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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of *O Canada*, led by the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

STEEL AND ALUMINUM TARIFFS

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois agrees with the Minister of Foreign Affairs: the steel and aluminum tariffs are illegal, unfair and absurd. That said, it is not enough for the minister to express her discontent. She needs to take concrete action to pressure the Americans, who are holding 15,000 Quebec workers hostage.

Claiming that Quebec steel and aluminum are a threat to U.S. national security is an insult to our intelligence.

The Bloc Québécois would like to see the ratification of the new NAFTA halted entirely until the tariffs are lifted. We should not ratify agreements with countries that do not keep their word or honour their signature.

If the Liberals give in to Donald Trump's bullying and agree to ratify the agreement, they can be sure that we will block them every step of the way.

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JOËL GUIMOND

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to celebrate the leadership skills of Joël Guimond, a young man who attends Étoile de l'Acadie school in my community, Rogersville.

At the beginning of this school year, Joël went to meet his teacher and chat about summer vacation. He noticed that his teacher greeted each student using their first name. The next day, Joël got to school five minutes before the first bus to join his teacher. Ever since, Joël has been at school before the first bus, remaining at his post until the last bus arrives. He greets every student with a hello or a high five and a friendly smile.

All the students appreciate Joël's simple daily gesture, and they all greet him in return. What Joël and his teacher are doing helps promote staff and student wellness.

Their wonderful initiative resulted in a daily routine that makes their school a welcoming and friendly place where life is good. Rogersville prides itself on being a welcoming community, and Joël and his teacher have truly taken that value to heart.

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[*English*]

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand here today in recognition of the Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Campaign. I am wearing the daffodil pin in memory and in honour of these people. We also pinned many MPs on their way into the chamber today, and I would like to thank them all.

I ask MPs to take a moment to reflect on the people who have passed, those who are living with cancer and the loved ones who support them all on the journey.

We want people who are on this difficult journey to know that they are not alone. The Canadian Cancer Society offers excellent programs and services that help people with cancer when they are unsure or anxious. I would like to thank the Canadian Cancer Society and its volunteers for their amazing work helping those touched by cancer.

By supporting the daffodil campaign, we can help people with cancer see life beyond their diagnosis. When we donate, we are helping these people live their lives more fully.

I encourage MPs to wear the daffodil proudly and to support the daffodil campaign and Cancer Society volunteers in their own communities.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month I had the honour of meeting an extraordinary constituent, nine-year-old Greta Fleet, to discuss her concerns about the plight of the Attawapiskat First Nation. Greta came to my office with a heartfelt letter asking our government to do everything possible for Attawapiskat and its people. She had a petition calling for action that has obtained more than 28,000 signatures, and counting. I made a promise to bring Greta's message to Ottawa.

There is no relationship more important than the one with indigenous peoples. Embracing reconciliation is a responsibility of all Canadians. Our government has achieved a great deal in this regard but remains committed to doing even more, and there is much more work to do indeed.

It is with the unwavering advocacy of young people like Greta in mind that we remain focused on moving forward with needed changes that address injustices in our country.

I will not forget meeting Greta. She personifies reconciliation in this country, and I thank her. She should keep being who she is; she is better because of it.

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INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to recognize two organizations in my riding celebrating a combined 70 years of service to the people of Saskatoon.

For 20 years, the Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre has been demonstrating the power of theatre and artistic expression, rooted in indigenous culture, to change lives and build community. Its Circle of Voices program inspires future generations to find their artistic voices by producing original theatre, and in doing so, building the next generation of indigenous storytellers, artists and leaders.

The Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc., or MACSI, is celebrating its 50th year providing addictions and recovery services to the people of Saskatchewan. Rooted in the Métis heritage and guided by traditional indigenous teachings, MACSI helps all who need support and care to heal from addictions.

I congratulate MACSI and the Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre for their decades of service and for building a great community for everyone.

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NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENISTS WEEK

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight Oral Health Month. This week, April 6 to 12, is National Dental Hygienists Week. This week focuses on oral health for total health and how proper care of our teeth, gums and mouth can lead to better physical and mental well-being. Recognizing the importance of good oral health is important for the health of all Canadians.

In Canada, we have nearly 30,000 dental hygienists who provide an array of services to ensure that Canadians receive proper dental care. Many Canadians, especially seniors, benefit significantly from the work of dental hygienists. Whether it is teeth cleaning and polishing, taking X-rays or assisting in the care of one's dentures, dental hygienists play a critical role.

I want to thank the nearly 30,000 dental hygienists across the country who are supporting Canadians and helping them lead healthier and happier lives.

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● (1410)

PARA SNOWBOARD CHAMPION

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize para athlete Alex Massie, from Barrie.

In 2011, Massie's leg was amputated, a tragedy he is turning into triumph. Massie has represented Canada for five years as a competitor on the World Cup circuit and as a member of the national para snowboard team, but Sport Canada has been repealing his funding, while Massie has been shattering the competition. With support from his family, he has fought through his fears of lost funding. In fact, this past week, in Sweden, Massie won a pair of gold medals at the World Cup, winning top in the World Para Snowboard Championships, and was awarded two crystal globes. These victories follow a first place win at the World Para Snowboard World Cup in Big White, British Columbia.

The funding this amazing man relies on is in jeopardy. This is a young man who has done his country and his city proud. Canada should be championing him while he wins championships for Canada.

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KOSOVO

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, Canada and Kosovo celebrate multiple anniversaries together. As we have just celebrated the 70th anniversary of NATO, it is worth remembering that 20 years ago, we started the most successful humanitarian intervention of NATO, in which Canada had a crucial role among our other allies, to liberate and stop the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. It was Canadian foreign policy based in human security, and it paved the way for the responsibility to protect. Twenty years ago, we opened the doors and airlifted 7,000 Kosovo-Albanian refugees. Today they are an integral part of our Canadian society.

On April 7, we celebrated a decade of diplomatic relations with Kosovo. As chair of the Canada-Kosovo Parliamentary Friendship Group, I would like to extend my best wishes to our Kosovar friends and commend the embassy of Kosovo for its dynamic efforts to strengthen our diplomatic relations.

DAUGHTERS OF THE VOTE

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 5, 1917, women's suffrage was won in British Columbia. One century later, Equal Voice started its Daughters of the Vote initiative to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's full participation in federal politics.

We extended a warm welcome to Bella Aung, who represented my riding of Burnaby North—Seymour as this year's delegate to Daughters of the Vote. Born in Myanmar and a student at Simon Fraser University, Bella is committed to the decolonization of academia. As a master's student, her research is focused on the electoral representation of minority women in Canada, the resettlement of newcomers in our community and women's rights movements around the globe.

We have come a long way since suffrage in 1917, but we still have a long way to go. Bella is an inspiration to women and girls everywhere, and we need more people like her to join us in this House.

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CANOLA

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers are sick and tired of the government's weak leadership when it comes to the Canada-China canola crisis. Forty-three thousand farmers across Canada seed 12.3 million acres of canola each year, which has a $26.7-million economic impact, and the canola industry employs 250,000 Canadians. When it comes to food safety, Canada has the best quality control system in the world, with CFIA monitoring as well as a strong regulatory process. We know that the allegations from China against Canada's canola are both false and baseless.

After holding canola all winter, farmers' bins are full. They must sell the canola to free up bin space, yet because of this crisis, the price per bushel is falling drastically, causing thousands of dollars in losses and uncertainty about which crop to seed.

Our farmers deserve action, and above all, strong leadership from their government. The Liberals' dithering and lack of leadership has consequences. If they refuse to step up, then as a government, they should step down.

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● (1415)

HOUSING

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, five years ago this week I made the decision to run for a seat in the House of Commons. At the time, I was a Toronto city councillor and the issue I campaigned on to get here was housing. I promised voters that if they sent me to Ottawa I would make sure the federal government delivered a national housing strategy, and I would make sure that strategy included more resources to fight homelessness. It would build more housing. It would protect rent subsidies and most importantly it would repair public housing.

I am proud to say that our government has delivered, and for the residents of Toronto community housing, these investments are historic. Last week, our government invested $1.3 billion to revitalize public housing in Toronto, which will protect, repair and reopen thousands of units in Toronto.

More importantly, for the families and children in my city, life will be better because, as we build affordable housing, we will also be creating jobs, making the neighbourhood energy efficient and making sure homes are more accessible.

The national housing strategy is real. It is helping real people with real investments. I am proud to be—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VERBE DIVIN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN GRANBY

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we are pleased to welcome students from Granby's Verbe Divin Secondary School to Parliament Hill. They are on a school trip to the nation's capital to learn more about Canada's system of governance

I am proud of these young people from the riding of Shefford for their curiosity and desire to learn more about our democratic institutions. We must foster the attitudes and skills needed for civic engagement because today's students will be tomorrow's leaders.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of their teacher, Louise Cherrier, who organized this visit to Parliament. I thank Madame Cherrier for encouraging our young people to take an interest in politics.

In closing, I wish the students of Verbe Divin Secondary School in Granby a very pleasant stay in Ottawa full of wonderful new experiences.

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[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PINK

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I stand in this House on the International Day of Pink, a day we come together to end all forms of bullying. It is a day we come together against bullying, harassment, hate, violence, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, colonialism and anti-Semitism.

We live in a world that can provide many vehicles for people to bully and we cannot ignore this growing trend. Instead, we can be pink shirt ambassadors.

Pink Shirt Day started when David Shepherd and Travis Price, two grade 12 students, decided they would make a difference. They saw a grade nine student who was wearing a pink shirt being bullied. The boy was called a homosexual for wearing pink and was threatened with being beaten up. Instead, David and Travis stood up for this young man by wearing pink shirts and having many others join them at their school in Nova Scotia.

We have to remember that anyone can bully and anyone can be victimized by bullying, but together we can stop it.

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CANCER

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the Canadian Cancer Society's daffodil campaign. Since the late 1940s, the Canadian Cancer Society has been funding research. Today, the organization has grown to the largest national charitable funder of research and accounts for more than a third of the country's overall charitable investment in cancer research. The charity also offers programs and services that help people with cancer and their families when they are unsure or anxious. I would like to recognize all the wonderful volunteers at the Canadian Cancer Society who raise funds to support research.

My thoughts are with so many Canadians, too many Canadians, who live with this disease every day, as well as their families and loved ones. By supporting the daffodil campaign, we can help people with cancer see life beyond their diagnosis. When we donate, we are helping these people live their lives more fully. Therefore, I encourage everyone to wear their daffodil pins with pride this month.

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ANTI-BULLYING

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today in a show of support for anti-bullying day I have joined many who are wearing pink, but I wish to respectfully suggest wearing pink is just not enough. As elected representatives, we can and must do more.

Yesterday, I was informed of hateful social media posts intended to demean and bully many of the young Edmontonians who participated in the recent Daughters of the Vote program. I now learn many more delegates are suffering similar levels of harassment.

Appallingly, some posts criticized the spending of tax dollars to send Muslim, indigenous and black delegates to Ottawa. These posts were, frankly, vicious and racist. Some were attacked simply because they dared to call for greater action to address Islamophobia and racism. It was suggested these young women could simply delete their pictures and bios from their Facebook pages to make themselves less visible. This is wrong.

We must demand deeper action against this much wider group spewing abuse through social media. We should all congratulate these young Canadians who continue to bravely speak truth to power.

● (1420)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to show how out of touch they are with the struggles of average Canadians. Earlier this week, they proudly gave $12 million to Loblaws. That is the same company that is owned by one of the richest families in Canada, the same company that earned $3 billion in revenue last year alone and the same company caught inflating the prices of bread in the ultimate act of corporate greed.

It was $12 million for new refrigeration units that are more environmentally sound, but I personally know of several not-for-profit groups and charities in my community and many other communities across Canada that would be better served by that $12 million.

Under the Liberal government, many small business owners are struggling to make ends meet. Instead of helping by reducing the tax rate, the government is ignoring their concerns. When we have a Conservative government, we will work to make life more affordable for all Canadians instead of giving taxpayer dollars to millionaires.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PINK

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I see my neighbours pushed to the margins of society because they do not fit the mould, I know it is incumbent upon me to stand up against bullying. Today marks the International Day of Pink, a day against homophobia, transphobia and all forms of bullying.

This occasion began after two high school students from Nova Scotia, David Shepherd and Travis Price, saw a gay student wearing a pink shirt and being bullied in school. They intervened and a few days later wore pink shirts themselves to show their solidarity.

It is 2019 and countries around the world are still passing laws that allow punishment of homosexuality by stoning. Nightclubs are no longer a safe place to dance with a loved one. I do not need to look any further than my own community of New Glasgow, where Scott Jones was tragically attacked simply for being gay.

There is no place in our society for hatred against people based on the colour of their skin, their country of origin, the god they pray to or the person they love. Hating people for things that they cannot change is the mark of intolerance, and refusing to acknowledge that diversity of humanity is what makes life interesting is a sign of ignorance.

Let us take a stand against bullying because, in the end, we are responsible not only for our actions but the times we saw an injustice and chose to stand silently by.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is still threatening to sue me over a statement that I made on March 29. I stand by every single word of that statement. In fact, I just repeated it moments ago outside the chamber. He claims I will face consequences for exposing his potentially illegal interference in a criminal trial. However, the only consequence seems to be that the Prime Minister will be forced to finally tell the truth.

When will I see him in court?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are doubling down on misleading Canadians. It shows that they are still following Stephen Harper's playbook.

We put the member on notice because he and his party have a history of making false and defamatory statements. That is what he did in December against the Minister of Innovation. He was forced to swallow his false words and retract his statements. We will not stand by while he continues to mislead Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister asked his lawyers to send me a letter threatening me with a lawsuit if I did not retract the statement I made on March 29. Not only will I not retract it, but I stand by every single word of that statement. I repeated it outside the chamber.

When will I see him in court to discuss his corruption scandal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to mislead Canadians.

This shows that the Conservatives are still following Stephen Harper's playbook. We put him on notice because he and his party have a history of making false and defamatory statements. That is what he did, and he will have to withdraw his statements because that is what happened in December, when he was forced to swallow his false words and retract his statements against the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

We will not stand by while he continues to mislead Canadians.

● (1425)

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister seems to be missing an important fact here. It is that I am not withdrawing my remarks. In fact, I am standing by them and I repeated them outside of the House of Commons. Once again, if the Prime Minister is so sure of his case, will he commence court proceedings so that Canadians can finally hear the truth about this scandal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives continue to mislead Canadians, and Canadians deserve better.

On Monday, the Conservative leader refused to denounce white supremacists in this House. On Tuesday, a Conservative senator said, "I would find it disturbing to believe that there is a politician in this country that believes that white supremacy is a threat to our way of life in Canada". When will the Conservative leader finally denounce white supremacists by name, and will he denounce comments from a member of his own caucus?

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are typical Liberal smear tactics. They know that I have always 100% denounced white supremacy and racism and anyone who promotes those hateful ideologies. The Prime Minister also knows that the senator withdrew and clarified his remarks and that I continue to denounce those types of messages. This is what is disgusting about this. The Liberals are using the very real threat of hatred and racism in this country to cover up their corruption scandal.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Whitby will come to order, please.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we seem to have hit a nerve in the way the Conservatives are misleading Canadians on intolerance. Let us try them on climate.

Today, we learned the Conservatives are hiding, from their own constituents, tax benefits that would give Canadians hundreds of dollars. Conservatives want to take hundreds of dollars away from families in New Brunswick, in Ontario, in Manitoba, in Saskatchewan. Indeed, their only plan seems to be to mislead Canadians about our plan to fight climate change. That is even more unacceptable. They continue to mislead Canadians.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only thing a Conservative government will take away from Canadians is their obligation to pay his carbon tax, and that will come to an end this October.

Canadians finally want to see the Prime Minister testify under oath. They finally want to see documents presented to court in an environment that his members of Parliament cannot control.

Once again, I have stood by everything I have said. When will the Prime Minister finally start the lawsuit?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, in his very first words in that last intervention, the Leader of the Opposition emphasized that the first thing he would do if he gained power was to make pollution free again. We know, and Canadians know, that climate change is real, and yet it has been 346 days since the Leader of the Opposition promised a climate plan and has not shown anything. He has no plan for the environment, no plan for the economy. All he does is mislead Canadians.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are silencing committees with Harper-like efficiency. They just shut down the ethics committee again, and the justice committee is under a cone of silence.

Yesterday, the OECD's anti-bribery unit wrote the NDP and said that it would welcome our input on this matter. It is saying that in the next meeting in June, it is going to put Canada's actions on corporate corruption on the table.

With no comprehensive investigation on its way and our reputation at stake, why will the Prime Minister not launch a public inquiry?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to explain for the member opposite that parliamentary committees are masters of their own decisions. That is a principle in this Parliament that all parties should take very seriously.

We thank the justice committee for its work, for the 10 hours of testimony it heard. Indeed, we were pleased to give an unprecedented waiver to allow individuals to fully share their perspectives on the matter at hand.

As for the work the Ethics Commissioner does, on this side of the House we have full confidence in our officers of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the world is watching. In response to our letter, the OECD anti-bribery unit reiterated its call to follow what is happening in Canada closely, and it will pay even more attention now that the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has finished its study.

The Prime Minister must do the right thing. Will he reassure the OECD and, most importantly, Canadians and launch a public inquiry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to get the truth on this matter, which is why we made an unprecedented move, waiving solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence and giving the former justice minister permission to speak openly about this matter in committee.

We have confidence in the parliamentary committees, which make their own decisions and set their own procedures, and we have confidence in the Ethics Commissioner, who is conducting his investigation.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is out of touch with the reality of Canadians. In order to turn the page on the scandal of interference favouring his rich friends, the Liberal government gave $12 million to another rich corporation. That is $12 million to a corporation that makes billions of dollars in profit and refuses to pay its workers a decent wage.

Rather than giving money to the wealthy, why does the Prime Minister not give that $12 million to those who need it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House know that it takes more than just nice words in the House of Commons to fight climate change. It takes action. It takes partnerships. That is why we are working with the provinces. That is why we are working with consumers and citizens, to help them with these changes we are now making.

That is why we are working with the private sector, which has a role to play in combatting climate change and helping Canada be more effective in its ongoing fight against this threat.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Loblaws made hundreds of millions of dollars selling groceries to Canadians. Its owner is worth over $10 billion. I am pretty sure Loblaws can afford to buy a few energy-efficient fridges.

The Liberals are so focused on pleasing big corporations that they have handed over a $12-million cheque to a massively profitable company. Why did they not ask Loblaws to buy its own fridges and instead spend that $12 million on small businesses and Canadians who actually need the help?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the problem with the NDP. Those members like to climb up on their high horses and make big speeches about protecting the environment, when this government actually moves forward on doing that. That means partnerships with the provinces. It means investing in Canadians and in renewable technologies. Yes, it means partnering with the private sector so we are moving forward on more efficient technologies and indeed fighting climate change.

We understand that everyone needs to do his or her part to fight against climate change. That is something neither the Conservatives nor, apparently, the NDP understand.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to talk about politicians who have led Canadians in error. The Prime Minister said, when the allegations were first printed in The Globe and Mail, that they were completely false. We now know that is not true.

Is the Prime Minister aware that if he says something that he knows not to be true in a court proceeding that he will be guilty of perjury?

● (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have seen the Conservatives time and time again mislead Canadians, and they are smarting that we actually called them out on it. We put them on notice because, indeed, they continue, particularly in this election year, to spread falsehoods to Canadians.

Just recently, the Conservatives actually sent a householder to Canadians that was not telling them about our climate action incentive, which returns hundreds of dollars to Canadians that they have to claim through their taxes. They have no plan on the environment. All they do is mislead Canadians about our plan to—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister now wants to talk about falsehoods. The Prime Minister said, in response to The Globe and Mail story breaking the SNC-Lavalin corruption scandal, that no one, neither himself nor anyone in his office, put pressure on the former attorney general to interfere in this case. We now know that is completely false.

Once again, is the Prime Minister aware that if he says something that he knows not to be true in a court case that he will be guilty of perjury?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think what Canadians are remarking upon is the fact that the Conservatives do not want to talk about anything that actually matters to Canadians in their day-to-day lives. Canadians are worried about the threat of climate change and the impact on their kids. The Conservatives have no plan, are misleading people about our plan, do not want to talk about it and try to change the subject.

What is worse is that the Conservatives have no plan for the economy. They continue to want to lower taxes on the wealthiest Canadians, when what we know is to invest in the middle class is to grow the economy. They have no plan on the economy and no plan on the environment.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would just remind the Prime Minister that it was his idea to bring these allegations to court. I am just waiting for him to tell me on what day I should show up, because I will be there.

Now, if he wants to talk about falsehoods, he told Canadians, looked them in the eyes and said that the former attorney general or anyone else never came to him to raise concerns about being pressured to interfere in this case. We now know that is false.

Is the Prime Minister aware that if he said that in a court case at this point that he would be guilty of perjury?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the opposition leader is doubling down on his false and misleading statements. We put him on notice because he has a history, and his party has a history, of misleading Canadians. That is exactly what they did when he had to withdraw and retract misleading statements he made about the Minister of Innovation just a few months ago.

We know that the Conservatives' way is to try to mislead Canadians as much as they possibly can. We need to call them out on that because falsehoods have no place in an election campaign.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that he has put me on notice, hoping that I will withdraw my statements. I will not. I repeated them again outside. Therefore, I am putting him on notice that I am looking forward to the day that he sets for this court case to proceed.

When it comes to falsehoods, the Prime Minister has stated that his excuse for interfering in this court case was jobs. We now know that is not true either.

Once again, is the Prime Minister aware of the criminal penalties for committing perjury in a court case?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand the member opposite's frustration. His economic plan is in shambles after 10 years of the lowest growth rate, since the Great Depression, under Stephen Harper.

We turned that around with an approach that invests in Canadians. Canadians have created over 900,000 new jobs over the past three years. We have seen the lowest unemployment in 40 years.

Our plan is working. We will always fight for jobs and we will never apologize for fighting for them.

