was the nature or summary of the warnings or concerns; (g) for all concerns or warnings raised in (e), (i) did the Minister receive the warnings and concerns, (ii) on what date did the Minister receive the warnings, (iii) what was the Ministers' response; (h) since 2015, have the departments identified in (e) prepared briefing notes based on risks identified and related to the CCG fleet, including, but not limited to, (i) vessel life, (ii) rust and water damage, (iii) budget to replace, (iv) schedule to replace, (v) operational risk, (vi) other challenges at Seaspan's Vancouver Shipyards, specifically related to the Offshore Science Fisheries Vessels, the Offshore Oceanographic Vessels, the Joint Support Ships and the Polar Class Icebreaker; and (i) for each briefing note, email or related document in (h), what are the details, including (i) date prepared, (ii) authors, (iii) recipients, (iv) findings, (v) actions taken to address each concern raised, (vi) date which the said actions were taken, (vii) internal filing or reference number for each document?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2242—Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle:

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Windsor—Tecumseh, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Windsor—Tecumseh that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Windsor—Tecumseh by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply*Question No. 2243—**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, between April 2016 and January 2019: (a) what applications for funding have been received, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application, (v) amount applied for, (vi) whether funding has been approved or not, (vii) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; (b) what funds, grants, loans, and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie that did not require a direct application from the applicant, including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie by organizations tasked with sub-granting government funds (e.g. Community Foundations of Canada), including for each the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they received funding, (iv) total amount of funding, if funding was approved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2244—**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (a) how much federal funding has been spent in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie on housing over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (b) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (c) how much federal funding has been invested in cooperative housing in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (d) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (e) how many physical housing units were owned by the government in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (f) how many physical housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; and (g) what government buildings and lands have been identified in the riding of Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2245—**Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to housing investments and housing assets held by the government: (a) how much federal funding has been spent in the riding of North Island—Powell River on housing over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (b) how much federal funding is scheduled to be spent on housing in the riding of North Island—Powell River over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (c) how much federal funding has been invested in cooperative housing in the riding of North Island—Powell River over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (d) how much federal funding is scheduled to be invested in cooperative housing in the riding of North Island—Powell River over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; (e) how many physical housing units were owned by the government in the riding of North Island—Powell River over the period of 1995 to 2017, broken down by year; (f) how many physical housing units owned by the government are scheduled to be constructed in the riding of North Island—Powell River over the period of 2015 to 2019, broken down by year; and (g) what government buildings and lands have been identified in the riding of North Island—Powell River as surplus and available for affordable housing developments?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—JUSTICE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada has four and a half minutes left.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I was stating prior to question period, the Government of Canada has had no inappropriate involvement in the case in question. Allegations of political interference in the prosecution of the case are absolutely false and without merit.

As the Public Prosecution Service of Canada has made clear, “The PPSC has not sought or received instructions in respect of the prosecution of Mr. Norman from the Privy Council Office or any other government department or body.”

The director of public prosecutions, Ms. Kathleen Roussel, went on to say that “I am confident that our prosecutors, in this and every other case, exercise their discretion independently and free from any political or partisan consideration.”

[Translation]

The *sub judice* convention exists to protect the parties in a case awaiting or undergoing trial and persons who stand to be affected by the outcome of a judicial inquiry. It is a critical element in maintaining the fairness of the criminal trial process before the court. To protect and maintain fairness, the rule restrains parliamentarians on statements made about ongoing legal proceedings, especially criminal cases, before the courts. For this very important reason, members of Parliament are expected to refrain from discussing matters that are before the courts.

In respect of Vice-Admiral Norman’s legal expenses, the government’s policy on legal assistance and indemnification establishes the framework to provide legal assistance and indemnification to Crown servants and matters greatly for the protection of the Crown’s interest, the fair treatment of its employees and the effective management of an organization. Where an individual makes an application to the government for assistance and indemnification under the policy, the application receives fair consideration and a decision is made, as was the case in respect of the vice-admiral.

For the rest of my time, I would like to once again address an issue that has come up several times over the course of this debate.

● (1225)

[English]

That concerns the issue of *sub judice*. We have heard this repeated over and over again in the context of this debate and in today’s question period.

Business of Supply

There is no better encapsulation of this than the one provided by the Hon. Peter Van Loan in the House on May 11, 2015, when he was a member of the previous government. Quoting *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* at page 504, he said:

...Members are expected to refrain from discussing matters before the courts, or under judicial consideration, in order to protect those involved in a court action or judicial inquiry against any undue influence through the discussion of the case. ... It is deemed improper for a Member, in posing a question, or a Minister, in responding to a question, to comment on any matter that is [before the courts].

The position to invoke the *sub judice* rule was taken by the Harper government on no fewer than 300 different occasions in this country. It is important to note this, because people need to understand that what is being asked here is that we directly intervene.

I will end by noting that I find it highly ironic that the opposition, through this motion, is demanding that our government politically interfere in an independent prosecution that is currently before the Ontario Court of Justice.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, spring has sprung. Although it snowed in Alberta this week once again, farmers are getting ready to plant their canola seeds in the ground.

This has been a bit of an interesting spring. Farmers typically plan these kinds of things several years in advance, but this year they are wondering what they should do. They wonder whether they should plant canola or a different plant this year, given that China, the biggest consumer of the canola we produce, has closed its borders to our canola.

The thing we are dealing with here is the rule of law. In Canada, we are dealing with the government's insistence on inserting itself into the judicial system in the SNC-Lavalin case. We see how that has impacts that go all the way to China, such as with the Huawei case, even though the government has said that it deals with the rule of law in Canada and it does not interfere. We also see impacts now regarding the Mark Norman case, as we suspect that there is some interference there.

What does the minister have to say about the fact that China has closed its border to our canola seed?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we go to the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, I want to remind members that it all has to come together and address the motion.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, if you can indulge me very briefly, I am very happy that the canola question is being raised in the context of debate. Surely we could have more questions about such important and pressing economic and agricultural matters in this country.

The connection the member opposite was trying to make is that rule-of-law concerns permeate many aspects of what is taking place in this country right now with respect to Vice-Admiral Norman's trial. In response to that question, I will reiterate that the rule of law remains intact. The evidence before the justice committee from the former attorney general in the SNC-Lavalin matter underscores this, and the statements of the director of public prosecutions reiterate it.

To reiterate, I quote again that "The PPSC has not sought or received instructions in respect of the prosecution of Mr. Norman from the Privy Council Office or any other government department or body."

That statement affirms the fact that the rule of law remains intact, which has implications around the country in various matters, including the canola matter just raised by the member opposite.

● (1230)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, with respect to Vice-Admiral Norman, I am concerned about whether there is interference at cabinet and about the role of Scott Brison and the role of the Irvings. I believe these are all serious issues and are just as serious as the leaks regarding the Supreme Court appointments and the smear effort against the member for Vancouver Granville. We have to respect the rule of law.

I am also very concerned about the motion being debated today. As difficult and terrible as the treatment of Vice-Admiral Norman is, I believe this should be dealt with by a parliamentary inquiry on these issues. When we have an ongoing court case, it is very dangerous for Parliament to attempt to try that case in real time because of the danger of interfering with the *sub judice* convention and thereby interfering in an ongoing court case.

If we are going to accept the rule of law, we cannot just take it on when it is beneficial to the opposition or beneficial to the government. We have to be seen in Parliament as standing up for it, whether on the SNC issue or this issue.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, the member opposite has a lot of experience in this chamber, and I absolutely underscore the comments he just made.

