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Friday, April 12, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 12, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

● (1005)

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-97—PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to respond to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Vancouver East on April 10, 2019, with respect to the status of Bill C-97, the budget implementation act, 2019, no. 1.

In her statement, my hon. colleague argued that since multiple items were included in Bill C-97, then the bill should be treated as an omnibus bill. Her view was that these measures were unrelated to the budget. In her argument, the hon. opposition member argued that subdivisions B, D, E, F, G, J, K and L of division 9 of part 4, amended different acts; that division 15 of part 4, clauses 292 to 302, created a new act; that division 16 of part 4, clauses 302 to 311, made changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act; and that Bill C-97 was an omnibus bill and as such should be divided for further consideration.

I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that this is not the case. As you know and as the opposition member pointed out in her point of order, Standing Order 69.1(2) states clearly that Standing Order 69.1(1) "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."

Consequently, I would like to point out that subdivisions B, E, F, G, J, K and L of division 9 of part 4 of Bill C-97, which amend different regulatory acts, are all alluded to at page 326 of budget 2019. Next to the subject of "Bringing Innovation to Regulations", it states:

> The Government proposes to introduce legislation to begin its work on an annual modernization bill consisting of legislative amendments to various statutes to help eliminate outdated federal regulations and better keep existing regulations up to date.

The amendments quoted by the honourable member are all part of that effort to modernize existing regulations. As for subdivision D of the aforementioned division, it is even more explicitly referenced at page 119. Next to the subject of "Removing federal barriers to the interprovincial trade of alcohol", it states:

> To facilitate internal trade, the Government intends to remove the federal requirement that alcohol moving from one province to another be sold or consigned to a provincial liquor authority. Provinces and territories would continue to be able to regulate the sale and distribution of alcohol within their boundaries.

Furthermore, division 15 of part 4, clauses 292 to 302 of the BIA, which relates to the creation of the college of immigration and citizenship consultants act, is referred to at pages 184 and 185 of the budget. Under the heading of "Protecting People from Unscrupulous Immigration Consultants", it states:

> To help protect newcomers and applicants wishing to obtain the services of legitimate service providers, Budget 2019 proposes to provide $51.9 million over five years, starting in 2019–20, and $10.1 million per year ongoing. Funding will improve oversight of immigration consultants and strengthen compliance and enforcement measures. It will also support public awareness activities that will help vulnerable newcomers and applicants protect themselves against fraudulent immigration consultants. These measures will help to ensure that all applicants have access to quality immigration and citizenship advice, and that those who are providing the services operate in a professional and ethical manner, with disciplinary powers in place should fraud or misrepresentation occur.
>
> In addition, the Government proposes to introduce legislation and propose amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Citizenship Act in order to implement these measures.

This is echoed at page 326, next to the subject "Protecting People from Unscrupulous Immigration Consultants", where it clearly states:

> The Government proposes to introduce legislation and propose amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and the Citizenship Act in order to implement measures to help protect newcomers and applicants wishing to obtain the services of legitimate service providers.

Finally, part 4, division 16, clauses 302 to 311, which make changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, are consequent with what is found once again on page 184, under the heading "Enhancing the Integrity of Canada's Borders and Asylum System". It states:

> ...Budget 2019 proposes to introduce legislative amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to better manage, discourage and prevent irregular migration.

Once again, this is echoed at page 326 of the budget, next to the subject "Enhancing the Integrity of Canada's Borders and Asylum System", which states:

> The Government proposes to introduce legislative amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to better manage, discourage and prevent irregular migration.

As such, I believe the measures contained in Bill C-97 were all included in the budget. Consequently, I respectfully submit that Bill C-97 is not an omnibus bill and, as such, should not be split.

● (1010)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to thank the hon. member for his intervention. The Speaker will come back with a response in due course.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

The House resumed from April 11 consideration of the motion 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, and of the amendment.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

It is a pleasure to rise in the House to speak to budget 2019, Bill C-97.

For the past four years, our government has invested in Canadians and in what matters to them the most. Budget 2019 continues that plan by investing in something that matters to all Canadians: their health. We all know the sinking feeling that comes when you hear a loved one is sick or badly hurt. The clock seems to stop and it is hard to think about anything else, especially about how much money there is saved in the bank. However, the sad reality is that too many Canadians have to think about finances in moments of such dread.

We are proud of our publicly funded universal health care system, connecting Canadians with the best health care system and connecting Canadians with the best doctors, nurses and health care providers based on their needs. However, when it comes to prescription drugs, not everyone has access to what they need to regain and maintain their health.

Many middle-class Canadians, and those struggling hard to join the middle class, cannot afford the prescription drugs they need. No one should have to choose between putting food on the table and buying prescription drugs. Therefore, our system can and must be improved, because when prescription drugs are unaffordable, it leads to poorer health for many Canadians and higher health care costs for all of us.

It is true that most Canadians have some form of public or private drug coverage. However, the nature of that coverage varies significantly from person to person across the country. Therefore, to improve the accessibility and affordability of prescription medications, the government announced, in budget 2018, the creation of an advisory council. This council is providing advice on how to implement the national pharmacare plan in a manner that is affordable for Canadians, employers and governments. With budget 2019, we are laying the foundation for the implementation of a national pharmacare program while we await the final report by our advisory council on its full implementation.

Based on the consultation and interim report of the advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare, our government intends to work with provinces, territories, the private sector and other partners on three foundational elements: first, create the Canadian drug agency that will assess drug effectiveness and negotiate prices; second, establish an evidence-based list of prescribed drugs, a list of drugs Canadians can access, to be developed as part of the agency; and third, establish a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases.

I will speak about these three items, specific measures and, should I have some time remaining, I would like to take a quick aside to discuss budget 2019's strong emphasis on issues facing seniors in communities like mine.

I will start with the first foundational element: assessing drug effectiveness and negotiating prices.

The new Canadian drug agency, through its ability to negotiate prices, will lead to lower prices for prescription drugs. That is very good news, because right now, Canada faces some of the highest drug costs in the world. Costs have risen dramatically over the last three decades. Prescription drug spending in Canada was about $2.5 billion in 1985. In 2018, it was nearly $34 billion and the costs keep rising.

Canada's current patchwork of drug coverage is not well equipped to handle the increasingly expensive drugs coming into the market. There are over 100 public prescription drug insurance companies in Canada and over 100,000 private insurance plans.

● (1015)

The Canadian drug agency would help make things better by negotiating drug prices on behalf of Canada's drug plans. The agency would also assess the effectiveness of new prescription drugs and recommend which drugs represented the best value for money for Canadians. For the first time in Canada, drug evaluation and price negotiation could be carried out by one single entity. This was one of the initial recommendations included in the interim report of the advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare.

The Canadian drug agency would be established in partnership with provinces, territories and all other stakeholders. It would build on existing provincial successes by acting as a single evaluator and negotiator on behalf of Canada's drug plans.

The proposed agency could help to considerably reduce drug spending. The Canadian drug agency could, in the long term, lead to billions of dollars in savings on prescription drug costs each year. In short, the Canadian drug agency could be a powerful tool for addressing the rising cost of prescription drugs across Canada.

The second foundational element is establishing a new national formulary for prescribed drugs. While the Canadian drug agency's key responsibility would be the development of a national formulary, the agency would work in partnership with provinces, territories and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based list of prescribed drugs. This would provide the basis for a consistent approach to formulary listings and patient access across the country. Therefore, budget 2019 proposes to provide Health Canada with $35 million over four years to establish a transition office to support the development of this vision.

The third foundational element is making high-cost drugs for rare diseases more accessible. I would like to discuss what budget 2019 would mean for Canadians who require high-cost prescription drugs to treat their diseases. For these Canadians, the cost of the medication they need can be astronomical.

It is worth noting that rare diseases predominantly affect children. These diseases are often genetically based and appear in early childhood. More than 7,000 rare diseases have been identified to date. However, each one of them affects a relatively small number of patients, which makes decisions on drug approval and coverage very difficult. The list price of some of these drugs often exceeds $100,000 per patient per year. In some cases, it is even more. This obviously creates significant distress for these patients and their families.

These costs also represent significant challenges for the government and private drug plans when it comes to making decisions on whether and how to pay for the treatment. This can lead to challenges for many provinces and territories looking to help families. This is why we need a national approach to drugs for rare diseases.

Canada's national strategy will be created in partnership, again, with the provinces and territories. It will allow for a coordinated approach for gathering and evaluating evidence, improve consistency in decision-making and access across the country, and ensure that effective treatments reach the patients who need them the most.

Budget 2019 proposes up to $1 billion over two years, starting in 2022, with up to $500 million per year ongoing, to help Canadians with rare diseases.

I know I have less than one minute left, so I would like to speak briefly about seniors and how those in my riding will be impacted.

Our government is increasing the GIS exemption from $3,500 to $5,000 per year to give more of our fixed-income seniors the choice to continue to work without being penalized. We will begin proactive CPP enrolment at age 70 to ensure that no seniors miss out on benefits they are entitled to.

We are increasing transparency and will launch an initiative to change corporate laws to increase oversight and grant the courts a greater ability to review payments made to executives in the lead-up to insolvency, protecting workplace pensions from predatory practices.

● (1020)

In conclusion, like many of my colleagues, I look forward to reading the final report of the advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare, which is due later this spring.

Moving forward, national pharmacare will help lead to protecting the health of every Canadian.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my colleague realizes that he spent much of his speech talking about pharmacare and the fact that the Liberals have been promising universal pharmacare for nearly 25 years now. In his speech, the member asked Canadians and the House to wait a bit longer for the advisory council's report. Canadians have been waiting for this program forever.

Can the member explain why, after nearly 25 years, the Liberals are still not ready to keep their promise and why they keep calling for more meetings, more discussion groups and more analysis? What more could they possibly need after 25 years? What is the problem?

[*English*]

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, I cannot talk about the past 25 years, but I can talk about what our government has done. Our government, shortly after coming to power, started the process for pharmacare. Almost all members within our caucus are very supportive of pharmacare.

I draw on my background as a management consultant. One does not launch such a huge initiative by blindly coming up with a plan or an act. One does consultations and puts a tough advisory team together. The research is done and a decision is made.

We are looking forward to seeing the report, but I can assure members that from the first step taken to the recommendations that have been made, we are well on our way to being able to implement national pharmacare.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Richmond Hill for his work as the chair of the all-party mental health caucus.

As he knows, suicide has a profound effect in Canada. For every suicide death, there are five self-inflicted injury hospitalizations, 25 to 30 attempts and seven to 10 people profoundly affected by suicide loss.

Could the hon. member comment on the Government of Canada's investments in mental health, particularly for suicide prevention programs, in budget 2019?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member for Guelph's strong advocacy on the mental health file and his unyielding support for this initiative.

In budget 2019, our government announced a pan-Canadian suicide prevention service. It is about $25 million over five years, with another $5 million per year thereafter.

The most important thing is that there were other initiatives in 2017 and 2018 vis-à-vis mental health. In 2017, the largest investment in mental health was tabled, with $11 billion over 10 years to support home care as well as mental health. Specifically, about $5 billion went to mental health. In budget 2018, about $20 million over five years was committed to projects focused on seniors and women living with dementia.

● (1025)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Richmond Hill for his speech.

I have been the MP for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for three and a half years now, having started at the same time as this Liberal government. I will pick up where my NDP colleague left off. He mentioned that it has been 25 years. Speaking personally, for the past three and a half years, I have been listening to the Liberals say that they are going to start a process, hold consultations, establish a council, create wide-ranging initiatives, set up a team and develop policies. They talk about 2022 and beyond.

How can we trust this government, which has been in power for three and a half years? What do I tell the seniors in my riding who want real help today?

This Liberal government has nothing concrete to offer. How can it be proud of what its Minister of Finance has introduced?

[*English*]

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Mr. Speaker, first let me say how proud I am of the accomplishments of our government.

One thing the hon. member has to remember is that this is a partnership. I emphasized that in my speech a number of times. This is not something we can do overnight, and this is not something we can do alone. It requires partnership, and it requires making sure that we spend the time needed to do it right.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not had the opportunity to speak at length in this place for some time, and I am happy to have the opportunity to rise today on Bill C-97 to speak to some of the initiatives in our government's budget that are going to make a difference for my constituents in Scarborough Centre.

This is our government's fourth budget, and it is the continuation of the plan Canadians voted for in 2015, a plan that is working.

Back in 2015, Canadians had a choice between Conservative and NDP plans for austerity and cuts and a Liberal plan for investing in growing the middle class and those working hard to join it. Canadians chose to invest in our future, and their decision is paying off. Today Canada's economy is one of the fastest growing in the G7. Since 2015, Canadians have created more than 900,000 new jobs. Thanks to the middle-class tax cut and the tax-free Canada child benefit, Canadian families have more money in their pockets to help make ends meet.

However, we recognize that our work is not yet done. We need to ensure that all Canadians share in the growing prosperity. That means being able to find an affordable place to live, getting the skills to find a well-paying job and being able to retire with confidence. That is why it is important that we do not allow the clock to be turned back to the Harper era and that we keep investing in Canadians and in our future.

Before I get to some of those investments, allow me to touch on another area of focus in budget 2019: keeping Canadians safe from violence and hate. Canadians of all backgrounds and identities should always feel safe together. Unfortunately, as recent tragic events have demonstrated, certain groups of people, because of their race, religion or sexual orientation, are at risk of being targeted by hate-motivated crimes, threatening their safety and security and the gathering places they enjoy.

To help community gathering spaces, such as schools, community centres and places of worship, make needed security improvements, we would double the annual funding for the security infrastructure program, from $2 million per year to $4 million per year. Several faith organizations in Scarborough Centre have already leveraged this program to upgrade their security infrastructure, and I encourage all eligible institutions to take advantage of this program.

We all know that diversity is one of Canada's strengths, but sadly, we know that Canada is not immune to the effects of hateful rhetoric. That is why budget 2019 would invest $45 million to support a new anti-racism strategy. It would work to find ways to counter racism in its various forms, with a strong focus on community-based projects.

While we cannot be blind to the threats, I know that most of my fellow Canadians are warm and welcoming people who reject fear, racism and division. What unites us all is our shared desire to provide opportunities for families, and this budget would make a number of important investments in that regard.

Perhaps the biggest issue I hear about at the door in Scarborough is housing. Buying a home is increasingly out of reach for the average family, and rental housing is often outdated, overpriced and inadequate for the needs of many families.

Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to live, but in the greater Toronto area, too many are being priced out of the market. The Harper government did nothing to address housing affordability for 10 years. The Conservatives were missing in action, leaving the provinces, the municipalities and community organizations to try to pick up the slack. However, with our 10-year, $40-billion national housing strategy, the federal government is finally back at the table when it comes to housing.

I had the opportunity to join the Prime Minister and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development in Scarborough, where our government committed $1.3 billion to help repair and renovate more than 58,000 Toronto community housing units. This will allow for long-delayed repairs to be completed and will improve the quality of life for thousands of Toronto families. We would build on these investments in budget 2019.

● (1030)

The new first-time homebuyer incentive will make home ownership more affordable for first-time homebuyers and allow them to lower their monthly mortgages. On a newly built $400,000 home, this new incentive could save an eligible homebuyer up to $40,000, or 10%, of the total cost. We expect as many as 100,000 Canadians could benefit from this program over the next three years, putting the dream of home ownership back within reach.

I have spoken with independent experts in the real estate industry who tell me this program will mean more families will be able to enter the housing market, especially younger families just starting out, families like Sameer Ahmed in my riding, whose wife and three children are crammed today in a two-bedroom apartment. They can now dream of a home in which their family has the room to grow and thrive. The more flexible homebuyer plan will let Canadians borrow an additional $10,000 from their RRSPs, raising the limit to $35,000, providing more flexibility for Canadians.

For Canadians looking to rent rather than buy, increased funding for rental construction finance initiatives means 42,500 new rental units across Canada. It is so important that we build capacity in the rental housing market where supply far outstrips demand and much of the existing supply is increasingly old and out of date.

I am also excited about the Canada training benefit. It is an initiative very similar to one brought as a policy to last spring's Liberal policy convention developed by a group of youth in my riding. It addressed a challenge identified by many of their peers, the challenge of lifelong learning and re-skilling for an ever-changing economy throughout our lives.