● (1440)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants to talk about false statements. The Prime Minister said that his motivation for interfering in this criminal court case was that he was afraid that SNC-Lavalin would move its headquarters out of the country. The head of SNC-Lavalin has said that this is completely false.

Once again, is the Prime Minister aware of the criminal penalties that he would face if he said that falsehood under oath in a court of law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we are unequivocal about standing up for jobs. Indeed, shortly after the head of SNC-Lavalin made those comments, the company came out and corrected the comments he had made.

We have been consistent in standing up for jobs. We will continue to defend workers right across the country, whether it is our steel and aluminum workers, or forestry workers or whether it is in manufacturing. We know that investing in Canadians and investing in their communities is way better than the cuts and austerity proposed by the Conservatives.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just said another false statement. A spokesperson for SNC-Lavalin said as late as last week that there was no intention to move the headquarters from Canada.

However, I guess the Prime Minister is worried about actually taking this to court. Everything he has said outside the House in front of Canadians if he were to say it again in a court of law, he would be guilty of perjury. I guess the famous “just watch me” has turned into “just watch me run away”.

Will the Prime Minister have the backbone to stand by his threats and show up in court to fight this case?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have is a Conservative Party flailing and floundering, trying to change the subject away from what matters to Canadians. It has no plan to fight climate change, no plan on the economy and, quite frankly, has continued to demonstrate this.

Despite the rejection the Conservatives had from Canadians in 2015, they still do not understand that the economy and the environment need to go to together. To build a stronger economy, we have to take action on fighting climate change. They fail to understand that and, therefore, they are looking for anything else to talk about.

The Speaker: Order, please. All members, including former chair occupants, should have a good understanding of the responsibility of each member to uphold dignity and decorum in the House. It is a responsibility we all share, and no one individual can do it alone. It requires all members.

The hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's interference scandal is capturing attention from the international community, but not the kind that Canadians are proud of.

The Liberals have shut down debate in two committees with their majority. The Ethics Commissioner has a very limited role. Now the world is watching and Canadians want the truth. Canadians have questions that the Prime Minister needs to answer.

If the Prime Minister is serious about the truth, then the answer is simple: an independent public inquiry. Will he launch one, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have said, we have tremendous confidence in the committees of Parliament to do their work.

We are pleased that the justice committee heard over 10 hours of testimony, over many weeks. That was facilitated by the fact that we gave an unprecedented waiver to allow for testimony that put aside both attorney-client privilege and cabinet confidentiality, because it is important that Canadians see what went on here. That is exactly what they did.

We continue to trust the Ethics Commissioner in the work that he does. We know that Canadians are concerned about this, but are also concerned about—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Essex.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the justice committee did not get the job done because the Liberals shut it down. What is the Prime Minister hiding that he does not want Canadians to know?

The OECD has referred the PMO's interference scandal to its working group on bribery. The Prime Minister does not seem to understand that Canada's reputation is on the line. The Liberals have blocked any way forward to get to the bottom of what happened. Canadians deserve to know if there was any political interference in the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin.

What is the Prime Minister afraid of? Why does he not do the right thing and call a public inquiry now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is kind of dismaying to see the NDP, which had such a tradition of standing up for workers, put all that aside to try to score a few points now that some international organization has actually noticed that they exist.

The fact of the matter is we are going to stay focused on the things that matter to Canadians. We are going to continue to fight for jobs, for workers across this country, for canola farmers across this country and for forestry workers across this country. We are going to stay focused on Canadians while everyone else tries to play politics.

● (1445)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, politics aside, the Prime Minister has left something very much open, and it is the response that he has to the notice of libel that he sent to the Leader of the Opposition.

Now, he may not be aware of this, but a notice of libel is for the benefit of the defendant to be able to mitigate his damages by apologizing, if he sees fit. In this case, the Leader of the Opposition has indicated that he has nothing to apologize for.

It is now in the hands of the Prime Minister. When will the Prime Minister start the statement of claim?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, we have noticed, and Canadians have noticed, that the Leader of the Opposition continues to double down on his misleading statements.

We know that Canadians deserve politicians on all sides who speak the truth, who do not mislead Canadians, and who end up talking about the things that matter and not hiding from Canadians. What we have right here is a political party that does not want to talk about the economy, that does not want to talk about the budget, that does not want to talk about climate change and that just wants to play politics and attack us.

We are going to stay focused on Canadians, because Canadians deserve a better path forward than what those members are offering.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot will come to order, I am sure, because he wants to hear both the question and the answer.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister seeks to be judge, jury and executioner in this matter when, quite frankly, he is using a notice of libel as a tool of intimidation, much like he has done for this entire case.

He states that it is a fact that the Leader of the Opposition is indeed spreading mistruths. Our fact is that is not the case. Guess who gets to decide that? A real court.

When will the Prime Minister bring this to the right place to debate, a court of law in the province of Ontario? When will he start the claim?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to Canadians having a choice between a party that consistently lies to Canadians, as the Conservatives do, and a party that stays focused on what matters to them.

We have, over the coming months, an opportunity to put our best feet forward for Canadians and show them our plans to grow the economy, to fight climate change and to continue to increase Canadians' prosperity and safety in the world. We have laid that out. We have acted on it over the past four years. The Conservatives have nothing to show but simple political attacks, partisanship and their misleading of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are faced with a Prime Minister who has been flatly denying the truth from the beginning, ever since The Globe and Mail broke the story on the interference scandal involving him and his entourage.

He was unsuccessful at silencing all the Liberals, so now he is bringing out a new Liberal tactic. He is threatening our leader with legal action, purely in the hope of silencing the members on this side of the House.

Does this Prime Minister have the guts to follow through on his notice?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to mislead Canadians. This shows that the Conservatives are still following Stephen Harper's playbook.

We put him on notice because he and his party have a history of making false and defamatory statements. That is what he did in December against the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. He was forced to swallow his false words and retract his statements. We will not stand by while he continues to mislead Canadians.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, the Prime Minister has been repeating that there was no political interference. Today, everyone knows that is untrue. He said that the former attorney general never shared her concerns with him, but we now know that is not true either.

If the Prime Minister has nothing to hide, then he should follow through on his notice. We, on this side of the House, are not afraid of the truth. In fact, the truth is all we are asking for. Canadians all want to know the truth.

The Prime Minister should show a little courage and follow through on his notice.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians want is a government with an economic plan and a plan to fight climate change, and that is exactly what we are doing.

The Conservatives are continuing to mislead Canadians about our economic plan and our plan to fight climate change.

I know that all Quebeckers and all Canadians are concerned about the fact that the Conservatives do not have a plan to fight climate change. The Leader of the Opposition promised to present a plan 346 days ago, but he has still not done so.

When will he tackle climate change?

● (1450)

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Liberals still discriminate against hundreds of thousands of first nations women across Canada. First nations women and their children still do not have the same right to Indian status or the right to transfer their status as first nations men have. This is a violation of their human rights and it denies first nations women's dignity.

Liberals know that they could stop this injustice at their next cabinet meeting. Will the Liberals commit now to end the discrimination against first nations women, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no relationship is more important than that between this government and indigenous peoples, and that is why we have made historic strides forward on reconciliation with indigenous peoples. It involves tangible things like ending boil water advisories and creating more housing and schools on reserves, but also moving forward on rights recognition frameworks and self-government agreements.

However, all of these are done in partnership and with respect for indigenous peoples. We are not the ones determining the path forward for them. We are working with them to determine that path forward. We will always do it in respect of their views, not impose ours.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to fight climate change, the Liberals are giving $12 million of our money to a billion-dollar corporation led by the second-richest person in the country, while our local markets and independent grocers struggle to survive. Our local businesses are greener, yet they are not getting any help from the government.

The Liberals would rather help billionaires than make life more affordable for families and fight climate change for future generations.

What is the Liberals' priority?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House understand that the fight against climate change requires action on many fronts. The government has a lot to do. The Conservatives and Canadians need to do their part, and the private sector needs to contribute, too.

We have programs aimed at supporting the fight against climate change. These programs are open to private sector businesses across Canada. We are going to keep making sure that we are all working together to fight climate change, not just paying lip service.

[*English*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians have been frustrated by the restrictions on the transportation of Canadian beer, wine and spirits between provinces and territories. In St. Catharines and across the Niagara region there are many small and medium-sized businesses that because of barriers to trade within Canada cannot sell their product to other provinces.

Could the Prime Minister please update the House on what our government is doing to eliminate the federal barriers to the trade of alcohol within Canada in order to make it easier for businesses to grow and succeed?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for St. Catharines for his hard work—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, now that we are all in a good mood.

Order. The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for St. Catharines for his hard work.

I highlight that for 10 years, Stephen Harper was unable to do what we just did in budget 2019. We removed the only remaining federal barrier to trade of Canadian wine, beer and spirits within Canada. It is now up to provinces to change their regulations to allow for direct-to-consumer alcohol sales across Canada.

We did what Stephen Harper and the Conservatives could not. We freed the beer.

* * *

● (1455)

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many will recall the sad day when the Liberal government and the Prime Minister cancelled the public transit tax credit, claiming that it favoured only wealthy Canadians. Not only is that stupid, but let us talk about some really wealthy folks.

Loblaws is a company that made over $3 billion in profits last year. Yesterday the government announced that it is giving Loblaws $12 million to purchase refrigerators. Wow. That means $3 billion in gross profits and $12 million in subsidies. Only the Liberals could possibly see the logic in that.

Why is the Prime Minister taking money out of the pockets of Canadian workers and giving it to people who really do not need it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member opposite is giving me a chance to talk about our investments in public transit. We have made historic investments worth over $28 billion in public transit systems across Canada. This gives Canadians more time to spend with their families.

More than 7,000 new buses have been purchased or upgraded. Nearly 15,000 bus stops or shelters have been built or updated. We are working with our partners, including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. We will continue to invest in our communities because that creates economic growth and opportunities for Canadians.

* * *

[*English*]

ETHICS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the Prime Minister did not want to answer that question, because this is really about the Prime Minister's motives. It is not just that. It is the illegal, taxpayer-funded vacation that he took while he was raising taxes on people who cannot think about affording their own vacation right now. It is the fact that he punished two strong women for doing the right thing while he moved hell and high water to protect his buddies at SNC-Lavalin from facing a day in court.

Why does everything the Prime Minister does benefit him and hurt the people that we are supposed to serve?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of misleading Canadians, the very first thing we did was lower taxes on the middle class and raise taxes on the wealthiest 1%. We then delivered a Canada child benefit that lifted 300,000 kids out of poverty. The Conservatives voted against both of those measures.

How is our economy doing? It has among the best in growth in the G7 and the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years, and Canadians have created over 900,000 new jobs.

No wonder the Conservatives can only sling mud instead of talking about any plan for growing the economy. It is because they have none.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, section 121 of the Criminal Code makes it an offence for any government employee to accept a benefit from someone who has business with the government, which is why it was so strange that several years after the Prime Minister accepted over $200,000 in gifts from someone seeking a government grant in the form of his famous island vacation, there still have been no charges laid.

Now we know that the Prime Minister implicated the RCMP in planning that very offence. How many times has he discussed that with the police force since he went on that vacation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP works diligently to meet its responsibilities under the Access to Information Act and Privacy Act and to be transparent with Canadians. We respect its independence, and as always, I will not discuss security-related matters.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not asking about a security-related matter; I am asking about a potential offence under section 121 of the Criminal Code.

If a junior procurement officer had accepted a small vacation from someone seeking a government contract, he would have been fired the same day and probably would have been charged within a week, yet the Prime Minister takes over $200,000 of illegal gifts from an individual seeking a government grant and there are no criminal consequences.

Has the Prime Minister discussed this case with the RCMP since he took that vacation, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Groundhog Day is February 2. We are a long way past that, yet the Conservatives seem to be desperate to reach back into any old thing they can to avoid talking about the fact that they have no plan for the economy, no plan to fight climate change and no plan to continue to grow an economy that works for Canadians in a way that is inclusive and positive.

These are the things that we have been working on over the past four years, and they are working for Canadians. All they can do is try to sling mud and bring up old issues that quite frankly are not what Canadians care about.

* * *

● (1500)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for more than a year, the government has been saying that Canada is meeting the UN's request for assistance in Mali with a smart pledge ending August 1.

Now we have learned that the UN has actually requested that Canada extend its excellent and important medevac mission to September 15. This would avoid a reduction in UN stabilization operations in Mali and the potential loss of lives resulting from the gap in medevac services before Romania takes over; otherwise, both the stability of Mali and people's lives will be at risk.

Will the Prime Minister now agree to extend Canada's Mali mission, as requested by the UN?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of visiting our troops in Mali around Christmastime and I have to say we can all be incredibly proud of the work they are doing, not just in keeping their allies safe through medevacs but in actually leading the way on innovative approaches to medevac that is transforming not just the way peace operations are run around the world but the way allied militaries around the world look at medevacs and helping.

That is something that Canada is leading on. There are always going to be gaps. There was a gap between Germany and us when taking over. There is going to be a gap before Romania, but we are working with our allies—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for months the ferry crossing between Matane and the North Shore has been a nightmare for users and the economy of the Lower St. Lawrence, Gaspé, and the North Shore. Worse yet, it seems that the ferry was not safe for Quebeckers. Following a recent accident involving the *Apollo* ferry, the inspector from the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, the TSB, deemed a Transport Canada certified ship to be unsafe.

Can the Prime Minister explain how Transport Canada could certify a ferry that the TSB deemed unseaworthy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ensuring the safety of Canadians is the responsibility of any government.

I can assure the House that Transport Canada takes its responsibilities very seriously. We will always ensure that Canadians are safe on board these ships. We will continue to do that. I will follow up on the question asked by my hon. colleague.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians remember the Prime Minister's controversial trip at taxpayers' expense. We know that he began planning his trip nine months before going on vacation to the Aga Khan's island.

While he was planning his dream trip, no one seems to have pointed out that he would be breaking the law. We would usually say that this was a one-off, but this Prime Minister has made a habit of breaking the law since 2015.

Why does the Prime Minister seem to be above the law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP works diligently to meet its responsibilities under the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to be transparent with Canadians.

We respect this independence and, as always, will not be discussing security-related matters.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today *Global News* reported that the Prime Minister's vacation to billionaire island was planned at least nine months ahead. Staff in the PMO had this information well in advance, yet the Prime Minister was found guilty of violating the ethics law four times.

In nine months of careful planning for his island vacation, how did no one in the PMO ever suggest to the Prime Minister that his trip was going to break the law, or did the Prime Minister just ignore the best advice from those around him because he was in one of his moods?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we respect the independence of the RCMP and we will not discuss security-related matters.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned from an access to information request that the government has been sitting on for years that senior officials and the RCMP were planning the Prime Minister's billionaire island vacation at least nine months before his flagrant violation of the Conflict of Interest Act. Two of his top advisers have since resigned under the cloud of the current scandal.

The PM may consider his job to be only ceremonial, but not once did these advisers point out that he was about to break the law. There is a pattern here.

Why do the PM and his acolytes believe he is above the law?

● (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP works diligently to meet its responsibilities under the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and be transparent with Canadians. We respect the independence of the RCMP, and as always, we will not be discussing security-related matters.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Cyclone Idai devastated Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. It destroyed homes and families, affecting more than 1.8 million people. Canada has not ignored the tragic plight of the thousands of people who fled their towns and villages. Our thoughts are with all those who are picking up the pieces after Cyclone Idai.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House about the support Canada has offered the people and communities affected by Cyclone Idai?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert for her question and for her hard work.

We responded quickly to the humanitarian crisis caused by Cyclone Idai and sent more assistance in light of the magnitude of the crisis. Canada's total contribution is up to $10 million.

Last week we launched the Cyclone Idai matching fund. The government will match every dollar raised. We will continue to monitor the situation. We are prepared to offer the assistance required, as are all Canadians, and we encourage them to donate generously.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, evidence confirms the Prime Minister undertook a coordinated, sustained and inappropriate campaign to interfere with the independence of the judicial system. The Criminal Code says that everyone who wilfully attempts in any manner to obstruct, pervert or defeat the course of justice is guilty of an offence.

Has the RCMP contacted the Prime Minister or any of his staff or former staff about the SNC-Lavalin scandal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Not to my knowledge, no, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Netanyahu hung on to power in Israel's election yesterday.

In a last-minute campaign promise, he vowed to annex Israeli settlements in the West Bank. If the Israeli government keeps that promise, there could be serious consequences for stability in the region. Canada's position is clear: The settlements are illegal. The United Nations Security Council agrees.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that Canada would view the annexation of those territories as illegal and act accordingly?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our position remains unchanged.

We support the two-state solution, which should be achieved through negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Unilateral actions, such as settlements, are illegitimate and do not help resolve the situation in the Middle East.

* * *

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past weeks, I have heard from constituents concerned about the outbreaks of measles in several regions of our country, including in the greater Toronto area. While Canada made great strides in the fight against measles and eliminated it over two decades ago, outbreaks do occur when the virus is picked up abroad.

Can the Prime Minister inform this House and all Canadians how they can protect themselves and their families against measles?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville for his hard work.

The problem is complex, but the solution is simple. Canadians can protect themselves and their families against measles by getting vaccinated. Vaccines are our best weapon to fight disease and the reason that measles was practically eliminated in Canada. We are investing $25 million over five years to get more Canadians vaccinated, to develop new vaccines and, importantly, to keep the public better informed. Vaccines are safe and effective and save lives.

JUSTICE

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, using tax dollars to fund his illegal private island vacation, groping a female reporter, strong-arming his former attorney general into interfering in a criminal prosecution with his friend's company, firing the former AG when she refused to do his bidding for him—Canadians might think I am describing a Communist dictator, but in fact I am describing the Liberal leader. When the Prime Minister does not like the law, he breaks it. There is one set of rules for him and one set of rules for everyone else.

Why?

● (1510)

The Speaker: As I should have done earlier when the Prime Minister used the word "lying", I ask the hon. member to be judicious in her comments.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to stay focused on what matters to Canadians. We will always stand up for women's rights. We will always stand up, unequivocally, for women's reproductive rights, unlike the member opposite and her party. We will always be there to defend Canadians. We will always be there to push for gender equality. We will always be there to invest in the middle class and those working hard to join it.

The members opposite can only sling mud, because the they have no plan for Canadians on the economy and no plan for Canadians on climate change. All they can do is continue to mislead Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Quebec, a majority government, finally has the opportunity to address the issue of secularism. If all goes as planned, the bill should be passed by the summer.

Unfortunately, it appears that this Liberal government might well be the biggest obstacle opposing the will of Quebeckers. Could the Prime Minister, the member for Papineau, in Quebec, commit to respecting the will of Quebeckers and promise not to challenge Bill 21 on secularism in the courts or support any legal challenges?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no place for discrimination against citizens in a free society, especially not on the basis of their religion. This is what I believe and what this government believes. We will always believe, unequivocally, that we must defend the rights of all Canadians at all times.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the discussions on misleading Canadians that happened back and forth, it appears that I may have used an unparliamentary word. For that, I apologize and withdraw it.

Points of Order

The Speaker: I thank the Right Hon. Prime Minister for his apology.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I believe that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: that this House condemn the comments made on April 5 by the mayor of Hampstead, William Steinberg, who described Bill 21 on secularism, passed at the National Assembly of Quebec, as ethnic cleansing.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I guess imitation is the greatest form of flattery. I would like to have unanimous consent to table this document from question period, which was given first reading two years ago tomorrow. It is my private member's bill, Bill C-351, which the Liberals, and I thank them very much, copied almost word for word, to free the beer. We tabled it and it was given first reading two years ago. I would like unanimous consent to table the document.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

LEGISLATION BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in a moment I will be asking the House for unanimous consent on a motion.

Legislative delays in the Senate have meant that time is running out on important bills that have been passed by the elected members of the House of Commons. That includes the watershed bill to enshrine the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into Canadian law; as well as a desperately needed bill to require better training for judges in the country to deal with sexual assault cases.

The time is now to get these bills passed. Therefore, I hope that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, in the opinion of the House, Bill C-262, An Act to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as Bill C-337, An Act to amend the Judges Act and the Criminal Code (sexual assault), are both critical pieces of legislation that have been duly passed by the House of Commons, and have been in possession of the honourable Senators for many months; that both bills should be passed into law at the earliest opportunity; and that a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint that House accordingly.

● (1515)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: 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)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I believe that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent of the House to table the document on Loblaws' financial statements. On pages 36, 37 and 56, it shows that the company that made more than $3 billion in gross profits just received a $12-million subsidy from Canadian workers without their consent.

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

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. During question period today, in referencing potential amendments to the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act, the Prime Minister said that the previous government had not improved the situation at all. We had three different provinces that opened it up, Nova Scotia, Manitoba as well as British Columbia.

Therefore, I would like to ask for unanimous consent, to table the comments made by the Prime Minister in his speech on May 29, 2012. He said, "The Liberal Party and I are pleased...to support this bill, which will encourage our Canadian wine producers and Canadians in particular to be proud of our products from across the country."

I would like to table this so the Prime Minister can remind himself of his support for that bill.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Several thousands of my constituents have been impacted by an event that threatens their families, their livelihoods and their business. The House has the obligation to address that issue. Therefore, I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to hold an emergency debate on the canola issue that affects so many western Canadians.

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

Some hon. members: No.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation of the Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association respecting its visit to London.

* * *

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, entitled "A Path to Growth: Investing in the North".

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

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will be tabling a dissenting report. We feel this report, by the majority Liberals, lacks a number of important details. This includes a comprehensive overview and an understanding of the impact their policies have had on the growth in the north, including the moratorium in the Beaufort Sea and the impact on carbon pricing with respect to development moving forward.

We feel the report has many gaps and we will be tabling a dissenting report.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the unanimously adopted 24th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled "Nation-Building at Home, Vigilance Beyond: Preparing for the Coming Decades in the Arctic".

I also have the distinct honour to present the executive summary on recommendations contained in this report in four indigenous languages: Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, Gwich'in and the Dogrib dialect, Wiiliideh. While there are many indigenous languages in Canada's north, these four languages are spoken by the groups the committee met with during our travel to Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. This is the first time that a committee has presented a report in an indigenous language. I speak for all committee members when I say that it is absolutely our honour to do so.