Obviously, we come from different parties, and sometimes we have very strong positions and opposition to one another on different matters, but on this point, he is absolutely correct. The very terms of this motion call for, in subsection (b), to "provide Vice-Admiral Mark Norman's defence with all records relating to his prosecution, including but not limited to", then it lists a long list of items.

That very issue is before the Ontario Court of Justice right now. What the opposition is doing in presenting this motion is effectively trying to subvert and leap over the ongoing judicial process and dictate to a sitting judge in this country what should and should not be disclosed. It is for the judge to make that determination based on the submissions and evidence he receives and for the judge to make that determination based on the privilege that is sought to be applied. That is what the rule of law means in this country. That is what must be respected by all parliamentarians in this chamber.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would not want Canadians to be confused by what my hon. colleague is saying. Ultimately, we in the opposition are asking the government to comply with the direction a judge has already made to deliver court-ordered documents.

The government is politically interfering by ensuring that those documents do not get to that judge and those lawyers to be heard in that trial for a fair defence.

The second-most important thing is that the government has ensured that all of its witnesses have taxpayer-funded, high-powered lawyers. This is another form of political interference, because while Vice-Admiral Norman has the right to a taxpayer-paid lawyer, the government has denied him that right, therefore jeopardizing his ability to mount a defence.

Do not be confused. This has nothing to do with interfering in the trial. It has to do with the government politically interfering to ensure that we cannot have a fair trial.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, those are a couple of important points, and I think they bear some explanation. I am glad the member opposite raised them.

The issue before the court right now, as I have mentioned, is a third-party records application. It is for the evidence and documents to support, in a preliminary manner, what will eventually become the evidentiary base in the trial. That is what is before the court right now. That is what the court is deliberating upon.

The member opposite raised the issue of government compliance with court orders. This government, any government in Canada, thankfully, complies with court orders. That is what the rule of law means. We continue to do so.

Second, on the issue of the government's participation in the process, justice department lawyers are participating equally and at the same time as Vice-Admiral Norman's lawyers.

On the issue of the payment of legal expenses, what the member opposite should know is that we are applying a Treasury Board policy that has been in place since, I believe, 2006. That policy was put in place by the previous government. It is a good policy, and it is a policy that addresses the needs of people who find themselves facing litigation. That is the policy that is being applied and is being enforced in this case.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, first of all I am always happy to point out that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions does a wonderful job speaking French. I thank him and congratulate him for that.

However, just because he is speaking French does not mean that I necessarily agree with what he has to say. Earlier he said that there had been absolutely no political interference in the Vice-Admiral Norman case. This is exactly what is in question here, so let us leave it up to the courts to decide.

We want the truth to come out, and we want individuals to have a right to a full and complete defence. This means that the government must provide all of the evidence and must give a man of this rank access to a defence paid for by the state, as has been the case in some 20 cases in our country's history.

Why is the government refusing this perfectly legitimate request?

• (1235)

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague from across the House. I will try to continue speaking in French, the language of Molière.

Business of Supply

We agree that this is a criminal proceeding; that is clear. This is the first step in the legal process. It is the preliminary proceeding. We are at the preliminary hearing stage dealing with the documents that will serve as the basis or foundation of the evidence, that the judge will review in this particular case. We are not at the point where the judge decides whether the defendant is guilty or not, but this is nevertheless an important step.

I want to emphasize as part of this debate that we are participating in the process. We are following all the rules and guidelines set out by the judge. What we are not doing and what we would never do is intervene or interfere politically, which would undermine the independence of our judicial system and our Attorney General.

[*English*]

What we will not do is interfere in a political manner to disturb the independence of the public prosecution process.

What I would return to is the exact statement made by Madam Kathleen Roussel, the head of the Public Prosecutions Service, who said, “[we have] not sought or received instructions in respect of the prosecution of Mr. Norman from the Privy Council Office or any other government department or body.”

That is a good thing, and that is exactly what we want to remain the case in this case.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I am here to speak to the Conservative motion. The issue before us is a serious one. The last several weeks in Parliament have been ones of great conflict and serious debate about the ethical behaviour Canadians want to see in the people who represent them. In the midst of this drama and concern, the lives of the people of this country continue, and the struggles they face at times make it very hard to have time to consider these serious issues brought before the justice committee, the House and all Canadians.

In reflection of these realities, I would like to take a personal moment to recognize the fact that life happens outside of politics. I was sadly reminded of this on February 11 of this year, when my brother, Darius William Mould, died suddenly and unexpectedly of a massive heart attack. In the few weeks after his passing, the busy life I live, filled with working in my riding and making sure that its voice is heard loud and clear here in this place, was paused.

Yesterday my brother would have been 39. It was a sad day for my family, and I want to recognize them, as I believe we should all recognize the people who love us, as we ask them repeatedly to let us come to this place and do the important work we do here, rather than be with them through these difficult times.

My brother was a hard-working man. He has left a huge hole in the world with his passing, and it is very hard to adjust. My brother was a powerful singer, a man who turned friends into family, and the middle brother of five siblings. I am very grateful to my many constituents who sent cards and messages of condolence during that time.

Business of Supply

It is moments like this when we remember that we are people. We do not know how much time we or our loved ones have in this world, and the people who we love are so very precious. As we are here doing the work that we must, I hope we all remember to appreciate those people who mean so very much to us. I have been sadly reminded of this with the loss of a very beloved brother.

Today we are here to speak about the case of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. I am personally deeply concerned about the allegations that have been put forward about the Prime Minister and the Privy Council Office influencing federal prosecutors in the case of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. While these allegations are unproven, it is troubling, given the alleged interference by the Prime Minister's Office in the case of SNC-Lavalin.

All of us here have been told that one politician is much like another. The level of cynicism in the world and in Canada concerns me greatly. The people of this country want us to focus on the issues that matter most to them.

The Government of Canada has the important duty of spending tax dollars in a responsible way, looking at opportunities that will benefit the people of this country, closing the gaps that leave too many far behind and having the institutions of Canada operate without any political interference.

When I speak with my constituents, they want to feel that their political representatives have their backs. I find that even disagreement is okay if I take the time to learn and understand.

In my riding of North Island—Powell River, many are worried about the environment. Today in Campbell River, local high schools are planning to strike to protest the lack of action on climate change. It is very important to listen to young people. I remember the late elder Ellen White telling me that young people had the energy and were quicker to see injustice. This makes their voices extremely valuable. We saw that in the House recently. I certainly hope that all of us here remember to listen to them.

I also hear from veterans who feel betrayed after many years of that experience with the former government. It is very exasperating for them to have to continue to fight for very basic supports.

Affordability continues to be a significant issue. In my riding, people are not sure how they will afford the most basic of necessities, such as the cost of housing and medication, as they continue to increase. Waiting for these issues to be addressed creates cynicism, and when the reality the former minister of justice brought to our attention is replayed in the media, Canadians are, reasonably, concerned.

● (1240)

Now we look at the motion before us today and we have heard that the lawyers of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman say that the Crown prosecutors have been politically influenced by lawyers from the Privy Council Office.

With the questions that have arisen from actions of the former Privy Council clerk and the Prime Minister, this is something that Canadians deserve to know more about. This is exactly why the New Democrats continue to insist on a public inquiry.

In an article in the Huffington Post regarding Vice-Admiral Norman, on February 11, it said:

Vice-Admiral Mark Norman's legal team has raised questions about the independence of federal prosecutors after the Crown and lawyers from the department that supports [the] Prime Minister...spoke several times last year about "trial strategy".