To ensure Canadians have the skills they need to get the well-paying jobs of the new economy, we are introducing the Canada training benefit. Canadians earning less than $150,000 can accumulate up to $5,000 tax-free over their lives, at a rate of $250 per year, to help with the cost of enrolling in a training program. Every four years, they can take up to four weeks of training to upgrade their skills and progress in their careers. With the EI training support benefit, they will get help with living expenses while on training leave. New leave provisions will ensure their jobs are safe.

While Canadians will need to supplement these resources with their own, this program will make it much easier for Canadian workers to invest in their careers and in themselves.

Speaking of young Canadians, we are helping our youth get ahead by lowering interest rates for student loans, saving the average borrower $2,000. We are also making the six-month grace period after graduation interest-free. If students temporarily leave their studies to have a child or deal with health issues, that period is now interest-free, too. We are helping students gain real-world experience by creating up to 40,000 annual new work placements and another 44,000 work-integrated work opportunities for Canadian students.

While the Conservatives were only focused on pushing back the age of retirement, we are committed to supporting seniors. With this budget, we are making their lives more affordable. We are ensuring that working seniors can keep more of their hard-earned income by enhancing the guaranteed income supplement earnings exemption. We are increasing the earnings exemption from $3,500 to $5,000, extending the exemption to include self-employment income, and introducing a 50% exemption in income between $5,000 and $15,000.

To fight social isolation and help seniors stay active and engaged in the community, we are increasing funding for the new horizons for seniors program. This program funds community-based projects designed to meet the needs of local seniors. I have seen first-hand in Scarborough the benefits this program brings to local seniors. For example, the Sesheme Foundation is using a new horizons grant to familiarize seniors with technology and help arm them with valuable financial literacy skills.

As I said earlier, our plan is working. I know this because, since 2015, 825,000 Canadians have been lifted out of poverty and Canada's poverty rate has dropped by more than 20%.

As I also said earlier, there is still more work to do. That is why we have launched Canada's first-ever poverty reduction strategy. Under this strategy, we are setting poverty reduction targets and entrenching Canada's official poverty line and the National Advisory Council on Poverty into law.

● (1035)

I could go on and on about the positive elements in this budget implementation act. Instead, let me just say that I am proud to be part of a government that is investing in Canadians. Truly, there can be no better bet than to bet on Canada.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things missing in budget 2019 has to do with diabetes. Eleven million Canadians have diabetes or pre-diabetes. Diabetes Canada came with an ask for the budget for its 360 plan to address this chronic disease, yet there is nothing in the budget.

Could the member explain why the government is not supporting that initiative or will she commit that it will?

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, this government has committed to many health initiatives for mental health and home care. In 2017, it committed over $11 billion in mental health and home care. That is helping seniors have a life where they can be more healthy and can continue to live in their homes. It is really making a difference in the lives of those seniors.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. She emphasized that we need to work together to fight racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Naturally, we on this side of the House support that fight.

To govern is to make choices. For instance, we have a government that continues to tax medicinal cannabis, which sick Canadians need for pain relief. Now it is giving Loblaws $12 million to buy some refrigerators.

I do not understand why a company that made $3 billion in profit last year needs our money, public money, to buy new refrigerators, while the government continues to tax sick Canadians who need cannabis for health reasons.

[*English*]

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, we have lowered taxes for the middle-class. We are investing in the middle class. Since 2015, when Liberals came into power, Canadians have created over 900,000 new jobs. Canada has the fastest growing economy in the G7. As well, we take diversity as one of our greatest strengths and we will fight for that, regardless of where people came from or when they arrived in Canada. This is a land of opportunities for everyone.

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Scarborough Centre for talking about the issues that matter most to Canadians. These are pocketbook issues like making home ownership affordable and helping working get their skills.

I would like her to talk about how the government is helping young people in her riding get the skills they need to get the jobs of the future.

● (1040)

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, with the changing economy, everyone needs to be equipped for the jobs of the future. The Canada training credit would allow workers to upgrade their skills so they could have the more successful jobs of the future.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows in the House, we had significant job losses in Oshawa when the plant there announced that it would be closing. I have looked through this budget and it does not seem to address any of the issues for which manufacturers have asked, such as the competitiveness of the Canadian economy, especially with this new carbon tax. Many people still do not understand how high it will be.

Could the member point out if there is anything in the budget that addresses the competitive disadvantage of Canadians? If she cannot, could she at least let us know what the carbon tax is going to be by 2030 so companies that are making once-in-a-generation investments know what the costs are going to be in Canada?

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, climate change is a reality today and for our future generations, we have to accept that reality.

Pollution cannot be free. There has to be a price on pollution. There will be a rebate to all families through climate action incentives. For example, in Ontario, a family of four will receive a climate action incentive of $307 for the price on pollution.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am actually sad to rise today on Bill C-97, because this is really a symbol of what the last four years have been like under the Liberal government.

The subtitle of this budget implementation bill is the budget of broken promises, and that is very apt. For four years, we have seen Liberals break promise after promise, commitment after commitment. I remember back in 2015 when the Prime Minister and the Liberals were campaigning. They promised a vast number of things.

The Liberals promised they would actually take care of the middle class. They promised they would bring new dignity to Parliament, that they would stop the systematic bulldozing of legislation through Parliament and that they would listen to opposition members of Parliament. Among many other broken promises, and we could reference pharmacare and democratic reform, they also promised never to bring in omnibus legislation.

The parliamentary secretary talks about ominous legislation, and he is quite right. Omnibus legislation does a profound disservice to the country and it does a profound disservice to Canadians. We only have to look at last year's omnibus bill, which the Liberals rammed through provisions designed to undermine what should be a principle of Canadian law, that if people broke the law, whether it was bribery or any other criminal act, they would be subject to consequences. However, what the Liberals slipped into the omnibus legislation, which they promptly bulldozed through Parliament, were provisions that would allow for companies like SNC-Lavalin to get off scot-free if there was not an attorney general willing to stand up to the Prime Minister and his people.

We have seen this whole sad SNC-Lavalin scandal play out as a result of that Liberal attempt to usurp parliamentary oversight. We raised questions about those provisions, but because the Liberals, with their majority government, bulldozed the budget implementation bill through last year, Canadians were not given the opportunity to really voice their displeasure about setting up what was a dual system in law. Rich corporations can break the law and do not have to worry, because the Prime Minister will let them off the hook.

What happens in this budget implementation bill? First, of course, the promise about not bringing in omnibus legislation is broken yet again. It is something the Liberals have broken four years in a row now. It is 364 pages. In the provisions of this budget implementation bill, we see the poison pills, legislation no Canadian would support the passage of if it were to stand on its own.

I will reference what my colleague from Vancouver East raised yesterday in a point of order about the provisions to undermine the ability of people fleeing persecution and extreme violence to apply for refugee status in Canada. What the Liberals have done, and extreme white nationalists are now complimenting the Liberals on the provisions that are deeply hidden in the budget implementation bill, is basically take away the right of refugees to cross the border because of what has happened under the Trump administration in the United States, that persecution of minorities we are seeing. The sad persecution undertaken by Mr. Trump and his allies in Washington is something Canadians reject, however, the Liberals have adopted and embraced it.

Instead of eliminating the safe third country agreement that allow refugees to apply when they are being forced out of the United States or forced back to situations of extreme peril, the Liberals have basically closed off the ability of those refugees to come to the border and apply for refugee status.

I think all of us, as human beings, understand what these refugees are escaping: profound violence and war, systematic sexual violence, a whole range of indignities and appalling situations that, fortunately, some people are able to escape.

● (1045)

They come to North America. They also come to the United States, which used to be a beacon of freedom. In fact, years ago, my grandfather arrived at Ellis Island, in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, to apply to enter the United States. He stayed in the United States and worked for a number of years, and then went back to Europe to get his family and came to Canada.

The United States used to be a beacon of welcome and freedom, typified by the Statue of Liberty. However, under the Trump administration, those doors have now been shut down and closed to those escaping persecution and violence.

Canada could have been that beacon of freedom by simply removing the safe third country agreement. Instead, by hiding items in the provisions of the budget implementation act, the Liberals have taken the kind of action that finds approval only from white nationalists, those with hatred in their hearts. This is appalling, and it is just one of the symptoms of how far the Liberal government has fallen.

The reality is that for the vast majority of Canadians, it has been four very difficult years. They were hoping that after the years of Harper cutbacks and massive handouts to the business sector and large, profitable corporations, the Liberals would keep their commitments and respond to people's needs. However, the budget implementation act is, again, a symbol of how far they have fallen from that goal, which Canadians elected them to achieve.

What have we seen over the last few years? It has been massive corporate handouts, symbolized by the $12 million given to Loblaws, one of Canada's richest corporations. My colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie just asked about this, with no response from the Liberals, as usual. However, that $12 million pales in comparison to the tens of billions of dollars that this Liberal government has shovelled out the door and given to some of the most profitable and wealthy corporations in the country.

One example is Kinder Morgan. Not only did the Liberals buy its pipeline, but they gave out a bonus of billions of dollars, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. They bought a piece of infrastructure and gave a bonus to Kinder Morgan executives. This is billions of dollars that could have gone to housing, pharmacare or helping the appalling situations in indigenous communities.

The Liberals did not bat an eye as billions of dollars went out the door. About $14 billion was given out last fall in the fall economic update as a gift to corporate executives on Bay Street. The Liberals pushed $14 billion out the door with no thought about whether doing so was in the public interest.

This does not even touch for a moment the intricate system of tax havens and tax loopholes that Liberals and Conservatives have put in place over the years. Canadians are left with an estimated $20 billion to $30 billion going offshore each year.

What is the result? For the corporate sector, it means the lowest effective tax rate in the industrialized world, at 9%. This is the estimated tax rate paid by Canada's wealthiest and most profitable corporations. This is far below any other industrialized country, because we have a porous and profoundly unjust tax system.

For corporate executives, it is the best of times. They are partying big, because they know that all of our resources are coming their way.

The missed opportunity in this budget implementation act and in the budget itself was to take any meaningful action that would actually make a difference in people's lives.

I have raised the names of two individuals a number of times in the House. I have done so because they are symptomatic of so many Canadians living in the same situation. I have often spoken about Jim, who is just off Parliament Hill on the bridge between the Château Laurier and Parliament Hill. Every day Liberal ministers, Liberal MPs and the Prime Minister's limousine go right by Jim. He sits begging in his wheelchair, trying to get enough money to survive for another month by buying the medication his doctor has prescribed to him. He needs it to stay alive. He needs it to be with his children and grandchildren. Because he is on a limited fixed income that barely pays for rent and food, he is obliged to beg for the $580 a month that keeps him in medication and keeps him alive.

● (1050)

What a shameful symbol. It is unbelievable that for four years Liberals have walked past him with hardly a thought about Jim as they walk past him and his sign asking people to please contribute.

Maybe some of them give a few dollars—I do not know, but what I do know is that if Liberals had come in 2015 with the intent to carry out their commitments, Jim would have pharmacare now. His medication would be paid for now. He would not need to beg to get the money to get through the month.

If Liberals had kept their promises, someone like Jim would no longer have to worry about that. He would be able to contribute as he wants to, spend his time volunteering in the community and spend time with his family. His family is low-income too, so he has said very clearly that he has to do this because he does not want to burden his family. What a tragic choice to make for the entire family, and it was imposed on Jim by the Liberal government and the Prime Minister.

I talked in the House before about Heather, who is struggling to find affordable housing and is worried about losing her apartment any month now. As rents skyrocket in the Lower Mainland in the New Westminster—Burnaby area, she shares a one-bedroom apartment with her mother and with her daughter, and they are struggling to get by. She is struggling to keep a roof over her head. She is like so many others in the Lower Mainland, in greater Toronto and right across this country.

In any indigenous community we see the absolutely deplorable state of housing. If Liberals four years ago had come with the intent of actually keeping their promises, they would have done something that the member for Burnaby South and the entire NDP caucus have been proposing, which is to build affordable housing. Do as we did after the Second World War, when we had governments at that time that actually listened to the public.

When hundreds of thousands of men and women in the service were coming back to Canada, the federal government built not one, or 10, or 100, or 1,000, or 10,000 units. Over three years, it built 300,000 affordable homes for those returning men and women in the service, because Canadians knew and still know that there is an important responsibility that comes with power. At that time after the Second World War, that government got it right.

One of those homes is the one my wife and I live in on Glover Avenue in New Westminster, and it is still a very good home today. If Liberals had wanted to keep the commitments that they made in 2015, they would have built hundreds of thousands of units, just as we did after the Second World War, and people like Heather would be safe in affordable housing. They would not be worried about whether they would still have their apartment in a month or two months or three months. If the government had done the right thing, housing would be provided now to every Canadian, and every Canadian would have a roof over their head and would feel safe in their housing.

However, the Liberals did not do any of that. They made a commitment in the budget act to do something eventually if they are re-elected. It is the same with pharmacare. They will fill in some of the holes after they are re-elected. They have a callous disregard for what Canadians are living through.

We have seen the figures. They show that things are getting worse, not better, yet Liberals stand in the House and say everything is great. Excuse me, but when statistics come out, as they did a few weeks ago, showing that 46% of Canadians are $200 away in any given month from not being able to pay their expenses, we have to think about that for a moment. It is half the Canadian population.

It may be $200 for a car repair, or perhaps something they have to contribute at school. It may be a health problem. Goodness knows, they do not have access to pharmacare, and if they have to pay for medication, a $200 margin is all they have before they go even more deeply in debt. Canada now has, after 20 or 30 years of Conservative and Liberal governments, the worst record in the industrialized world for the level of family debt.

● (1055)

All of this splurging on Bay Street, these massive tax handouts that are given left, right and centre, have left a decimated middle class. It is not only the worst family debt crisis in our nation's history; it is the worst family debt crisis in any industrialized nation's history. Canadians are struggling under massive levels of family debt. They are trying to pay for their homes and having to borrow to stay in their homes. They are trying to pay for school or for their children to go to university or college and they are struggling and going further into debt. They are going into debt to pay for their medication. They are going into debt for a wide variety of basic needs that are no longer met by our federal government in any way, shape or form.

What we have with this budget implementation act is a powerful symbol of four years of inaction by the current Liberal government, four years of betrayal and four years of broken promises. I think that on October 21, Canadians will judge the Liberals on those broken promises.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We will interrupt now for question period. However, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby will have three minutes and 50 seconds coming to him when we return, and we will take up the questions then.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

BETSY BURY

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, last week, we lost one of Saskatchewan's great pioneers for medicare.

Betsy Bury served in the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II before becoming active in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. She was a founding member of the Saskatoon Community Clinic, which continued to provide health care after doctors withdrew their services in opposition to the CCF government's medicare plan. She was predeceased by her husband, John Bury, one of the doctors from the British National Health Service who came to Saskatchewan in support of medicare.

While the Burys and other Saskatchewan people succeeded in bringing public health care to Canada, their work remains incomplete. The best tribute we can pay them is to continue building our public system to include prescription drugs, dental care and all health services.

CANADIAN INFERTILITY AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows someone who has struggled with fertility issues, yet speaking about infertility is still quite taboo in our society. Starting later this month, Canadians will have an opportunity to highlight the need to break the stigma and share their stories with others during Canadian Infertility Awareness Week.

I thank Fertility Matters, the national organization that empowers Canadians to help reach their reproductive health goals, for their leadership and bringing awareness to this important issue.

● (1100)

[*Translation*]

As the sponsor of Bill C-404, which seeks to amend the Assisted Human Reproduction Act in order to help more Canadians have their own child, I think that we need to pay more attention to this discussion.

[*English*]

I ask my colleagues to join me in encouraging all Canadians who have experienced difficulty building their families to share their stories and help remove the stigma surrounding their struggles.

* * *

VAISAKHI

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC):

[*Member spoke in Punjabi*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment today to express my best wishes to everyone in Canada and around the world celebrating Vaisakhi.

Vaisakhi is the most celebrated day in the Sikh faith. We honour the creation of the Khalsa by spending quality time with family and friends.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the Amritsar massacre, which was the massacre of an estimated 1,000 civilians at Jallianwala Bagh, a public garden where they had gathered for a peaceful protest on April 13, 1919. It was a very devastating day.