In developing this report, the committee benefited greatly from the information and experience provided by indigenous communities. This unprecedented translation represents the importance this committee places on working with Canada's indigenous peoples in strengthening our Arctic and their essential role in developing and defending Canada's north.

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

● (1520)

STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women entitled, "Elect Her: A Roadmap for Improving the Representation of Women in Canadian Politics".

Women's representation in Canadian politics has increased significantly since 1921, when the first woman, Agnes Macphail, was elected to the House of Commons. Despite their growing political participation, women represent only 35% of all legislators in Canada and remain under-represented in all levels of government.

Increasing women's representation in electoral politics is essential, because it can lead to greater gender equality and better social, economic and political outcomes for all Canadians. We saw over 10 organizations, 18 individuals and four federal departments and agencies and received 12 written briefs.

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

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the report talks about the barriers that women face when they enter the political realm, barriers such as a lack of gender-sensitive workplace practices, abuse of power, treating women as tokens or a lack of value that is placed on women's voices. These things are discussed in the report as barriers that prevent women from feeling secure and confident in putting their name forward for election.

Interestingly enough, the Prime Minister actually personifies all of those barriers. He actually perpetuates them in this place. Hence, there was a need for a dissenting report. The Conservative members therefore put forward that report today.

As Conservatives, we know that Canada is enriched by the participation of women from diverse backgrounds and in all levels of political leadership. We also believe that women should be encouraged to run for political office and should be free to do so without reprisal. We also understand that a woman's voice should be heard and that her truth should be spoken to power when necessary. We also understand that this should be respected and that in this place called the House of Commons there should be a place for principles.

I therefore present a dissenting report by the Conservative Party of Canada.

HEALTH

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on Health, entitled "A Diabetes Strategy for Canada".

I thank all the witnesses who came to outline the challenges they faced and the possible solutions. We heard that 7,000 people a year died of diabetes.

I also thank the committee officials and the members on the committee who did a lot of hard work on it. I especially want to thank the member for Brampton South who proposed the study and played an active role in preparing the recommendations.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

TOURISM

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise with a petition on behalf of tourism operators in our national parks. They provide renowned experiences for visitors from around the world. They require fair lease renewal practices so they can continue to provide those quality visitor experiences in our national parks. Unfortunately, Parks Canada has forced one-sided leases upon tourism operators that will compromise the quality of visitor experiences to our national parks.

The petitioners call on the government to revisit the renewal provisions for leaseholders in our national parks to provide greater certainty for tourism operators so they can continue to provide those unique and dynamic visitor experiences.

● (1525)

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise to today to present e-petition 1854, medical assistance in dying, initiated by Dana Livingstone from Sooke, B.C., in my riding. The petition has received more than 2,600 signatures.

The petitioners point out that the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in 2015, Carter v. Canada, established medical assistance in dying as a right for Canadians, but Bill C-14, as passed through the House of Commons, excluded advanced directives.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to amend subsection 241.2 (3) of the Criminal Code to allow Canadians to make advanced requests for medical assistance in dying. This would be of great of assistance to those individuals who suffer from degenerative conditions like Alzheimer's or other causes of dementia and are denied their right to that medical assistance.

EPILEPSY

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to present a petition that was started by someone in my community, Tamzin Jeffs, with respect to sudden unexpected death in epilepsy.

The petitions calls for the development and overseeing of a standardized approach to the measurement, investigation and reporting of sudden deaths involving epilepsy. It also calls for the collation of Canadian epilepsy related death data in a centralized repository to assist SUDEP researchers and help prevent further loss.

One of the most touching things about this petition is the stories I have heard from people who have lost loved ones to SUDEP. I am very pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Unfortunately, I was trying to present a committee report, but I was not recognized. I would like to have unanimous consent to present our committee report.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to present the committee report?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I apologize to the member for not recognizing him at the time, and I did not have him on my list.

The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions to present today.

The first is an e-petition signed by 640 Canadians. It calls on the Government of Canada to exercise its moral, legal and political authority to ensure the safety of the public and innocent children by making a registry for high-risk child crime offenders and allowing lifetime criminal restraining orders for offenders to stay away from their child victims and the victims' families.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition points out that there is not adequate palliative care in the country and that it is impossible for a person to give informed consent to assisted suicide or euthanasia if appropriate palliative care is unavailable to them.

Therefore, the petitioners call on Parliament to establish a national strategy on palliative care.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third and final petition is signed by hundreds of Canadians, calling on the House of Commons to support Bill S-214 and ban the sale and/or manufacture of animal tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada.

[*Translation*]

TAX HAVENS

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to rise in the House to table two sets of petitions.

The first set of petitions has to do with tax havens. Given that the Government of Canada recently signed two new tax information exchange agreements with notorious tax havens, namely Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda, and given that the use of tax havens results in massive revenue losses for the public treasury, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to cancel its agreements with tax havens, beginning with the ones it just signed with Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda, in order to reduce social inequality in this country.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the other petition has to do with the mandatory labelling of GMOs. I have been tabling petitions on this issue for years.

In light of Health Canada's approval of the sale of genetically modified salmon, Canadians believe that the government should give Canadian consumers access to all necessary information with respect to genetically modified foods, or GMOs.

Accordingly, they are calling on the Government of Canada to pass legislation on mandatory labelling for genetically modified foods.

[*English*]

HOSPITAL PARKING

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition on a behalf of a citizen from my riding who recently passed away, Collin Kennedy. It is about ensuring that people have access to medical services and do not need to pay for parking when they go to hospitals. He spent over $17,000 in his lifetime to pay for parking to gain access to the facilities and cancer treatment he needed.

The petition is signed by many people from Winnipeg Centre and across the country. I have already tabled one petition on this issue. This is the final act of this gentleman, Collin Kennedy, and it is in his memory.

● (1530)

EQUALIZATION PAYMENTS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are many people across Canada who are furious about the fact that the government continues to denigrate the energy sector and to cause the loss of jobs. They are also furious that they still have to pay the same level of equalization while the government takes away their jobs.

I am pleased to table this petition calling on the government to immediately cancel Bill C-69; to launch a study of the economic impact of equalization, including an examination of the formula and an examination of how renewable and non-renewable resources, including energy resources that are both developed and undeveloped, are treated in the formula; and to issue a report to Canadians on the fairness, effectiveness and outcomes of the equalization program.

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition to the government that calls for universal access to employment insurance.

Employment insurance unfairly penalizes women in terms of their access to benefits. Only 35.2% of unemployed women are eligible for regular EI benefits compared to 52.5% of men. The petitioners are therefore calling on the Government of Canada to enhance the current employment insurance system to ensure universal access to it.

To achieve that, they want the government to do the following: lower the eligibility threshold to 350 hours or 13 weeks instead of 420 to 700 hours; establish a minimum threshold of 35 weeks of benefits instead of 14 weeks; increase the benefit rate to 70% of salary based on the best 12 weeks of salary instead of 55%; annually index the levels of the family supplement, including a retroactive readjustment as of 1997, calculated based on individual income rather than family income; eliminate total exclusions resulting from resignation or misconduct; and amend the Employment Insurance Act so that any absence related to pregnancy, maternity or parental responsibilities does not prevent access to regular employment insurance benefits.

[*English*]

FORCED MIGRATION

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition from constituents in Beaches—East York, including in the St. Brigid community, who are calling our attention to the plight of forced migrants. Specifically, they are asking us to address the root causes of forced migration, in addition to providing humanitarian aid for refugees in host countries. They are asking us to support grassroots organizations working for peace, democracy and human rights and to invest more in diplomatic and peaceful solutions to armed conflicts. They note, rightly, that no one should be forced to flee his or her home.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present in the House with respect to increasing concerns about the international trafficking of human organs removed from victims without consent and the not yet legal prohibition against Canadians travelling abroad to acquire or receive such organs. There are two bills currently before Parliament, Bill C-350 and Bill S-240, which is in the Senate. The undersigned are asking for amendments to the Criminal Code as well as to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad with respect to this issue.

The Speaker: We have quite a few members still wishing to present petitions, so I would ask members to be extremely brief.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to table two petitions that offer a unique Saskatchewan perspective.

The first petition, e-petition 1959, has garnered support from people across Canada. The petition was initiated by the Citizens Environment Alliance, and the petitioners are asking the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to require a number of Saskatchewan drainage network projects to undergo environmental assessments, including with meaningful public and indigenous consultations. They are asking the government to protect these wetlands, which provide important public health benefits, such as alleviating the impacts of floods, improving water quality, recharging groundwater, preserving fish and wildlife habitat and storing carbon.

AGRICULTURE

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am tabling today comes from constituents in my riding who are concerned about the erosion of farmers' rights under the amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act. The constituents are calling on Parliament to protect thousands of years' worth of custom and tradition. They are asking the government to enshrine in legislation the rights of farmers and other Canadians to freely save, reuse, select, exchange, condition, store and sell seeds.

[*Translation*]

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, petition E-1925, which was initiated by Wendy Atto Doran, from Île-Perrot.

This petition recognizes that there are tens of thousands of older Canadians currently caring for adult children with severe autism or other physical or mental disabilities.

● (1535)

[*English*]

That is why this petition calls upon our government to work with parents and caregivers to provide them with funding opportunities for affordable group homes and residences that can provide appropriate and continued care to aging Canadians coping with severe autism and/or other physical and mental disabilities.

VYSHYVANKA DAY

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition calling on Parliament to designate every third Thursday in May Vyshyvanka Day throughout Canada.

Every year, thousands of Ukrainian Canadians celebrate Vyshyvanka Day to show that an embroidered shirt is in their national genetic code. It is a symbol of the struggle for independence and a symbol of dignity, love and unity.

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of Trois-Rivières are a tenacious bunch. That is why they are still coming out in droves to sign the petition calling for rail service to return to Trois-Rivières. They believe rail service will make it easier to travel to other cities, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and help develop the local economy and tourism.

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I would like to present two petitions, the first signed by 36 constituents in my riding of Etobicoke Centre.

The petitions are gravely concerned about the ongoing systematic persecution of the Uyghurs and other ethnic Turkic groups by the Government of China. These human rights violations have included mass arbitrary arrests, imprisonment in detention and re-education camps, torture, disappearances and the obstruction of contact with family members of Uyghurs living abroad, including in Canada.

The petitioners pray and request that the House consider all available options to put a stop to this ethnic and religious persecution, and they urge China to fully respect its international human rights obligations.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition raises a concern about international trafficking in human organs obtained from victims without their consent. This international trade has been documented in *Bloody Harvest*, a report issued by human rights lawyer David Matas and former Liberal cabinet minister David Kilgour.

In an effort to stop this disturbing trade, the petitioners, 200 of them, urge Parliament to adopt Bill C-350 and Bill S-240, which would make it illegal to acquire organs or body parts from unwilling donors as part of a financial transaction.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table four petitions in the House today. The first is like the one just tabled by my friend from Etobicoke Centre and calls on Parliament to support Bill C-350, and in particular, Bill S-240, which deal with the issue of forced organ harvesting.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition deals with the Canada summer jobs program. It refers to the attestation requirement that was formerly in the jobs program last year, but petitioners are also concerned about issues happening this year, with the exclusion of certain organizations.

The petitioners are calling on the government to respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 2, in respect of this program.

FIREARMS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition calls on the House of Commons to reverse the 10-round magazine reclassification enforced by the RCMP and to remove the power of the RCMP to arbitrarily make classification decisions with respect to firearms.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fourth petition draws the attention of the House to the plight of Pakistani Christian asylum seekers who are in Thailand.

The petitioners urge the Government of Canada to take up this matter urgently with the Government of Thailand to seek more humane treatment of Pakistani asylum seekers, and they say that these asylum seekers must be provided the opportunity to apply for refugee status with the UNHCR and for resettlement without arrest, detention or deportation.

[*Translation*]

LAC-MÉGANTIC

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, a petition signed by the people of Sherbrooke and the surrounding area, calling for an independent public commission of inquiry into the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. The signatories are still worried about rail safety. They would like to shed light on the tragedy so that the necessary measures can be taken to fix our rail system.

TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, a petition regarding the Government of Canada's purchase of the Trans Mountain pipeline at a cost of $4.5 billion. The signatories strongly oppose this purchase as well as the oil and gas subsidies that the Government of Canada continues to pay out, despite promising to end them during the last election. The signatories call on the House to end the oil and gas subsidies.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition that was spearheaded by councillor Mike Colle and the mayor of Toronto, John Tory, together with the Bathurst Street initiative, with regard to security concerns.

The tragic and horrific events in Pittsburgh have brought to light the need for enhanced security so that Canadians can worship and children can attend religious schools without fear of violence. The rising cost of security weighs heavily on religious places of worship, given the other normal costs associated with operating a place of worship or religious school. The local police forces are strained and cannot be expected to offer comprehensive security to the hundreds of synagogues and religious schools that exist in Toronto alone.

All Canadians have the right to worship without fear of a violent attack while exercising their right to practice. These residents of the city of Toronto call upon the House of Commons to create a fully funded, robust program that provides funding to offset the growing high cost of providing safety and security at places of worship and religious education institutions.

● (1540)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of co-operation, I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow the tabling of petitions portion of Routine Proceedings to continue, at the discretion of the Chair.

The Speaker: I think there are about three more members who wish to present petitions. Is there unanimous consent to allow that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Chilliwack—Hope for his very helpful intervention.

The petition I wish to table for the residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands calls on the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to expedite the creation of marine protected areas by eliminating some of the multilateral communication difficulties within different elements of our bureaucracy.

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan—St. Paul, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from citizens of Kildonan—St. Paul and of Canada, who point out that artifacts are maintained presently by Parks Canada and regional facilities, including in Winnipeg, and that the removal of these will cause great hardship for researchers and people interested in history and cultural artifacts. They ask the government to commit to maintaining regional facilities for artifact storage and curation in Manitoba.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition similar to many that have been presented in the House over the last couple of weeks.

This one has 725 signatures on it. It asks, as the others did, for the support of the House for Bill S-214, an act to amend the Food and Drugs Act. Specifically, it asks the House and the government to ban the use of animals in the testing of cosmetic pesticides.

IMMIGRATION

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, PPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions, an electronic one, E-1906, and a paper version of the same petition. They were initiated by Mr. George Browne, a resident of Ontario. They deal with the protection of our borders and note that limited, merit-based immigration is essential to Canadians' rights and well-being. They call on the Canadian government to withdraw from the United Nations global migration compact.

The two petitions contain more than 68,000 signatures.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2265 and 2271.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2265—**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy**:

> With regard to infrastructure investments through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, since its creation: (*a*) what are the Bank's investments, broken down by (i) province, (ii) constituency, (iii) investment partners, (iv) investment projects, (v) investment amounts; and (*b*) how many jobs are generated by these investments, broken down by (i) province, (ii) constituency?

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part(a)(i) of the question, the Canada Infrastructure Bank invested $1.283 billion in the Réseau express métropolitain project in Montréal, a 67-kilometre, light rail, high-frequency network with 26 stations located in greater Montreal in the Province of Québec. For more information, please consult https://rem.info/en#carte.

Regarding part (a)(ii), the Réseau express métropolitain project is a 67-kilometre, light rail, high-frequency network with 26 stations. Once completed, the stations will be located in the following constituencies: Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, Laval-Les Îles, Pierrefonds-Dollard, Lac-Saint-Louis, Dorval-Lachine-Lasalle, Saint-Laurent, Mount Royal, Outremont, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Sœurs and Brossard-Saint-Lambert. For more information, please consult http://www.elections.ca/res/cir/maps2/images/atlas/Montreal.pdf.

In response to part (a)(iii), the investment partners are CDPQ Infra and the Government of Québec.

Regarding part (a)(iv), the answer is the Réseau express métropolitain.

In response to part(a)(v), the investment amount is $1.283 billion in the form of a 15-year senior secured loan at a rate starting at 1%, escalating to 3% over the term of the loan.

Regarding part (b)(i) of the question, in the province of Québec, it is expected that more than 34,000 direct and indirect jobs will be created during the construction phase and more than 1,000 permanent jobs will be created once the Réseau express métropolitain starts running. For more information, please consult https://www.cdpqinfra.com/en/reseau_electrique_metropolitain.

The answer to part (b)(ii) of the question is the same as the answer to part (a)(ii).

Question No. 2271—**Mr. Erin O'Toole**:

With regard to expenditures related to litigation or legal proceedings since January 1, 2016, broken down by department or agency: (*a*) what is the total amount spent; and (*b*) for each case where more than $25,000 has been spent to date, what are the details, including (i) amount spent, (ii) title of proceedings, (iii) parties involved, (iv) current status of case?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice is unable to provide a response as the department has an active litigation inventory of more than 35,000 cases. An extensive manual search through our records would be required and is not possible within the time allotted. An aggregate amount of the expenditures related to legal services to government programs can be found online in the Department of Justice's public accounts: https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/2018/vol2/justice/index-eng.html.

The vast majority of the legal proceedings involving the Government of Canada are handled by Department of Justice lawyers, notaries and paralegals who are salaried public servants. For cost recovery purposes the Department of Justice records the number of hours of work performed on each file and multiplies the hours by differential hourly rates by level of counsel, notary or paralegal. It also records whether the work is performed by regional employees, for which the department pays rent to Public Services and Procurement Canada, or headquarters employees in client premises, for which the client bears the costs of rent. Recovery from different clients varies according to a range of reductions applied based upon, among other things, the different amounts of historical resources within the Department of Justice dedicated to each client. As well, many legal proceedings and litigation files have multiple clients who share the cost recoveries from the Department of Justice.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 2266 to 2270 and 2273 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2266—**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval**:

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, since 2015: what is the total amount of federal investments, broken down by year, department and project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2267—**Ms. Candice Bergen**:

With regard to communications received by the Office of the Prime Minister: on what date was the Office of the Prime Minister informed that the Director of Public Prosecutions had rejected the request by SNC-Lavalin for a deferred prosecution agreement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2268—**Mr. Guy Caron**:

With regard to transfer payments to TransCanada Corporation since November 4, 2015: (*a*) what is the total of transfer payments, broken down by (i) year, (ii) grant, (iii) contribution, (iv) any other form of payment, (v) ministerial portfolio, (vi) ministerial portfolio program; and (*b*) do the public accounts refer to these transfer payments to TransCanada Corporation, and, if not, why?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2269—**Mr. Jamie Schmale**:

With regard to the purchase of promotional products since January 1, 2017, broken down by department, agency, or Crown corporation: (*a*) what products were purchased; (*b*) what quantity of each product was purchased; (*c*) what was the amount spent; (*d*) what was the price per unit; (*e*) if the products were purchased in relation to a specific event, what are the details of the event; (*f*) in what country was each product manufactured; and (*g*) what is the relevant file number for each purchase?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2270—**Mr. James Bezan**:

With regard to ministers and exempt staff members flying on government aircraft, including helicopters, since January 1, 2017: what are the details of all such flights, including (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) type of aircraft, (v) which ministers and exempt staff members were on board?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2273—**Mr. Scott Reid**:

With regard to the large white elm tree that is located near the southeast corner of the Centre Block of Parliament: (*a*) when does Public Services and Procurement Canada plan to cut it down; (*b*) when does Public Services and Procurement Canada plan to begin excavation or other operations that it believes necessitate the removal of the tree; (*c*) when was the decision made to cut it down; (*d*) when was the decision to cut it down announced publicly; (*e*) by what method was the decision to cut it down announced publicly; (*f*) what are the details of the public announcement made by Public Services and Procurement Canada respecting the decision to cut it down, including additional information that was made publicly available in support of the announcement; (*g*) what information informed the recommendation to cut it down, including the titles, authors, publications or applicable media, publishing dates, and applicable Internet addresses of all reports or other documents used to prepare the recommendation; (*h*) what analysis was done respecting the possibility of maintaining and protecting the tree during the excavation and other operations related to the Centre Block Rehabilitation Program and phase 2 of the Visitors' Welcome Centre complex, including the titles, authors, publications or applicable media, publishing dates, and applicable Internet addresses of all reports or other documents used in the analysis; (*i*) was the Minister of Public Services and Procurement consulted on the decision to cut it down; (*j*) did the Minister of Public Services and Procurement authorize the decision to cut it down or, if not the Minister, who authorized the final decision to cut it down; (*k*) what are the details of the public consultation process that preceded the decision to cut it down, including time range, available methods of public input, public meetings held, attendance of public meetings, documents provided to the public, and advertising and public notice of the consultation process; (*l*) what are the details of the Parliamentary consultation process initiated by the Minister that preceded the decision to cut it down, including time range, available methods of Parliamentarian input, meetings held with Parliamentarians, documents provided to Parliamentarians, and advertising and notice to Parliamentarians of the consultation process; (*m*) what are the details of all meetings and communications respecting the tree since October 20, 2015, including dates, times, locations or methods, and participants, that occurred between the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital and (i) the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, (ii) exempt staff in the Office of the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, (iii) employees of Public Services and Procurement Canada; (*n*) what are the projected costs of cutting it down, extricating the root system, and removing the resulting debris from the Parliamentary Precinct; (*o*) what are the projected costs of the planned carvings of the tree to be procured from the Dominion sculptor; (*p*) what is the name and firm, if applicable, of the arborist hired by Public Services and Procurement Canada to inspect and report on the tree; (*q*) when did the arborist hired by Public Services and Procurement Canada to inspect and report on the tree deliver the report to Public Services and Procurement Canada; (*r*) is the arborist's report delivered to Public Services and Procurement Canada available on a public Internet site, and, if so, what is the Internet address at which the report is available; (*s*) what are the details of the arborist's report on the tree that was delivered to Public Services and Procurement Canada, including (i) figures or estimates respecting the tree's age, (ii) general health and condition, (iii) arboreal disease status, (iv) life expectancy, (v) response to past or ongoing treatment for arboreal disease, (vi) resilience against future arboreal disease, (vii) resilience against close-proximity construction or excavation, (viii) structural integrity, (ix) present, future, and contingent maintenance and care requirements; (*t*) what information is held by Public Services and Procurement Canada with respect to treatment provided to the tree for arboreal diseases; and (*u*) what information, not held by Public Services and Procurement Canada, was provided to or consulted by the department with respect to treatment provided to the tree for arboreal diseases?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege concerning misleading comments made to the House of Commons by the Minister of National Revenue.