For the people across Canada who are working several jobs to make enough to pay for a loved one's medication or a person who is at risk of homelessness, this sounds like something so far from their everyday life and they have asked me why should they worry about this.

It is important because it speaks to the strength of our systems. It speaks to the ability of the Prime Minister's Office to politically interfere in the systems in which we have to put our faith. Vice-Admiral Norman's lawyers have made it clear that the Privy Council Office supports the Prime Minister and executes what the Prime Minister's Office wants. Therefore, Crown attorneys should not have discussed trial strategy with them as it is seen as influence on a Crown attorney that should be independent of politics.

Even the consideration that Crown attorneys are being put in the position of any political interference is something we should all be disturbed by. I will state here again that allegations have not been proven in court. I respect that. The fact that the allegations include the Prime Minister's Office inappropriately bypassing the office of the Attorney General and dealing directly with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada are ones that in the current political climate only worry me more.

Today we have a motion before us that asks:

That, given the recent allegations of political interference against the Prime Minister and given that Canadians reject the Prime Minister's excuse for his actions as simply routine government business, the House call on the government to show respect for the rule of law and immediately

These are requests that must be considered carefully. I hope the members on the government side are considering heavily what has happened in this case and in the case we have most recently heard so much about.

I have the deep honour of representing the people of the former attorney general, the We Wai Kai community of the Laich-kwil-tach speaking people. The member for Vancouver Granville has often introduced me as her mother's member of Parliament, something I continue to be very honoured to be.

It was in a community I represent that the former minister of justice came for a traditional ceremony in the big house, a ceremony of honouring. As one elder said to me, "We are wrapping her up in our love."

In this place there is not, sadly, a deep understanding of the words that the former minister spoke to the justice committee, when she said quote:

...I was taught to always be careful what you say because you cannot take it back. I was taught to always hold true to your core values and principles, and to act with integrity. These are the teachings of my parents, my grandparents and my community. I come from a long line of matriarchs, and I'm a truth-teller in accordance with the laws and traditions of our big house. This is who I am, and this is who I always will be.

Business of Supply

I believe that these words will be written in history books. When I heard them spoken, I was moved. I could feel what she was telling people, something that so few were able to understand. For me, this was a statement of fact, of identity, identity in a sense of she knows where she comes from, the matriarchs who have worked hard for several generations to put her in the place she is today. That is a dedication and a responsibility that one does not take lightly because those generations are watching and they gave up so much.

● (1245)

I believe the member has fulfilled this responsibly, and I am very proud to know her and her family. To trust the institutions that oversee the justice of our country, Canadians need to know that political interference is something that those institutions are simply not exposed to. We all know, because of the people we hear from in our ridings and those responding to different articles across this country, that right now and right here in this country there is significant doubt.

In January of 2017, Vice-Admiral Norman was suspended from his role as the military's second in command. Last March, he was charged with one count of breach of trust. It has been alleged that he was leaking government secrets on a shipbuilding deal. This is a serious charge. In the 41st Parliament, New Democrats supported the national shipbuilding strategy. In fact, all parties supported it.

I recently spent the day in Port McNeill, a beautiful community in my riding, with the Canadian navy. Commodore Topsyee brought several ships to visit the community and do the important work of outreach. It is moments like these when it is easy to be proud of the Canadian Armed Forces. The trip I had on an Orca patrol craft was amazing. This experience showed me the high level of skill and dedication those men and women in uniform have. I was very impressed.

Although I did not speak to anyone about the shipbuilding strategy on that trip, I was reminded of a comment I heard from someone about the continuous reduction of support we have seen in this country to the military over the last 20 years. As a constituent said to me, the military has become very efficient, and at some point, it is impossible to become more so. At some point, it will just need more resources to get the job done.

I hope that in the context of this conversation we are all mindful of this, especially as we face the realities of climate change. Our Canadian Armed Forces are some of the most concerned about these issues, and I have heard those worries expressed at the national defence committee. It is also Canadian Armed Forces members who are trained to protect us. In the case of natural disasters, it is important they have the proper resources to do the jobs they are asked to do.

Returning to the vice-admiral, he has denied all wrongdoing and his trial is scheduled to begin in August. When we look at this case before us, there are serious conversations that we need to be having, and Canadians are having those conversations across this country. The Liberals are currently facing two allegations of influencing Crown attorneys, who are supposed to be independent of political interference. If these allegations are proven true, it calls into question the impartiality of the Crown attorneys and will throw the office of

the Public Prosecution Service of Canada into disrepute. This is certainly not something I want to see happen.

When I look at the history of our Canadian Armed Forces, we have seen so many things go awry. Successive governments have continued to play politics with the lives of the men and women who serve our country. When it comes to the current government, it promised a new fighter jet, one with an open and fair competition. It has failed to deliver this. Instead, the competition is delayed until after the next election, and the plan that has been discussed is to buy used Australian jets.

As the member representing 19 Wing Comox, this is something that I have had to share my alarm about, and I have done so by communicating that concern to the Minister of National Defence. I see the hard-working people in the 19 Wing in my riding, and I appreciate their dedication to the community and the amazing work they do. It is very important that at no point we put them at risk by not getting the proper equipment they so desperately need. Again, it is unfortunate that they have had to wait so long.

During the last election, the Liberals promised a return to peacekeeping for Canada, but so far they have considerably under-delivered on that promise. The RCN needs ships now to meet domestic security requirements and international obligations. Any delay or changes to the national shipbuilding strategy would result in lost jobs for Canadians and a further capability gap in the navy. That is something that we just cannot have.

● (1250)

I remember the Canadian navy officials coming to speak to the defence committee and talking about the challenges they were facing in providing safety and support to the Arctic region of this country. Unfortunately, some people think that the ice is gone. Tourists are going up with boats that are simply not going to do the job and they are put in very risky and unsafe situations. We need to make sure that the Royal Canadian Navy has the resources that it needs to address these issues.

Sadly, this has been the reality of our armed forces for far too long, doing their very best with the limited resources they have. The last Conservative government led to 10 years of drastic cutbacks across all of the Canadian Armed Forces. The fact is that the former government failed to get the procurement under way for all branches of the Canadian Armed Forces and the current capability gaps are a direct result of a decade of inaction that has been followed up by another over three years of inaction. This is disappointing in this country. Like so many Canadians, the Canadian Armed Forces are just being asked to wait, to just continue to wait a bit longer. That is simply not okay. I will continue to do my work to change this.

I will be supporting this motion. In the face of the many allegations, there is a sense of disquiet in Canada. Releasing information to the lawyers of Vice-Admiral Norman is appropriate. Having the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office keep out of any so-called trial strategy is, again, only appropriate.

Business of Supply

What Canadians want to see is transparency. They want to see accountability. They want to believe that the institutions here in this place are sacred and held sacred, and not full of political interference. Sometimes it is just time to accept what is before us, and I certainly hope that the government will do so.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her impressive speech on this very important matter. I had the privilege of working with her on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Her commitment to our Canadian Forces as well as the rule of law is something we should all aspire to in this place.

The important conversation that we are having today is about Admiral Norman's trial and whether he is in a position to get a fair trial based on the obstruction, obfuscation and interference that the current government is putting forward. I wonder if the member could take it to perhaps a broader perspective and give us some thoughts on whether we as Canadians should be concerned about the strong negative message that this type of behaviour from the government sends to anyone who would stand up for the rule of law, to anyone who would put his or her neck out to do what is right for God, Queen and country, because if they do, they could find themselves destroyed. Could the member perhaps comment on that?