I also want to take this opportunity to invite all of my colleagues and friends to a Vaisakhi celebration here on Parliament Hill on May 12.

I hope to see everyone there and I wish everyone a safe and joyful holiday.

[*Member spoke in Punjabi*]

[*English*]

Happy Vaisakhi.

* * *

CHRISTIAN HOLY WEEK

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the start of Christian Holy Week upon us, I would like to first recognize Monsignor Dennis Noon who recently announced his plans to retire after serving as pastor of the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate for 16 years.

The entire Christian community in Guelph and across Canada continues to do incredible work to build up our communities. Each Sunday, after attending church at my home parish of Holy Rosary, I visit another faith community in my riding. I am always impressed with the volunteers supporting vulnerable people; providing meals, clothing or housing; welcoming refugees; looking out for seniors; and providing summer camps for our children and for our youth to gain work experience.

Each faith community has its own personality, but its foundation is always centred on a vision to do good work and bring people together. At this time of year, Christians reflect on where they are on their faith journey and how they can do better in the year ahead, following the call to love one another.

In that same spirit, I want to wish Guelphites and Canadians a happy Easter.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, another student demonstration is taking place today in Jeanne-Mance park in Montreal. What are those students asking for? They are asking us to stop dragging our feet. They are asking us to address the most pressing issue of all, climate change. They are asking us to stop all the partisan bickering. They are asking us to take a stand. They are asking us to work together to finally agree to reach our greenhouse gas reduction targets.

That is what we have done. The NDP, the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party have banded together. We asked the leaders of the other two parties to sit down with us so that we could come to an agreement on how we are going to meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets. We have global targets. We set those targets based on what is needed at the international level. We need to meet them. That is what the students are asking us to do. Some are even questioning whether they want to bring children into this world.

It is our responsibility, here in the House, to come to an agreement, not about whether or not we will meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets, but about what we are going to do to meet them during the next campaign. We need to stand up for children.

* * *

[*English*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their government to take aggressive action on climate change. A new report indicates Canada is warming at twice the global rate.

As climate change escalates, we face stronger and more unpredictable weather events. Deadly wildfires have devastated communities in British Columbia, Alberta, south of us in California and across the Pacific in China. Unprecedented drought has struck Africa and the Middle East.

Just recently, massive flooding has taken over 70 lives in the Golestan, Fars, Khuzestan and Lorestan provinces of Iran. An international effort is currently under way to provide relief to those affected by this ongoing crisis. I encourage everyone to donate to the Canadian Red Cross to support its important life-saving work.

We have a plan to address climate change. We are putting a price on pollution, investing in green technology and working with the international community to face one of the greatest challenges of our time. Canada is doing its part.

* * *

● (1105)

[*Translation*]

MOTHER OF AN MP

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I want to pay tribute to a woman who taught me everything I know about life, people and self-sacrifice. My mother may have been small in stature, but her personality was larger than life.

Last December, right before her 88th birthday, she took her last breath, as winter raged on, tired of fighting while her memories slipped away. It is painful to watch someone you love slowly stripped of their life. Alzheimer's is beyond comprehension. For years this woman was my beacon, my guiding light, but she became a mere shadow of herself. It was my turn to be her beacon, her guiding light. Every moment I was lucky enough to spend with her will remain etched in my memory. Even despite her illness, I cherished each and every moment.

Mom, you have gone to be with your love, your dancer, your friend, your lover, my father, Justin. Spread your wings and fly, my angel.

* * *

NORMAND GAGNON

Mr. Jean Rioux (Saint-Jean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, agriculture and the women and men who ensure our food security are at the heart of what has defined Canada since its inception.

On April 8, Normand Gagnon, a farmer from the riding of Saint-Jean, won the "Coup de chapeau" award at the Agristars gala, an honour he richly deserves. The award is also a reflection of the commitment and support of Mr. Gagnon's family, especially his wife, Louise.

Normand and I go way back. We worked together on getting an ethanol plant built in Quebec. Normand has dedicated the past 40 years to defending and promoting the farming profession.

Congratulations on this achievement, Norman. Never stop passionately promoting your noble profession.

SOUTH SHORE SENIORS HOCKEY LEAGUE

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this hockey playoff season, I would be remiss if I did not mention the Les Sages de la Rive-Sud hockey league, which held its 16th annual tournament this week at the Gaétan Boucher sports complex in Saint-Hubert.

What sets this league apart is that the players are all 70 years of age or older. There are even some players 80 and over, the oldest being 92. You heard that right, 92 years old.

This year, at least 24 teams, mainly from Ontario and Quebec, participated in the 16th edition of the tournament, which is very popular and was once again a great success.

I would like to take the opportunity afforded by the House to honour all these men who, to remain young, active and in good health, have decided to keep following their passion and to play hockey for many more years.

* * *

[*English*]

EASTER

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, even as Africa, Asia and the Middle East are intensifying persecution against Christians, our government and media stay mostly silent. In this past year alone, 4,136 Christians were killed for their faith, 2,625 were detained without trial and 1,266 places of worship were attacked. We must not take for granted the religious freedoms that our democracy provides.

As Christians celebrate this Easter, we remember when Christ was crucified. He did what none of us could do. He paid the price for our sins and then he rose from the dead to stand in the gap between our personal inability to save ourselves and our holy, just and loving God.

> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
>
> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

I offer Easter blessings today to all Christians who will be celebrating all over the world.

* * *

● (1110)

LACROSSE

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that no relationship is more important than the one we have with indigenous peoples. To start rebuilding this relationship, we made clear our commitment to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.

As part of the report, there was a call to action for greater support to indigenous sport. That is why, just yesterday, the Minister of Science and Sport was in St. Catharines to announce that our government will be providing $1.7 million to add box lacrosse to the 2021 Canada Summer Games taking place in Niagara.

Lacrosse is a sport that is deeply ingrained in the culture and tradition of the indigenous people. As many in this House know, adding lacrosse to these games is a major milestone, especially considering it is also our national summer sport. I cannot wait to see lacrosse at the 2021 Canada Summer Games.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GUY LAFLEUR

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the remarkable career of a man from Thurso, in my wonderful riding of Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation

I am talking about hockey legend Guy Lafleur, also known as "Flower" and "Démon blond". He was recently voted the best player in the history of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League at the Golden Puck Awards in Quebec City. He earned this title as a result of his two extraordinary seasons with the Quebec Remparts. At the time, he racked up a total of 379 points, including 233 goals, leading his team to a Memorial Cup victory in 1971. This was yet one more notch on the belt of a player who had an incredible hockey career.

Mr. Lafleur is a true role model when it comes to perseverance and passion for young athletes from Quebec.

Guy! Guy! Guy! Guy!

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people in my riding have been waiting 16 months for the Liberal government to do something to restore the border crossing at Sombra. We need $2 million for that. We have been waiting four years for the government to find $6 million to fund a project that will create 3,000 well-paying jobs in my community. We have waited four years for the government to address high-speed internet gaps in my riding.

People can imagine my outrage when I found out that the environment minister gave $12 million taxpayer dollars to Loblaws, a company that made a $3 billion profit last year.

While small businesses like JDW trucking in Sarnia and many other Canadians are struggling to pay the Liberal carbon tax, the environment minister is taking from the poor to give to the rich. Instead of fridges for the wealthy, how about jobs and border crossings in Sarnia—Lambton?

* * *

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Cancer Society has launched its annual daffodil campaign to raise funds to support its life-changing programs, groundbreaking research and important advocacy efforts, as we all work toward the goal of eradicating cancer.

This year's campaign is particularly meaningful to me as a cancer survivor. Cancer can strike us or a loved one at any time and without warning.

Young or old, whatever one's race or gender, no matter how active and healthy one is, cancer does not discriminate. I have seen first-hand the impact a cancer diagnosis has not only on the patient, but on their family, their colleagues and their community. The support that organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society provide is invaluable.

I encourage my colleagues and all Canadians to support the efforts of the Canadian Cancer Society and wear their daffodil with pride. Together, we can make cancer history.

* * *

[*Translation*]

GALA FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the success of the women entrepreneurs project #EntrepreneurEs, which held its award ceremony on March 7. Gilles Sigouin partnered with the Ainsi soit-elle women's centre, the Chambly chamber of commerce and industry, and LumaStudio to create this competition to promote women's entrepreneurship.

Congratulations to the winners: Mylène Girard, Nadège Rousseau, Gabrielle Desmarais, Sylvie Racine, Julia Girard-Desbiens, Karine Thibault, Louise and Nancy Lacelle, Georgette Alary, Anik Cormier and Sandrine Milante.

We know that the power imbalance between men and women in our society contributes to inequality and, unfortunately, violence and assault. That is why I am proud of these efforts to showcase businesswomen.

Many thanks to Josée Daigle, from Ainsi soit-elle, not only for the success of this event, but also all for everything the centre does for women.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, if you ever go to Chambly, go to the Délires & Délices pub and try the Ainsi soit-elle beer. Part of the proceeds from the sale of this very good beer goes to the Ainsi soit-elle centre.

Congratulations to all the winners and the organizers.

* * *

● (1115)

[*English*]

ARMENIA

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Sunday I was honoured to attend the Armenian genocide commemoration in Cambridge. Between 1915 and 1923, millions of Armenians were subjected to unspeakable suffering and approximately 1.5 million Armenians died at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Although 104 years have passed, the horror of the Armenian genocide has not diminished.

On April 24, thousands of Armenians will gather in Yerevan to remember and to commemorate the lives lost. I have had the privilege of meeting Canadians of Armenian descent, who contribute so much to my home community in the Waterloo region and to our great country. I look forward to joining fellow Canadians at the Armenian genocide commemoration in North York later this month.

Remembering the Armenian genocide should motivate us all to continue bridge-building initiatives and to do everything in our power to ensure that such a terrible tragedy never happens again. We will remember.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LASSONDE-TYLER HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 16th edition of the Lassonde-Tyler hockey tournament is wrapping up today at the Centre sportif Gaétan-Boucher, in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne.

This tournament is the only one of its kind in North America, as it is exclusively for players 70 years of age and older. Les Sages de la Rive-Sud hockey league organizes this event every year. This year, 24 teams are participating, including 4 teams with players 80 years of age and over.

[*English*]

The goal of this tournament is to enable seniors 70 years of age and older to play a sport they enjoy, stay active, healthy and develop new friendships. This year's event hosts teams from across Quebec and Ontario. The profits generated will go to supporting the Alzheimer's Society of the south shore.

I congratulate the organizers and participants of the tournament and a long life to Les Sages de la Rive-Sud hockey league.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Teddy Roosevelt said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick – you will go far." The Prime Minister, making big, bold threats of a lawsuit and then hiding from following through, is roaring loudly and carrying a small twig.

I am announcing today, on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, that he is setting a deadline for the Prime Minister to follow through on his threat, which is Monday at midnight. Will the Liberals meet the deadline or will the Prime Minister just run for cover?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me share a bit of history. The Minister of Innovation had put the leader of the official opposition on notice in December, because he had used words that were not judicious and should not have been used. He used them in the House. We challenged him to use them outside the House. He tried it outside the House, was served notice, and all of a sudden, like magic, those tweets disappeared, those online press releases disappeared. This happened in February.

Now, in March, the Prime Minister served him notice and, like magic, those tweets disappeared—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually the letter of threat the Prime Minister sent the official opposition included a bunch of different objectionable claims that he said the Conservative leader had made. Therefore, the Conservative leader took the same letter, walked outside and repeated every single allegation.

If the Prime Minister does not believe the Leader of the Opposition was telling the truth, he could take action. However, he has to do so quickly. Under the principle of libel law, one has to move as soon as reasonably possible.

When will he live up to his bold threats or will he simply back down and hide?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December, the leader of the official opposition deleted tweets and retracted messages. In February, the leader of the official opposition deleted tweets and retracted messages. In March, the leader of the official opposition deleted tweets and retracted messages. The Conservatives change their messaging and then they go outside.

However, most recently, because the Conservatives have a history of misleading Canadians, they wanted to have a fundraiser. They wanted a private fundraiser to talk about the privatization of health care. Today, they have now changed the parameters of that fundraiser. Maybe they will delete it entirely.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, do the Liberals really want to talk about health care and fundraisers? This from a party whose leader had a $1,500-a-plate fundraiser and threw out of the room, to cackles of laughter, an aboriginal protester who was angry about the mercury poisoning that occurred in a first nations community? We will take no lessons from the Prime Minister on health care and fundraisers.

Instead of political attacks and hypocrisy, why will the Liberals not stand up behind their words and—

● (1120)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. government House leader is going to want to respond to that.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know you could not find the question in there, but that is how the Conservatives mislead Canadians and call it a question. However, it is important, because it is a very important matter. The Prime Minister did apologize and accept responsibility.

However, what is more important is that when it comes to the fundraisers we hold, they are in public. The media is present. Anyone who lobbies the Prime Minister is not able to attend, because we have even stricter rules when it comes to fundraising. We had to bring the Conservatives along, kicking and screaming. When it came to the fundraiser the future finance dream minister wanted to have—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party has been unable to manage a crisis for two months now. Oddly, their leader, the Prime Minister, came up with a surprising idea. He decided to sue the leader of the official opposition. The Leader of the Opposition has not budged an inch. He has even repeated his statement word for word and published it again. We are now awaiting the lawsuit.

Will the Prime Minister do what he said, or was it all hot air, as usual?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a lot to say. That is exactly why our economy is working so well today. We know Canadians are better off now than they were during Stephen Harper's decade in power.

The member opposite is asking questions, yet he knows perfectly well that the Leader of the Opposition changed the words he used. Before changing the words, the Leader of the Opposition erased statements he made because he knows that he is continuing to mislead Canadians, which is unacceptable.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is unacceptable is a Prime Minister who shows contempt for Canadians by saying one thing and doing the opposite.

Let us not forget that The Globe and Mail broke the SNC-Lavalin scandal two months ago and the day after, the Prime Minister said that it was completely false. Since then, four people have resigned. The other thing the Prime Minister said was that he had never been informed of the dangers of political influence in this matter. That is what he maintained up until two weeks ago when, here, in the House, he acknowledged that he was informed of those dangers on September 17.

Will the Prime Minister follow through on his threat to sue? If yes, when will he do so?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians need to hear the truth. That is exactly why the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence. That is exactly why all the facts are now public.

The Conservatives continue to mislead Canadians and that is not acceptable. That is what this member is also doing. We see that he is following the lead of the Leader of the Opposition. They should show some respect for Canadians. We know that they heard the truth. All the facts are public. Canadians will decide for themselves.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are increasingly worried about the political interference by the Prime Minister and his office in our independent justice system. Instead of reassuring them, the Liberal government continues to try to cover up its wrongdoing and scandal.

Canadians know there was inappropriate pressure on our justice system for the government's rich Liberal friends. The OECD's anti-bribery unit is also paying attention. It put Canada on notice, in a letter to the NDP, that it is watching what the Liberals are doing.

Will the Liberals just do what is right, reassure the OECD and Canadians, and call a public inquiry now?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in March, the minister spoke to the chair of the OECD working group. She confirmed to him that we are fully committed to co-operating with the good work they do. Obviously, we fully support the OECD's work in all such endeavours. Canada is a strong supporter of the rules-based international order, including the OECD, which is a flagship organization.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if they really respected the OECD, they would not have wrapped up the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights' investigation.

The Liberals would like everyone to stop talking about the political interference scandal, but people still want the whole truth about the SNC-Lavalin affair. The government seems to have a double standard: one for its friends and another for everyone else. Look at how cozy Loblaws lobbyists and the Liberal Party are. That tells us who the Liberals are really working for, and that is just the latest example. This has gone on long enough. The public is entitled to greater transparency.

Will the government finally launch a real public investigation into the allegations of interference before the next election?

● (1125)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in March, the minister spoke to the chair of the OECD working group. She confirmed to him that we are fully committed to co-operating with the good work her team does and that we fully support the OECD's work.

Canada is a strong supporter of the rules-based international order and this flagship organization.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we learned this week that the Minister of Finance is working hand in glove with Canada's big banks. This is another example of the special treatment the Liberals' pals enjoy.