On December 13, 2018, the minister told the House that the Canada Revenue Agency "hired 1,300 new auditors". Again, on February 5, 2019, the minister said, "we hired 1,300 new auditors". This weekend, Quebec newspapers reported that these numbers were wrong and erroneous.

Le Journal de Montréal reported in an article entitled *"Elle répète des chiffres erronés depuis cinq mois"* that the real figure is 192 new auditors. That is about one-seventh of what the minister claimed to be the truth. Since January 1, 2016, the number of auditors has increased from 6,265 to 6,457.

Page 85 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, describes the three-part test that must be met to establish that the House has been misled. First, it must be proven that the statement was misleading.

Ted Gallivan, deputy commissioner of Revenue Canada, told the newspaper that auditors were replaced as they retired or moved to other jobs. The minister tries to take credit for replacement hiring as so-called new auditors. Le Journal reported that:

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gallivan even admitted that, unlike [the Minister], he does not use the figure of 1,000 when praising the work of his department.

[*English*]

The minister's spin is, simply put, false.

The second arm of the three-part test is that it must be established that the member making the statement knew it to be misleading.

When called out on her misleading claims by an intrepid journalist, the minister and her office tried to backtrack. According to Le Journal:

[*Translation*]

The Minister's staff repeatedly told the Journal de Montréal that the Minister was too busy to grant an interview. In response to very specific written questions, her communications director sent us a short statement in which, lo and behold, the reference to "new" auditors had vanished.

[*English*]

She was caught and she backed down. The original statements were not simply some slip of the tongue, or this newest statement a slip of the fingers on a keyboard.

The newspaper reminded its readers that:

[*Translation*]

> The woman who was appointed minister by the [Prime Minister] in late 2015 has been repeating this statement to anyone who cares to hear it since November.

[*English*]

The article goes on to provide a list of occasions in the House, at the finance committee, at press conferences and in written statements where the minister made her claim of new auditors. You can infer, Mr. Speaker, that the minister, confronted by the real facts, is tacitly acknowledging that her claims were misleading.

Finally, the third test laid out in Bosc and Gagnon is that the statements must have been made with the intention of misleading the House.

The comments I quoted earlier were made during question period. A plain reading of the situation is that they were obviously meant to deflect and parry opposition charges against the Liberal government's failures to take tax evasion seriously. The minister's comments were meant to contain the political damage of her lacklustre efforts to address tax evasion and the Liberal government's reluctance to crack down on the well-connected with deep pockets. However, it is not just members who were misled. It is indeed all Canadians.

The article quotes Toby Sanger, the executive director of Canadians for Tax Fairness, who said:

[*Translation*]

> When the Minister spoke about more than 1,300 new auditors, I definitely thought that the number of positions had increased by that amount. I feel that I was completely deceived by the Minister...

[*English*]

Mr. Sanger is not alone. The minister has been trying to fool all Canadians but it has not worked.

In closing, I want to add a comment about how this satisfies the requirement for a question of privilege to be raised in a timely manner. As you can tell, Mr. Speaker, my first language is English. I do not sit for a Quebec constituency, so I do not routinely follow Quebec media in real time every weekend. This news, however, has come to my attention upon my return to Ottawa this week for the sittings of the House.

With that said, if you find a prima facie case of privilege, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope for raising his question.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same question of privilege. I listened with great interest to the member's question of privilege. We will probably come back to the House a bit later to add some additional material.

● (1550)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby for the notice.

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-97—PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I believe that Bill C-97 is an omnibus bill as defined under Standing Order 69.1.

My NDP colleagues and I are deeply concerned at the current government's reliance on omnibus bills to ram its priorities through in this place and to attempt to conceal measures from Canadians. We firmly believe that this practice is inherently undemocratic. Therefore, we request that you intervene.

Standing Order 69.1 states:

> (1) In the case where a government bill seeks to repeal, amend or enact more than one act, and where there is not a common element connecting the various provisions or where unrelated matters are linked, the Speaker shall have the power to divide the questions, for the purposes of voting, on the motion for second reading and reference to a committee and the motion for third reading and passage of the bill. The Speaker shall have the power to combine clauses of the bill thematically and to put the aforementioned questions on each of these groups of clauses separately, provided that there will be a single debate at each stage.

Page 730 of the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states:

> In general, an omnibus bill seeks to amend, repeal or enact several Acts, and is characterized by the fact that it is made up of a number of related but separate initiatives.

To render an omnibus bill intelligible for parliamentary purposes, the Speakers have previously ruled that such a bill should have "one basic principle or purpose which ties together all the proposed enactments".

Given this definition, it is plainly obvious to me that Bill C-97, with over 350 pages and several stand-alone pieces of legislation, is an omnibus bill. I strongly believe that Canadians at home would agree. I would imagine they would also like us, as their representatives in this place, to properly study and debate these separate pieces of legislation as such.

However, it is clear that the Liberals are once again using the loophole they added to the Standing Orders to include many unrelated measures. That would be Standing Order 69.1(2), which states:

> The present Standing Order shall not apply if the bill has as its main purpose the implementation of a budget and contains only provisions that were announced in the budget presentation or in the documents tabled during the budget presentation.

While we have had limited time to sort through this mess of a budget implementation act, we have already found several provisions contained in Bill C-97 that were not announced on March 19.

First, subdivision B of division 9 of part 4 amends the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act. Second, subdivision D of division 9 of part 4 amends the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act. Third, subdivision E of division 9 of part 4 amends the Precious Metals Making Act. Fourth, subdivision F of division 9 of part 4 amends the Textile Labelling Act. Fifth, subdivision G of division 9 of part 4 amends the Weights and Measures Act. Sixth, subdivision J of division 9 of part 4 amends the Pest Control Products Act. Seventh, subdivision K of division 9 of part 4 repeals provisions of the Quarantine Act. Eighth, subdivision L of division 9 of part 4 repeals provisions of the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act.

Additionally, I am simply disheartened by the Liberal government's attempt to hide within the budget bill implementation act two pieces of stand-alone legislation that will significantly transform the Canadian immigration system.

First, in part 4, division 15, sections 292 to 302 would create the college of immigration and citizenship consultants act. As you know, this issue was studied by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, which produced the only unanimously supported report in that committee of this Parliament. It called for urgent action and was concurred in on December 4, 2017, in this House.

The government response to that study was presented to the House in October 2017, wherein the minister stated, "The Government expects to be able to provide more information on the way forward next year." The minister missed his own self-imposed deadline and is now forced to hide these changes within the budget implementation act. Given the significance of this stand-alone piece of legislation, my colleagues and I strongly believe that this 45-page act must be separated out of Bill C-97 so it can be debated, studied, amended and voted on as the separate legislation that it is.

● (1555)

Second, and even more alarming, is the Liberal government's attempt to hide its efforts to shut down the Canadian border to asylum seekers in the midst of a global refugee crisis. In part 4, division 16, clauses 302 to 311 would make dramatic changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. These changes would render ineligible potentially thousands of individuals seeking asylum from even having their claims heard by the Immigration and Refugee Board.

There is an ongoing court case challenging the constitutionality of the safe third country agreement and it appears that the government is looking to legislate around this lawsuit, expanding the agreement to include countries that Canada has an information sharing agreement with and codifying it into the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

I will quote a refugee lawyer who has contacted me already on these changes. He stated, "The substance here is disappointing, but the fact that such significant change is being introduced this way, without consultation, without notice, is what's even worse. At least Harper and Jason Kenney (and this is something straight out of their kitchen) would have had the courage to stand behind this."

This would be a grave injustice to some of the most vulnerable groups in the world and an abdication of our duty under international law to simply slide this legislation through in Bill C-97. We, as parliamentarians, have a duty to separate out this piece of legislation from Bill C-97 so that its impacts can be truly examined and debated in this place. We must have the opportunity to debate in this place whether this is truly a direction the Canadian government wants to take.

By throwing in elements that were not announced in the budget presentation and by hiding significant stand-alone legislation that would have far-reaching impacts on Canada's immigration system, I submit that the bill meets the standards set out in the Standing Orders to be treated as an omnibus bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will take the recommendation under advisement and return to the chamber in due course.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I attempted to catch your eye to respond to the earlier question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope. I also would like to put on notice that I will make representations on that motion later.

At this moment, I want to support the motion we have just heard related to Bill C-97 and its status as an omnibus bill. I am still working my way through it, but it is very clear that this meets the definition of an omnibus bill. I regret so much that it has now become common to hear the words "omnibus budget bill" strung together. I did not think we would be seeing this in this Parliament. I believed the Liberal commitments to end the use of omnibus budget bills, but this one does contain sections that are quite disturbing.

As I went through the budget, it was very clear that 35 separate measures within the budget required legislative changes, so it was very clear to me that we were going to see legislative changes for things like changing the interest rates for student loans and getting action on items that we think are appropriate and long overdue. However, bundled up in all of those measures are things like division 16 of part 4 with amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act that are deeply disturbing, unacceptable and should never be bundled together in an omnibus fashion in a budget bill.

I will not go on at length, although I could because this is really outrageous. I do hope that we can at least split apart these sections so that the immigration committee studies this division. Otherwise, it is very clear what happens in an omnibus budget bill. Most of it will never get properly studied because it is only before the Standing Committee on Finance. It is not that there is anything wrong or delinquent or inadequate about the finance committee, but it is not the proper place to study substantial changes to other areas of law where the expertise resides with the committee, which is a standing committee, on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, in the strongest possible terms, I urge you to find this bill as omnibus and allow us to split out those sections that require proper and thorough study.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I thank the hon. member. That will be taken under advisement. As I mentioned to the member for Vancouver East, we will get back to the chamber as soon as possible.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1600)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-97, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to contribute to the debate on Bill C-97, the budget implementation act. The act would implement important measures in our 2019 budget that the Minister of Finance tabled last month in the House.

Budget 2019 comes at a time when Canada's economy is strong. Thanks to the hard work of Canadians, more than 900,000 jobs have been created since 2015, most of them full time. Unemployment is at 40-year lows.

New jobs are being created across the country, but many of these new well-paying opportunities require a level of education or a skill set that people do not have the time or the money to get. Many Canadians feel as though they are missing out.

Young people who are striking out into the job market are hoping to get their first full-time job, one that pays well and gives them a good start to their working life.

That is why budget 2019 has a particular focus on the challenges faced by young Canadians. Young Canadians are more diverse, educated and socially connected than ever before. Like all Canadians, they want the chance to work in a good career, buy a home and build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Whether at town halls or during online discussions, young Canadians have delivered the same message to the government: Invest in a plan that helps youth overcome the barriers to their success. Our government has listened. With budget 2019, our government is making strategic and responsible investments to address these challenges and provide young Canadians with access to opportunities that position them for well-paid jobs today and tomorrow, make it easier for them to have better access to home ownership and help them thrive.

Just as our government helps more children get the best start in life with measures like the Canada child benefit, which has helped lift nearly 300,000 children out of poverty since 2015, it remains equally focused on what comes next for young people, whether they seek to purchase a first home, enrol in university or college, or start their career.

Measures that address those issues are what I will be speaking about today, because budget 2019 is not just a plan to create jobs; it is targeted help where people need it the most.

We can see that approach when it comes to housing. Many Canadians might feel that because of high house prices in some of Canada's largest cities, buying a home is increasingly out of reach. We know that young people especially are being priced out of some house and condo markets. Average home prices today are about eight times larger than the average full-time income of Canadians aged 25 to 34. That is markedly different from a few decades ago, when they were about four times larger.

To address the difficulty that young families may be having in buying their first home, through Bill C-97, budget 2019 proposes a new first-time home buyer incentive. With this extra help in the shape of a shared equity mortgage through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Canadians can lower their monthly mortgage payments, making home ownership more affordable.

The incentive would provide funding of 5% or 10% of the home purchase price for existing or new homes respectively, with no ongoing monthly payments required. The program is expected to help approximately 100,000 Canadians buy homes that they can afford.

Through budget 2019 and Bill C-97, our government is also increasing the home buyers' plan withdrawal limit for the first time in a decade. This would provide first-time home buyers with greater access to their registered retirement savings plan savings to buy a home.

Specifically, the budget proposes to increase the HBP withdrawal limit to $35,000 from the previous $25,000 limit. Young Canadians are the main beneficiaries of the new first-time home buyer incentive and of the increase in the withdrawal limit on the home buyers' plan. They are the Canadians who are especially likely to be prospective first-time homebuyers and to live in urban centres where affordability gaps are pronounced.

● (1605)

These two measures to make home ownership more affordable for Canadians are the next step in our national housing strategy, which is included in the bill we are debating today.

For more affordable rental units in areas with low vacancy, budget 2019 would also expand the rental construction financing incentive, helping to build more affordable rental options for Canadians to live near where they work or study and tackling homelessness across the country through the reaching home strategy.

Our government also believes in doing its part to make sure young Canadians can access the post-secondary education they need to get the jobs they want. Our government is committed to making post-secondary education more affordable for students and to helping young Canadians pursue higher education without the undue financial burden that often comes with post-secondary learning.

While Canada is among the most educated countries in the world, too many Canadians still face barriers that prevent them from pursuing post-secondary studies or skilled trades programs. This is why, since 2015, our government has helped make university, college and apprenticeship programs more affordable and accessible. From boosting Canada student grants to lowering the interest rate on Canada student loans to improving access to loans for vulnerable students, our government is making sure more young people have the opportunity to go to university or college.

With budget 2019, the government is taking new steps to help Canadians access post-secondary education.

Budget 2019 proposes to lower the floating interest rate on Canada student loans to the prime rate, helping close to one million borrowers who are repaying their student loans and saving the average borrower approximately $2,000 over the time of the loan.

In addition, budget 2019 has proposed to waive interest payments during the six-month grace period after graduation, helping approximately 200,000 borrowers every year transition successfully from their studies to work.

To make these student loans more accessible, a modernized Canada student loans program will better respond to the needs of vulnerable student borrowers.

The investment in budget 2019 includes increased supports for students with permanent disabilities as well as the introduction of interest-free and payment-free medical and parental leave for student loan borrowers.

Also, budget 2019 proposes to expand parental leave coverage for post-secondary students and post-doctoral fellows who receive federal granting council funding from six months to 12 months. This will help parents to better balance work obligations with family responsibilities, such as child care.

When combined with the government's previous investments in student financial assistance, budget 2019's proposals respond to the reality of rising tuition costs, rising living costs and the changing nature of work faced by today's students and youth, and they go far to help achieve the goal of making higher education more affordable.

Barriers to pursuing post-secondary education and finding good, well-paying work are also certainly a challenge that Canada's indigenous peoples continue to face.

Engaging more indigenous people in the workforce will boost economic outcomes for the nearly 1.5 million indigenous Canadians, as well as spur economic opportunities and raise living standards for all Canadians. That is why budget 2019 proposes to provide distinction-based funding for post-secondary education to help first nations, Inuit and Métis Nation students better access post-secondary education and obtain the skills and experience they need to succeed.

With regard to work placement, experience and apprenticeship, beyond the cost of post-secondary education is another reality that many young Canadians face. After graduation, just having a degree or a diploma is often not enough to secure a good, well-paying job. They want more opportunities to learn while they work and to work while they learn.

This is why our government is committed to helping young Canadians find relevant on-the-job experience and employer-relevant skills that will help to ensure a smooth transition into the workforce.

● (1610)

Budget 2019 supports this commitment by proposing to provide more on-the-job learning opportunities for young Canadians who want relevant, real-world work experience. The government would do this by extending the student work placement program as part of a plan to create up to 84,000 new student work placements per year by 2023-24. This will be a significant step toward ensuring that 10 years from now, every young Canadian who wants a work placement will be able to get one.

At the same time, by providing partnerships with businesses to support work placements through the modernized youth employment strategy, the government will help more young people develop new skills and obtain professional experience earlier. The proposed modernized youth employment strategy will have the aim of ensuring that all young people have access to the supports they need, including enhanced supports for young people facing more serious barriers to joining and staying in the workforce.

Furthermore, in an increasingly global economy and labour market, Canadian youth need to develop a range of skills, many of which are best fostered through international experiences such as travelling, studying and working overseas. Building on the commitment in the 2018 fall economic statement to develop a new international education strategy, budget 2019 proposes to support Canadian post-secondary students and young people pursuing opportunities to travel, study and work abroad.

The government is also acting to attract more top-tier foreign students to Canada by promoting Canadian educational institutions as high-calibre places to study.

In addition, budget 2019 includes measures to encourage more Canadians to pursue volunteer opportunities. Service opportunities give young Canadians the chance to gain valuable work and life experience, build on what they have learned through their formal education and give back to their community in meaningful ways.

To encourage and support more service opportunities, in January 2018 our government launched the design phase of the Canada service corps, a youth service initiative. The expanded Canada service corps proposed in 2019 will help young Canadians serve their communities while gaining valuable skills and leadership experience. This includes supporting the creation of up to 15,000 annual volunteer service placements for young Canadians by 2023-24 and of 1,000 annual individual grants for self-directed service projects.

The investment in the Canada service corps will also address barriers to participation in service that have been identified by under-represented youth by providing new incentives and program supports co-created with young people.

Budget 2019 also proposes to improve access to mentorship, learning resources and start-up financing to help young Canadian entrepreneurs bring their business ideas to life and to market through Futurpreneur Canada.

These initiatives are just some of the many actions our government is taking to help more young Canadians get quality education and valuable experience as they build a future for themselves.

Finally, I would like to speak about the subject that is too often overlooked, and that is the mental health of young Canadians.

People aged 15 to 24 are more likely than those in other age groups to have a mood or anxiety disorder. Suicide is the second most common cause of death among people aged 15 to 24, while it ranks ninth among the general population.

Less than half of young people with depression or suicidal thoughts have sought professional help. That is why budget 2019 is proposing to invest in a new pan-Canadian suicide prevention service. This service would provide people across Canada with access to bilingual 24-7 crisis support from trained responders, using the technology of their choice. This builds on the government's previous investments in mental health supports, such as the $5 billion over 10 years to provincial and territorial governments to ensure long-term support for mental health in communities around the country.

● (1615)

To conclude, young Canadians are the future drivers of Canada's economic growth and are ready to be the champions of a fair, more diverse, more inclusive nation. They deserve opportunities to succeed in and benefit from Canada's growing economy. Our government's investments to make education more affordable, give young people more opportunities to find and keep good, well-paying jobs, and make home ownership more attainable will help young Canadians today and help keep our economy strong and growing for the long term.

With budget 2019, our government is investing in ways to prepare young Canadians for their future, helping them succeed for many years to come.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will not restate what has been stated so many times, that of course this budget is again not meeting the Liberals' 2015 campaign commitments to balance, but I am going to target one area that people were interested in but are now a little disappointed about.

I had someone reach out to me and say, "Listen, I am in my thirties. I would really like to get into the housing market. I do not have an RRSP that I can take $35,000 out of. That is number one. Number two, I am in a market where to find something under $500,000 is going to be a very significant challenge."

The most important question he asked, which I could not answer, was, "Number three, if I enter this new program, is it an interest-free loan, or is the government going to have equity in my home? If so, is it going to take the equity out at the end?"

I could not answer that question. I am hoping my colleague can, because it is one of the important measures that Liberals are heralding in this budget.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. colleague for her interest in our youth, in this country and, in particular, in the housing market.

This is something incredibly important that we have heard from young people across this country. In relation to the member's question about the affordability, or having funds in an RSP, we have heard that, but what we have also heard is that the issues facing young people getting into the housing market are not one-size-fits-all. The Conservatives did nothing on this file for 10 years, and allowed the housing market to explode.

We are addressing the concerns of people who are able to afford more in their RSPs. We are also increasing rental units. We are also creating the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation's new incentive, which is an incentive that is actually going to reduce individuals' monthly housing costs. The Conservatives left our economy in such a state, and we saw that household debt was continuing to increase.

In terms of the specific details of the CMHC plan, those packages will be developed very soon, and as it says in the budget, those details will be forthcoming.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

It is important to point out that, today, we are debating what is likely to be this government's last budget implementation bill. This was the government's last chance, but it still proposed what is essentially a budget of half-measures. These measures do not do as much as Canadians expected from this government, particularly when it comes to the environment. The March 19 budget statement also made very little mention of the environment, climate change or the energy transition. There are a few half-measures that were, of course, well received, but they certainly do not go far enough to make the changes required to save our planet.

The universal pharmacare program could have been added to the half-measures that the government announced to buy time until the upcoming election. This bill gave the government one last chance to implement such a system and to introduce a flagship piece of legislation, but the Liberals put it off until later, as usual.

Why is the parliamentary secretary once again asking Canadians to wait?

Why are the Liberals only making promises that ask people to put their trust in them for another term when they did not even have the courage to keep their promises and make those changes during their first four-year term?

● (1620)

[*English*]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, we are not asking Canadians to wait. In fact, we are acting. It would have been very difficult for the NDP, which promised to balance the budget at all costs and adopt the same economic plan as the Conservatives, to do these things. We are moving forward. This is a transformational investment to establish a national pharmacare plan.

We are moving forward to a national pharmacare plan with the best expertise and recommendations to build a foundation, which is what this budget does. This budget sets the foundation to establish a national negotiator. It also deals with some of the most difficult issues in terms of drugs for rare diseases. We have to work in partnership with the provinces and territories.

We cannot ram things through like the Conservatives used to. We have to use a smart approach based on facts and evidence, but we are doing it. We are setting in place the foundation to create a national pharmacare plan.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the hon. member about the Canada student loan provisions in division 22 of part 4 of this omnibus bill. Why would we be continuing to charge interest on student loans at all, given that when they were brought into this place under the government of Lester B. Pearson, there were no interest payments on student loans? We should actually be eliminating both tuition and student loans.