• (1255)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I too appreciated our time together working for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. I was very honoured when she represented our country so well in multiple events, and I was actually very sad to see such a dedicated person no longer be able to keep her position and her role within the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Today, and across Canada, we are seeing a lot of people who are expressing a lot of frustration and a lot of cynicism. I talked earlier in my speech about the realities of so many people across our country who are dealing with things as basic as trying to find a place to live or trying to find appropriate child care and being worried about whether they are going to be able to keep their job if they cannot find that child care. These things are really important to people: finding a home, having enough money to afford their medication.

This kind of behaviour is seen as what is important in this place, when we see brave women stand up on principle and say how they feel. It is very apparent, based on testimony that we have heard from the former attorney general, that there were multiple opportunities for a better conversation and a more honest conversation, which simply did not happen. Therefore, Canadians are struggling. Like I said, they want to know that their institutions are fair. They want to know that political interference is not part of those institutions. When they are just dealing every day with getting by, making ends meet, they want to know that if something occurs and they are dealing with those institutions, they will not be in a place of discomfort because of that political interference.

I hope that this is part of our discussion today. I hope that there is a reflection by all of us in this House about what our work is, to make sure that we are as honest and open as we possibly can be and that when accusations come forward we make sure to make those things public. That is exactly why we ask for a public inquiry.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on my colleague's thoughts in regard to the current status of the Canadian Forces, their equipment and capacity-related issues. Ultimately, it has been pointed out that we have a very active court process that is taking place. Given that there is an active court process, maybe we could be spending more time talking about what my colleague referenced, which is ensuring that we have capacity in the many different areas of our Canadian Forces. It goes beyond ships to our air force and having the proper military equipment for the Canadian Forces.

This is something I think the chamber could have more debate and dialogue on, because it is supporting our women and men of the forces. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that particular issue.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I think it is also important to remind that side that they are actually in the role of government. One of the things that has been really frustrating for many people in the Canadian Armed Forces is the aspect of waiting.

We know that the process is long. When we look at the procurement process for our armed forces, it is a long process. If there is a change in government, it is suddenly changed and the resources they need are stepped back several more years. Unfortunately, what we have seen from this government is a lot of talk and not a lot of action. Our armed forces are waiting for that.

I will talk again about 19 Wing Comox, which I am so proud to represent. The work they do, especially in areas like search and rescue and the training they do internationally, is incredibly important. It saves lives. I know that several of the members from my riding have been to Maui doing hard, incredible work. They need the resources to do that safely. Waiting and waiting for discussions to happen and then for actions to not be followed through is very distressing.

• (1300)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is situated very close to CFB Esquimalt, Canada's Pacific naval base. I know that a lot of my residents work there directly. We also have a lot of retired veterans.

I would like to thank my colleague for her advocacy, because the navy has some very deep structural needs. I am glad that she mentioned that in her speech.

I also want to thank her for putting this motion within the context of what has happened with SNC-Lavalin and the former attorney general. The Liberals say that nothing went wrong and that the system held. However, they are completely oblivious to the irony that the system held precisely because the member for Vancouver Granville, in her former role as attorney general, actually resisted the inappropriate pressure. That is why the system held.

A lot of people are starting to become really interested in this principle of prosecutorial independence, what it means, and how fundamentally important it is to our system and our democracy that prosecutors, when discharging their role, must be completely free of all political considerations and of any consideration of the national economic interest. They must be able to look at the facts before them and use their constitutional responsibility to make the appropriate decisions on how to proceed. It might involve a deferred prosecution agreement, or it might involve going to a criminal trial. However, the prosecutor alone must make that case.

My question to my hon. colleague is this. If SNC-Lavalin had been successful in lobbying for a DPA, how dangerous a precedent would that have established for this country? If the awesome corporate lobbying power displayed by SNC-Lavalin had been able to achieve a DPA, what might that have provided as a slippery slope, going forward, in our country?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I think the story many Canadians are left with is this strong impression that the former justice minister stood in the face of a large machine, under a lot of pressure, and did her best to ensure that machine understood the risk it was taking by putting immense pressure on her position. When we look at what that means, it is sort of a David and Goliath story about the bravery of someone to stand and not be moved.

I have heard multiple constituents talk about their concerns on both sides. I have obviously heard very clearly from some people that they are very upset there was a recording of a phone call.

What I have said to my constituents is this. I do not know what I would have done in that situation. I do not know what I would have done when I had a very big, powerful machine focused at me. I do not know how I would have responded. All I can say is that I trust that this felt like the best opportunity for her to ensure that voice was heard.

What do we do when we want to ensure our government is doing the right thing? Those very institutions are the foundations of our country. They must not have political interference. If they do, that means all bets are off and we are suddenly in a situation where the most vulnerable Canadians will be even more vulnerable and the most powerful few will have way too much power for any place in the country.

Therefore, I am proud to stand with the former attorney general. When we stand up and speak to power, we create a safer place for everyone.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, for 22 years I served in the Canadian Armed Forces, as did the Minister of National Defence and the hon. member for Orléans, who was my boss when I was a unit commander. The hon. member for Orléans was a lieutenant general who commanded the Canadian army.

From 2003 to 2007, I was the commanding officer of an infantry unit. One of my duties was to attend brigade meetings and make decisions. Some decisions were not always easy to make since soldiers depend on the government. Soldiers are not public servants, but the government is their boss.

Business of Supply

Every time we were confronted with situations, we had to rely on government decisions. We had to find a way to tell our troops that we did not know what the government was going to decide. We did not know whether we would get the equipment we asked for. We had to await the minister's decision. This type of information has a major impact on soldiers at all levels. My colleague from Orléans knows that full well since he was a commanding officer and worked on reforming the army. He is aware of the challenges. In fact, I read his report.

What happened with Vice-Admiral Norman, who was commander of the Royal Canadian Navy, is important. We need to understand how senior officers like Vice-Admiral Norman and other Canadian Armed Forces commanders think. The rank and file and their commanding officers have to carry out the government's orders and ensure that operations run smoothly and troops have what they need to do their work.

The Canadian Armed Forces were an international laughingstock when they were deployed to Afghanistan in 2003. They showed up in green fatigues. They looked like little fir trees on the Afghan plains. It was ridiculous. That kind of thing is tough for a soldier. Soldiers are proud to don the uniform and defend their country, and they are ready for deployment anywhere in the world, but they should not be laughed at.

Vice-Admiral Norman had to grapple with a serious problem facing the Royal Canadian Navy. In 2014, both of its supply ships, the *Preserver* and the *Protecteur* were retired. The former's hull was bad and the latter burned. The Royal Canadian Navy was left with no supply ships, which is totally unacceptable.

The government's short-term solution was to rent a ship from Chile, but the Davie shipyard in Quebec City and Federal Fleet Services, a company that works with Davie, had another solution to propose. They offered to turn a civilian ship into a supply ship capable of participating in military operations. I am, of course, referring to the famous *Asterix*.

However, the government had already awarded contracts to Seaspan Shipyards in Vancouver. These contracts were awarded six or seven years ago, yet Seaspan has only just started building the ships.

It was therefore urgent to procure efficient equipment at an affordable price. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars, but that is reasonable for a ship of this size. Federal Fleet Services submitted a proposal to the Conservative government to build the *Asterix*. In July 2015, Mr. Harper, the then prime minister, and his national defence minister Mr. Kenney accepted Davie's proposal. It was the best option for addressing the operational problem.

During my time in politics, I have come to realize that people do not understand what "operational" actually means. It is a concept that not everyone can wrap their heads around.