The Liberal government promised to provide more transparency, do politics differently and take real measures to fight climate change. What did those measures turn out to be? A gift of $12 million for one of the country's richest corporations. To Loblaws with love, from the Prime Minister of Canada.

When will the Liberals stop favouring the upper class and put our priorities first?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to talk about what we are doing to fight climate change.

We are putting a price on pollution. We are phasing out coal. We are investing in clean technologies. In the context that the member opposite was talking about, we are only investing 25%. It will have the equivalent impact of taking 50,000 cars off the road. I think it is a great investment.

We all need to work together to tackle climate change, including businesses, the provinces, cities, the government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister should actually ask Canadians whether they think it is a good idea to give $12 million to a company that made nearly $1 billion in profits last year, all while refusing to pay its staff a fair wage.

People across the country are desperate for the government to act on climate change, but instead, they see Liberals padding Loblaws' profits. Two Loblaws lobbyists were at a Liberal cash-for-access fundraiser with the Prime Minister and the environment minister's senior staff. Canadians want to know, is that why Loblaws got this sweetheart deal?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no. The reason Loblaws got this deal was that there was an open tender process that was open to businesses, communities, big businesses, small businesses and indigenous peoples. There were 54 winners. It was based on emissions reductions. In this case, in this open and transparent process run by public servants, we are only putting up one-quarter of the amount of the $48 million. That reduction in emissions is like 50,000 vehicles off the road. We should all support that. We should all be looking to work together to tackle climate change.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that the Prime Minister has been misleading Canadians now for over two months. He said that the SNC story was false, that no one raised concerns and that he did it for jobs, yet each one of these statements is a proven falsehood. Then he foolishly tried to bully the opposition leader into silence by threatening to sue, but the opposition leader has now called this ridiculous bluff.

It is the Prime Minister's move. When will we see him in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important that Canadians know, and I guess members should also be informed, that when people say things that they should not say, there are consequences. What happened is that the Leader of the Opposition used terminology and made accusations that were inappropriate. What we did was not stand idly by, and Canadians can have confidence, and we put him on notice. Really quickly after he received notice, he deleted those tweets. He took a step back from his messaging and now reiterates his new messaging that I guess we helped him discover.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our leader has repeated exactly the words he said in the first place. It is the Prime Minister who has been misleading Canadians. He told them the SNC story was false, and that is not true. Then he said that no one raised concerns; not true. Then he said he did it for jobs. The company says that is not true.

The Prime Minister's threat to sue the Leader of the Opposition is clearly a bluff. If he truly believes he has a case, when will we see him in court?

● (1130)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they say repetition works. When it comes to hearing the answer, obviously repetition does not work, so let me remind the hon. member, who is more focused on privatizing health care than she is focused on making sure that we have a universal health care system that actually works for all Canadians. That is something Canadians pride themselves in, but that is not the focus of the dreamy future minister of health, as she likes to refer to herself.

I will remind her that all facts are now public. The justice committee meetings took place in public. They took place in public so that witnesses could appear, and the Prime Minister ensured that solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence were waived.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister himself is the one who misled Canadians. He said that the SNC-Lavalin story was not true. Obviously that is not the case. Then, he said that no one had come to him with their concerns, which is also not true.

If he really believes that telling the truth would be defamatory to him, when will we see him in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, all the facts of this matter have been made public because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence.

The members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights examined this matter for five weeks and made their own decision. All the meetings were public so that Canadians could watch them. We know that the facts are public.

We will always speak out against the Conservatives when they mislead Canadians, because that is not how things are done here.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously misleading Canadians is not the way to go, but that is what the Liberal government has been doing since the beginning of the SNC-Lavalin case.

The Prime Minister put our leader on notice. Our leader repeated word for word what he said outside the House. Every time we ask questions about SNC-Lavalin, the Prime Minister changes his story.

Will he follow through on his notice and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite forgot one small detail. The Prime Minister sent a letter to the Leader of the Opposition putting him on notice because he has a habit of misleading Canadians. Everyone knows this is not the right approach, so the Prime Minister sent him a letter. I think the Leader of the Opposition read the letter and then deleted his online statements and his tweets. He and his team probably changed the words he used, but now he is repeating them. It is a—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been misleading Canadians for months now. That is nothing new for the Prime Minister, with his track record of four ethical breaches. Now he has the audacity to threaten the opposition leader with a lawsuit for speaking the truth, but the opposition leader will not be intimidated.

When will the Prime Minister put his money where his mouth is and meet the opposition leader in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we should have confidence in our institutions and the court of law, and no one should be intimidated, because we know that the rule of law in Canada is intact. That is exactly why, when the leader of the official opposition received a notice from the Prime Minister, he quickly erased his tweets. He erased his online statements, and then he chose better words. That probably was the right thing to do, and now they continue to repeat those words.

The Conservatives have a history of misleading Canadians. This is now new terminology that they have been echoing for months. They did it in December, they did it in February, and now they just did it in March, but most recently, they sent out a publicly funded tax booklet and forgot to talk about the climate action incentive.

● (1135)

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know the Liberals are obsessed with Twitter. They have started diplomatic feuds on Twitter. They have damaged the integrity of our immigration system on Twitter. They have even praised dictators on Twitter, but this is not about Twitter. This is about the opposition leader's March 29 statement. That is why he repeated every word from that statement inside and outside the chamber.

When will the Prime Minister meet the opposition leader in court, or should I just check his Twitter?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that members who want to be on the Conservative benches have to follow their leader. They are not allowed to speak out of turn, so I encourage him to follow his leader on Twitter so that he can maintain that speed.

More importantly, what is clear is that Conservatives are focused on—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order, please. The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes asked a question, and the hon. government House leader was answering it. I am having a hard time hearing the answer. I am sure the hon. member is as well. I would ask everyone to show a little politeness. I notice a lot of students watching today, and we want to set an example for them. We do not want to act out of line.

The hon. government House leader has 18 seconds remaining.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, I will finish by saying that the Conservatives will remain focused on us, but we will remain focused on Canadians, because that is exactly who we are here to serve.

The member who occupied that seat prior to the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes was actually a member of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, and we just tabled its report for the first time. It was dedicated to him—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, survivors of the Île-à-la-Crosse and Timber Bay boarding schools are seeking justice from the government. When they were in opposition, the Liberals wanted justice for Métis survivors from northern Saskatchewan, but they have done nothing to provide compensation or justice since they formed government.

Métis people and survivors of boarding schools do not want to wait for another election to get justice. Will the Liberals commit today to do the right thing for survivors of the Île-à-la-Crosse and Timber Bay boarding schools?

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her relentless advocacy in this matter, as well as her colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

This is obviously a matter that is under advisement with the department. It is a matter we take very seriously, and I hope to come back to the House with further clarification on the matter.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are just weeks away from the Kashechewan First Nation's annual evacuation. The dike wall could fail, causing catastrophic damage to the community.

This community has been waiting for funding for relocation to higher ground for years. The Liberal budget gave nothing to the community, and people are getting desperate. This is not a nation-to-nation relationship. When will the Liberals stop playing games with the lives of Kashechewan's people and fund their relocation?

Mr. Dan Vandal (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that the threat of flooding during the spring breakup is an ongoing reality for the first nation of Kashechewan.

Our commitment to a long-term relocation plan has not wavered and has not changed. In the meantime, we have made significant progress on priorities, such as the new modular school that will be installed in September of this year. We are currently working with the first nation to monitor the threat of flooding, conduct preliminary flood mitigation and prepare a smooth transition to the host communities.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has threatened to sue the Leader of the Opposition. His lawyer objects to our claim that the Clerk of the Privy Council pressured the former attorney general and made it clear that her job was on the line. Canadians heard the Clerk of the Privy Council in his own words. They know the statement to be true.

When will the Prime Minister allow this court case to begin so that the truth can be revealed?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question now on numerous occasions, and I do believe that one day we will be in this House debating policies that have impacts on Canadians.

I can share that when it comes to our plan, we have seen 950,000 jobs created by Canadians. We know that over 800,000 children have been lifted out of poverty and almost 300,000 children have been lifted out of poverty because of the tax-free Canada child benefit, measures that the Conservatives continue to vote against.

We know that the Conservatives have no plan for the environment. The only plan they have is to mislead Canadians, and that really should not be the competition.

● (1140)

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months the Prime Minister has been trying to keep the truth from Canadians, and now he is threatening a lawsuit and trying to silence his opponents. It will not work. Canadians want the Prime Minister to present his evidence in a court of law.

When will the Prime Minister follow through on his threat, or is he just talk, no walk?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I have answered that question. What many Canadians are prioritizing is the economy and the environment.

When it comes to the economy, we know that we have one of the fastest-growing economies in the G7. That is pretty impressive, because it means that more Canadians are working today than were working in my lifetime. When it comes to our climate plan, because we know that climate change is real, we want to transition to a cleaner, greener economy by making cleaner, greener choices more affordable. That is why we have the climate action incentive payment.

That member and his party choose to mislead Canadians by not reminding them—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Lévis-Lotbinière.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 29, our leader issued an official statement in a press release. It stated that the Prime Minister led a campaign of political interference, personally gave orders, denied the truth and had therefore lost the moral authority to govern. Our leader stands by everything he said in that statement.

My question is simple. Will the Prime Minister show some courage and do as he said he would, that is, follow through on his notice so the truth can come out in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows very well, I have already answered that question.

Instead of asking the same question, I encourage the member to focus on the policies that will have a positive impact on Canadians.

The Conservatives are doing everything in their power to block a budget that includes important initiatives for Canadians, things like lower interest rates on student loans, funding to help seniors keep more of their money and new assistance for first-time homebuyers. We will continue to—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is becoming abundantly clear that the thing the Prime Minister fears most is telling the truth. Yes, in open court, he cannot shut down the hearings and he cannot threaten the witnesses.

Will he commit today to immediately file his lawsuit and testify in open court about what he did to politically interfere in a criminal trial?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member from the province of Saskatchewan would rise, and he knows very well that I have answered that question.

Saskatchewan is one of the provinces that do not have a provincial climate plan. To ensure that we can transition to a cleaner, greener economy, the federal government has put forward a climate action incentive payment.

Families within Saskatchewan will be receiving over $600 when they file their taxes this year, and 80% of families will spend less when they come to make cleaner, greener choices, because we want to make sure that they make cleaner, greener choices and that they are affordable. I encourage—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

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HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to breast cancer experts, thousands of Canadian women will die due to the Liberal government's new breast cancer screening guidelines.

The new guidelines ignore expert advice, disregard the importance of mammograms for women in their forties, and advise against self-exams. They overlook the benefits of early detection, ignore current data and are silent on the risk of breast density.

Given these grave concerns, will the Liberals halt these guidelines, advise physicians not to follow them and launch a review under the direction of subject matter experts?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protecting the health and safety of all Canadians is my top priority.

The Canadian task force on preventive health care is an independent, arm's-length panel of 15 experts with a mandate to develop practical clinical guidelines.

While the government provided support to the task force breast cancer screening workgroup, its decision was totally done independently. As such, these are not official government guidelines.

* * *

● (1145)

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, steelworkers and their families are going through a tough time. They are facing uncertainty as the temporary safeguards are set to expire on April 27.

The Liberals are reluctant to keep these safeguards in place to protect our jobs and prevent our market from being flooded, but they offer millions of dollars as a gift to the Weston family.

It is the eleventh hour. Steelworkers do not have the means to wait.

Instead of helping big banks and corporations, can the Liberal government finally help out workers?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will always protect Canadians, Canadian workers and their interests. In reaction to the illegal and unjustified measures imposed by the United States, Canada introduced tariffs on steel and aluminum imports totalling $16.6 billion. We also put measures in place to help the industry on this side of the border.

We will continue to work with people in the steel and aluminum sector to support them during this difficult time until these illegal and unjustified U.S. tariffs are lifted.

[*English*]

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that our country's continued prosperity depends on innovative, hard-working Canadian companies and their ability to access new markets. Increased trade improves overall productivity and creates good-paying jobs for all Canadians.

Can the Minister of International Trade Diversification please let the House know what steps are being taken to increase trade opportunities for Canadians from coast to coast to coast?

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Newmarket—Aurora for his question and for his leadership on the international trade committee.

Consecutive governments talked about trade diversification, but it was only our government that made it a reality. Under our government, we signed and ratified CETA and CPTPP. That is 1.5 billion new customers for our businesses.

This week, the minister announced new measures to help SMEs trade, grow and create jobs. We are aiming to grow our global exports by 50% by 2025.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they will not succeed, because instead of being at home planting, worried canola farmers were in Ottawa this week to sound the alarm. Canada is already barred from exporting canola to China, but now Saudi Arabia has stopped buying our barley, Italy has closed its doors to our durum wheat, and India is slapping tariffs on our pulses. The Prime Minister is failing dismally, and Canadian farmers are paying the price.

Eight times we asked for an emergency debate, and eight times the Liberals said no. It is time for the government to take a more involved, creative and aggressive approach to defending Canadian grains and oilseeds. That is what the industry is calling for.

When will we see that happen?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the concerns of the canola industry. For the past month and a half, the minister has been meeting with dozens of farmers and industry representatives here in Ottawa, in Alberta, in Saskatchewan and even in Manitoba.

The Canadian representatives of the CFIA are having discussions with their counterparts in China to find a science-based solution. We have sent a letter to China to propose sending a high-level delegation of experts.

We are going to keep standing up for the canola industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the canola crisis, it is clear that the Prime Minister is letting China call the shots. His weak leadership and inaction are hurting Canadian farmers. One of my farmers has 400,000 bushels of canola in the bin, and it has lost $600,000 in value in the past few weeks. As the price of canola is driven down, farmers have no certainty as to what they should plant in the future. This is a crisis.

When will the Prime Minister actually stand up for our canola farmers?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I already said, we understand the concerns of canola growers.

Our government has created a working group made up of industry representatives and our provincial partners. We sent a letter to China asking them to welcome a high-level delegation of experts. We will continue to defend the canola industry and to vigorously defend our inspection system, which is among the best in the world.

I remind members that the opposition parties voted against the agriculture budget.

[*English*]

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the time for working groups and letters is over. The canola crisis continues, with farmers across Canada paying for the Liberals' mistakes.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food says she is seized with the issue, that this requires a scientific solution. Let us call a spade a spade: The Chinese do not have a pest problem with Canada's canola. They have a problem with the Liberal government.

When will Liberals finally stand up for canola farmers and start addressing this crisis with China?

● (1150)

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised the hon. member is justifying a foreign government action against Canadian farmers. It used to be that political parties debated internally on domestic policies, but we used to come together when a foreign government imposed actions against Canadian farmers. I ask the hon. member to join our government in standing up for Canadian farmers and defending our excellent and high-quality products as we resolve this issue.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, steel producers and fabricators across the greater Hamilton area have been feeling the pain for almost a year, and now they are strapped with a crippling carbon tax and the threat of the removal of the one market protection they have had. Those who rely on good-quality Canadian steel are feeling the effects and are very concerned. Producers, fabricators and steelworkers need more than talk and photo ops from the Prime Minister.

Why did the Prime Minister sign this new agreement without getting these tariffs removed?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will always stand up for Canadian workers and Canadian interests. Canada responded to the illegal U.S. measures with dollar-for-dollar tariffs on imported steel, aluminum and other products from the U.S. As we work to completely repeal the U.S. tariffs, we recognize the potential impacts on Canadian businesses, workers and communities.

While Canada's countermeasures remain in place, we are providing targeted relief for Canadian manufacturers facing exceptional circumstances, such as challenges around the lack of domestic supply. We are also imposing provisional safeguards on imports of seven steel products that are causing or threatening harm to Canadian steel producers and workers because of increased foreign imports caused by the U.S. tariffs.

We will remain steadfast in our support of the Canadian steel and aluminum industry.

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[*Translation*]

MARINE TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, spring has finally arrived, or at least we hope it has. Good weather means boaters will be out on the Richelieu river.

We have been calling for better regulations for years now, to prevent shore erosion, protect boaters and ensure respect for residents living along the river. In 2016 I moved a motion to that effect.