Now that the question of pharmacare has been raised, I have to say it is quite galling to hear that we need more evidence despite the reports that have been done by experts, not just within this Parliament but, for instance, by the Pharmacare 2020 report. That report was a collaboration of the leading experts across Canada, who pointed out that we would save $7 billion a year by moving to universal pharmacare.

I would suggest to the hon. member that it is not ramming anything down anyone's throat for the federal government to create a bulk-buying agency that would buy pharmaceutical drugs along a formulary that meets the needs of Canadians and not those of big pharma, that would bring down the prices, and that would then allow the provinces to decide if they want to buy drugs more cheaply through a federal government universal plan or to go out on their own if they would like to and pay more. There is nothing that keeps the price of drugs down when individual provinces go to large pharmaceutical companies and pay far more than any other jurisdiction around the world.

I would caution hon. members on the government side not to oversell the inadequate measures toward pharmacare in this budget.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I actually think the hon. member and I and our government's plan are on the exact same page and the same path forward. The evidence I speak about is the fact that we have an advisory council that is advising us on the best way to implement this and the areas in which we need to act.

This budget builds that foundation, in terms of drug purchasing, to create one negotiator. This in itself will help deal with the issue of multiple provinces and territories, as well as multiple people, negotiating with drug companies. By having one negotiator, we set the foundation in place to then move forward in other areas.

I also spoke about drugs for rare diseases, which can be incredibly difficult to deal with, especially in smaller provinces or provinces with smaller populations. This will allow the federal government to help in that area. Again, this is building on the foundation that will be based on the advisory council's advice. The next report will be coming soon.

However, we were not going to wait for all of the reports. We wanted to build on their recommendations and advice as soon as we could, and that is exactly what this budget does.

● (1625)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going back to the first part that the parliamentary secretary was talking about, specifically about home ownership for younger Canadians.

We know that more and more millennials do not realize that they may have the potential of home ownership. They start looking at renting as something they will do forever. It is so important that we start to move toward home ownership and get millennials in a position where they can actually benefit.

Can the parliamentary secretary comment on the long-term benefit of home ownership for millennials?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. This is an incredibly difficult issue for young people, in particular millennials, who are not able to access home ownership. Home ownership, for many Canadians, is their largest investment. We want to make sure that young people have access to the housing market as well.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Human Rights; the hon. member for Drummond, Official Languages; the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Telecommunications.

[*English*]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for constituents in the snowy upper Ottawa Valley riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, it is an honour to be their representative in this place.

In 2019, there is a sense among Canadians that the promise of progress, the idea that with hard work everyone could build a better life, is no longer true. The greatest threat to Canada's prosperity today is government, not climate change. Any country faced with massive government interference can be brought to starvation. Blaming poverty on climate change not only lets the government off the hook for bad policy but also encourages the enactment of harmful, inhumane policies.

Today's poverty has little to do with climate change. The most commonly held characteristics of affluent countries are greater personal liberty, private property rights, the rule of law, and an economic system closer to capitalism than to Communism. That is the recipe for prosperity.

The first thing that hits Canadians when they look at the budget document is that there is no plan for balanced budgets. This is a socialist budget.

Economists and the marketplace are telling Canadians that we will be in a recession within the next 12 to 18 months that will significantly impact the underlying projections that budgets are based on, as well as the fact that the government has been wildly spending at a time when Canada should have continued with the balanced budget policy that was left to them by our previous Conservative government.

Compounding the recession that is coming are the foreign policy failures of the government, particularly the inability of the Prime Minister to manage trade policy, first with our largest trading partner, America, and the tariffs on lumber and steel, and then with the trans-Pacific partnership that was basically handed to the government by our previous Conservative government, ready to go, and now with China and the dispute that is causing our farmers to suffer.

The government may be optimistically predicting GDP growth over the next year; however, the external shock of not ratifying the new NAFTA deal, the loss of confidence in the stock market in how Canada is managed and the broader fallout of a U.S.-China trade war mean all bets are off when it comes to predicting the size and duration of any future recession.

Canadians understand that when government runs a deficit, particularly one of the size and duration we see today in the 2019 budget document and Bill C-97, it means the Liberal Party is basically handing the bill not just to the next generation but to generations after that. It is recognized that there will be a price someone will have to pay, and it will be our children, grandchildren and their children.

This budget is being likened to someone being bought a very expensive gift, only to find out it was their own credit card that was being used to pay for it. If the gift was a shirt, it would be made of cheap cloth and two sizes too small.

People who live in Ontario have seen this all before. Canadians who follow my speeches in the House of Commons will have been warned about disgraced former prime minister top aide Gerry Butts, who was forced to resign over his role in the SNC-Lavalin corruption scandal. As a principal political operative for Dalton McGuinty and whatever backroom dealings he had with McGuinty's defeated party replacement, by trashing the Ontario economy, disgraced former PMO operative Gerald Butts can share the credit for the Toronto Liberal policy of “heat or eat” among seniors and others on fixed incomes.

In Ottawa, “heat or eat” refers to the carbon tax.

Canadians would not be as familiar with Butts' close buddy, Ben Chin, until the SNC-Lavalin scandal exposed his backroom role in that sordid affair. During the former attorney general's testimony before the House of Commons justice committee, she mentioned two names. The disgraced Gerry Butts was mentioned five times, and the now-infamous Ben Chin seven times.

In Ottawa, Ben Chin is chief of staff to the finance minister. In his role as political commissar, as was made clear during the SNC-Lavalin testimony, Ben Chin is there to promote the interests of his party over the good of Canadians.

This is a critical point to raise during the budget implementation debate, as Canadians need to be aware of Ben Chin and whether the interference role he had in Toronto is now happening in Ottawa, and at what scale.

● (1630)

Mr. Chin joined the finance minister's office as senior adviser and worked with the minister on the rollout of the government's third budget. The decision to hire Mr. Chin for the top position in the finance minister's office suggests a desire on Gerald Butts' part for an individual to keep close tabs on the finance minister.

That change marked the second significant staffing move in the finance minister's office. Previously, the Prime Minister's policy adviser, Justin To, another of Butts' confidants named in the SNC-Lavalin scandal, was shifted from the Prime Minister's Office to take over as policy and budget director for the finance minister. Ben Chin played the same role with former principal secretary Gerald Butts in Toronto in the disgraced Dalton McGuinty regime: run interference.

Well-informed observer Parker Gallant said this in the blog “Energy Perspectives”:

> For the benefit of those who didn’t follow Ontario politics during the McGuinty/Wynne era, it’s worth pointing out both Gerry Butts and Ben Chin played significant roles in Ontario, especially the ill-fated electricity file.
>
> Butts is credited as the mastermind behind Dalton McGuinty’s election as Ontario’s Premier: Butts was, according to the Toronto Star, “the man they call ‘the brains behind the operation’ and policy architect of the Liberal government since 2003.”

> Butts left the McGuinty government in mid-2008, after he and the Ontario Liberal team set the stage for the Green Energy Act, by pushing for renewable wind and solar projects and to close coal plants. Butts went off to lead the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) for four years before joining [the Prime Minister] as his political advisor.

The article continues:

> Ben Chin, engaged as a "political advisor" to Dalton McGuinty, was the McGuinty candidate chosen to run against the NDP's Peter Tabuns in a byelection in 2006. Chin lost, but returned as a "senior advisor" to Premier McGuinty's office where he again worked with Gerry Butts. Chin left for the private sector and a short while later was hired back as Vice President Communications for the OPA (Ontario Power Authority). The OPA was the creation of Dwight Duncan when he was McGuinty's Minister of Energy and became the Crown corporation to enact the myriad of things mired in the Green Energy & Green Economy Act (GEA).
>
> Chin later became embroiled in the "gas plant" scandal as the Premier's principal contact with the negotiating team dealing with TransCanada et al on compensation issues related to the cancellation. Ontario's ratepayers know how that turned out! While Chin occupied his position with the OPA, [former executive director of the environmental group Energy Probe] Tom Adams and I were investigating the gas plant scandal by reviewing thousands of documents.

Mr. Gallant goes on:

> The following reveals some of our findings in an article I wrote about the "smart grid" and a Brad Duguid directive.
>
> Co-incidentally (noted by Tom Adams), the Duguid directive is dated the same day as the e-mail exchange between Alicia Johnston (formerly a senior political staffer for Energy Minister Brad Duguid, later promoted to the Premier's Office) and Ben Chin (a senior Ontario Power Authority executive).

● (1635)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am really finding this research fascinating and I have been watching Ben Chin's association with the Christy Clark government in B.C., but I am not yet seeing a connection to the bill we are currently debating. I really find it interesting, and I am not being facetious, but I just realized it had nothing to do with Bill C-97.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): That is a good point of order.

I want to remind the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke that we do have to stay with the topic, and the topic is the budget bill.

I will leave it to the hon. member. I am sure she will bring it back and I am sure she will get there very quickly.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will. The speech is in order because it will be setting the stage and the background for subdivision B of division 9 and subdivision G of division 9. The background is necessary in order to tie it all together.

Mr. Gallant's quote continues:

> That e-mail exchange contained Ms Johnston's suggestion to engage Tyler Hamilton, a contributor to Toronto Star, as an "expert" to counter the Adams and Gallant duo who "are killing me"; Chin agreed. Shortly after, Hamilton received a contract from the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) for a report on the smart grid.

According to former Pollution Probe executive director Tom Adams:

> In July 2011, Tyler Hamilton, a Toronto Star journalist then taking government cash under the table to promote its smart grid agenda, published a "news" report in the Toronto Star extolling the relationship between Air Miles and the [Ontario Power Authority]. As usual, Hamilton failed to disclose to his readers his then ongoing financial relation with the Ontario government energy programs.
>
> As revealed through the gas scandal disclosures, in November 2010 Chin had proposed that Hamilton be "engaged for central" to aid with rebutting criticism of the government's Green Energy and Green Economy Act.
>
> ...Chin also described Hamilton's journalism as part of the intellectual foundation for Ontario's Green Energy and Green Economy Act.
>
> Ben Chin's electricity career helps to illuminate the real purposes driving those with their hands on the levers of power in Ontario's electricity system. Practical solutions to Ontario's energy problems were never the focus for the team Chin played for. Weaving his way around the in-house and outsourced government sector, Chin was engineering a conservation PR culture. At the same time as the "Count Me In" program was being formulated, Ontario was establishing itself as a massive electricity exporter, selling enough discounted and often free power to neighbouring jurisdictions to power substantial cities. To the extent that the conservation promotions and subsidies Chin worked on actually reduced usage in Ontario, the benefits were mostly captured by neighbour utilities. The conservation PR that Chin was engineering was focused on a different kind of power.

I have more from the Energy Perspectives blog, and then I will be back on this one. It states:

> The spin emanating from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the Prime Minister himself is not all that different than what we were hearing several years ago during the gas plant scandals days. ...
>
> Those two unelected individuals (Butts and Chin) originally involved in the Ontario electricity muddle now find themselves named as two (out of eleven) of the bullies pressuring [the former justice minister] to grant SNC-Lavalin a DPA (deferred prosecution agreement). In the case of the [Green Energy Act] and the gas plant scandal it took much longer to surface in the public eye than the current [SNC-Lavalin] scandal so it would appear the Chin/Butts team has lost some of the spin abilities they displayed in the past.

From the former attorney general, I quote:

> On Sept. 20, my chief of staff had phone calls with Mr. Chin and Justin To, both members of the Minister of Finance's office, about DPAs and SNC. ...
>
> ...Gerry talked to me about how the statute was a statute was passed by [former Conservative prime minister] Harper and that he does not like the law. I said something like that is the law that we have. ...

The foregoing led to the former attorney general saying this:

> I will now read to you a transcript of the most relevant sections of a text conversation between my chief of staff and me almost immediately after that meeting.
>
> Jessica: "Basically, they want a solution. Nothing new. They want external counsel retained to give you an opinion on whether you can review the DPP's decision here and whether you should in this case.... I told them that would be interference. Gerry said, 'Jess, there is no solution here that does not involve some interference.' At least they are finally being honest about what they are asking you to do! Don't care about the PPSC's independence. Katie was like 'we don't want to debate legalities anymore....' They keep being like 'we aren't lawyers, but there has to be some solution here.' "
>
> I—MOJAG—texted: "So where were things left?"
>
> Jessica: "So unclear. I said I would of course let you know about the conversation and they said they were going to 'kick the tires' with a few people on this tonight. The Clerk was waiting outside when I left. But they said that they want to set up a call between you and the Prime Minister and the Clerk tomorrow. I said that of course you would be happy to speak to your boss! They seem quite keen on the idea of you retaining an ex Supreme Court of Canada judge to get advice on this. Katie Telford thinks it gives us cover in the business community and the legal community, and that it would allow the Prime Minister to say we were doing something. She was like 'If Jody is nervous, we would of course line up all kinds of people to write OpEds saying that what she is doing is proper.' "

The foregoing highlights the unmitigated gall of two unelected individuals who, for whatever reasons, see themselves as king-makers, much as they did for the McGuinty government—

● (1640)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We went through many hours of budget debate. It was then explained that some latitude was given to members in addressing the budget debate. We now have budget implementation legislation. The member, even though she might suggest she will get to that debate, has really not done so.

She has emphasized the issue of character assassination of individuals who cannot defend themselves in the chamber. All we would ask is that the member be relevant to the debate we are supposed to be having today, the budget implementation bill. If she does not have a copy of the bill, we would be more than happy to provide her with more information about the bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke that it is about Bill C-97. I understand she is laying down the story, but it is a 20-minute period and 15 minutes have already been taken up. Therefore, for the next five minutes, I am sure she will talk about Bill C-97 and what the budget bill has to offer or not offer.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I paused for a moment to focus on the Prime Minister's chief of staff reference to lining up some amateur journalists to write up some fake news, such as the Ben Chin-Gerald Butts duo that had lined up Tyler Hamilton during the Ontario Green Energy Act. I am saying that what happened then is happening now.

A prominent CBC reporter not only recently confirmed being used to distribute the fake news stories, he followed up with a story about another global warming report, which is being used by the Liberal Party to justify its new carbon tax, while it desperately gropes to change the political channel to the weather channel.

The purpose of this is to put on the record the inner workings of the Prime Minister's Office, as it cynically manipulates some hidden agenda that has nothing to do with climate change and everything to do with another Liberal insider, rich at the expense of ordinary hard-working Canadians.

When it comes to the government's budget implementation bill or the budget itself, nothing is to be believed. In 2019, there is a sense among Canadians that the promise of progress, the idea that with hard work that everyone can build a better life is no longer true.

When we look through the budget implementation bill, we see something very peculiar. We see that subdivision B of division 9 of part 4 would amend the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act to allow for the addition, by regulation, nothing to do with MPs representing their people, of units of measurement for electricity and gas sales and distribution. The Liberals are also amending the Weights and Measures Act to authorize by regulation the use of new units of—

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is Bill C-97. It is the government's much vaunted budget implementation bill. The Liberals have been wondering when we are going to get around to addressing it, but they are not addressing it.

If we take a look around, we see how many people are in the House, how few are on that side—

● (1645)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The member is getting into a point of argument, not a point of order. If the hon. member wants to refer to a point of order, then the rules—

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, I would like you to call a quorum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am afraid we are short. Ring the bells.

And the bells having rung:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I believe we have quorum.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has one minute and 58 seconds remaining.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, it is quite curious that in a budget bill, the Liberals are changing the weights, measures and standards, and I will get back to that a little later.

Already there has been feedback from my riding on these budgets. I will read a couple of letters that I received, which directly relate to the budget itself and what is being cast upon Canadians.

The first letter begins with "Dear Minister", meaning the climate change minister. It states: "Please send me the forms to apply for a climate change action grant for our recent purchase of a new refrigerator for our home. Be assured we purchased it for the sole purpose of saving our planet from the ravages of global warming. Our new fridge will allow us to stock up on food since the carbon tax has impacted our ability to travel to Renfrew to shop for the necessities of life.

"I would like to apply for the same grant as Galen Weston of Loblaws, so please send me those forms. We're tired rural Canadian seniors who, although we worked hard, raised a family and paid taxes all our lives, were not able to amass the billions that Galen Weston has. I hope this does not disqualify us from the government corporate welfare handout.

"If our application is successful, you can tell your corporate friend Mr. Weston—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): There is another point of order by the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

Hon. Diane Finley: Mr. Speaker, despite my last intervention, I again call quorum because I still do not see it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We do not have quorum. Please ring the bells.

And the bells having rung:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We now have quorum.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has 41 seconds coming her way.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: The letter continues: "If our application is successful, you can tell your corporate friend Mr. Weston that we will promise to use this government welfare to buy and store only Loblaws bread in our new climate action fridge at whatever price he fixes it at. You can also assure Mr. Weston that if Loblaws is fined for tax evasion, no Trudeau DPA, his dollars will go to a good cause through the trickle-down effect of our new climate change action fridge.

"I trust that pandering to your friend Mr. Weston will help our application. I look forward to seeing you at the ballot box in October. Thank you. Cheers from Griffith, Ontario."

I will continue on during questions and comments.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind hon. members that they are to refer to other members by their position or the ridings they represent in the House and not mention their names.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for London North Centre.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a simple question for the member opposite. She focused just now on issues relating to climate change. Specifically, though, does she believe in climate change? Does she believe in the fact that the planet is getting warmer? Does she believe that human activity is primarily responsible for it? It is a simple yes or no question.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have commented on that same issue. One said, "Dear [Member]: I am trying awful hard to be nice towards a certain individual who thinks he's the king and ruler of Canada. Can you tell me, since when is it legal to charge a tax on top of a tax? The carbon tax is a tax is it not and if so why do we have to pay the HST on this new tax? Thanks in advance for your reply..."

Throughout the budget and the budget implementation, I have not found the page yet that explains why the government can charge the HST on top of a carbon tax. My constituents want to know.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to ask my colleague a question, and I will not judge the quality of her speech.

I wonder if she would care to comment on the fact that this is the government's last chance to implement its budget plan. This being the spring of 2019, this is probably the last budget implementation bill.

Is she, like me, disappointed that the government did not deliver on its promise to eliminate stock option deductions or at least cap the amount people can claim? As we saw in the budget statement, the benefits disproportionately accrue to the wealthiest Canadians.

Why not address that in the budget implementation bill? What is her opinion on the matter?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I am not the government yet, so I cannot say why something is or is not in the budget. However, I would like to draw to the attention of landowners in my riding, who are always very interested in what the government is doing, that there is a special subdivision D that would amend the Seized Property Management Act. It goes on to talk about the consultative services and how they will teach more bureaucrats and managers how to seize property. I am wondering if that is in anticipation of more people losing their homes and lands as a consequence of the carbon tax.

I also want to talk about this aspect of amending the Weights and Measures Act and using a different unit of measure for electricity. I am wondering if it has anything to do with the United Nations' move toward having a carbon currency.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, although it was not the subject of the omnibus budget bill, Bill C-97, I really was fascinated by the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke's search through the individuals who were part of the tentacles of SNC-Lavalin. I have been following this too, and I am very concerned that regardless of what party is in power, it seems to have a full grip.

For instance, I wonder if she could comment on the role of Gwyn Morgan, who was a very strong confidant and supporter of former prime minister Stephen Harper. He was put forward by Stephen Harper to be the chair of the Public Appointments Commission. He of course was the chair of the board of SNC-Lavalin during all of the alleged Libyan affairs, including also being the chair of its board of governance.

Could she also comment on the appointment of Arthur Porter to the highest position of trust in the land, by former prime minister Stephen Harper, to be chair of the review committee for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, CSIS? I mention that appointment in relation to SNC-Lavalin because, as we all know now, Arthur Porter was a co-conspirator with SNC-Lavalin in the bribery case involving the Montreal hospital.

My concern, and I wonder if the hon. member shares it, is regardless of who is in the PMO, SNC-Lavalin seems to know who to go to in order to get what it wants.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I know the member is really passionate about the UN, carbon and the atmosphere. She was at the UN back in the 1990s, as she so often tells us. An individual called Judith Hanna wrote for New Scientist. She said that for those keen to slow global warming, the most effective actions were in the creation of strong national carbon currencies.

What I am trying to glean from this budget implementation act is whether that relates to the needed amendment to measure electricity differently, along with other weights and measures. There was a further description of what this carbon currency would look like. With this budget implementation bill, it looks like we are changing the way the whole economy is going to work. It is going to be on an energy based system, as opposed to a market based system.

Further to the issue of creating a strategy for carbon currencies, the U.K. environment secretary, David Miliband, said:

> Imagine a country where carbon becomes a new currency. We carry bank cards that store both pounds and carbon points.
>
> When we buy electricity, gas and fuel, we use our carbon points, as well as pounds. To help reduce carbon emissions, the Government would set limits on the amount of carbon that could be used.

Is the government, and this is again something I hope I can glean from this document, working and going toward allocating or rationing energy per individual in the future, at least for the common everyday person? We know that would never apply to the jet-set that can blow carbon into the air with its jet fuel.

● (1655)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a fairly straightforward question. Today is Daffodil Days, which is about hope, educating and encouraging Canadians to give contributions to the Cancer Society. In this budget, there is a $150-million commitment toward the Terry Fox Research Institute.

Could the member indicate whether she supports that initiative?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I am so happy that my greatest fan mentioned the daffodil campaign right now. In fact, last week, when I was in the riding, I was sitting in the Scotiabank, collecting donations and providing daffodils to the kind donors.

Many people said that this was all they could give. They were so strapped because of the high taxes. One of the best things we can do is leave money in the pockets of people so they have the money to donate by themselves and they have that spirit of giving, rather than having organizations depend on the government for the handouts when it so feels like giving them.

Mr. Scott Simms (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member had qualms with the Paris Agreement. Her party voted for it and she voted against it. I am wondering if she would like to have a chance to talk about that.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I know the government is waiting with great anticipation for our leader's unveiling of our environmental plan. There is much reason for that anticipation. We are going to meet whatever standards we need in terms of making sure that the air, the water and our land is free of pollution.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before resuming debate, I want to remind hon. members that for the gentlemen in the Chamber a tie is required when they ask a question. Sometimes even the Speaker overlooks this, but I will be looking out for that in the questions to come.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to add my voice to the debate that just began on Bill C-97, another budget implementation bill from the Liberal government.