In July 2015, the Conservative government signed an agreement with Federal Fleet Services and Davie. After the election on October 19, 2015, the government changed, and that is when the problems started.

Business of Supply

The *Asterix*, which was a civilian ship, was already at the Davie shipyard, but everyone was waiting. In November 2015, we learned that the Prime Minister's Office wanted to cancel the contract.

• (1305)

Ministers were exerting pressure on cabinet and saying that the contract should be cancelled. They did not want the Davie shipyard to have the contract. Today, in answer to my questions, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility said that they were proud to give a contract and jobs to the Davie shipyard, but that is completely false. First, we are the ones that gave Davie that contract, and second, and most importantly, the Liberals did everything they could to cancel it. We found out that they were plotting to do just that. We put pressure on them and talked about the file publicly. Finally, because of pressure from the media and the opposition, this government reluctantly signed the contract at the last minute on the last possible day, November 20, 2015. The Liberals were really not happy about it.

A few months later, someone had to be punished for saying that this government had plotted to cancel a contract that was extremely important for the operational needs of the Royal Canadian Navy, a contract for the construction of an effective supply ship to support our forces and those of other countries, since we are part of an international coalition.

That took someone who worked for these people in the Royal Canadian Navy and who made that their career. It took someone who does not think like a politician, as I said at the outset. This person is interested in operational capabilities. Some politicians do not understand the word "operational". When troops are deployed on operations at sea, especially in the navy, proper equipment is needed. We simply cannot cut corners.

Basically, the government could no longer cancel the contract, because everyone, including the Conservatives, Canadians in general and the media, knew what it was trying to do. It was looking for someone to blame. In the SNC-Lavalin affair, the Liberals bragged about putting inappropriate pressure on the former attorney general in order to protect jobs in Montreal. They kept repeating this PR line, saying they were willing to do anything to protect jobs, even if it was illegal or crooked.

In 2015, the Conservatives asked the Quebec shipyard, which had recovered from bankruptcy and had 1,000 workers ready to work, to build an extraordinary ship called the *Asterix*. However, the current government was being pressured by some other friends in the industry. I will not name those friends today, but everyone knows who I am talking about. Just to make them happy, the government tried to cancel this contract, therefore eliminating 1,000 jobs at Davie shipyard in Lévis.

The Liberals were pressured by their buddies and had to exert pressure for SNC-Lavalin, invoking job losses, even though the president and CEO of SNC-Lavalin himself said that jobs were not in jeopardy. The Liberals, however, could not care less about a wonderful big shipyard in the Quebec City area that employs 1,000 people. That was not important to them. They wanted to cancel the contract to make their buddies happy. The Liberal government could

not care less about the jobs, and they could not care less about the operational needs of the Royal Canadian Navy.

When the members opposite go on and on with the rhetoric about being there for our men and women in uniform, I can say, now that I have been here for three and a half years, that that it is a bunch of baloney.

I believe that the minister really wanted to do a good job. I believe that, in the beginning, as a former member of the military, he had good intentions when he undertook the defence policy review. However, there are people in his entourage who thanked him for his fine document and then shelved it so that nothing more would be said about it. That is what is happening now.

• (1310)

We see it with every military procurement contract. Nothing is moving, everything is at a standstill. The supposed investments are non-existent. They have done everything they could to delay the fighter jet contract because they do not want it to go ahead. That is ridiculous.

I believe that Vice-Admiral Norman is paying a high price in terms of his reputation. He is a military officer with a career spanning over 30 years who was commander of the Royal Canadian Navy. That is no small feat. He had even been promoted to the position of vice-chief of the defence staff. He was probably going to be the next chief of the defence staff, the man who could have led the Canadian Forces. However, the Liberals decided to throw him under the bus.

In conclusion, I am asking the government to be honest at least once in its mandate and provide all the documents requested by Admiral Norman's lawyers so that they can mount a proper defence. I am asking the government to stop playing dirty politics.

• (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 1:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Private Members' Business

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Monday, April 8, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would suggest that if you were to canvass the House you would find unanimous consent to call it 1:30 p.m. at this time so that we could begin Private Members' Business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FOREIGN LOBBYIST TRANSPARENCY ACT

The House resumed from January 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-278, An Act to amend the Lobbying Act (reporting obligations), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is such an honour to rise on such an important discussion as lobbying. With all the inappropriate lobbying done by SNC-Lavalin, I would like to think that my colleagues in the Conservative Party would come forward with a really strong bill to deal with the power of lobbyists, but this bill is about going after grassroots people who dare to oppose government policies.

If I read this bill as being something that was proposed in Saudi Arabia, I would not be all that surprised. The Conservatives are so angry about the right of ordinary citizens to talk to international organizations about fundamental issues like human rights and the environment, that if they oppose a government policy then all of their communication has to be registered.

I certainly remember when Stephen Harper was here and he attacked charities across Canada. There were attacks against Amnesty International. Saudi Arabia might attack Amnesty International, but why would Canada? Stephen Harper saw it as a threat.

One of the other charities the Conservatives went after was PEN. PEN, technically, is a very small charity, but it represents writers around the world who speak up for the right of dissent and imprisoned writers around the world. So powerful is the moral affect of PEN, the Conservatives lined up with their evening gowns and tuxedos to be at the PEN gala event while the Stephen Harper government was targeting it to try to shut it down.

What is this bill? This bill is specifically tailored to stop citizen engagement in taking on potential projects that could affect the environment. It is so specific that it says that lobbyists or any international organization, anybody doing environmental work, must identify "grass-roots communication", which is defined as appeals to organizations or the public that are intended to encourage recipients to "obstruct, delay or otherwise negatively affect" government policy. Welcome to Canada. There we have it.

If one attempts to involve and work with any international organization, to speak up on policies that the government does not approve of, one could be illegally covered under the Lobbying Act. The Lobbying Act, by the way, is supposed to cover people like Arthur Porter. Everyone remembers Arthur Porter, the international criminal who was involved in the SNC-Lavalin kickbacks. Stephen Harper appointed Arthur Porter to the top of the securities oversight committee because that is how powerful Arthur Porter was with Stephen Harper. Of course, Arthur Porter ended up in a Panamanian jail. He was good enough to go to jail and good enough to have all the secrets of the Canadian state. I would think that it is something we would involve in the Lobbying Act, but no, what Conservatives want to go after are grassroots people.

I came into politics by taking on massive environmentally threatening companies that were brought into Ontario by the Mike Harris government. We were rural people, farm families and indigenous communities, and everything that the Harris government did was to limit our ability to even talk about the health affects of detrimental projects in our region.

For example, a small company called TCI came into our region to do what it claimed was local recycling of PCB products in local mines and it seemed like a great idea. It talked about cleanup, because we have many old mills and many mines, and TCI said that it would do that. Then we found a very small article in a U.S. military paper that there was a ship called the *Wan He* that was carrying 90,000 kilograms of PCB-contaminated materials and it was headed to a facility run by this company called TCI.

TCI was an American company. I always wondered why it came up to Canada and it was that, under American law, it was illegal for the Americans to reimport all the damage of the PCBs that was caused by American bases in the Pacific. We began to ask if it was attempting to bring PCBs into Canada, because it did not have a licence for it. It did not have a licence from the Canadian government or from the Ontario government, but this ship was carrying 90,000 kilograms that were destined for Vancouver harbour.