Will the Liberals listen to the municipalities in the Richelieu valley and the Chambly basin and change the federal rules so that municipalities can better protect the Richelieu river?

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise on this issue once again. I spoke to the House leader in Parliament in question period just a few weeks ago on a similar issue. We directed the House leader to funding that is available and we encouraged our constituents to apply for that funding.

If the member would also like to meet with me, I would be happy to have that meeting as well.

* * *

[*Translation*]

YOUTH

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, do you know what issue children and youth respond to the most? The health of the planet and global warming. Unfortunately, last week we learned that Canada is warming twice as fast as the global average.

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes children's right to live in a clean environment. However, we do not have a federal institution that defends children and serves as their voice. I have proposed a solution that would change that.

Will the Liberal government support my bill to create a federal commissioner for young persons?

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for this very good idea. It is one that we are exploring through appointments to various commissions and bodies within the department I represent. In fact, we had discussions about that today.

We are looking to make sure that children's voices and the voices of youth are present when we deal with poverty or with housing or with any of the issues that affect children in this country.

The member opposite has put forth a good motion. We will be looking at that motion and coming back to the House with our position on it. I thank her for it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are claiming that they want to protect jobs at SNC-Lavalin, when they know full well that those jobs are not in jeopardy. To make matters worse, they have no problem with political interference in the justice system.

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

Why did the Prime Minister want to cancel that contract and undermine the Davie shipyard?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is 100% committed to strengthening the Royal Canadian Navy and ensuring that it has the resources it needs to serve Canadians.

Davie is a major shipyard, and we recognize the expertise of its workers. The *Asterix* filled a temporary need for refuelling at sea, air support and medical capabilities for our navy. The shipyard was granted contracts last summer and even this fall.

We will continue to ensure that all of the shipyards in Canada get the work they need, particularly the employees of the Davie shipyard in Quebec City.

● (1155)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Conservative government, which gave the *Asterix* contract to the Davie shipyard in 2015.

What I want to know is why the Liberals, when they took office, did everything in their power to cancel that contract, to prevent the Davie shipyard from having the *Asterix* contract and employing 1,000 people.

I also want to know why they are doing everything they can to undermine those who brought their schemes to light.

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, I thank my colleague for his question.

I feel I should make it clear that we are following the rule of law in the Norman case. We are complying with all of the judge's orders and co-operating fully. I would emphatically reiterate that it is important to let the Ontario judge play her role independently. Interfering in this matter, as the Conservatives are now urging us to do, would be a clear violation of the rule of law. We want to obey the law, as every parliamentarian must.

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[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vice-Admiral Mark Norman is a 38-year highly decorated, deeply respected member of the Canadian Forces. As vice-chief of the defence staff, he has served with honour and dignity. Today, he is trying to prove his innocence in another Liberal scandal.

The Prime Minister is again undermining the rule of law, refusing to release documents that Vice-Admiral Norman has the right to receive to prove his case in court. Once again, the Prime Minister is abusing his office and manipulating these court proceedings. Why?

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, with great respect, that is an absolute misconstruction of what is actually taking place. There is a court that is dealing with a third party records application. We have heard the court order. We are co-operating with that court order, as any government would. We provided the documents. It is now for a judge in the Ontario court to decide whether our co-operation has been sufficient or is deficient. It is for a judge to determine this matter. It is not to be debated in the House of Commons nor is it to be determined by a political actor. That is what the independence of the rule of law is all about. That is what I would urge the Conservatives to respect.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a cornerstone of our government's relationship with indigenous peoples. In 2016, our government became a full supporter of the declaration, without qualification.

Our government is moving forward on key legislative initiatives that support the implementation of the declaration. We have also supported Bill C-262 as an important next step. Can the parliamentary secretary update the House on the status of this important legislative measure?

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-262 is a key step in implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Passed by the House last spring, the bill is now stalled in the other place as a result of Conservative procedural delay tactics.

While we have enormous respect for the independence and work of the other place, reconciliation with indigenous peoples and particularly this piece of legislation cannot be subject to partisan and procedural games. I urge the Conservative members of the other place and the members of this House who are in their caucus to heed the unanimous motion passed by the House this week and stop their inexcusable delay tactics.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in November, the Prime Minister promised that he would have a plan for saving jobs in Oshawa. Instead of saving jobs, we have seen more job losses announced in the automotive sector, this time in Windsor.

The Prime Minister pretended to stand up for jobs at SNC-Lavalin to the point of political interference in a criminal trial. Those jobs were not even at risk. Meanwhile, we stand to lose 15,000-plus jobs in Durham Region and Windsor stands to lose over 1,500 jobs.

Instead of just acting, why can this Prime Minister not act when there is a real crisis?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has always been committed to supporting auto workers, their families and the industry as a whole. Our government has invested over $5.6 billion in the auto sector, which has served to created and maintain tens of thousands of jobs since we took office.

For example, we invested $110 million in Toyota facilities in Cambridge, $49 million in Linamar facilities in Guelph and $41.8 million in Honda facilities in Alliston. The list is a long one. Our government has made it clear that it will continue to invest in the auto sector to support the development and manufacture of the vehicles of the future.

● (1200)

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, communities like those in the city of Brampton need to adapt to the effects of climate change. Reducing the impact of natural disasters is critical in keeping Canadians safe and supporting the strong economy and the middle class.

Could the minister update the House on what the government is doing to build climate resilience in cities like Brampton?

Hon. Bernadette Jordan (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to helping communities build the infrastructure they need for this century and helping them better withstand climate change. That is why we are investing $2 billion over 10 years in the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund.

Our government was in Brampton last week to announce that we are investing over $22 million in an erosion protection project that will protect the homes and businesses of residents in the entire region. This is vitally important work, and we look forward to continuing that partnership across Canada.

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GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

> SNC-Lavalin, Arctic surf clams and no-show in Vietnam.
> India trip sideshow, fundraising from the PMO and Trans Mountain no go.
> Secret fundraisers with Chinese billionaires, terrorists being millionaires and Panama paper fundraising chairs.
> Forgotten mansions, ethics sanctions, Morneau Shepell stock sale and veterans asking for too much, fail.
> Phoenix pay, island vacay, investment flying far away, cash-for-access soiree, balanced budget: no way.

Why do Canadians always have to pay?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is probably the most support for the arts I have ever seen from a Conservative, so I think it is pretty impressive to see Conservatives coming along.

I know the member is concerned for his constituents and I know he is concerned about the future generation. He forgot to say the word "environment", but I know it is on his mind. I know he challenges the leader of the official opposition every day to come out with a climate plan.

I have good news for his constituents. We are going to make sure that transitioning to a cleaner, greener economy is more affordable. That is why constituents in his riding and all across Ontario will be able to receive $307 for a family of four, which will be more than it will cost them so that we get a better economy—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Regina Lewvan.

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CAUCUS MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Speaker ruled that he cannot enforce the Parliament of Canada Act rules for caucus expulsions, which are also not subject to judicial review. If neither the courts nor the Speaker uphold the law, party leaders are free to ignore it. A possible solution would be to empower an independent Attorney General, separate from the justice minister, to enforce the Parliament of Canada Act.

Does the government agree?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that members know that at our first caucus meeting, the caucus chair wrote the Speaker to inform him of the will of our caucus on these measures.

In regard to the role of the Attorney General, we know that Canadians expect and deserve to have faith in their institutions and in the people who serve them. That is exactly why, when the Prime Minister observed the testimony that took place at the justice committee, he brought forward the hon. Anne McLellan so that she could look into this matter and provide advice and guidance to the government. This information will also be available for future governments when it comes to the dual role of the Minister of Justice as well as the Attorney General of Canada.

I can assure him that we are taking this very seriously.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while Abitibi is developing the Rouyn-Noranda airport, the federal government is considering authorizing cuts to air transportation security. It makes no sense to let NAV Canada cut night services for pilots at the third-largest airport in Quebec. This is dangerous and impedes regional development.

Will the minister listen to business people in Abitibi, air carriers, pilots, local officials and the unanimous voice of the Quebec National Assembly, which are all calling for the government to maintain the flight service station, or FSS, in Rouyn-Noranda?

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the safety of our transportation system, Canadians and members can rest assured that we have one of the clearest safety records in all of Canada. When it comes to individual investments and individual decisions, we are making clear investments right across the country for the safety of our airports. We are seeing the results, and the member can go back to his constituents and safely say that we have one of the clearest safety records in the entire world.

● (1205)

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government tabled the estimates yesterday. This is the last request for spending approval before the election. Nearly all of the initiatives from the latest budget are in there, but a big one is missing. The $3.9 billion promised to supply-managed producers is missing. This money was not in any financial tables in the budget and is not in the estimates.

Can the government tell us where we can find the $3.9 billion?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always been clear with supply-managed producers that we would provide fair and full compensation, and we are keeping this promise. This is a very firm commitment on our end.

Our party is the one that first implemented supply management and the party that has defended it and will always defend it. The same cannot be said for the Conservative Party.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the sword of Damocles is hanging over the heads of steel workers who might lose their safeguards in two weeks.

Accordingly, I hope you will find unanimous consent of the House to move the following motion:

> That, given that many of the 23,000 direct jobs and 100,000 indirect jobs of the Canadian steel industry are at risk and that many of our economic partners, like the European Union, protect workers with permanent safeguard measures, the House urge the Minister of Finance to implement permanent safeguard measures for our steel industry immediately to avoid a deadline of April 27, 2019.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, during question period, the hon. member for Mississauga Centre reached out to the opposition to put an end to the Liberal inaction on the canola crisis file.

That is why I, in turn, am reaching out to the government by calling for the unanimous consent of the House to hold an emergency debate on the canola crisis.

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

Some hon. members: No.

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 six petitions.

* * *

CRUELTY-FREE COSMETICS ACT

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC) moved that Bill S-214, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (cruelty-free cosmetics), be read the first time.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House and table Bill S-214. I want to thank Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen.

This bill proposes to eliminate animal testing of cosmetics. A number of organizations have worked with me to bring the bill forward, including the Humane Society, the Animal Alliance of Canada, the Cosmetics Alliance Canada, Cruelty Free International and Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics.

These organizations have worked to bring forward seven amendments, which would be needed as we study the bill further. The amendments have to do with ministerial powers, responsibilities and definition of manufacturers and importers responsibilities and a clarity for testing to sell in other countries.

I am very pleased to bring this forward. This would make us the 40th country to consider such legislation and would bring us into alignment with Europe and California.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

● (1210)

PETITIONS

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is quite timely. I rise today to present two petitions on behalf of the residents of Thunder Bay—Rainy River in support of Bill S-214, the cruelty-free cosmetics act, which would ban the sale and manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the former president of the Greater Victoria Eldercare Foundation, Vancouver Island's largest hospital foundation supporting seniors, I am very pleased to present petitions from several hundred constituents, as well as people across the country, calling on the government to establish a national strategy on palliative care.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition from the great people of Guelph. They are concerned about climate change, knowing that it is real, that it represents an existential threat to humanity and that pollution should not be free.

Research has shown that the price of pollution is the most effective and lowest-cost way to transition to a cleaner, greener economy. Canada can have an ambitious, effective climate plan that creates new jobs and makes life affordable for Canadians.

The people of Guelph would like to see Canada and the Government of Canada continuing to do the great work we are doing to combat climate change through the market pricing mechanisms we are using.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have with me a number of signed petitions from all over Saskatchewan, calling upon the House of Commons to support Bill S-214, to ban the sale and/or manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada, moving forward.

* * *

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 the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2274 to 2280 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Question No. 2274—**Mr. Bev Shipley**:

> With regard to spending on photographers or photography services since June 1, 2018, broken down by department or agency: (*a*) how much has been spent; (*b*) what were the dates and duration of each photography contract; (*c*) what was the initial and final value of each contract; (*d*) what were the events or occasions which were meant to be photographed as a result of each contract; and (*e*) what were the locations where the photography work was performed for each contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2275—**Mr. Bev Shipley**:

> With regard to the consumption of alcohol and food on flights taken on government-owned Airbus and Challenger aircraft since June 1, 2018: (*a*) on which flights was alcohol consumed; and (*b*) for each flight where alcohol was consumed (i) what is the value of alcohol consumed, (ii) what was the origin and destination of the flight, (iii) what was the flight date, (iv) what is the breakdown of alcoholic beverages consumed by specific beverage and quantity, (v) what is the cost of food consumed on each flight?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2276—**Mr. Kevin Waugh**:

> With regard to government advertising on the boards of the ice at NHL arenas since January 1, 2016: what are the details of each campaign which involves such advertising, including (i) date and duration of campaign, (ii) total cost of campaign, (iii) all costs associated with having the advertisement on the boards, including a breakdown of all such costs; (iv) name and location of arenas, (v) text of advertisement on the boards, (vi) number of games which each advertisement was on the boards, (vii) number of boards each advertisement was on?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2277—**Mr. Bob Saroya**:

With regard to renovation, redesign and refurnishing of ministers' or deputy ministers' offices since April 1, 2018: (*a*) what is the total cost of any spending on renovating, redesigning, and refurnishing for each ministerial office, broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) moving services, (iii) renovating services, (iv) painting, (v) flooring, (vi) furniture, (vii) appliances, (viii) art installation, (ix) all other expenditures; and (*b*) what is the total cost of any spending on renovating, redesigning, and refurnishing for each deputy minister's office, broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) moving services, (iii) renovating services, (iv) painting, (v) flooring, (vi) furniture, (vii) appliances, (viii) art installation, (ix) all other expenditures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2278—**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif**:

With regard to international development funding, since May 29, 2018: what are the details of all funding provided to civil society organizations, including the (i) name of the organization, (ii) amount received, (iii) amount requested, (iv) purpose of the funding and the description of related projects, (v) date of the funding announcement, (vi) start and end dates of the project receiving funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2279—**Mr. Garnett Genuis**:

With regard to the 2018 Public Report on the Terrorism Threat to Canada and its references to so-called Sikh extremism: does the government have any evidence of an uptick in violent extremist activities which justifies the addition?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2280—**Mr. Garnett Genuis**:

With regard to foreign aid provided to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) intended for work or assistance in Sri Lanka, since January 1, 2016: (*a*) which NGOs received funding; (*b*) how much did each NGO receive; (*c*) what were the dates on which each payment in (*b*) was received; (*d*) what is the purpose or projects associated with each payment, including a brief description of that project; (*e*) what specific accountability measures are in place to ensure that the funding for each NGO is used properly; (*f*) did each project meet the accountability requirements; and (*g*) for any projects which did not meet the accountability requirements, what was the consequence of not meeting such requirements?

(Return tabled)

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion 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, and of the amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby has three minutes and 50 seconds remaining.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before we were interrupted by question period, I was talking about how this BIA was really a budget of broken promises.

It systematically shows how many times over the last four years the Liberal government has betrayed its commitments to try to do something that would be supportive of regular Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

We have raised the issue of pharmacare in the House numerous times, as has the leader of the NDP, the member for Burnaby South. The fact that we do not have pharmacare after four years of a Liberal government shows the paucity of the Liberals' ideas and their ability to carry them forward.

We have not seen any investments in affordable housing in any meaningful way. Members will recall that it was the former Liberal government that destroyed the national housing program. Symbolically, the Liberals love to talk about housing. However, that has not helped people to build units across the country. As we found out through access to information, the Liberals, by the time they finish their four-year mandate, will have constructed or are in the process of constructing, 14,000 units across the country. That is all.

I pointed out earlier how, after the Second World War, the federal government made an investment in affordable housing. Over three years, it built 300,000 affordable housing units across the length and breadth of Canada to ensure that returning men and women in the service were taken care of. After four years, the Liberals will be able to point to 14,000 units that are either built or are still in the process of being built.

Hundreds of thousands of families are in precarious housing situations. Millions of Canadian families worry about whether they will be able to keep a roof over their head or whether the roof over their head is something they can make sustainable. When we look at the appalling conditions in indigenous communities, the Liberal government has done very little to address that. This shows again the paucity of ideas, broken promises and betrayals coming out of this most recent budget, the last chance budget for the Liberals to get it right.