I rise for the first time as the finance critic for the New Democratic Party. I thank my leader, the member for Burnaby South, for trusting me and for granting me the privilege of serving in the NDP caucus on issues related to finances and the economy as well as on tax issues, as I already do in my role as critic for national revenue.

I am very pleased to be able to continue the fight for greater social, fiscal and even environmental justice, just as we have been doing for quite some time now. That is extremely important to me.

Unfortunately, I must say, this bill falls quite short of the expectations we had, on this side of the House, as well as the expectations of most Canadians. It falls far short of what we would expect from the Liberal government, which has failed to fulfill the promises it made during the election campaign.

It is all the more disappointing because we are debating the Liberal government's last budget implementation bill. This is the government's last real opportunity to implement its legislative proposals for moving our country forward. I am very disappointed that several of the Liberal government's promised initiatives are not found in this bill. The Liberal government will definitely not keep certain promises. In the next election campaign, the Liberals will have to defend why they are keeping Canadians waiting for beneficial and important measures that would improve the lives of most of our constituents. I am truly disappointed, even though some measures have been implemented.

It is difficult to examine such a huge bill. I will reiterate the comments of my colleague from Vancouver East, who earlier called this an omnibus bill. I, too, consider this to be an omnibus bill because of its nature, the variety of laws affected and the fact that many of these measures are not found in the budget document presented to the House on March 19.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that you will consider the points my colleague raised to show that this is an omnibus bill that meets the criteria set out in the new rules of the House of Commons.

I hope that parliamentarians will be able to have their say through separate votes, at the very least. This would allow us to make decisions as parliamentarians and do our jobs properly. It is very difficult for a member of Parliament to vote on a wide range of measures. We may agree with some and not others, but at the end of the day we have to make a choice.

We have to choose between measures that may be good but are connected to bad budget measures or bad legislative measures, which means that we are forced to oppose the entire document. I hope that the Chair will decide to divide this bill so that there will be several votes, which would allow us to better represent our constituents on such important issues. I am confident that we will be able to make good decisions.

Moving on from the form of this bill, I would like to talk about the content. This budget misses the mark and is in keeping with the trend we have seen in recent years and more obviously in recent months and days: putting the wealthy and Liberal Party cronies above all else. Lobbyists have direct access to the Prime Minister's Office, and the second they knock at the door or make a call, they get what they want. The office does everything it can to make them happy.

● (1700)

This budget is a continuation of the Liberals' policy to benefit the party's friends, insiders and donors, like SNC-Lavalin and Loblaws, which have joined the list of companies in the Liberal government's good graces. I could also mention KPMG and big pharma, which still have considerable influence in the Prime Minister's Office. Lastly, we cannot forget Kinder Morgan, the big, Houston-based oil company that pocketed $4.5 billion of Canadian taxpayers' money.

These kinds of actions give us a glimpse of a party's and a government's true values. This budget is essentially the continuation of a policy to benefit wealthy insiders. It obviously does not benefit the ordinary Canadians who truly need help. These people are struggling every day, every week and every month to make ends meet.

Pharmacare is one important element that is nowhere to be found in this bill even though it is an obvious and easy solution that people have been talking about for years. The Liberals have been promising pharmacare for over 20 years, but today, the parliamentary secretary talked about doing things the right way, studying the matter before taking action, laying the groundwork to create ideal conditions and setting up an advisory council before creating a universal pharmacare program. They have been promising that for 20 years. No more excuses. This is long overdue, but the government keeps saying that it is too soon to take action on this file because the conditions are not ideal yet.

People in Sherbrooke have talked to me about being unable to get some of their prescription drugs. One of my constituents has to take three drugs prescribed by his doctor, but because he cannot afford all three, he had to ask his pharmacist which one was the most important. That is an everyday reality for people in Sherbrooke and elsewhere in Canada. In this budget implementation bill, the government is telling people they will have to keep waiting even though everyone who has studied the problem agrees on the solutions. The government is still asking people to choose between medication and food or medication and rent.

Sadly, the government lacks the courage of its convictions. It refuses to stand up to the big pharmaceutical and insurance companies that object to this idea. These are the actions that show us where the Liberal government stands, namely on the side of the companies. These companies are resisting efforts to create a pharmacare program, because they see it as a threat to their bottom line. Everyone knows that drug and insurance companies are immensely profitable, and they are afraid of losing some of their market share, which would hurt their profits.

Once again, the Liberals are siding with big business over Canadians, who just want access to quality medication so they can heal and participate fully and actively in the economy. A healthy population means lower costs for the provincial health care systems, which are straining at the seams.

● (1705)

This is another example of the Liberal government's wait-and-see approach and its habit of putting off important decisions. Powerful lobbies are influencing the Prime Minister's Office and shutting down any good ideas that could hurt their bottom line.

Another thing the bill fails to mention is the environment. I brought this up earlier. The environment is the single most important issue for our generation and our society, especially now in 2019. It was already very important, but it is even more critical today. The environment is virtually a non-factor in the bill. As I was saying earlier, this bill is the Liberals' last chance to take a stand before the election, to propose meaningful and hopefully bold legislation. However, with respect to the environment, they are proposing a few paltry measures here and there. They are proposing measures for purchases of electric vehicles and renovation projects. Given the scale of the problem, these measures are grossly insufficient.

This clearly demonstrates that the Liberals are siding with large corporations on this issue. The major oil companies are still getting subsidies, and just recently they benefited from a $4.5-billion cheque. A single company got that big of a cheque from Canadian taxpayers, from the government. Once again, the government is saying that we need to put off any changes to oil subsidies. The Liberals have put that off until later, probably until after the election, if they are lucky enough to get re-elected and if we do not take their place. That is the reality of a wait-and-see government.

The government wants to put off these changes until later. Major lobby groups have been putting pressure on the government. Billionaire oil companies are getting cheques from the government and keeping their subsidies. Bill C-97 would have been a good opportunity to put an end to shameful oil subsidies that are being condemned around the world. Other countries have taken action to end oil subsidies. This is yet another example of a government putting the interests of large corporations above those of ordinary Canadians. Canadians deserve as much attention as the large corporations are getting from the Liberal government.

The most recent example of this is the famous $12-million subsidy. That is a lot of money. We tend to forget sometimes how much money we are really talking about. A significant amount of money, $12 million, was given to a highly profitable company, Loblaws. That is how the government chooses to fight climate change. It invests in companies that have all the money in the world. If there is a grocery store that has the means to buy itself some fridges, it is certainly Loblaws. In every one of our ridings there are grocery stores that are struggling to make ends meet every month. They want to pay their employees well and provide good working conditions. They see the government caving to pressure from multinationals like Loblaws and giving them the money they need to replace their refrigerators. It is so frustrating for taxpayers, businesses, small grocers, or any business that wants to become greener and invest in improving their energy efficiency, to see that corporations are the ones getting the subsidies to upgrade their refrigerators. It is the right thing to do, but the government chose the wrong target.

I also want to mention some of the proposed measures in the budget that are just half-measures. In some cases, it might be a step in the right direction. However, in other cases, the government again hits the wrong target.

There is the home buyers plan, which allows home buyers to withdraw some money from their RRSPs to invest in buying a house. The government told us that this measure will help millennials access home ownership. We recognize the importance of encouraging access to home ownership. In fact, we also proposed something to that effect in the past few weeks.

● (1710)

The national housing crisis must be addressed. It is clearly an important and serious issue for our country. The Liberals' solution involves expanding the home buyers' plan, allowing people to withdraw $10,000 more from their RRSPs to use as a down payment, raising the limit from $25,000 to $35,000.

Maybe some of my colleagues had young people in their ridings come and knock on their doors to say that $25,000 from their RRSPs was not enough and they needed more, $35,000, in order to buy a house. That makes no sense.

Perhaps some members will tell me that happened to them, but most young people who come to see me are not telling me they need more money from their RRSPs. They are telling me that they simply do not have any money to put towards a down payment, that they simply cannot afford to buy a house. It is not about their RRSPs or how much they can withdraw. I do not know how the Liberals came up with that solution. On top of that, they claim to be targeting millennials.

This may benefit some people who want to buy their first property, but it is certainly not something that will help millennials, given that statistics show that only 35% of them have RRSPs. It makes no sense to target this measure at millennials.

The bill also amends the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. This clearly does not meet the expectations of many unions and stakeholders involved in this important file, who want pensions to be protected from unscrupulous executives who will do anything to get their hands on as much money as possible before declaring bankruptcy.

What the government failed to do in this bill was change the creditors' priority ranking. It was the government's last chance to change creditors' order of priority in a budget implementation bill. It was an opportunity to put employees, their pensions, their salaries and their benefits first in the priority ranking. However, the government again chose to side with big business and lobbyists, who argued that it would not be good for the economy. They told the government not to give priority to employees because it would stifle investment. The government always gives in to these types of arguments by lobbyists who knock at the Prime Minister's door. Sears executives would like us to believe that they acted in good faith. That was another missed opportunity.

Another missed opportunity here has to do with student debt. The government says it will postpone collecting interest on student debt. That is how the government plans to help students drowning in debt once they complete their studies.

The government could support those students and help them become homeowners, as mentioned earlier, but no, students will continue to pay interest on their student loans, on what they owe the federal government. The government had one last opportunity to do something but missed it.

The Liberals are squandering their last chance. They are going to tell Canadians to wait a bit longer, but I think the last four years have proven to Canadians that whatever the Liberals say during a campaign is not worth much at all. The Liberals have had four years to make these changes and deliver on their promises, but they have clearly failed to do so. They have helped the rich at the expense of ordinary Canadians who really need help. It is a great shame those ordinary Canadians must suffer the consequences. The government is telling them to keep holding their breath.

That is unfortunate and is the reason why Canadians will have to choose another economic vision, another vision for our country, a vision for an energy transition, a true vision for the environment, a true vision for pharmacare, a true vision for housing, a true vision for helping people who are really in need. Canadians are going to have to choose people who will stand up to the big oil and economic interests of multinationals, which try to get everything they want from the Prime Minister's Office. Canadians will have people who stand with them.

● (1715)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his rather interesting speech. He seems to be very knowledgeable about the budget, and I must congratulate him for speaking about all the good things that the Liberals put in the budget to help Canadians. However, he said that it was not enough. He stated that we did not do enough for the environment, for example. He said that the measures for zero-emission vehicles were well received, but insufficient. Then he stated that people could not afford their medications, but he mentioned that we created an agency to negotiate the price of drugs, which will save $3 million a year.

I liked the things he mentioned. Since he stated that it is still not enough, could my colleague tell us what would be enough? The opposition keeps repeating that we have good measures that will help Canadians, but that they are not enough. Can he tell us if there is anything that lives up to his expectations?

● (1720)

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: No, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, it is nowhere near enough.

My colleague himself admits that the government is taking half-measures and that it can do better. He knows that realistic and documented solutions exist, but that the government lacks the courage to implement them. That is the problem. Although there are good ideas out there and they are well documented, the people in the Prime Minister's Office are kowtowing to the powerful lobbies of this world that are preventing the Liberal government from making progress. We saw that in the SNC-Lavalin affair. That is just one example among so many that show that the government is still serving the country's major economic and financial interests. When it comes to making the right decisions, the Liberals take half-measures to have us believe that they did something when they know full well that they are not doing enough.

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must say that in this case, I also appreciated the speech made by my colleague from Sherbrooke. I agree with him, much to the chagrin of my colleague from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

As the member for Sherbrooke said, this budget is dragging up broken promises, such as the promise to return to a balanced budget this year, which is rather unbelievable. It does not even include a timeline for balancing the budget. This is a first in our country's history.

The government is budgeting $41 billion to deflect attention from its mistakes, including its bungled foreign and domestic policy. Once again, the budget favours the major interest groups, as the member for Sherbrooke pointed out. We saw more evidence of this today, when the government gave Loblaws $12 million for refrigerators. It is absolutely ridiculous.

Does my colleague from Sherbrooke agree that this budget shows a lack of respect for Quebeckers?

In 2015, the member for Papineau, the Prime Minister, told a New York newspaper that Canada was postnational. This is an outright affront to Quebeckers, whose historical and political reality is very much alive and well.

There are also no measures in this bill to address the Quebec premier's concerns about the cost of the arrival of a huge number of illegal refugees. I know he does not like that term, but Quebec wants to be reimbursed for some of those costs. There is also nothing in the budget about a single tax return or the Quebec Bridge, and there is nothing to address the discriminatory measure wherein larger cities will get more money for sustainable mobility infrastructure than smaller ones like Quebec City.

Does my colleague agree that the 2019 budget implementation bill once again shows the government's lack of respect for all our fellow Quebeckers?

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes, absolutely.

The federal government quite simply ignored some very specific demands from the Government of Quebec. The member mentioned a few files. This clearly shows that the Prime Minister could care less about Quebec's requests, even though he had a private meeting with the new premier. That is nothing new. The Prime Minister is not going to start acting differently because Quebec has a new government. He has always had very little respect for Quebec and the demands of Quebeckers, unlike the NDP, which recognizes the Quebec nation, its autonomy and its ability to make decisions in its best interests in areas under its jurisdiction.

That is the reality within certain parties in the House that think they are always right and want to impose their ideas on the rest of the country. Other parties, like the NDP, recognize Quebec's specificity and the fact that it needs to be recognized not only in words but also through actions. It is important to be open to requests from Quebec and to listen carefully to Quebeckers. What we are seeing these days is 40 or so phantom MPs of the Liberal Party. No one really knows where they are or what they are doing. Any time Quebec asks for something, they seem to disappear. They are invisible, they have nothing to say, they are gone. Maybe that is symptomatic of being a member from Quebec who does nothing for Quebec.

● (1725)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with my hon. friend's comment that there are many shortcomings. One interesting one I was looking at, and one my colleague mentioned in his speech, was about the BIA and the CCAA under bankruptcy protection.

The Liberals promised that they were going to fix this and were going to have consultations. The experts gave the government some ideas on how to make sure that workplace health benefits would not be taken away anymore during bankruptcy protection. They also recommended that the government have a pension guarantee fund. They also wanted pensioners to be considered secured creditors and not unsecured creditors.

It was interesting to read what those experts gave the government as great recommendations. They told the government the best way to do it, and it required everyone involved to act in good faith. That is on page 67. That is how the government is going to fix the act. That is how we are going to keep pensioners from being ripped off.

Does my friend agree that this is a great way to fix the act to make sure that pensioners across Canada will no longer be ripped off, with just a handshake and people acting in good faith? I would like his comments, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his work on this issue and his expertise in the area of bankruptcy and insolvency.

Very few changes are ever made to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, an important piece of legislation that is exclusively under federal jurisdiction and that governs bankruptcies in this country. The government had an opportunity to make a real difference, to propose more meaningful changes than the ones brought forward in Bill C-97. It could have put creditors first, including the employees and pensioners of companies, in order to prevent any more problems such as the ones we saw at Nortel, Sears or companies in my colleague's riding from ever happening again. This is another opportunity missed by this government. This government says all the right things and makes all kinds of promises, but the results fall far short of the expectations and recommendations of experts, as my colleague pointed out. Experts have looked closely at these matters and are familiar with the reality. That is true of my colleague, who is known to be somewhat of an expert in this area.

This is another missed opportunity for the government, which is just relying on the good faith of these companies' administrators and trustees to properly distribute all of the bankruptcy assets and pay the creditors their due. This is an inadequate measure that falls well short of what experts and leaders in this field were hoping for.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in so many ways I disagree with my colleague and friend's debate during his 20 minutes.

The Liberal Party and the Prime Minister, back in the last election, made it very clear that the first priority was going to be Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be part of it. Virtually from day one, from the very first piece of legislation we introduced right up to this budget, it has all been about ensuring that we have a healthier economy and that we continue to build Canada's middle class. Whether it is tax cuts, negotiations with provinces on the legislative agenda or the enhancement of the GIS and the Canada child benefit, there have been numerous policies. The NDP, more often than not, has actually debated them out, voted against and resisted many of those progressive changes.

I anxiously await the next election, when this government is going to be able to go to the population and say how we have delivered on what we told Canadians we would in terms of our first priority.

I wonder if the member opposite might have some remorse that on many of the progressive actions this government has taken, the NDP continuously voted against them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I have no remorse about voting against the changes they proposed. These changes do not benefit the middle class.

The Liberals' definition of middle class is people who earn $180,000 a year. Those people are the ones benefiting the most from the so-called middle-class tax cut. People earning less than $45,000 a year did not get a cent from this government.

The big problem with the Liberal government is that they think people who earn $180,000 a year are part of the middle class. Those are the people the government made it a priority to help.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1730)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The House resumed from April 3 consideration of the motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion for concurrence in the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

Call in the members.

● (1805)

[*English*]

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

(Division No. 1290)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brosseau	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Choquette	Clarke
Cooper	Cullen
Davidson	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Eglinski	Fast

Finley
Garrison
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Harder
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Leitch
Lloyd
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nicholson
O'Toole
Pauzé
Poilievre
Ramsey
Rayes
Rempel
Sansoucy
Schmale
Shipley
Sopuck
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Van Kesteren
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber
Wong– — 127

Gallant
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Hardcastle
Hughes
Johns
Julian
Kent
Kmiec
Kwan
Laverdière
Liepert
Lobb
MacGregor
Maguire
Martel
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nantel
Nuttall
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Quach
Rankin
Reid
Richards
Saroya
Shields
Singh
Sorenson
Stetski
Stubbs
Tilson
Trudel
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Weir

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arseneault
Badawey
Baylis
Bendayan
Bittle
Boissonnault
Bratina
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Cuzner
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Gerretsen
Gould
Hajdu
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jordan
Khalid
Lambropoulos

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Beech
Bibeau
Blair
Bossio
Breton
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeCourcey
Dhillon
Dubourg
Duguid
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Garneau
Goodale
Graham
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hutchings
Jones
Jowhari
Khera
Lamoureux

Lapointe
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Monsef
Murray
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Poissant
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Tan
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Yip
Zahid– — 157

Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lefebvre
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
McCrimmon
McKay
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Morrissey
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peterson
Picard
Qualtrough
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sarai
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

PAIRED

Members

Goldsmith-Jones
Moore

LeBlanc
Thériault– — 4

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on the main motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

DUTCH HERITAGE DAY

The House resumed from April 4 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 207 under Private Members' Business.

● (1815)

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

Private Members' Business

(Division No. 1291)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Badawey
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Benzen
Berthold
Bittle
Blair
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bossio
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Bratina
Brosseau
Cannings
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chong
Clarke
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
Davies
Deltell
Dhillon
Donnelly
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Eglinski
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fergus
Finley
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Gallant
Garrison
Genuis
Gill
Godin
Gould
Graham
Hardcastle
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Kusie
Lake
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leitch
Levitt
Lightbound
Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arseneault
Aubin
Bagnell
Barrett
Baylis
Beech
Benson
Bergen
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault
Boucher
Boulerice
Brassard
Breton
Calkins
Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Choquette
Cooper
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davidson
DeCourcey
Dhaliwal
Diotte
Dreeshen
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Généreux
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goodale
Gourde
Hajdu
Harder
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Jeneroux
Jolibois
Jordan
Julian
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Laverdière
Lefebvre
Leslie
Liepert
Lloyd
Lobb
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Martel
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Monsef
Motz
Nantel
Nault
Nuttall
Oliphant
O'Regan
Ouellette
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Plamondon
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rayes
Rempel
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sansoucy
Saroya
Schmale
Serré
Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Singh
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stanton
Strahl
Sweet
Tan
Tilson
Trudel
Vandal
Vaughan
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Weir
Wong
Yip
Zahid– — 285
Lockhart
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacKenzie
Maguire
Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McKay
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
Nicholson
O'Connell
Oliver
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Poilievre
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sohi
Sorbara
Spengemann
Stetski
Stubbs
Tabbara
Tassi
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Virani
Warkentin
Webber
Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Members

Goldsmith-Jones
Moore
LeBlanc
Thériault– — 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN LOBBYIST TRANSPARENCY ACT

The House resumed from April 5 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.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-278.

● (1825)

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

(Division No. 1292)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Allison
Arnold
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bergen
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boudrias
Calkins
Chong
Cooper
Deltell
Dreeshen
Fast
Gallant
Genuis
Gladu
Gourde
Jeneroux
Kent
Kmiec
Lake
Liepert
Lobb
MacKenzie
Marcil
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz
Nuttall
Paul-Hus
Plamondon
Rayes
Rempel
Saroya
Schmale
Shipley
Sorenson
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Vecchio
Wagantall
Waugh
Wong– — 91

Albas
Alleslev
Anderson
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Benzen
Berthold
Boucher
Brassard
Carrie
Clarke
Davidson
Diotte
Eglinski
Finley
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Harder
Kelly
Kitchen
Kusie
Leitch
Lloyd
Lukiwski
Maguire
Martel
McColeman
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Nicholson
O'Toole
Pauzé
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Scheer
Shields
Sopuck
Stanton
Stubbs
Tilson
Van Kesteren
Viersen
Warkentin
Webber

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arseneault
Aubin
Bagnell
Beech
Benson
Bittle

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Baylis
Bendayan
Bibeau
Blaikie

Blair
Boissonnault
Boulerice
Bratina
Brosseau
Caron
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Choquette
Cullen
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Donnelly
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Garneau
Gerretsen
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Jolibois
Jordan
Julian
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Laverdière
Lefebvre
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacGregor
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Monsef
Murray
Nassif
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peterson
Philpott
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Singh
Sorbara

Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Bossio
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Cannings
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Cormier
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCourcey
Dhillon
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garrison
Goodale
Graham
Hardcastle
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Kwan
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Masse (Windsor West)

McCrimmon
McKay
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Morrissey
Nantel
Nault
Oliphant
O'Regan
Peschisolido
Petitpas Taylor
Picard
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Sarai
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sohi
Spengemann

Stetski
Tan
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Whalen
Yip
Zahid– — 194

PAIRED

Members

Goldsmith-Jones
Moore
LeBlanc
Thériault– — 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from April 9 consideration of the motion that Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for violent offences against Aboriginal women), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill S-215.