Private Members' Business

● (1320)

We were a small rural region. What did we do? How did we deal with international PCB travel? We had to call the Basel Action Network, an international organization and, my God, Stephen Harper would have just railed about them. It is an international organization that ensures that countries respect the rule of law on PCB exports. What we have is the creation of sacrifice zones, where very wealthy companies or very wealthy countries identify poorer regions in which to dump waste. We counted on the Basel Action Network, which is out of Seattle.

We were also looking for anyone who could tell us about the effects of PCBs and how to stop these imports. Of course, Greenpeace had a long history of that. Now, Greenpeace is the devil incarnate to the Conservatives, but to our rural farmers, we called out to them. We worked internationally to stop the *Wan He*. It was denied access in Vancouver harbour by the longshoremen and by the agents of Greenpeace. Then they tried to move it into Seattle where the teamsters stopped it. Then they shipped it back to Guam. We were able to stop that toxic waste from coming into northern Ontario because of those connections we made.

Then of course it did not stop there. We dealt with the Mario Cortellucci gang and the Adams Mine dump. Mario is back. He is best buddies with Doug Ford. He is attempting to build a massive garbage dump, shutting down public consultations with farmers, first nations and the miners, who all stood together against that project. Then they tried to bring in what was called the Bennett toxic waste incinerator, to bring in toxic waste from Mexico and the United States.

They always tell rural Canadians, "My God, this is such a great project. We are going to bring waste from across North America and give you jobs." If it is such a great business opportunity, why did Bennett not set it up in Oakville where the company is centred? They did not set it up in Oakville, because, again, they are looking for sacrifice zones, the ability to target poor, rural, marginalized or indigenous communities with toxic waste.

We had to do a major crash course on the effects of these incinerators, which they called state-of-the-art thermal oxidizers. It was basically a burn can with a claptrap on top that spilled dioxins out. We did not know the effects of dioxins, and we had a massive dairy business region right beside this. If dioxin gets anywhere near milk, the dairy industry is done. We saw that happen in France and Belgium with these bad incinerators.

Who did we reach out to? We had to reach out to international experts like Dr. Neil Carman, who came up from Texas, and Dr. Paul Connett, who came up from the United States, who worked with our local organizations and local farmers. I remember meetings where local farm women sat down and went through the EA line by line and learned the bogus science of toxic waste incineration, and learned how to challenge the environmental assessment against very powerful companies, against a government that was committed to making this go through.

It was possible because we were able to work with international organizations. These international organizations and these grassroots people are the direct target of a bill that wants to criminalize dissent,

to make any efforts to stand up for the environment, any efforts to stop this kind of thing, whether it is toxic waste or the Trans Mountain pipeline going through indigenous territory, illegal, and to deny the rights of citizens to have public input.

That is what the Harper government did not get. That is why it never got a pipeline. To get a pipeline, there has to be social licence. The National Energy Board was little more than a bunch of hand puppets for the oil industry, and it limited public consultation again and again. Lo and behold, the courts ruled that this was a bogus process because there needs to be fair, open, public consultation: the bigger the risk, the bigger the obligation.

This bill to criminalize the rights of citizens to organize, to work with international organizations on bettering the plan, is fundamentally wrong and goes right to the rot that exists in the Conservative Party, which is to protect its big buddies and not to stand up for grassroots people.

● (1325)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-278, an act to amend the Lobbying Act, specifically with regard to reporting obligations.

Canadians have a right to know when foreign entities are trying to influence federally elected officials. The intent of this bill is to require the sources of any foreign funding received by lobbyists and grassroots organizations to be reported in the lobbyist registry to provide Canadians with greater transparency about who is actually lobbying their politicians.

This bill aims to make two changes to the current law.

The first amendment requires all corporations and organizations that lobby the government to disclose all funds received from foreign nationals, non-resident corporations and non-resident organizations. Lobbyists would then need to disclose the original foreign source of their funding, rather than hiding behind layers of shell companies or a chain of charities and foundations.

The second amendment expands the types of activities that lobbyists must report, specifically requiring reporting of any activities that appeal to the public directly or through mass media to try to persuade them to communicate directly with public office holders to influence their opinion. Reporting any grassroots communications—and I say "grassroots" loosely—funded by foreign actors that impacts the government's ability to consult the Canadian public on a specific course of action would allow the Canadian public to assess for themselves the motives of these actors.

The bill does not restrict or prohibit any groups from seeking foreign funding, nor does it restrict or prohibit their right to protest; it simply requires organizations that want to participate in our democracy to be honest and transparent. It provides transparency to Canadians and allows them to draw their own conclusions from that clarity.

Private Members' Business

My colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke should be commended not only on a well-thought-out and important bill that strengthens democracy in this country, but also on her patience. Nearly three years ago, the foreign lobbyist transparency act was introduced and received first reading. In that time, the Liberal government bought a \$4.5-billion pipeline nobody wanted to sell, and now we cannot even build it. The Liberal government killed energy east, a \$12-billion pipeline that would have brought economic prosperity to New Brunswick and other provinces right across the country. The government killed northern gateway, an \$8-billion project that would have seen Alberta oil get to lucrative markets in Asia to the benefit of all Canadians. The energy sector has lost \$100 billion in potential investment, which is equivalent to 4.5% of Canada's gross domestic product. Capital investment in the mining sector has fallen every year that the current government has been in power. The value of total mining projects planned and under construction from 2018 to 2028 has been reduced by 55% since 2014, from \$160 billion to \$72 billion.

We have seen Bill C-69, the no-more-pipelines bill, and Bill C-48, the anti-tanker bill—which does not stop tankers, just Canadian tankers—pass in this House.

The policies of the Liberal government have doomed the Canadian natural resources sector.

While this bill has floundered in the House, a lot of time has passed for lobbyists to influence the government's policy decisions. We must have robust lobbyist regulations in place so that Canadians can have a clear picture of who is attempting to influence whom.

However, when it comes to the manipulation of domestic policy by foreign entities, the picture is not so clear. A CBC report in mid-February analyzed more than 21,000 tweets from so-called “troll accounts” that had been deleted by Twitter and that had set their sights on Canada, including on the pipeline debate. The report found 245 accounts re-tweeting messages about the pipeline and circulating media articles and re-tweets from the accounts of anti-oil activists.

According to the report, the foreign accounts are suspected of being based in Russia, Iran and Venezuela. It should come as no surprise that these three countries produce large amounts of oil. Russia and Iran are second and third respectively in global oil exports.

• (1330)

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources was questioned by the media about this foreign attack on Canada's oil and gas sector, and he had this to say:

Its always concerning when you have people from outside of your country trying to influence the decision-making. There is a legitimate way of doing that, and that's through diplomacy and other venues and avenues.... Misinformation and information that is not based on facts is never healthy for any democratic process to take place.

I could not agree more, and while this incident might not be caught up in this legislation, it is a symptom of the cold. By having in place a stronger, healthier act governing lobbying activity in this country, we can inoculate ourselves better against all forms of foreign influence in our political decision-making process.

We are all aware of the work of Vivian Krause, who has been researching the oil sands for nearly a decade and believes that there

is a concerted push against Canadian oil, funded by U.S. interests, to keep Alberta oil chained to U.S. markets. Over the past 10 years, nearly \$90 million in foreign funding, according to Krause, has gone into this endeavour.

Whether one believes that American philanthropists are behind the scheme to keep Canadian oil in the ground, whether one believes it is American industrialists ensuring low prices by restricting access to international markets, or whether one believes the whole thing is just a conspiracy theory, the fact remains that the amendments in the bill will illuminate the matter and provide a clear picture for Canadians to judge for themselves what is really going on.