On all the important issues, the Liberals have simply betrayed their commitments, except for one. They did not make that commitment during the last election campaign, but they have certainly carried it out. They have provided as much support and help to the pampered, privileged and wealthiest Canadians as is absolutely possible. There is no better illustration than the $12 million splurged on Loblaws, one of Canada's most profitable corporations, with almost a billion dollars in profit last year, and run by one of Canada's richest Canadians. In fact, two men now have as much wealth as a third of Canadians. The Liberals, by not applying pharmacare or affordable housing, have taken from the very poor and the middle class and given $12 million to Loblaws. That shows an inability to understand what Canadians are going through.

On October 21, Canadians will have the ability to judge the Canadians on that. Certainly, we are putting forward strong proposals that will help bring the country forward and provide the supports that Canadians need.

● (1215)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the member's comments on household debt. I was going to ask this question last night, before the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola rose to try to adjourn the House and really stall debate on this matter. Maybe the member could help me with a question on debt.

The credit market borrowing fell by 19.5% to $84.6 million in 2008, which is now the lowest level since 2014. Mortgage loan demand has risen by $2.3 billion to $12.3 billion. This looks at how people get into housing. It looks like there is a lot of activity there, which may be a reflection of 825,000 Canadians coming out of poverty and Canadians creating 950,000 jobs under this economy.

Canada now has the highest foreign direct investment in the G7, higher than Germany by almost two times. I wonder whether this growing economy is something the member has some selective vision on or whether he sees some positive things happening in our economy.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, that is the stark difference between the Liberals and New Democrat. He could not have said it more appropriately. While the banks are reaping profits, giving a lot of loans to Canadians and reaping record profits, that means everyone is taken care of. With everything I have said today, that we have the highest family debt levels not only in Canadian history, but in the history of any industrialized country, the Liberals just blank out because they are doing okay.

When I say, as we saw with stark clarity just a few weeks ago, that half of Canadian families are $200 away from basic bankruptcy in the course of a month, $200 away from falling even further into debt, if they are lucky to get more loans, the Liberals eyes glaze over. They are saying that the markets, the CEOs and executive bonuses are doing well. Loblaws is going to get CEO bonuses for the $12 million the Liberals took away from students and seniors to splurge on one of the most profitable companies in the country.

That is the stark difference. When the Liberals say that everything is great for them and for the CEOs, we actually look at what is happening to Canadians. For Canadians, it has been four miserable years under the Liberal government.

● (1220)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent contribution to this debate.

When I spoke about this bill, I pointed out that the Liberals' solution to helping youth buy a first home was to increase the amount they can withdraw from their RRSP from $25,000 to $35,000.

In my speech, I directly asked my colleagues if young people in their ridings often knocked on their doors to say that the $25,000 from their RRSPs was not enough and that they wanted more to buy that first home.

I will ask the same question that I asked of all the other members: does my colleague know many young people in his riding of New Westminster—Burnaby who have said that the maximum withdrawal from their RRSP was not enough and that they wanted more to buy a house?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Sherbrooke. A few days ago, he was named the youngest finance critic in the history of the House of Commons. Well done. He was chosen as finance critic because of his knowledge and because he works so hard, not only for the people of Sherbrooke, but for all Canadians. I congratulate the member. He fully deserves this position.

He asked a very good question. With regard to RRSPs, young people right now are trying to pay off their student loans, because the previous Conservative government and the current Liberal government have been refusing to help them for years. These governments decided it was more important to take care of CEOs and big corporations, cut taxes across the board, sign treaties with tax havens and create tax loopholes. Now students are paying the price.

Student loan debt has reached astronomical levels and is incredibly hard to pay off. The young people who are working to pay off these student loans are now being forced to take money out of their RRSPs, if they have one, to buy a home. However, they do not have any money to set aside for RRSPs, because they are still paying off the debt imposed by the Liberal government and the previous Conservative government.

The fact that the government's solution is to tell young people to just take money out of their RRSPs shows how out of touch this government is with the everyday reality of Canadians.

I think Canadians will teach this government a lesson on October 21.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's first 17-minute speech and then the three minutes after question period. The member embodies what I believe is the NDP's fantasyland. People listening to the New Democrats would think that if they were born in Canada, they are going to be given a house. If they were born in Canada, good news; they will have anything they can possibly imagine, because the NDP will just give it to them.

The reality of government, as we have seen from the NDP at the provincial level, is far from that fantasyland. I suggest that the member opposite might want to look at some of those NDP governments to get a sense of reality.

The reality inside this House in the last four years is that we have seen many progressive policies, such as a policy that saw Canada's wealthiest 1% get an increase in taxes, something the member voted against. We saw a government that brought in a policy to give a tax break to Canada's middle class, something the NDP voted against.

What about the measures that lifted thousands of children in every region of our country out of poverty? The NDP voted against them. What about the thousands of seniors who were lifted out of poverty? The NDP voted against that. For measure after measure, they are in that fantasyland. I do not quite understand it, when during the last election, Jack Layton himself said that they were going to balance the budget. It just does not add up.

Can my colleague across the way step out of fantasyland for a while and tell us if his new leader believes, as his former leader did, that Canada has to have a balanced budget at all costs?

● (1225)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, first off, aside from the rant, which I will come back to in a moment, the member pointed out something that is very important to note. The fiscal period returns from ministries of finance over the last 30 years show, collectively, that NDP governments have the best record of managing money and paying down debt.

The NDP takes as its fundamental principle, as did Tommy Douglas, our first leader, actually helping people. We will never deviate from that course of making sure that regular Canadians are taken care of. The Conservatives and Liberals say that they are going to balance the books, but they do not.

Let us get back to the member's point about fantasyland and that money does not grow on trees, except that it does, in Liberal-land, for CEOs. If one is a corporate CEO for Loblaws and wants $12 million, one shows up at a cash for access fundraiser for the Liberal Party, and days later, one gets $12 million. Do seniors get it? No. Do students get it? No. Do hard-working families that are now having to cobble together jobs, because there are now more and more part-time, precarious, temporary jobs, get it? No.

The Liberals will say that there are jobs, but the reality is that families are struggling to make ends meet. Families are struggling under the worst family debt load crisis in the industrialized world. Half of Canadian families are a couple of hundred dollars away from falling into insolvency in any given month. Those are the realities.

However, in Liberal fantasyland, a corporate CEO who runs Kinder Morgan gets $1 billion for free. Liberals up the price. If companies are asking for an amount, they will give them another billion dollars on top of it. If they want tax cuts, they will give them $14 billion in tax cuts in the fall economic statements. In Liberal fantasyland, money does grow on trees, but it only goes to wealthy Canadians.

The NDP believes that regular, hard-working Canadians deserve better, and that is what they are going to get after October 21.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to budget 2019, on behalf of my constituents. I will be sharing my time with the member for Parkdale—High Park.

[*English*]

Budget 2019 continues to build on the Liberal vision for Canada, and this is a vision for a prosperous Canada, where all boats rise together. This, of course, is a precondition for a harmonious democracy where social justice reigns. We know that when there is growing inequality, the middle class, in fact everyone, loses faith in the democratic institutions that are so important to this country. Therefore, it is very important not only for our economy but for our democracy that we strengthen the middle class and that we have a prosperous economy where, as I said, all boats rise together.

Our vision for the middle class is focused on three things, and this has been a recurring theme throughout the three and a half years we have had the great privilege and honour of making decisions in government. Those three things are, first, rebuilding and expanding our infrastructure; second, creating a 21st-century labour force; and third, creating an environmentally sustainable economy that generates jobs and a better quality of life.

Yes, it is important to have jobs, and it is important to have prosperity. However, if we have all of that and our quality of life is degrading because our environment is degrading and the risk to our health is increasing because of a poor environment, people will start asking themselves what they are working for. Obviously, we are working to put our skills and talents to good use, but we are also working to live in a country that has a good quality of life and a strong democracy. We pursue these objectives while at the same time giving a helping hand to those who may need a bit of a hand to participate more fully in the economy.

As a result, this budget includes measures to help seniors who are on GIS actually earn more money before their GIS payments are affected. Of course, in past budgets, we have instituted measures that will help children, who are tomorrow's leaders and workers. We have included measures like the Canada child benefit to ensure that they can grow up strong and healthy and be good citizens and productive members of the economy.

Finally, going back to budget 2018, we have instituted measures to improve the chances of success for women entrepreneurs and to increase the participation rate of women in the labour force. As we know, if we can have a labour force participation rate for women that is equal to that of men, our GDP, by some estimates, could be boosted by 4%, which is not insignificant. As I said, budget 2019 builds on that vision.

I will speak a little about infrastructure.

● (1230)

[*Translation*]

Infrastructure is about more than just fixing potholes. That said, fixing potholes is not a minor thing, it is important. Not so long ago someone said to me that if everyone took the money they spent fixing their cars and aligning wheels every year because of potholes and put that money into RRSPs, they would all have quite a nest egg on their retirement. Potholes are a real problem.

[*English*]

However, infrastructure is about more than that. It is about building the capacity we need to have a strong 21st-century economy, not only today but in the future. Infrastructure is about building capacity to communicate, not only through high-speed Internet access but also through public transportation to allow people to go from point A to point B for business meetings, for example, meetings that create wealth.

I know that a lot is done on the Internet, but if we ask experts in business or the economy, they tell us that face-to-face meetings are important in terms of generating the relationships and creating the networks that are fundamentally at the root of all wealth creation.

What else would the budget do? It would focus on creating, as I said, a 21st-century labour force. One of the main measures in the budget that would help to do this is the Canada training benefit. As we know, skills gaps hold the economy back. They hold the economy back even more when it is an economy that, because of the accelerating rate of technological change, is moving ahead very quickly. The Canada training benefit would offer a lifetime training credit of up to $5,000, earned at a rate of $250 per year, to those who wished to upgrade their skills for the 21st-century economy.

Attached to that Canada training benefit would be an EI benefit of four weeks, which would allow people to earn some income while they were retraining. It is fine to say that there would be money to pay for courses so people could retrain, but they would be off work, so they would not be able to sustain themselves during that period. Therefore, attached to the Canada training benefit would be an important EI benefit.

As I say, we have also in the past invested money in the Business Development Bank specifically for female entrepreneurs and so on.

On the environment, glaciers are melting, floodwaters are rising and heatwaves endanger the lives of the vulnerable. By the vulnerable, I mean seniors and those who cannot escape urban heat islands. All this is happening while the Conservatives twiddle their thumbs.

What have we done? We have brought in a price on pollution. Experts agree that if we are serious about combatting climate change, the cheapest and most efficient way to do that is through a price on pollution. I quote The Guardian newspaper, which said, not long ago, "Economists widely agree that introducing a carbon price is the single most effective way for countries to reduce their emissions."

I am very proud that our government has launched a federal backstop, which will apply to the four provinces that have not instituted mechanisms for pricing carbon pollution. Of course, with that backstop comes a remittance to the citizens of those provinces so that at the end of the day, the price on pollution does not impact their family budgets.

Many constituents have said that a price on pollution is great but that we need to do more. In fact, that is what our government is doing. We are bringing in a clean-fuel standard, which will be based on a system of tradable credits. I know that the Conservatives do not like systems of tradable credits, but this clean-fuel standard will incentivize fuel distributors and others to modify their fuel so that they emit less in greenhouse gas emissions. Also, if we look at the experience in California, we see that a clean-fuel standard will encourage, for example, transit companies to shift to electric fleets, so that is very important.

What else are we doing? We are investing in creating a pan-Canadian network of electric charging stations and natural gas and hydrogen refuelling stations. As a matter of fact, I am very pleased and proud that our government announced recently, back in January, a $5-million investment to build 100 fast-charging stations for electric vehicles in the province of Quebec, including, I am pleased to say, two stations in Beaconsfield, in my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis, and two stations in Kirkland, also in my constituency. They will be built by Hydro Quebec, with funding from NRCan's electric vehicle and alternative fuel infrastructure deployment initiative.

What else are we doing to increase demand for zero-emissions vehicles, including plug-in hybrids? This budget would take the very important step of offering up to a $5,000 incentive for those who purchase those vehicles.

I am very proud of the budget. It is making progress in many important areas.

● (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis for his speech.

I noted that he spoke with great pride about the budget and also that he insisted we must fight global warming. I thank him for that, because I believe we do not discuss it enough.

I would like to ask him two questions. First, given that he spoke about plug-in hybrids, I would like him to remind me whether plug-in hybrids such as the Chrysler Pacifica, which is built in Windsor and is the only vehicle of this kind made in Canada, will be eligible. Could he please refresh my memory and provide details about that?

Second, since he is an experienced politician, he knows full well that over the next six months the only thing the parties are going to do is sling mud at one another and quarrel about whether there will be a carbon tax. That will be a pointless fight. I would like to know what he thinks of that.

Take, for example, the resignation of Nicolas Hulot in France. He said that partisan politics do not work. We do not want yellow vests in Canada. There was the United We Roll movement. We must find a consensus and the social licence for what needs to be done.

Does my colleague not agree that it would be good if, before the end of this session, we could come up with a non-partisan, all-party approach to meeting our greenhouse gas reduction targets?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for both of his questions.

In answer to his first question, I would say that the budget has not yet been approved. However, I assume that the details of the program to provide subsidies of up to $5,000 are currently being worked out. I cannot answer his question because we do not have the details yet. I think that those who make their purchase after the budget comes into effect will be eligible for the subsidy, but we do not have the details yet.

With regard to the non-partisan policy, I completely agree that people need to talk. We talk here in the House because we are a democracy. Even though we may not agree, we must not turn our backs on each other. We need to listen to each other because we are not listening just for ourselves as members. We are also listening on behalf of our constituents, some of whom obviously did not vote for our party. I completely agree that we need to stop throwing mud. That is how we will move forward. I know that, often, it is in committee that we work together to meet important objectives, including those pertaining to the fight against climate change.

● (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Vandal (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues I am very proud that we have dealt with since being elected as a government is that we have removed 81 long-term boil water advisories across Canada. There are under 60 left. It is not perfect, as the NDP would have it be, but it is very good, and we are going in the right direction.

Budget 2019 has $739 million over five years for boil water removals, with at least $200 million in the next year or year and a half. I know the member has a particular interest and expertise in water. I wonder if he could talk about the importance of this initiative.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question and the kind of thing we should be talking about in this House instead of engaging in hyperpartisanship.

That $700 million is added to the $1.8 billion that we committed to over five years. Indeed, many Canadians were wondering why we could not solve this problem. It was a question of funding, of course, but it was also a question of political will. Our government has made a priority of removing these long-term drinking water advisories, and it is because of a focus of attention, in addition to the funds, that we have made progress.

I know that we are extremely committed. The Prime Minister is fundamentally committed to removing all long-term drinking water advisories by March 2021, and the member is right that we are on the right track. We are going to get there and that will be a proud moment for Canada.

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, I will continue the excellent commencement to this debate in this 20-minute segment by carrying on from the comments that were made by the member who just spoke.

I am rising in the chamber to speak to Bill C-97, the budget implementation act. This bill continues our government's commitment to put forward a progressive and positive agenda for all Canadians.

This budget has received praise from numerous sources. I have heard about it from the engaged and informed constituents of my riding of Parkdale—High Park, some of whom are here observing the proceedings today. Welcome, Mr. Van Dam.

This legislation will fund important initiatives in relationship to the environment, in relationship to anti-racism, in relationship to support for places of worship, indigenous languages, students, the LGBTQ2 community, infrastructure, health initiatives, social finance and so much more.

During my remarks today I will detail the highlights of this budget that relate to Bill C-97, which will improve the lives of my constituents in Parkdale—Hyde Park as well as Canadians right across the country.

First, it is important to thank the many stakeholders and individual Canadians for their hard work in advocating for various causes and issues raised in the budget by presenting their submissions to the Minister of Finance and the finance committee.

I want to begin my substantive remarks with one of the most important priorities for our country and for the world at large, as was just touched upon in the previous statements. It is the issue of climate change and its impact on our environment.

I agree wholeheartedly with the question that was posed by the NDP heritage critic about this issue needing to be a pan-governmental issue and a nonpartisan issue. Unfortunately, to date it has not been.