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

● (1835)

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

(Division No. 1293)

YEAS

Members

Aubin
Beaulieu
Blaikie
Boudrias
Boutin-Sweet
Cannings
Choquette
Davies
Dubé
Dusseault
Garrison
Hardcastle
Johns
Julian
Laverdière
Marcil
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Nantel
Pauzé
Quach
Rankin
Singh
Trudel– — 45
Barsalou-Duval
Benson
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boulerice
Brosseau
Caron
Cullen
Donnelly
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Gill
Hughes
Jolibois
Kwan
MacGregor
Masse (Windsor West)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Ouellette
Plamondon
Ramsey
Sansoucy
Stetski

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Arnold
Arya
Barlow
Baylis
Bendayan
Bergen
Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Boucher
Bratina
Calkins
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Chagger
Chen
Clarke
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davidson
Deltell
Dhillon
Dreeshen
Dubourg
Duguid
Easter
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fast
Fillmore
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodale
Gourde
Hajdu
Hardie
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hutchings
Jeneroux
Jordan
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Kusie
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lebouthillier
Leitch
Levitt
Lightbound
Lobb
Long
Ludwig
MacKenzie
Maguire
Martel
May (Cambridge)
McColeman
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef
Morrissey
Murray
Nault
Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arseneault
Badawey
Barrett
Beech
Benzen
Berthold
Bittle
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Bossio
Brassard
Breton
Carrie
Casey (Charlottetown)
Champagne
Chong
Cooper
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCourcey
Dhaliwal
Diotte
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Eglinski
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fergus
Finley
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Freeland
Gallant
Généreux
Gerretsen
Godin
Gould
Graham
Harder
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jones
Jowhari
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Lake
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lefebvre
Leslie
Liepert
Lloyd
Lockhart
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McCrimmon
McKay
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Mendicino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz
Nassif
Ng

Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Poilievre	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Saroya	Scarpaleggia
Schmale	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sopuck
Sorbara	Sorenson
Spengemann	Stanton
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tilson	Trost
Van Kesteren	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vecchio	Viersen
Virani	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Whalen	Wong
Yip	Young
Zahid– — 237	

PAIRED

Members

Goldsmith-Jones	LeBlanc
Moore	Thériault– — 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:36 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CREDIT CARD FAIRNESS ACT

The House resumed from January 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-419, An Act to amend the Bank Act, the Trust and Loan Companies Act, the Insurance Companies Act and the Cooperative Credit Associations Act (credit cards), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it always a pleasure to rise to support a colleague's bill, especially when that colleague is the hon. member for Victoria. I admire the way he manages files and provides pertinent answers to our questions when we are discussing the matter with him. I must admit, he has a talent for getting to the heart of the issue.

One thing that is seriously starting to grate on me after nearly eight years in the House of Commons is having to say that a bill is a step in the right direction. It is as though we are never able to fully resolve an issue and close a file and say that the matter is resolved and we can tackle another problem and find the best solutions.

That is exactly what the member for Victoria has done with this bill, however; he even stated what he sadly cannot do within the confines of a private member's bill. Nevertheless, he still very much hopes that Bill C-415 will get the ball rolling and motivate the government to either add what he was not able to include and pass this bill or, alternatively, overhaul Bill C-93, the counterpart of this bill that, to my mind, is not up to snuff.

After speaking with my colleague from Victoria, I was preparing a theoretical and even intellectual presentation on the merits of expunging records for simple possession of cannabis compared to the suspension of records. However, reality caught up with me in my riding. I will therefore provide an overview of a case I had to deal with in my own riding and which clearly shows, in black and white, that the government's Bill C-93 does not go far enough and that Bill C-415 really does take a step in the right direction. I do not believe you could find a better example.

I got a phone call from one of my constituents who was in a bit of a panic. Actually, it was a complete panic. I will not name names or say anything that would give away this person's identity, but he is a musician. I have a soft spot for those in the music business because I was a musician myself for many years. This particular musician is on an international tour with a band. They have played in England, several European countries, and many cities across Canada. Now the band is set to play 15 or 20 American cities. Things are going well. It is probably the best tour of this musician's career. A musician's life is not necessarily easy and it is not always a very lucrative career either. Artists really have to have a strong conviction that they are making an essential contribution to society.

Everything is going well for this musician. The whole group, both the musicians and the trucks with the equipment, arrive at the American border. They fill out the necessary paperwork and cross the border. Everyone gets through no problem except for this individual, because border officials saw that he had been charged with simple marijuana possession 25 years ago for one gram of cannabis that he forgot was in his pocket. He is barred from entering the U.S. The band is supposed to play 15 to 20 shows in the United States and they have just lost one of their musicians. They either have to find a replacement or cancel that leg of the international tour because this individual was charged for the possession of one gram of marijuana 25 years ago.

● (1840)

Obviously, the conviction happened 25 years ago and it is on his record. It is not difficult to imagine how someone could forget this after 25 years. It is kind of laughable, especially since society has evolved in the meantime.

This musician is therefore unable to do the tour. He called me to ask how this situation could be fixed as quickly as possible so that he could join the band for the rest of the American tour, since this record did not cause problems anywhere else in the world.

There are all kinds of conditions that you have to meet. You cannot request a pardon until at least five years have passed since the conviction. After 20 years, that condition is fairly easy to meet. Then, you must pay $631 to apply. Whether this amount is high or not high enough is a matter of perspective, as it is directly linked to the individual's annual income. For a musician, $631 could easily represent one or two shows where he is working for the Crown and not for his family or himself. In addition, he has to track down certain documents, like police reports and legal documents. This takes time, and deciding whether he can continue the tour is a time-sensitive decision.

To top it all off, you have to wait 24 months for a response. There is your answer for the American part of the tour. This is a real problem, since Parliament decided this was no longer a relevant issue in 2019. We legalized simple possession of marijuana. The whole time that this government was preparing the legislation, it never bothered to consider what would happen the day after this bill passed.

How do we make sure that a crime that is not considered a crime anymore no longer weighs on people who committed it in the past? If society has evolved to the point of recognizing marijuana as legal, there is no reason in the world to make people suffer permanently for doing something that is no longer seen as a crime. However, their records live on.

If we go with the record suspension approach proposed in the government's Bill C-93, it would be too little, too late, because the suspension would not make the criminal record disappear. The name says it all. The record is suspended. I will admit that the government is showing openness by eliminating the fee to apply for a record suspension. In contrast, the process of expungement is very clear. With expungement, all existing files relating to the conviction are erased, and the slate is wiped clean, as if the crime had ever happened. That also enables anyone with such a conviction on their record to answer "no" with perfect confidence and honesty whenever they are asked if they have a criminal record, because the record has basically disappeared and the offence is deemed never to have been committed. That is an important difference proposed in Bill C-415.

My time is almost up. I had so much more to talk about, but the case I mentioned is probably more compelling than anything I could say. I urge all members to make sure they really understand the difference between expungement and suspension and to support the bill introduced by my colleague from Victoria.

● (1845)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be rising at this late hour to join the debate on this private member's bill, Bill C-419.

Bill C-419 is an act to amend the Bank Act, the Trust and Loan Companies Act, the Insurance Companies Act and the Cooperative Credit Associations Act. The reason it mentions all of those is that the bill would amend every single one of those acts in exactly the same way regarding credit cards, including exactly what type of reporting will happen on the credit cards and what type of information will be required for customers to receive.

My colleague, the member for Lethbridge, has moved this excellent piece of legislation, which I ardently support. It is about time that there be greater fairness for those who use credit cards. There is a Yiddish proverb that says, "Do good and ask not for whom", which is exactly the spirit of this proposed legislative amendment that my colleague is moving. We are trying to do good here on behalf of all of those who carry a large amount of credit card debt. We are not asking who will receive the benefit. We simply want to provide more fairness for those who have to use credit cards on a daily basis, whether they are students, members of Parliament or just regular Canadians who have expenses and use credit cards on a daily basis to pay for them.

As I mentioned, the same amendments would apply to every act the bill mentions. However, on the Bank Act side, what the legislation proposes to do, under proposed subsection 451.1(1), is that if a person pays at least 95% of an outstanding credit card balance, interest would be charged only on the difference. For example, if there is $1,000 owing and $950 and change is paid, then interest would be charged only on the balance left owing.

What is happening right now is that, with online banking and the apps that banks provide, it is easy to make a typo mistake when trying to pay a bill. What people do not understand is that if the full amount owing is not paid, then interest on the full amount is charged. For example, on a $1,000 credit card bill, if $950 is paid, then the interest charged will be on the $1,000, and that could be at 19.95%, 21.99% or whatever the credit card interest is. The interest is not charged just on the amount outstanding but on the full amount. Therefore, the bill proposes that if 95% is paid, then there would be credit for that amount and interest would not be owing.

The bill is a perfectly reasonable piece of legislation that gets to the point of fairness. It gets to the point for people who are honestly trying to pay off the full amount. Perhaps a person could not pay the full amount in a particular month, or had made an error in the calculation of the amount owing or made a mistake typing on the app when trying to pay the correct amount and clicked next thinking it was perfectly fine. If people make an honest mistake, they would not be charged on the full amount, such as in my example of the $1,000. They would only be charged on the difference left outstanding on the credit card bill.

The bill also proposes that consent be sought for any type of credit limit increase, which is found in proposed subsection 451.3(1) of the bill. Specifically, if a bank chooses to increase a credit limit, it has to obtain the cardholder's approval to do so first. This is an issue for people who have a credit report out there that they are checking and double-checking.

For example, when applying for a loan or a mortgage, if one has a lot of credit cards on his or her credit report, the banks can see the balance and total amount of credit a person can obtain, which will affect whether a bank approves a mortgage, credit card, personal line of credit or home equity line of credit. As well, it can be shocking to get a letter in the mail where the bank is extending extra credit that was not asked for. A person may use a credit card for a specific purpose and only wants $1,500, not $10,000 or $15,000, but the bank could increase the credit without asking permission. I have had this happen to me and have asked the bank to lower it back down.

● (1850)

That is probably a nice problem to have for some, but for those of us who are trying to manage our credit reports and credit rating scores, it is a bother. We have to reach out to the bank and have it changed back to what it used to be. Therefore, this particular provision of the act, which I like, and proposed subsection 451.3(2), "Confirmation in Writing", which I also like, I think get to some of the problems that could happen if banks and issuers in general could simply just issue credit limits that people do not want.

I have had it happen in the past. My son, who was eight years old at the time, was issued a notice that he was eligible for a credit card for $500. I do not know how the company got the information. It must have drummed it up in its database. I had to call the bank to inform it that my young Maximillian should not be eligible for a $500 credit card because, although he was a student, he was not a university student and the bank probably did not mean to send it to him.

The customer service agent apologized about the error and we had a good laugh about it on the phone, but of course those types of situations should not be happening. Parents should not have to be calling a bank to double-check with it as to how it got the information and why it made such an error.

I think this legislation is timely. As I mentioned, we should be doing good here and not asking for whom. There is no lobby out there asking for these credit limit rules to be imposed. I do not think there is a lobby out there asking for the changes proposed in this piece of legislation. I think the member for Lethbridge is simply going after fairness for the general population. It is a diluted benefit across the entire Canadian population for all those consumers who are using a credit card.

Many consumers in Canada prefer to use debit, and I know why. I sometimes rely on my debit card as well. However, this is for all those who are using a credit card, regardless of who the issuer is, to make sure that if they are trying to get close to paying their total amount—95% in this case, of their outstanding balance owing—they will not be charged interest on the full amount because they did not pay it all off. It is there in the terms of reference.

We are all like this. I will be the first to tell members I have never read my iTunes user agreement. I admit to that. I have never read it. I just click on "Okay" every single time. I trust the member for Kingston and the Islands has read it; I know he has.

I have gone through the Netflix one, just out of sheer curiosity as to what is in there, but many of us simply click on "Okay" and move on. We are all guilty of this.

However, I have read my credit card rules and the little sub-points in them. I did it before I became a member of Parliament, and afterward especially, because I realized very quickly how much of our expenses are run through our offices. I had to ask for five credit card limit increases because so many of our expenses are run through our credit cards. I do not know if other members have had this experience, but many of our expenses are, so I carry a balance month to month.

I am fortunate that I can pay it off every single month. It is a practice my parents instilled in me. For those of us who are unable to do so, for those of us who do make those typing mistakes—I know I have made a few expensive typing mistakes in 2018 that cost me very dearly in interest—and for those of us who are getting closer, the 95% the member for Lethbridge is proposing is a reasonable legislative change that will do good. We are not asking for whom, because all credit card users across Canada will benefit from this legislative change. I hope that it will find support on both sides of the House that will send it to committee for a thorough review of the consequences of making such a legislative change.

I think that in this case, more information and control for credit card holders and fairness on the side of how much interest people are paying when they are trying to pay off the total amount owing on their account balance is a good thing. It is good thing for Canadian credit card users. We would do good and we will not ask for whom, so I am imploring all members of the House to support this important piece of legislation that has been brought forward by my colleague from Lethbridge.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill C-419, the credit card fairness act.

I also want to thank the hon. member for Lethbridge for allowing us to talk about fairness, transparency, and financial consumer protection. These files are important to our government. I am pleased to see that the hon. member shares the concerns that have been guiding our work since the beginning of our term in 2015.

Canadians know that it is not always easy to manage their relationship with their bank and other financial institutions. That is why the government ensures that year after year there are rigorous consumer protection standards in place to reassure Canadians when they make transactions and decisions on financial products and services.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, some of the proposals for the credit card products in Bill C-419, as presented, could harm or confuse Canadians.

As I will describe, our government has introduced a number of new consumer protection measures in the Budget Implementation Act, 2018, No. 2, or Bill C-86, to further empower and protect financial consumers of credit card products. In fact, with the new set of rules to protect Canadians when they deal with their banks, our government has put in place the most significant change since the creation of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada in 2001.

Further, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, or FCAC, has a number of tools available to raise awareness of credit and consumer debt issues, and is continually working to improve the financial literacy of Canadians.

However, the bill proposes that cardholders who leave as much as 5% of their balance unpaid in a month would pay reduced interest. This type of measure could encourage Canadians to carry a balance on their credit account and increase credit card indebtedness.

In contrast, existing credit card rules encourage Canadians to use credit cards responsibly. Borrowers who pay off their entire balance monthly benefit from a 21-day interest-free grace period. This incentivizes Canadians to pay their credit card bills in full without incurring interest costs.

Also, some specific measures that protect consumers are already in place in the Bank Act as they have already been introduced as part of the comprehensive package of measures included in our government's most recent Budget Implementation Act, 2018, No. 2, or Bill C-86, which received royal assent on December 13, 2018.

For example, Bill C-419 proposes to require a bank to obtain express consent from the consumer prior to increasing the credit limit on a credit card account and provide written confirmation in cases of oral consent. This requirement is already provided for in the existing protections.

Bill C-419 also proposes to require specific information disclosures in credit card advertisements, including the annual rate of interest. This is largely duplicative of the existing requirements, including the requirement to disclose in advertisements the annual rate of interest and non-interest charges.

On another front, some of the proposals could confuse or harm Canadians. They would go against the spirit of our reforms in last year's BIA to protect consumers when they deal with their banks.

Our government has taken concrete action with Bill C-86 to strengthen the rights of consumers and better address their interests when they deal with their banks.

Our government also introduced measures to improve the ability of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada to protect consumers. This legislation received royal assent in December 2018, and included 60 new or enhanced measures to protect bank customers.

● (1900)

[*Translation*]

These measures include requiring banks to have policies in place to ensure that consumers receive products and services that are appropriate to their situation; requiring banks to notify consumers who might incur fees and inform them of steps they can take to avoid those fees; creating a new prohibition against presenting misleading information to consumers; and creating a new prohibition against exerting undue pressure on consumers when selling products or services.

[*English*]

These measures reflect best practices in the provinces and international jurisdictions, and represent the most significant change to financial consumer protection in Canada since the creation of the FCAC in 2001.

Before introducing Bill C-86, the government consulted with stakeholders, including provinces and territories, to develop these measures. I would like to spend some time on this important point.

[*Translation*]

This bill might not be well received by the provinces and territories, and especially by Quebec. Bill C-419 has not been the subject of much consultation with stakeholders, including the provincial and territorial governments. This is not what happened with Bill C-86, the budget implementation bill, which I was talking about earlier and which was the subject of extensive consultations with the provinces and territories. Consumer protection is an area in which both provincial and territorial governments and the federal government are active.

Several provinces, including Quebec, have comprehensive financial consumer protection rules. Consulting provinces and territories is crucial before introducing new measures to avoid conflict and duplication. The Government of Quebec and the National Assembly have made it very clear that any new federal rules must first be the subject of consultations in order to ensure that they respect provincial jurisdictions and will not have any unintended consequences. This is a lesson that everyone here in the House learned in the early days of this government, including the opposition. I cannot emphasize this point enough. It is very important that there be thorough consultations with the provinces before going ahead with a bill like this. In addition, major stakeholders, such as consumer groups, must be engaged in the process to ensure that there will not be any unintended consequences for consumers.

[*English*]

The list of measures I have described is only one part of what the government is doing to protect Canadians' interests. Let me go into more depth about other measures the government is taking.

The first is the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada's excellent work to raise awareness of credit card and consumer debt issues while also working to improve the financial literacy of Canadians.

The FCAC offers a range of online tools, educational materials and programs intended to help Canadians make informed financial decisions. It also has tools to help consumers understand how credit cards work and how to use them responsibly. For example, the FCAC offers a credit card payment calculator that lets Canadians explore different payment options and see the cost of only making minimum payments.

Beyond credit cards, our government is taking additional action to protect and empower financial consumers. We know that when Canadians have disputes with their banks, they deserve to have access to a resolution process that is fair and impartial. That is why bank consumers can take any complaints they cannot resolve with their banks to an independent body free of charge.

● (1905)

[*Translation*]

To ensure that the system is meeting Canadians' needs, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada will conduct a review by June 2019 to assess the banks' complaints handling process and the effectiveness of the external complaints bodies.

In addition, to respond to the unique needs of Canada's aging population, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada will engage with banks and seniors' groups to create a code of conduct to guide banks in their delivery of services to Canada's seniors. The Minister of Seniors will support this engagement.

Measures the government has taken recently are well-founded and will strengthen financial consumer protection. We are working with our community and industry partners, as well as the provinces and territories.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the Government of Canada is absolutely dedicated to protecting consumers in their dealings with banks and to helping all Canadians achieve and maintain financial well-being by managing money and debt wisely and planning and saving for the future.

Guided by what matters most to Canadians, the government will continue to work to ensure that more Canadians are better off as we grow our economy today and over the long term. Due to the measures already contained in Bill C-86, and the other factors I have mentioned, such as appropriate and informed consultations with the provinces and territories, I recommend that my hon. colleagues oppose Bill C-419.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate the opportunity today to rise in this chamber to speak to this private member's bill from my colleague, the member of Parliament for Lethbridge.

I want to reiterate something the hon. member for Calgary Shepard said. I believe that the intention of the member for Lethbridge is to help Canadians get ahead and help Canadians stay ahead. That is something we have not seen the government of the day assist in doing.

I am very proud to stand today to support this piece of legislation.

Unfortunately, not every Canadian has a trust fund, like the Prime Minister. The majority of Canadians, in fact the majority of constituents in Calgary Midnapore, do not have those types of trust funds. As a result, they must rely on their own resources and their own family decision-making to manage their finances, because they simply do not have the resources the Prime Minister has to lean on.

Life is becoming less and less affordable for Canadians. I certainly, as a mother, can say this. When I go grocery shopping, I cannot believe the increase in the cost of groceries I am seeing. Mortgages, of course, are getting more and more difficult to obtain, with the recent stress test, particularly in Calgary, a place where the market is not defined the same way it is in larger cities.

Gas, certainly, has just hit record prices in the last three or four years, as has home heating. I will take this moment to say that I very much support the initiative of our leader in making home heating more affordable for Canadians.

Families like mine sit around the dinner table making difficult decisions. Will they be able to enrol their son or daughter in gymnastics? Will they be able to enrol their son or daughter in hockey? Is there enough money to have meat every day of the week? Probably not. That is because the Liberal government is not helping to make life more affordable for Canadians.

I would also include the carbon tax, the carbon tax that we are seeing many provinces across the country refuting, such as Saskatchewan, of course, where my father is from. Manitoba and Ontario are also refuting the carbon tax.

God willing, I hope that we have a new United Conservative Party government in Alberta on Tuesday, led by the previous member for Calgary Midnapore, whose footsteps I am so proud to follow in.

Canadians do not want a life that is more expensive. They want a life that is aspirational and attainable. What they really want is fairness and transparency. Might I add that we are not seeing this at all recently from the government of the day. However, this credit card fairness act would promote these principles. I will review them once again.

Number one, the credit card fairness act would mandate that if a cardholder paid more than 95% of the outstanding balance before the payment due date, the bank could not charge interest on the amount paid on or before the due date. The bank could only charge interest on the amount outstanding after the due date.

Number two, it would ensure that payments made by cardholders were applied to balances with the highest interest rate first, before being applied to balances at a lower interest rate.

Number three, it would require banks to disclose on the monthly statement how much interest the cardholder had paid in the previous 12 months.

Number four, it would require that marketing materials prominently communicate the annual fee, the annual interest rate and the period of time until the introductory rate ended, along with the interest rate that would apply following that period.

Number five, it would prohibit banks from increasing interest rates retroactively on the cardholder's outstanding balance owing.

Number six, it would require banks to provide an online mechanism for consumers to cancel their credit cards and/or decrease their credit limit. As my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard, mentioned, it is not uncommon to receive a notice in the mail that one's credit limit has been increased.