That is what this bill is all about. It is about giving power to Canadians to judge for themselves. Almost two-thirds of Canadians have identified oil and gas as one of the most critical economic sectors in the entire country. Sixty-nine per cent of Canadians say that the country will face a considerable or significant economic impact if no new oil pipelines are built. Fifty-two per cent support constructing both the Trans Mountain and the now cancelled energy east projects, while 19% oppose both.

Are these opinions influenced by subversives, pro- or anti-oil, or are they based on clear economic, scientific and environmental facts? There are divisions, for sure, and alternate opinions are important in the policy-making process, but it is Canadians' opinions that need to shape Canadian policy, not foreign entities with their own political and economic agendas.

Earlier in the debate, on January 31, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands asked if there was any concern, I believe her word was “disturbed,” that the Fraser Institute had received more foreign funding to defend pipelines than environmental groups had received from the U.S. to attack Canadian pipelines. Yes, everyone in the House should be concerned when anyone is receiving foreign funds to influence Canadian policy, but it is far more important, in fact it is our duty here in this place, to be influenced by the 69% of Canadians who are worried about the significant economic impact if no new oil pipelines are built or the 52% for and the 19% opposed to the construction of the Trans Mountain and energy east pipelines.

During the debate on Bill C-278, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra raised a concern that the lobbyist community might face an increased reporting burden and that any amendments must “respect the principles of the act, which seek to strike a balance between transparency and ensuring that the compliance burden imposed on lobbyists is reasonable and fair.” I believe, as do the vast majority of Canadians, it seems, that protecting our democracy from foreign influence might just be worth increasing the reporting burden for lobbyists.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-278, the foreign lobbyist transparency act, would achieve financial clarity and improved accountability through the public reporting of payments made by foreigners to lobbyists. This is a non-partisan piece of legislation that would support a healthy, transparent and accountable democracy for Canadians from coast to coast, and I look forward to it undergoing full scrutiny at committee, returning and passing in the House.

• (1335)

Ms. Linda Lapointe (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-278, an act to amend the Lobbying Act (reporting obligations).

The purpose of the Lobbying Act is to achieve a balance in maintaining the transparency of lobbying activities and ensuring free and open access to government. To that end, the Lobbying Act is based on four key principles.

First is that free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest.

Second is that lobbying public office holders is a legitimate activity.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Third, it is desirable that public office holders and the public be able to know who is engaged in lobbying activities.

Fourth, the system of registration of paid lobbyists should not impede free and open access to government.

I would like to take this opportunity to go over the main features of this legislation. The Lobbying Act requires anyone who lobbies federal public office holders to register with the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada.

[*English*]

All lobbyists are obligated under the act to report on lobbying activities, including communications with designated public office holders, on a monthly basis. This information is published on the Internet on the public registry maintained by the Commissioner of Lobbying.

The Lobbying Act identifies two types of lobbyists. A consultant lobbyist is an individual who, for payment, communicates with public office holders on behalf of any person or organization.

[*Translation*]

The Lobbying Act lists activities that are considered to be lobbying when carried out in return for payment. Generally speaking, they include communication with a public office holder in respect of the amendment of any act, regulation, policy or program of the federal government, the awarding of a financial benefit such as a grant or contribution, and, in some cases, the awarding of a government contract.

In addition, for a consultant lobbyist, arranging a meeting between a public office holder and any other person constitutes lobbying.

[*English*]

The commissioner has provided additional interpretation on what must be reported. In-house and consultant lobbyists must report all oral and arranged communications with designated public office holders relating to financial benefits, even when initiated by public officer holders. Likewise, consultant lobbyists must report oral and arranged communications with designated public office holders relating to a contract regardless of who initiated the communication.

[*Translation*]

For the purposes of the Lobbying Act, communications include oral, written and local communications. Examples of oral communication with a public office holder include organized meetings, telephone calls and informal verbal communications. Letters and emails are examples of written communication with a public office holder. Lobbyists' appeals to the public through letter-writing and email campaigns, advertising, websites or social media are examples of local communication.

[*English*]

Currently, under the act, grassroots communication means appealing to the public directly or through mass media to persuade them to communicate directly with a public office holder to influence their opinion.

Some types of communication do not require registration. These include, for example, inquiries to obtain publicly available information and general inquiries about the terms and conditions of programs and application processes.

Registration is also not required for participation in government-initiated activities such as consultations, hearings, round tables or like-minded activities where transparency is comparable to that of a parliamentary committee, with participants, proceedings and decisions readily made public. The same goes for the preparation and presentation of briefings to parliamentary committees.

The bill before us today would require organizations and corporations that lobby the government to report on funds received from foreign nationals, non-resident corporations and non-resident organizations. This bill would also expand the types of activities that lobbyists must report as grass roots communications.

The proposed bill will expand the definition of grassroots communications to require lobbyists to also disclose if they are encouraging the public or organizations to undertake activities that could indirectly influence public office holders.

When we consider the bill against the principles of the act, which have sought to strike a balance between transparency and ensuring that the compliance burden imposed on lobbyists is reasonable and fair, important concerns become apparent.

Private Members' Business

For example, lobbyists can face steep penalties for violating the Lobbying Act. Filing a false return can result in a \$200,000 fine or two years in jail. As such, it is crucial that the reporting obligations under the act remain clear so that lobbyists are able to comply with the legislation. We believe the proposed bill does the exact opposite.

In addition, the bill's amendments would increase the compliance burden on lobbyists and the enforcement burden on the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying. The limited impact of the bill in terms of transparency must be weighed against these potential costs.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

The Lobbying Act makes it possible for Canadians to know who is talking to public office holders and whose interests they represent. I am open to improving the act, but I think that, in this case, the cons of the proposed amendments outweigh the potential pros. That is why I encourage all members to vote against this bill.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to bring us home regarding the debate on Bill C-278 and the important public policy discussion started by our colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

I find it quite interesting to listen to NDP members and the Liberals in this debate. The Liberal speaker who preceded me suggested that everything was fine regarding lobbyist registries and that the regulations did not need to be updated. This is after two months of scandal related to intensive lobbying efforts by SNC-Lavalin to change the course of justice in Canada, which has led us to the largest political scandal in Canadian history.

In fact, the OECD has a group looking into the SNC-Lavalin affair. The OECD is an international body that has never investigated Canada before for rule-of-law concerns. This all stems from lobbying that commenced four months into the government's mandate, which led to the insertion of the remediation agreement provisions into the budget implementation act, an omnibus bill.

That lobbying was all above board and done correctly, but to dismiss concerns about the need to ensure our lobbying registries are the most current and effective in the world is a false argument at a time when we have been consumed by a scandal that, at its centre, was the government advancing the interests of a private corporation.

When my friend from Timmins—James Bay stood up, he had a piece of paper in his hand that looked like the bill, but he clearly had not read it. He went on a rant about a lot of his old nuggets from the Harper government days and talked about grassroots efforts. We know that money coming from foreign sources, unions or elsewhere does not represent truly grassroots efforts. At the very minimum, we should expect full transparency disclosure of any monies used to influence public discourse, public debate and the review of legislation in Canada.

Why do I say this? Why is Bill C-278 critical at this time in our history?

Today, at the G7 meeting in Europe, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, “interference is very likely and we think there have probably already been efforts by malign foreign actors to disrupt our

democracy.” This was what the Liberal minister said today at the G7 meeting about foreign influence in elections and democracies. This is why my colleague brought forward Bill C-278.