As many Canadians know, our government has placed a price on pollution, and it came into full force on April 1 of this year. This is a historic tool that will ensure that pollution is no longer free, and it reflects what I hear from my constituents and people right around this country: that climate change is absolutely real and that we must take action now.

In budget 2019 and through this very bill, we are taking steps in our plan to protect the environment and at the same time grow a clean economy while making life more affordable for Canadians.

This budget implementation legislation would implement a few additional measures, such as our $1-billion plan for investments in energy efficiency, which includes our new home retrofit program to help Canadians lower their electricity and energy bills.

It also includes a new $5,000 subsidy for Canadians investing in zero-emission vehicles. Those are Canadians in my riding of Parkdale—High Park and Canadians in every riding of this country. The bill will also support zero-emission vehicle manufacturing right here in Canada.

This is how we are making meaningful progress on fighting climate change now.

Next is an issue that touches all of us in this country, including residents in Parkdale—High Park in Toronto: the cost of housing.

Everyone deserves an affordable place to call home, but far too often Canadians are being priced out of the housing market. This bill would implement housing investments from budget 2019 that we are making to address housing affordability.

An important initiative is the first-time homebuyers incentive, which will allow first-time homebuyers to reduce their monthly insured mortgage payments by way of a shared equity mortgage from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC, which would not have to be paid off until the unit is eventually resold. The shared equity mortgage could be up to 10% for a new build or up to 5% for a repurchase.

We are also allowing Canadians to withdraw, without penalty, an additional $10,000 from their RRSPs for the purpose of buying a home.

As well, we are increasing the funds for the rental construction financing initiative, which will help to build thousands of new, well-priced units right around country. That is important, because we have heard constantly that in order to address housing, we have to address the supply.

Bill C-97 would also implement our plan to modernize the Canada homebuyers' plan. This plan is intended to assist Canadians with their down payment and, by extension, the costs of purchasing a home. With this legislation, we are increasing the homebuyers' plan withdrawal limit from $25,000 to $35,000, which will make it more flexible to adapt to changing familial circumstances. That is in reference to the RRSP notion that I raised earlier.

This is on top of our overall $40-billion national housing strategy that now exceeds $50 billion when we combine previous budgetary allocations with the allocations currently being made. This national housing strategy has already been a tremendous success right around the country.

How does it affect my riding? I will explain how. It will affect my riding in two concrete ways.

First, we have five federally subsidized co-ops in my riding of Parkdale—High Park. Every single one of the tenants who has a rent-geared-to-income subsidy provided by the federal government will have that subsidy renewed by virtue of this budget and by virtue of our policies on housing.

● (1245)

Second, we have made a historic announcement of $1.3 billion for the national housing strategy that will come directly to Toronto to help those who are in social housing. It will come to the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. This is the single largest investment in Canadian history that is dedicated directly to municipalities, and 58,000 units will be affected. It will help to renovate, maintain and repair the housing stock, ensuring that the housing stock remains on the market so that people are appropriately housed. That is what a housing strategy does. That is what I am proud to defend here as a government member.

Our infrastructure investments do not stop there. Once again, we are stepping up while governments like the provincial government of Doug Ford are stepping out. In particular, we are investing $2.2 billion into the federal gas tax fund. That gas tax transfer is being doubled this year through this budget so that municipalities can commence much-needed infrastructure repair. This is how we will ensure that infrastructure funding gets exactly where it needs to go, and more importantly, it will go to those who have the ability to actually get the projects done, meaning local and municipal governments and grassroots community organizations.

Why are we taking this step? It is because it was asked for by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Those municipalities have expressed their absolute frustration with governments like the one in Ontario led by Premier Ford, which has stubbornly refused to get moving on much-needed infrastructure repairs purely because of partisan considerations. What we are doing is going directly to those municipalities to address their needs.

This budget implementation bill would also implement Canada's first ever poverty reduction strategy by entrenching an official poverty line and the national advisory council on poverty into law. This is in addition to the incredible news this year that the poverty initiatives implemented by our government are indeed working. Statistics released earlier this year show that 825,000 Canadians have been lifted out of poverty and that we are three years ahead of the targets we set as a government. Thanks to federal initiatives, poverty has fallen 20% since 2015. A hallmark of that initiative is the Canada child benefit and its targeted, means-tested approach.

We are continuing with the other important commitments we have made. We are entrenching pay transparency with this bill. As we well know, currently women in Canada earn approximately 87¢ on the dollar compared to men. This is absolutely unacceptable. Last year's budget introduced pay equity measures, and in order to reduce the wage gap, this year's budget will introduce new pay transparency measures in Canada for federally regulated employers. With this legislation, we will require employers to include new salary data in their annual reports to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour in order to ensure total pay transparency. This is important because it will have an impact on Canadians.

I want to pick up on a question that was asked to the previous member, who spoke about indigenous reconciliation and how it is vested in this budget. It is vested in two critically important ways.

The first is in providing supports of over $300 million for indigenous language maintenance, protection and revitalization. I was very proud to have worked on the development of Bill C-91, which would revitalize, protect and promote indigenous languages during my time as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. We are now coupling that statutory instrument with the financial resources to make it a reality. This is something that has been lauded by indigenous leaders, and rightly so, because it puts money to the commitments we have made to reconcile with indigenous peoples through promoting their language faculties.

Second, it needs to be stated over and over again that the situation of boil water advisories on reserves is deplorable, but we are making active changes to that situation. Thus far, we have lifted 81 boil water advisories around Canada. We are on track to lift all of them by March 2021. To demonstrate our commitment to this goal, we have dedicated an additional $733 million in this year's budget to that very important goal to ensure that no person in Canada, particularly no indigenous person, has to boil their water in order to drink safe water.

Those are the kinds of commitments that people have talked about to me in my riding. Those are the kinds of commitments toward housing, to reconciliation, to poverty elimination, to women, to addressing economic circumstances and job creation that people prioritize. This is a budget that I am proud to stand behind, and I urge every member of this chamber to do exactly the same.

● (1250)

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the government representative speak about indigenous issues, I want to correct that side about the deplorable conditions the majority of indigenous people have to live in, with poor housing and inadequate homes. The government did not even support the amendments to change and strengthen the current legislation regarding the indigenous languages he talks about. There were suggestions made by witnesses to spend up to a billion dollars and take this seriously and the government said no.

The government could not even say yes to ensuring that the commissioner would be indigenous. It said no to that, leaving it open. It has done it in the past and continues to show that anything to do with indigenous people it does not support. It has consistent records on that, from poor housing, poor education, the languages and the list goes on.

The government talks about boil water advisories. Whoop-de-do. It wants to take pride in saying that, but how many indigenous people does it actually know and visit, like the elders, the single moms, the young people, the schools, the health care facilities and even the RCMP, to see how they have to live.

We live in Canada and the indigenous file that the government is happy about is not a good plan. How can it continue to improve? The government can praise the numbers in the budget, but what about the boil drinking water advisories and the language legislation?

Why did the government not support amending the legislation to ensure that the commissioner would be of indigenous heritage?

● (1255)

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her continued advocacy on behalf of her constituents and for indigenous peoples in Canada. It is a contribution to this House and it is an important voice that is being heard.

In the work that was done on Bill C-91, which is the indigenous languages act, first, we took the important step of co-developing that act, meeting with first nations, Métis and Inuit leaders around the country. I participated in those consultations, as did the former minister of heritage, as well as the current Minister of Heritage.

Secondly, we have tabled historic legislation, because we know that the policy of assimilation manifested by the residential school system was one of gross assimilation and effectively cultural genocide, as was described by Beverley McLachlin. We know that when we restore language capacity, we restore people's connections to their culture, their self-esteem and their education, and their economic outcomes improve.

With respect to this specifically, this issue was raised by the TRC calls to action 13, 14 and 15 and were responded to by virtue of tabling this very legislation. The monetary amounts complement the important statutory instrument.

With respect to the committee issues that she is raising, I am not aware of how committee proceedings proceeded, nor what the basis was for making a determination or predetermining who would fulfill the role of the official commissioner.

I will always stand behind our government's commitment to indigenous reconciliation and the fact that it informs every single mandate letter for every single minister in this cabinet, the fact that we have tabled language legislation, child welfare legislation and that we have lifted 81 boil water advisories and are on track to continue to lift all of them by March 2021.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Parkdale—High Park, who is my middle daughter's member of Parliament. She has a young family and she is looking at things around the Canada child benefit and improving cash flow as a young family.

As I mentioned earlier, credit market borrowing fell by 19.5% in 2018. Cash flow is getting improved by policies that we are introducing. Maybe the member could comment on how we are trying to help cash flow for young families.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to represent the member for Guelph's daughter, in terms of having her as a constituent.

What I can say to her, and to many others who live in Parkdale—High Park, is that this is exactly what we are trying to do as a government, broadly. The very first thing we voted on after selecting the Speaker was reducing the taxation burden on middle-income Canadians. That is critical because it puts more money in the pockets of families like his daughter's.

By doing that, what we empower them to do, through things like the middle-class tax cut and the Canada child benefit, which targets people who are raising families, is to take control of their own spending and to spend on what is important for their own families, whether that is purchasing their first home or putting their kids in a new course.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to be sharing my time today with my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent. For those who are watching at home and who may be quickly bored by my speech, if they hang in there for 10 minutes, they will hear a much better speech after by my colleague.

I am very pleased to join the debate today on the Liberal budget. The Liberals have presented what I call a *Dr. Strangelove* budget or, in this case, "How I stopped worrying and learned to love the debt". That is what the government wants Canadians to believe: "Do not worry, we can continue to spend forever. Do not worry, the economy will grow forever. No recession will ever happen again. Do not worry, we can rack up debt to the very end of time and it will not be a problem. Do not worry about about interest payments. Do not worry about the fact that our interest payments are growing from this fiscal year of $26 billion and to $33.2 billion per year in just a four-year period."

That is $149 billion that we are going to be paying, transferred out of the pockets of taxpayers to rich bondholders on Bay Street, just over a five-year period. It will be $149 billion. In the fourth year, 2023, it is going to be $33.2 billion. Now, that is more than we spend per year in EI payments. That is more than we pay out in the child benefit program. That is more than we pay out for national defence.

Here we are with the Liberal priority of paying off rich Bay Street bankers and bondholders instead of defence, instead of families and instead of those on EI. To put it in perspective, with that money, the Liberals could pay for 2,750 refrigeration units for the Weston family. Let us think about that. The Liberals could also provide their own billionaire island for every single cabinet minister, so they could go to their island and not worry about violating the ethics laws. Liberal ministers could go to their own billionaire island and not worry about being invited by a paid lobbyist.

"Do not worry" is what the Liberals are saying. Do not worry about the declining productivity rate that Canadians are suffering through. Do not worry about disappearing foreign investment.

That is one thing I do worry about, though. We see foreign investment fleeing Canada. We see the oil industry devastated, $100 billion fleeing to the States. We see the Liberals giving Kinder Morgan $4.5 billion to take out of the country and invest in pipelines in the States. Who do we see interested in investing in Canada, which the Liberals are only too happy to see? It is Huawei. We see Anbang investing in Canada, thanks to the Liberal government. We see the Chinese Communist government-controlled CCCC construction firm trying to buy out local Canadian infrastructure companies. The Liberals are all willing to invest in Canada but not regular people.

"Do not worry," say the Liberals. Do not worry about the fact that the debt is going to rise to over three-quarters of a billion dollars over the next five years. That is not including Crown corporations. When we throw in the Crown corporations, it is well over a trillion dollars of debt that Canadians are going to be carrying. This money has to be worrying, but "Do not worry. Stop worrying. Learn to love it," is what the Liberals are saying.

Canadians are worried. We sent out a request to my constituents, asking for their response, asking what they think of the debt and if they feel they are further ahead than when the Liberals took over. This is what they are saying. This is not the made-up information that is in the budget, such as "Billy went to buy an electric vehicle and got a handout from the government." These are real Canadians, real people living in Edmonton West, and this what they are saying.

Elmer wrote in and said, "It's worse off and it's not improving. They are so concerned about the ramifications of Oshawa's GM plant closing. What about Alberta? We've had no oil revenue and, therefore, severe unemployment problems for over three years, but I have not seen any concern about Alberta's unemployment situation."

We used to have four Liberal members of Parliament. We have not had any of them stand up, supporting Alberta. We had four MPs in Liberal Party from Alberta, which are now down to three because of a scandal. We used to have two in the cabinet and now we are down to one, again, because of a scandal.

The member for Calgary Centre stood up and publicly stated that he would pound his fist on the desk at the cabinet table to make sure pipelines were built. What has happened? Absolute crickets from the member, he has done nothing.

● (1300)

The natural resources minister is based in Edmonton in the riding of Edmonton Mill Woods. What has he done for Alberta? Absolutely nothing.

In the budget, $27 million are provided for the diversification of the western economy and there are $100 million for oil and gas support. What did the Liberals put aside for subsidies so wealthy people could buy electric vehicles? Almost half a billion dollars. Even though the Minister of Natural Resources is from Edmonton Mill Woods in Alberta, only $27 million have been provided for diversification.

What about the member for Edmonton Centre? I asked him for his thoughts on the no new pipeline bill, Bill C-69. I asked him about the offshore tanker ban that did not ban tankers, just Alberta oil. I also asked him about all of the Liberals' other punitive policies against Alberta. He stood and said that he was proud of them. He was proud to push through Bill C-69, which ensures we will not see a single new energy project ever again in Alberta. He was proud that our oil was banned on the west coast, while we happily bring in oil from Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. This is shameful.

I received a letter from a lady named Holly, who was asked if she was better off. She said, “Seriously? Can anyone be better off? We lost our small business of 20 years. We paid our taxes and paid our staff. The bank took our house, which guaranteed our small business loan, which we hadn't missed a payment on. All of our employees, including four family members, are all out of work. We are jobless and homeless, and the government just keeps on destroying the economy.”

Let us remember back to a couple of years ago when the Prime Minister was in Calgary and confronting these things. His comment was, “Just hang in there.” People like Holly cannot just hang in there. The government's policies are destroying the livelihoods and hope of people living in Alberta.

Brian writes, “Worse off—I live in subsidized housing in Edmonton—the cost of living has gone up a great deal but not our income. We all got a raise from the Alberta Government, not even $2. 30% of that goes to my apartment cost, so what did I get? We got a carbon tax—30% of that went to our apartment cost. Anything we get, 30% goes to the cost of our apartment.”

The Government members stand again and again, as they did just recently, to note the Liberals' $40-billion national housing program. Apparently, it is $50 billion now. The Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy, or IFSD, which is headed by former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page, has looked for this money. It writes that the Liberals', “NHS looks like” nothing except a “glossy document that accompanied its announcement....unfortunately, for now, the NHS is virtually nowhere to be seen in the federal fiscal framework.”

With respect to the Liberals' $40 billion, the Prime Minister and the parliamentary secretary responsible for this both stood to say that the Liberals housed one million people. They actually told people this. That was until the Toronto Star, the prophet of North America, said this was not true and that the number was actually 13,000. The Liberals' own department results showed it was 13,000 and the Liberals claimed it was one million. However, they say, as they just did now, this is worth $50 billion.

The IFSD said that it could only find $1.3 billion budgeted in the first five years and $5.1 billion budgeted over 10 years.

As a last comment, I would like to note comments by a man named Helmut. He said, “Worse than a year ago. As a senior on income security, the provision is not keeping pace with high rise in expenses....”

This is what we are hearing from Canadians when we talk to them. They are barely treading water. They are not getting ahead, as generations have before them. Every time they take a step forward, the government drags them back two steps, whether it is done with the carbon tax, taking away other tax credits or pushing up debt, which pushes up interest rates. Canadians are not getting ahead.

On Tuesday, when Jason Kenney becomes premier of Alberta, we will take our first steps toward fixing the problems in Alberta. On October 21, we will take the next step, when we turf the government and bring back a Conservative government.

● (1305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I must thank the member for not moving adjournment. I know that yesterday the Conservatives moved adjournment because they did not want to debate and wanted to maybe go home a little early. Therefore, I am grateful the member did not move adjournment today.

Having said that, the member talked quite negatively about Alberta. I would like to say to the people of Alberta and all the Prairies that I am a member of Parliament from the Prairies and this government has delivered in many different ways. It has put money into the pockets of Canadians throughout. In particular, when I think of western Canada and our Prairies, I think of things such as the Canada child benefit, the GIS increase and infrastructure.