Number seven, it would legislate that banks must obtain consent before increasing a cardholder's credit limit. As I said, this is something that would promote better financial management by families across Canada.

● (1910)

Families need to have full information when making financial decisions. I need not remind anyone that household debt at present is 170% of disposable income. That means that most Canadians owe $1.70 for every $1 in after-tax earnings, for a total of $1.83 trillion of household debt, which is incredible, or an average of $22,800 per Canadian. I really believe that the member for Lethbridge is making this sincere and humble attempt to help families across Canada as they face difficult decisions in this financial crisis, which as I said is not being assisted by the government of the day, as they make their financial decisions.

Every family in Canada goes through the process of making these decisions, such as home renovations. Many homes in Calgary come with undeveloped basements and this is a significant investment if families decide to renovate their homes. A new car is another significant investment, as well as vacations. These are all difficult decisions that Canadian families have to make relative to their finances. The member of Parliament for Lethbridge is trying to help these families manage their finances.

I will mention what a fan I am of financial literacy for Canadians. I want to recognize a special constituent of mine, Shamez Kassam, who is a financial planner in my riding. He has an annual financial planning summit for women, at which I have twice now been the keynote speaker, and that is another reason I support this piece of legislation. I believe in financial literacy for women because women, wives and mothers, are a major part of running finances within our families. I definitely believe that the member for Lethbridge would help families with this legislation.

We all know that people need a credit card to do anything and everything in this day and age, such as booking a hotel, booking a flight or going on vacation. In fact, today I used my credit card to make a payment for my son's birthday party. We are going to a Roughnecks game. I am really looking forward to that at the end of April. I receive the Calgary Sun newspaper every day on my front porch. I look forward to reading my horoscope and the news. This goes on my credit card. Again I applaud the hon. member for Lethbridge for putting forward this legislation.

My colleague, the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, pointed out that previously the government had the position of a minister of consumer and corporate affairs. Unfortunately, under the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien, that position was eliminated. In the absence of the previous checks and balances we had, we need to give Canadian families the power to have more knowledge and information when making these complicated financial decisions. As I stated, we want to help Canadians get ahead and stay ahead.

As I mentioned previously, the Liberal government is not helping. We had the fourth consecutive deficit budget, adding to the debt. My son, at this point, will be 32 years old when the budget is balanced. That is absolutely terrible. I have said if financial planners need a new product, it should be the RDSP, the registered debt savings plan, so that all youth will have the money to pay off their debt eventually.

I hope the government will do the right thing. We are an aspirational nation. On this side of the House, we are a party that wants Canadians to live their dreams and that happens by having more information and more control over their finances. I urge the government to vote for this bill that would help Canadians get ahead and stay ahead. It is the right thing to do.

● (1915)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Lethbridge has five minutes for her right of reply.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to correct the record. Earlier, the parliamentary secretary said that this bill may “confuse“ or “harm” Canadians. I find it very interesting that it would confuse Canadians or cause harm to Canadians when it has seven measures within it that would protect them and advocate for the right of fairness and transparency. Only Liberal logic would say that fairness and transparency somehow would confuse or harm Canadians. It is very interesting.

Nevertheless, the bill before the House today is my private members' bill, Bill C-419, which is the credit card fairness act. In the legislation, I propose seven changes that would advocate on behalf of Canadian consumers.

The reason I am proposing this is because people from across the country have told me they are struggling to make ends meet and that one of the things that could be done to assist them would be an increase in the fairness and transparency that surround credit cards so they could make better and more informed decisions with regard to credit card use.

I understand this would not solve all the problems, and it certainly would not. People have to take personal responsibility for their spending habits. However, fairness and transparency are noble principles to which we should hold banks accountable. Government officials advocate on behalf of Canadian consumers.

This is the bill that is being proposed to Parliament, and it is important for a couple of reasons.

First, nearly every person in Canada has a credit card. We use it for Amazon purchases, or Uber rides or to book a plane ticket or a hotel room. It is a necessity to get by in our modern Canadian life.

The other reason this is so important is because consumers deserve transparency and to be treated with fairness. At the end of the day, it is difficult when people are dealing with something as complex as the Bank Act to represent themselves as a consumer or advocate for change. Therefore, consumers rely on government officials, those in the House, to advocate on their behalf when they find themselves in a tight situation where it is difficult for them to create change on their own initiative.

It is right for governments to insist that banks be fair and transparent. It is right because these banks hold people's money and therefore hold a lot of power. Those of us in the House have the responsibility to push back on that and to ensure they abide by the laws.

I will very briefly outline the seven reforms within the legislation.

First, when people make payments on their credit cards, and let us say they do not pay it off quite in full but pay 95% or more, it would mean they would not be expected to pay interest on the entire bill, but only on the amount outstanding. Right now, that is not the case. For example, if a person has a bill for $1,000 and pays off $999, that person would expect to pay interest only on the $1 that is outstanding. That seems quite reasonable. Most Canadians I talk to think that is the way things are, but it is not.

In fact, many people in the House think that is the way things are. It is not. Instead, if a person pays $999 off a credit bill, that person pays interest on the entire original $1,000 and not the $1 that is outstanding. Let us be very clear there, let us make some changes and make it more fair.

Second, if a cardholder has a high-interest debt and a low-interest debt, it would be reasonable for the amount that the cardholder pays on the bill to be applied to the highest interest first. Right now, banks take advantage of that a bit and like to put it toward the lower amount, which helps them collect further money. That is unfair. I want to advocate on behalf of the consumers, so I believe 100% of their payment should go toward the highest interest first.

Third, the bill would also require banks to disclose the amount of interest cardholders pay on their monthly statements.

Fourth, it would require advertisements and marketing materials to properly display all the information in bold print, not fine print.

Fifth, it would also prohibit credit card companies from increasing interest rates retroactively; in other words, on money already spent. That seems fair.

Sixth, it would require credit card companies to provide an online mechanism by which people could cancel their credit cards. This is also fair.

Seventh, the bill would legislate that credit card companies could not automatically increase a cardholder's limit, which is very important for consumer protection.

I would ask for the support of the House to bring fairness and transparency to credit card consumers.

● (1920)

[*Translation*]

The Acting 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 yea.

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 nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, a recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, May 1, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, this year is the 82nd anniversary of the Nanjing massacre. On November 30, 2017, I asked the Prime Minister if he would set December 13 as Nanjing massacre commemorative day to mark the 80th anniversary of the horrific events.

Since then, with the support of diverse community leaders, I have campaigned for an entire year, raising awareness and collecting signatures to support this endeavour. Over the course of the year, we collected tens of thousands of signatures from Canadian citizens and residents. The petitioners called for the government to declare December 13 each year as Nanjing massacre commemorative day.

The commemoration of the Nanjing massacre is about the formal recognition of atrocities, learning from history and paying tribute to those impacted. If we can learn from history and commit ourselves to preventing it from happening again, humanity benefits.

The treatment of Yazidi women in northern Iraq shows that large-scale, systemic sexual violence continues to be used as a tactic to assert power and dominance, to dehumanize people and to attack their identity. We must recognize these atrocities now and act to end those that are currently under way.

It is estimated that as many as 300,000 people were killed in the Nanjing massacre. Another 200,000 women and girls from Korea, China, Japan, Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines and other occupied territories in Asia were tricked, kidnapped or coerced by the Imperial Japanese Army into sexual slavery, serving as comfort women.

Currently, the UN recognizes 19 countries in conflict where sexual violence is used as a weapon of war. Canada has a rich humanitarian tradition of advocating for peace and recognizing global atrocities, in which women and children are often brutal casualties of war and armed conflicts.

That is why I moved a unanimous-consent motion on November 28, 2018, to declare December 13 every year as Nanjing massacre commemorative day.

Order of Canada recipient, Joy Kogawa, said to the importance of this motion:

> In an age of increasing xenophobia and historical revisionism, when even the victims of the Holocaust can once more be openly mocked, [the member for Vancouver East's] motion assumes a new urgency to align ourselves with the world's historians and to guard against revisionists, equivocators and deniers of history who attempt to falsify and sanitize the past. Our humanity depends on recognizing our capacity for barbarity.

It was extremely disappointing that the motion failed. Back on November 30, 2017, I asked if the government would proclaim December 13 as Nanjing massacre commemorative day. I received an encouraging answer from the former minister of Canadian heritage, as she offered to work with me to achieve this goal.

I followed up with the minister and she informed me that the issue falls in the jurisdiction of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I then wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who asked me to work with her chief of staff. Subsequently, I was advised that in fact the matter should be dealt with by the minister of heritage. I then went back to the former minister of heritage, at which point she advised that it would not be possible to have the declaration made by December 13, 2017.

Even though the window had closed for 2017, I campaigned for a full year, speaking with countless Canadians face to face across the country, and finally collecting tens of thousands of signatures, which I brought to the House on November 28, 2018. Needless to say, I was deeply disappointed that my unanimous-consent motion failed.

While the message I received from the Liberal government had been positive, when it came down to the vote, I was taken aback to learn that the Liberal MPs actually voted against the motion. When I moved the motion for the first time, the motion did not pass, and the Speaker at the time, in an unprecedented way, noted that the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan voted against it.

However, at the end of the day, the government members also did not vote for this motion.

● (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is out of time. I am sure she will be able to add to her comments in her next allotted time slot.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government acknowledges and commemorates a number of tragedies that occurred during the chaos of the Second World War. Such terrible moments remind us that we must remain engaged in promoting peace, multiculturalism, inclusion and respect for diversity.

[*English*]

What occurred in Nanjing on December 13, 1937, was a horrible moment in human history. It reminds us that we need to remain constantly vigilant about the dangers of all forms of hatred, discrimination and violence, that it is all too easy to be blinded by hate to the detriment of human rights.

Our government acknowledges and understands the value of learning and being cognizant of atrocities that have been inflicted on international communities. These horrific moments give us insight into preventing such incidents in the future.

[*Translation*]

Canadians know that we must continue to remember the tragedies of the Second World War, such as the Nanjing massacre, and their impact on our communities.

[*English*]

The Government of Canada is committed to advancing human rights and gender equality. It has recognized the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that all peoples have inalienable rights, including the right to equality, freedom from discrimination, personal security and freedom from torture and degrading treatment. This declaration was the inspiration behind our own Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In December 2017, federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for human rights met for the first time in 29 years to discuss ways that Canada could remain an international leader in this area.

Our government's commitment to diversity and inclusion is unwavering, and we will continue to work toward promoting these principles.

Together, we must work to ensure that the lessons afforded us by history will continue to guide our actions in the future.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan voted against it at the time. I spoke with him afterward and he told me that it was a mistake. Then I spoke with the Conservative House leader and she informed me that her party would not oppose the motion.

I learned later that night that the member of Parliament for Scarborough North had sent an email to stakeholders indicating that the Prime Minister's Office did not oppose the motion.

With this knowledge and confirmation from the Conservatives that they would also not oppose the motion, I moved that motion again the next day. To my dismay, my motion was blocked again, and this time it was clear it was Liberal members who voted against it.

My question for the Liberals is this. Why did they vote against this so we could not ensure this commemoration would be done to reinforce the principle of "never again"?

● (1930)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada recognizes and respects the unique history of all Canadians, as it reflects the rich social fabric of our country and makes us stronger.

Because diversity is at the heart of who we are as Canadians, we will continue to work to ensure that the histories of all Canadians are valued and shared.

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour for me to rise in the House to stand up for Franco-Ontarians and continue to call on the government to ensure that the language rights of francophones across the country and those of the anglophone minority in Quebec are respected.

On November 28, I asked the Liberal government a question about Franco-Ontarians and the cuts being imposed on this minority community. Of course, I was talking about the elimination of the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner and Ontario's French-language university, which, unfortunately, will not become a reality. That was a serious blow not just to the francophone community in Ontario, but also to francophone communities all across the country. That is why the meetings that were held between the party leaders to discuss this crisis were so important. That was the least that could be done, given the circumstances. More action is required. That is why I said that the first ministers should hold a federal-provincial-territorial forum to talk about official languages and other issues. Official languages should be on the agenda, especially since this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Official Languages Act.

I would like to talk about Drummond's anglophone community. Education plays an extremely important role in the development of our official language communities. In Drummond, the City of Drummondville is funding the construction of a new English-language elementary school. I would like to point out that the greater Drummond area has a very vibrant anglophone community.

I recently had the opportunity to view a superb intergenerational art installation involving the residents of Manoir Drummond and Drummondville Elementary School students. Local artists also participated in this art project, and young and not-so-young people created works of visual art. I congratulate all participants, especially teacher Nancy Catchpaw and guest artist Mance Di.

I also invite the citizens of the greater Drummond area to view the exhibit "Once Upon a Time... La petite histoire des écoles anglophones de Drummondville" organized by the Société d'histoire de Drummond. It tells some of the story of Drummondville's anglophone community. I would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of the entire team of the Société d'histoire de Drummond, including Geneviève Béliveau, director, Gabriel Cormier, cultural projects officer, Martin Bergevin, archivist, and all the members of the board of directors.

As I mentioned, the crisis continues in Ontario. Sadly, the services of the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner have been cut and made the responsibility of the ombudsman, which has resulted in job losses. The federal government must absolutely show leadership and set an example. We would have liked to see money in the budget for Ontario's French-language university. We do not understand why the government did not choose to include these investments in the budget.

● (1935)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his question and his work on francophone issues.

We were surprised by the announcement concerning the future of Ontario's French-language university. The vitality of official language communities across the country and the preservation of their language rights are a priority for our government.

[*English*]

Therefore, the Government of Canada is proud of its long-standing collaboration with provincial counterparts to provide better services to official language minority communities. That is why we have approved the renewal of all bilateral agreements on services in the minority language for the coming years.

[*Translation*]

Our government has renewed and strengthened agreements to encourage the provinces to provide services in the language of minority communities, through initiatives like education in the minority language, education infrastructure and access to provincial public services in the official language of one's choice.

[*English*]

ln 2018 alone, the provinces and territories received close to $149 million as part of bilateral education agreements, and approximately $13 million for complementary projects in education agreements.

ln terms of access to services, we have announced new investments to increase the offering of services in official language minority communities, including $22.5 million over five years to improve access to health services. We note that Ontario receives $1.4 million per year to provide French language services. This is the highest amount among the provinces.

[*Translation*]

Budget 2019 clearly shows that our government is prepared to invest additional funds in federal-provincial-territorial agreements as soon as a new protocol is signed. The accountability process must be improved, and the communities must be consulted regularly.

[*English*]

Our government is committed to supporting the provinces and territories in the provision of French language services. Our action plan for official languages, with its unprecedented $2.7-billion investment, is helping to strengthen minority language communities across the country.

Our official languages are at the core of who we are as a country. That is also why we are currently revising the Official Languages Act, on its 50th anniversary, to modernize it so it better serves the needs of Canadians. This is the first revision.

[*Translation*]

We hope that the Government of Ontario will follow our lead and take steps to strengthen the rights of francophone communities in the province.

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Official Languages Act. The Liberal government committed to modernize the act, and I congratulate it for that.

However, as the situations in Ontario, New Brunswick, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have shown, official languages are in jeopardy. This is why we should have taken these opportunities to talk about official languages and to put them on the agenda at the federal-provincial-territorial conferences. This has not been done for decades, under both Liberal and Conservative governments. The government does not discuss official languages with the provinces, and then they wonder why there are problems.

When will the Liberal government take real action, show some leadership and put official languages on the agenda at federal-provincial-territorial meetings?

● (1940)

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, I disagree with my colleague.

We took the initiative to meet with several organizations and the provinces as part of our study on the modernization of the Official Languages Act.

In November 2018, the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie wrote to her counterpart in the Ontario government to share her concerns regarding the announcements made by the Government of Ontario about the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner and Ontario's French-language university.

[*English*]

The Franco-Ontarian community will always be able to count on our government's unwavering support as a partner and in helping to ensure the vitality of the francophone communities in Ontario and across Canada.

I would ask my colleague to also look at and put more pressure on his counterparts in the NDP in Ontario to ensure that the Province of Ontario respects the rights of francophone communities in Ontario.

[*Translation*]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, in our region, high-speed Internet access is indispensable, especially for families, students, SMEs, self-employed workers and of course agricultural businesses.

More than 350,000 households in Quebec still do not have not have an affordable and reliable Internet connection. There is a desperate need now, but the Liberals are telling us today that we will have to wait until 2030.

Much like the Conservatives before them, the Liberals are turning their backs on our rural regions. Budget 2019 would have been a great opportunity to invest in this infrastructure to give everyone access and to help our region develop faster. Instead, we have to wait more than 10 years.

Since I was elected in 2015, I keep repeating over and over that this government is not doing enough to ensure everyone has Internet access, but now, with the election just six months away, the government is saying it is going to invest. Be careful, though, for the devil is in the details. Canadians and Quebeckers will not all have access for another 10 years.

The people of Saint-Hyacinthe and Acton Vale cannot wait 10 years. In my region, 16 of the 25 municipalities have connectivity problems and need Internet. We are talking about a riding that is less than an hour from Montreal. It is truly appalling.

Instead of giving millions of dollars to multi-billionnaires, the government should invest that money now so that our young people can pursue their studies close to home, so that our small businesses can innovate, so that our farmers can prosper, so that our regions can achieve their economic development potential and so that our seniors can access health and social services online if they want to.

Saint-Hyacinthe is an agri-food technopole. Our farmers and producers want to be on the cutting edge of technology, but the government has to give them the tools to achieve that.

Many farms in our riding still do not have a reliable connection. That is a drawback for farmers who want to innovate and improve their efficiency and productivity. Many of our farms and rural areas do not have cable or fibre optic access.

Wireless Internet access is the only solution, but the available networks are often way too slow to be functional. That has a direct impact on farmers, who need Internet access on their farm, in the barn, in the stable, in the fields and in the house to manage their books. To be productive, they need access to fast, reliable Internet.

Connectivity to high-speed Internet is necessary for accessing the latest health care technologies, providing modern education for our young people and students, and helping businesses innovate and grow.

In 2019, reliable access to the Internet is not a luxury. It is an essential service. Only 37% of households have access to high-speed Internet in rural, remote or sparsely populated areas. That means that six out of 10 people living in a rural area do not have access to reliable Internet service.

Why? Because the Liberals, like the Conservatives before them, are not doing enough.

In rural areas, Internet access, if it is available, costs about $100 a month, and sometimes even twice that, for service that often falls short on capacity and quality. Telling people six months before an election that they will have reliable Internet access in 10 years is not going help our SMEs prosper, keep our young people in the regions, help our farmers succeed, support self-employed people, equip our families, and the list goes on.

Why are the Liberals waiting another 10 years to do something about this?

● (1945)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my esteemed colleague for raising this important issue and for her work on behalf of rural regions.

Our government believes that the only way for Canada to succeed is to make sure that all of our communities are able to succeed, no matter where they are located. In order to meaningfully contribute to the success of our communities, our plan needs to be tailored to their needs and priorities. In particular, we recognize that our rural and remote communities have unique needs. That is why our plan includes $2 billion in funding to renew rural and northern infrastructure.

This funding will support investments aimed at improving roads in rural and northern communities. It will also support projects to reduce these communities' dependence on diesel for heating and electricity. Furthermore, this funding will support projects to expand high-speed Internet to many other rural and northern communities that do not currently have access to this service, which is a necessity in Canada.

Right now, less than half of our rural and northern communities have access to high-speed Internet. That is why, on January 14, 2019, the government appointed a Minister of Rural Economic Development. Her mandate letter gives her the responsibility of increasing the number of Canadians who have access to high-speed Internet and leading the development of a Canadian rural economic development strategy.

More recently, in budget 2019, our government committed to a national target. The member mentioned access to high-speed Internet by 2030, but to be precise, 90% of homes and businesses will have access to high-speed Internet by 2021.

[*English*]

By 2026, we will have 95% of households connected to high-speed Internet. As the member mentioned, in 2030, 100% of households and businesses will have access to the Internet, regardless of where they live or are located. That is a concrete plan.

To meet these targets, budget 2019 is proposing to provide $1.7 billion over that time to establish a new national Internet program called the universal broadband fund. This fund will include a top-up to the existing connect to innovate program. It will extend high-speed access to remote areas across the country by laying more fibre and by using signals beamed through low-earth-orbit satellites, which is necessary.

This technology will ensure that reliable Internet service reaches all Canadians. Furthermore, we will be adding $11 million for Statistics Canada to survey and measure households and businesses on the use of the Internet, because the best way to know where Canada needs to be is to understand where it stands.

The government cannot do this alone. This is why we are going to partner with municipalities, the private sector, the provinces, indigenous communities, public institutions and not-for-profit organizations.

Our government is investing in infrastructure so that all Canadians will have the opportunity to participate fully in the economy and share in our nation's prosperity. Extending Internet services to every Canadian, regardless of where they live, is a priority and a goal. We have a plan to achieve this, and we will work hard together to make it happen.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Madam Speaker, the problem is that an area like the one I represent is only 50 kilometres from Montreal. It is not in a remote area.

The problem with satellite Internet services is that they do not work in our area. They use a wireless technology and when it snows or is windy, it does not work. If a silo is built between our antenna and the transmission antenna, it stops working. If a tree grows, it stops working. We need fibre optics in all areas to have efficient service.

In my riding, young adults go to Montreal, Sherbrooke or Quebec City for their post-secondary studies. Parents tell me that their children do not go home on weekends because they cannot connect to their institution's portal. We want our young people to remain in our region and to return to our region.

● (1950)

Mr. Marc Serré: Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that Canada is a large country and that we need to ensure that our regions and remote areas have access to the Internet.

Many partnerships are required to accomplish that. It is very important that the regions work with the provinces, the federal government, the municipalities and the private sector in order to get Internet access.

[*English*]

This is why we recognized in budget 2019 that high-speed Internet is no longer a luxury. We need to make sure we work together to provide every single household and business in Canada with access to the Internet at 50 megabits per second download and 10 megabits per second upload speeds by 2030, regardless of where we live.

As indicated earlier, 90% of Canadians will be connected by 2021 and 95% of Canadians will be connected by 2026. We are going to work hard—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

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

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