The last Liberal speaker should get on the phone to correct her minister. Perhaps she could say to her House leader that the Liberals should support what the Conservatives are doing to ensure we prevent interference.

Bill C-278 does two discrete and very easy-to-understand things. It would require lobbyists to disclose the source of their funding as well as disclose the intention of those foreign funds and lobbying efforts to influence proceedings in Canada, be they regulatory proceedings on pipeline review or legislative proceedings on the legalization of cannabis. Last I checked, most Liberal operatives seem to working that industry these days. All that will do is bring disclosure.

What is wrong with a little sunshine? We have this new chamber that allows in a bit of diffused light. That diffused and opaque transparency is what we get from the Prime Minister.

I find this the height of hypocrisy. As a private member, the member for Papineau was not really known for doing much in this place before he became Prime Minister, and I respect the role he has. His one private member's bill from the last session, about which maybe my Liberal friends who were elected in 2015 do not know, was Bill C-613, and I always thought it was ironic that it used the Ottawa area code. That bill was meant to update access to information laws.

• (1350)

When he was in opposition, he talked about having transparency by default. As Prime Minister, he has done the opposite. In fact, he has not lived up to one shred of the intention of Bill C-613.

The last information commissioner chastised the Prime Minister for his conduct with respect to access to information. We have just today debated code words being used within the government to delay disclosure in the Norman affair. We have heard that ATIs asked for by La Presse will not be available from the government on the SNC matter until after the election. There has been zero transparency from the Liberal government, this Prime Minister and the small group of people around him.

Private Members' Business

Let me say why this sunshine is needed and particularly why I am concerned that we seem to be fine with not tracking foreign money in our country. I would invite members, including Liberal and NDP members, to watch Wendy Mesley's interview with Vivian Krause. Because in the U.S. there is disclosure of tax records, of foundation reports to the IRS, of unions' disclosures of money spent on the legislative process, she is able to analyze U.S. documentation to track the spending of money in Canada.

In fact, it should very much concern Canadians, including in my province, where in the great recession when the auto industry was at the edge, the resource industry in western Canada led to more jobs than the auto sector did in Ontario. People in my community of Durham should be concerned that the Rockefeller Foundation, the Tides Foundation and the Hewlett trust were part of a Corporate Ethics International campaign to, in their words, "landlock Canadian oil".

In fact, they were putting and syphoning money into Canada, into activist groups, into activities to actually stop regulatory proceedings with respect to resource development and getting those products to market. As a result, last year alone our national interests received \$15 billion less than the world price for oil because of a deflated price that has hurt Alberta immensely. That is less tax revenue that we can spend at the provincial and federal levels on things that matter to Canadians. I think people should know if those projects are being delayed, cancelled or influenced by foreign money.

Therefore, what is wrong with a little disclosure, particularly from a Prime Minister who said transparency should be the default setting in government? Today we hear from the Liberals that the regulatory process is in order and the bill is not needed, yet in Europe, the minister is saying there is likely interference going on now with respect to our parliamentary democracy and our election this fall.

Bill C-278 is intended to address that. Let us at least get it to committee so we can talk about this situation. If we go on social media, on Twitter, what we see would probably keep most of us up at night because of the terrible environment. The last Clerk of the Privy Council called it a vomitorium.

The influence of paid operatives on Twitter may have influenced other elections before ours. Should we not know if some of those foreign influences are paying organizations on the ground here in Canada to impact Canadians and our decisions on our resources, on our projects, on our infrastructure, on whether indigenous Canadians will be able to benefit from resources on traditional lands. It is impacting our indigenous peoples and our democracy.

Bill C-278 is a modest proposal. I know the grassroots members of the NDP will survive without foreign money. They should support the bill. If the Liberal members listened to their own minister today, talking to G7 leaders about interference by foreign actors in political elections, then the Liberals should also support the bill. That is why I want to thank the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke for bringing it to Parliament.

• (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has five minutes for her right of reply.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour, on behalf of the people of the riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, who work hard, play by the rules and pay their taxes, to conclude the debate on Bill C-278.

Bill C-278, which would amend the Lobbying Act, would require lobbyists to disclose whether they are funded by a foreign national, a non-resident corporation or a non-resident organization and whether they use, or expect to use, grassroots communication to seek to persuade organizations or members of the public to take measures to obstruct, delay or otherwise negatively affect any process that requires the Government of Canada to consult with the public before embarking on a specific course of action, in an attempt to place pressure on a public office holder to endorse a particular option.

It is ironic that on this day, Parliament is debating allegations of political interference by the Prime Minister in relation to the trial of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. Bill C-278 seeks to strengthen our democratic institutions from foreign influence. The controversial figure in those corruption allegations is Scott Brison, whose resignation from the Liberal cabinet is the excuse used to somehow justify how this fake feminist Prime Minister mistreats principled female members of Parliament.

I mentioned the controversial ex-cabinet minister in the context of Bill C-76, which she sponsored in the House. Bill C-76 is a regressive piece of legislation that very controversially removes the Commissioner of Canada Elections from the independent office of public prosecution. The independence of that office has proven its worth in the SNC-Lavalin corruption scandal. What Bill C-76 also does is implement a section on foreign influence and the threat that influence poses for the democratic process in Canada. Most controversially, what government legislation Bill C-76 does not do is address the same threat between elections. Bill C-278 would fill that legislative oversight.

Bill C-278 would require transparency from foreign-funding sources. Canadians have a right to know who is trying to influence their opinions. Bill C-76 brings in a new provision that would prohibit the distribution of material intended to mislead the public as to its source. While Bill C-76 claims to be closing the loophole that has allowed foreign entities to spend money in Canadian elections, the government is allowing the biggest loophole to remain open by not identifying who these same foreign entities they will now prohibit are and what they are spending to influence Canadians between elections.

Andrew Coyne, of the National Post, wrote, which I think is worth repeating:

But let's examine those much-hyped measures to "protect and defend" Canadian democracy. For example, we are told the bill will prohibit foreign entities "from spending any money to influence elections." Wonderful, you say: how much were they allowed to spend until now? Er, \$500.

But then, the real scandal, to borrow Michael Kinsley's phrase, is not what is illegal—direct foreign spending on Canadian elections—but what's legal: foreign money, by the millions, funneled through Canadian intermediaries, which pass it on to domestic advocacy groups to spend.

For the upcoming election, the government has stated that it is running on the carbon tax and man-made global warming. The government owes it to Canadians to provide information to Canadians about the environment in an unbiased way. That means free from foreign money.

In Canada's most recent reports to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Environment and Climate Change Canada listed over 300 existing federal programs and other measures designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Natural Resources Canada website recently listed an additional 280 programs and measures implemented by provincial and territorial governments. That is a large sum of taxpayers' dollars being spent and has caused the Canadian deficit to skyrocket.

The announced goal of Canadian climate policy is to reduce national emissions by 30% from 2010 levels by 2030 and then to go on reducing them to perhaps 50% of 2010 levels by 2050. That would mean a massive and costly transformation of the Canadian economy and a sharp reduction in transportation use and resource industry activity, with devastating consequences for consumers in provinces like Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Emissions reductions of that magnitude will not be achieved at low or moderate carbon tax levels. The taxes would need to be high enough to shut down entire industries.

• (1400)

Let us have an honest discussion about this policy, free from foreign money looking to cash in on Canadian climate programs.

Private Members' Business

In closing, I thank all members who participated in this debate and I look forward to a more detailed examination of Bill C-278 at committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say ye.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, a recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 10, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

[*English*]

It being 2:02 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:02 p.m.)

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