In fact, in this last budget, I believe one of the wonderful initiatives is that a portion of the gas tax is going directly to the municipalities. Therefore, a city like Winnipeg, for example, is going to be spending roughly another $37 million as a direct result of this government. That is all with respect to building or reconstructing roads and things of that nature. Infrastructure is something that is very important to this government. It has been virtually from day one.

My question to my colleague and friend across the way is this. Does he not recognize that, over and above the many positive, progressive, social benefits that individuals are receiving, there is also, within the budget, some very positive things that municipalities will be able to take advantage of to build healthier infrastructure throughout our prairie provinces, and that is a really good thing?

● (1310)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments and his humour. It is always funny watching Liberals stand up and try to explain all the great things they have done for western Canada, such as Bill C-69, the no new pipelines bill, and Bill C-48. It is amazing that we had four, now down to three, Liberal MPs from Alberta betray the people of Alberta by supporting the Liberal plan to destroy our energy industry.

As to the member's comment about infrastructure, again I have to laugh at this. The independent-controlled Senate, filled with Liberal senators and appointees, came out with a report that said there is no metric for success for the infrastructure spending by the government apart from money spent. Therefore, are we spending money so that people can get to work faster, improve productivity, which we are not, or improve the environment? No, the Liberal plan is not any of those. Its metric of success is spending.

We saw the spending for Alberta. The Prime Minister stood up and talked about it the other day. He bragged about putting ashtrays at bus stops in Alberta. We have 100,000 unemployed energy workers and the government is bragging about upgrading a bus stop with its infrastructure money. The current government has failed Alberta and this is another perfect example of it.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we saw what a Conservative budget looks like, essentially, with the tabling of the Doug Ford budget. We saw that, with their obsessive fixation on the debt and deficit, they are cutting health care in Ontario to less than the rate of inflation. We know that health care costs are growing at a rate of a little over 5% and the Doug Ford Conservatives have capped it at 1.6%, which means more patients in hallways and Ontarians getting sicker and not having the health care system they need.

I noticed the Liberal budget is cutting the health care federal budget from $3.5 billion to $2.5 billion. The Liberals are taking a billion dollars out of the federal health care system.

I know my hon. colleague's party is as equally concerned about the debt and deficit as the Doug Ford Conservatives are. Therefore, does he agree with the Liberal government's budget that will take a billion dollars out of the federal budget for health care? Is that something that, were he to form government, he would countenance and agree with?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague meant to say "when" we form government, but this is the issue. If we are spending $33 billion in interest four years from now, that is money that cannot be spent on health care. That is money that cannot be spent supporting families and children.

The Conservatives do not go on about the debt because we like to see black ink in the ledger. It is because debt and interest payments have victims. Those victims are average Canadians who need to get ahead, but are being held back with big, onerous interest payments. That is money being taken out of their pockets and put into the pockets of wealthy bankers instead of services in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak at second reading of the bill to implement budget 2019, which was presented by the Minister of Finance three weeks ago already.

[*English*]

I first want to thank my colleague from Edmonton West. It is a real privilege and honour to sit with him on the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Each and every time I sit with him at committee, I learn so much, as all Canadians learned so much a week ago, when the hon. member for Edmonton West gave the information to all Canadians, in an interview with the National Post, that the government cannot count correctly. This is absolutely crazy. We are talking about billions of dollars in a budget, and it cannot put the right numbers in the right places. As the member for Carleton said in a tweet, Canada is blessed to have the member for Edmonton West, who is doing such great work at committee, in the House, in his riding and for Canada.

[*Translation*]

This fourth budget presented by the Minister of Finance is the last budget before Canadians choose the next government six months from now.

Let me remind everyone how the Canadian economy was doing when the people decided to put in power the governing party, the Liberal Party of Canada. When the Liberals came to power at the end of 2015, the previous government had left a surplus of $2.9 billion.

The previous government left Canada in an enviable economic position, as we had the best debt-to-GDP ratio among the G7 nations. We were the first country to recover from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1920s. We were the best country of all G7 nations.

We, the Conservatives, left the house in order, with a budget surplus, the best debt-to-GDP ratio and a thriving economy that was expanding nicely around the world.

What did the Liberals do with that wonderful gift from the previous government?

Let us not forget that, during the last election campaign, the Liberals pledged in all sincerity to run small deficits and balance the budget in 2019. I will quote from their platform because it bears repeating again and again. If I have asked once, I have asked a hundred times since being elected, but they keep refusing to let me table their very own campaign platform. They can deny the truth all they want, but we will not hide it from Canadians.

In 2015, they got elected because they said:

> With the Liberal plan, the federal government will have a modest short-term deficit of less than $10 billion [in each of the next three years]...[which] will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019/20.

Well, here we are in 2019. Those were the promises that got the Liberal Party elected. Canadians believed those promises when they voted and gave the Liberals a majority.

What happened? First, the Liberal Party promised to run three modest deficits of less than $10 billion, but in reality they ran three huge deficits that were nearly twice as big as projected: $18 billion in the first year; $19 billion in the second year; $18 billion in the third year; and $19.8 billion this year. The Liberals promised three modest and temporary deficits, but they gave us three huge deficits that are here to stay. Such is the reality of the Liberal government and the administration of the Minister of Finance.

Three years later we are looking at 2019-20, or the budget that was tabled three weeks ago. The Liberals swore that 2019-20 would be the year of zero deficit. In one of the English debates during the last election campaign, the Prime Minister looked Canadians in the eye and gave them his word, solid as a rock, that they could expect the budget to be balanced in 2019-20.

Unfortunately, those dear Canadians were duped by the current Prime Minister. Not only will 2019 not be a zero-deficit year, but it is the year in which the government will run its largest deficit to date, at nearly $20 billion. It is totally unacceptable.

The Liberals abandoned their commitments. They threw away their election promises. They scrapped their election platform. They are telling us to forget the zero-deficit year. This being an election year means that it is time to let loose. They are making promises left and right, but we all know how those turn out.

● (1315)

That is the problem with deficits. Running a deficit is like borrowing on our children's, grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's line of credit because the government is not able to properly manage the country.

A father, mother or head of a household cannot live off of a line of credit. A family cannot keep maxing out credit cards. At the end of the day, you have to pay. That is what is unfortunate about the current government's administration. They always claim to care about families, about children and about children's futures. I understand why it claims to be a family-oriented government. It passes the bill on to children and grandchildren who are not yet born but will be stuck paying for this government's mismanagement.

As we can see, this is an unprecedented economic theory if ever there was one. Its one and only adherent is the Prime Minister. Four years ago, he said that the budget would balance itself. When you leave public finance up to the kids in short pants, you end up with massive deficits.

I am still waiting for experts from the London School of Economics and Political Science, Harvard or anywhere else in the world to say that our current Prime Minister was right when he came up with the far-fetched, preposterous and absurd theory that budgets balance themselves. This is what happens.

I would also remind members that the Liberals promised to balance the budget. It was written in black and white in their election platform. On page 76, it states that they plan to invest in infrastructure to stimulate the economy.

That is not at all what they did. They announced their infrastructure program with great fanfare, saying it was the largest investment in infrastructure in the history of Canada. Three and a half years later, they have spent only 10% of what they promised to spend. Everyone expected there to be a deficit, a debt, because investments were made in infrastructure. That is just logical. I do not necessarily always agree with their logic. The condition is a balanced budget. Yes, that is logical, but they did not keep their word. It is like borrowing money to pay for your groceries. Borrowing money to buy a car or a house, now that makes sense, but not to pay for your groceries.

That is why this is the budget of broken promises. This will be the year of the Liberal carbon tax. Canadians must expect to pay more. The Liberal carbon tax will not cut greenhouse gas emissions, but will take money out of Canadian workers' pockets.

When we asked for access to information to determine if the government had done studies on the impact this could have on families, we received documents outlining the impact, but they were redacted. There was nothing in them. They wanted to hide pertinent information from Canadians.

Second, according to some documents, the government's target could increase not just up to $50 per tonne, but up to $300 per tonne, or six times greater than what Canadians were told. We have to be careful about that.

Some people will say that the tax is a way of putting a price on pollution and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That is their argument, but it does not work. I am not just making up an example here. I am talking about Quebec, which has had what is known as a carbon exchange in place for over three years. It is a carbon market that acts as a tax on pollution. It was approved by the Quebec National Assembly. It has been in place for three years. What was the actual impact of this carbon exchange, this measure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, after two years? There was no impact.

That is why anyone who would have Canadians believe that the Liberal carbon tax will reduce greenhouse gas emissions is misleading them, and there is evidence to prove it. It is unfortunate for those who believe the contrary, but facts are facts, as the Quebec carbon exchange has shown. I have here a document that I would be happy to table with the consent of the House. It shows that the Liberal carbon exchange program did not reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

● (1320)

This is the budget of broken promises. It is a budget that proves the Liberals have been pulling the wool over Canadians' eyes for the past three years. In six months, Canadians will get a chance to pass harsh, well-deserved judgment on those who got elected by abusing their trust and who have unfortunately saddled Canadians with debt for generations to come.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first thing I want to point out is that the economic legacy of Stephen Harper's government was to leave Canada in a recession in 2015. What will the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent's approach to taxation look like? If I may cut through his histrionics, it sounds like he is sincerely upset about the fact that we eliminated the non-refundable tax credit for public transit. That seems to be his plan for fighting climate change and poverty.

Since he has brought up this tax credit so many times over the past three years, let us see how much his constituents benefited from it. It amounted to a non-refundable tax credit of $13.25 a month for an RTC pass, which the taxpayer would get at the end of the year, after filing a tax return and receiving a notice of assessment. That is the measure my colleague is advocating. He has given us so much grief about our decision to eliminate this tax credit of $13.25 a month, which was granted at the end of the year, for those paying taxes, since it was non-refundable.

Meanwhile, he voted against the Canada child benefit, which gives an average of $5,500 annually, tax free, to 12,500 families in his riding. Let me repeat that. It gives 12,500 families $5,500 every year, tax free. That means 23,000 children in his riding are better off, for a total of $69 million.

Is my colleague going to cancel that? Is he telling Canadians he would like to cancel the Canada child benefit and bring back his public transit tax credit worth $13 a month, which is only collected at the end of the year when they do their tax returns? If he wants to make that the key message of his election campaign, I say "bring it on".

● (1325)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out a few contradictions in the member for Louis-Hébert's statements.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that what they inherited was a $2.9 billion surplus. That is a fact. Another fact is that we were the first G7 country to emerge from the worst recession since the 1920s, and we did it with flair. We were the best in the G7. When we left power, Canada was in an enviable position and a period of economic prosperity was forecast for 2016, 2017 and 2018. Those people were lucky, but sadly, they threw that golden opportunity away in favour of heaping debt on our children and grandchildren.

The member also said that we did nothing for the environment. I would like to remind him that greenhouse gas emissions declined by 2.2% on our watch. We invested over $1.5 billion in creating the ecotrust program, which Greenpeace and Steven Guilbeault applauded. Guilbeault might even end up being the member for Louis-Hébert's colleague. I look forward to tabling the documents later.

One thing I never saw coming was that the government abolished the tax credit that our government had created for all Canadians who take the bus. It was unacceptable for the government to punish these people like that. That is why their attitude is so disappointing. If the member wants to talk about public transit, let us talk about public transit. The government is bickering with its provincial partners, which is the worst thing you can do. Furthermore, the member for Louis-Hébert recently insulted his provincial counterpart from Louis-Hébert, the Deputy Premier of Quebec, saying that she was not telling Canadians the truth. The member for Louis-Hébert should familiarize himself with his files.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to pick up on what my colleague from Louis-Hébert was saying, I will ask a question that the Conservatives have yet to answer. Rightly or wrongly, they get worked up about budgetary deficits every chance they get. What they fail to talk about is how they propose to manage public finances and what their financial framework will be in the upcoming election campaign.

Will it be a balanced framework? If so, how do they plan to balance the budget? Will they, like us, have the courage to collect revenues where they are available in order to fund public services? If not, will the hon. member take the same approach as every other Conservative in this country and make budget cuts or adopt Conservative austerity measures? Which of these options will he campaign on in the upcoming election if he wants to return to a balanced budget?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this relevant question from the member for Sherbrooke. I want to commend him and his party for having the courage, honour, dignity and sense of responsibility in 2015 to run on a platform that proposed a balanced budget and no deficits.

That is what drew the ire of the Liberals. They were told that they had to be progressive; the lefties had spoken. Unfortunately, not only did the Liberals not keep their word, but they also sunk our country into massive amounts of debt without having any idea of how to balance the budget.

The member asked how we will return to a balanced budget. The election is in six months, and in the coming months we will be presenting a financial plan for meeting our objectives.

I urge my colleague and all others to pay attention when they make threats to scare everyone. Some people thought that yesterday would be the end of the world in Ontario, but even Chantal Hébert acknowledged that the budget was perfectly fine.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1330)

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-417, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (disclosure of information by jurors), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to putting the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in.

(Motion agreed to)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): When shall the bill be read a third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Michael Cooper moved that Bill C-417, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (disclosure of information by jurors), be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and speak at third reading stage of my private member's bill, Bill C-417.

This is a bill that arises from a key recommendation of a unanimous report by the justice committee respecting juror support. It is a study that was initiated thanks to the leadership of the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

During the course of that study, we heard from former jurors whose lives had forever been changed as a result of doing nothing more than their civic duty. Former jurors who sat through horrific evidence in gruesome trials had, as a result, suffered from mental health issues, including PTSD. I want to thank those jurors who came before us for having the courage to do so, because it was not easy to do, including Mark Farrant, Daniel Cozine, Michaela Swan, Patrick Fleming, Tina Daenzer and Scott Glew.

One thing these jurors said is an impediment to getting the mental health support they require is the jury secrecy rule. The jury secrecy rule makes it a Criminal Code offence, pursuant to section 649, to disclose any aspect of the jury deliberation process for life, even to a mental health professional. It begs the question: How is it possible for former jurors to get the therapeutic or counselling support they require when they are unable to have a free exchange with a medical health professional about what is one of, if not the most, stressful aspects of jury service, if they are to be silenced from being able to speak to a medical health professional about the core of their injury?

This is precisely what Bill C-417 seeks to change by carving out an narrow exception to the jury secrecy rule so that former jurors who are suffering from mental health issues arising from jury service can speak to a mental health professional about all aspects of their jury service. It is a bill that will protect the integrity of the jury secrecy rule, because, again, it will be in a strictly confidential context post-trial, while allowing for that vital exchange between a former juror and a medical health practitioner so that they can get the help they need and the help they deserve.

I have thought long and hard about there being any argument against this bill, and I really cannot think of an argument. It is why, when the justice committee studied this, every witness who appeared, from the mental health community to former jurors to the legal community, endorsed this change. It is why it was a key, unanimous recommendation of the justice committee's juror support study. It is why, when my bill was introduced at second reading, it passed unanimously in the House. It is why, when it went to the justice committee for further study, it passed unanimously, subject to some minor technical amendments.

If there ever was an amendment to the Criminal Code that everyone could agree on, it is surely this change. Therefore, what is needed now is to make sure that we can get this across the finish line and that we can get it passed. The time for debate, really, is over. What we need to do today is allow this bill to go forward and get it over to the Senate so that it has a fighting chance of being passed before the expiration of this Parliament. I implore my colleagues to join me this afternoon in seeing that happen.

There are many members from all sides of the House that I would like to thank, but I would like to specifically acknowledge the leadership of our chair, the member for Mount Royal, who has been tireless in his efforts to see this bill advance.

● (1335)

Let us come together, let us get this over to the Senate and let us get Bill C-417 passed before the end of this Parliament.

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, I appreciate the commitment of the member opposite to this issue and his work on the justice committee as vice-chair.

I reiterate the comments he made about the consensual approach the committee took with this bill. The committee looked at this bill, and I agree that it should be sent to the Senate and proceeded with forthwith. There have been some discrepancies about other justice bills that are before the Senate, but I will not go into those. Those were raised previously by Ms. Ambrose.

There were a few amendments made to the bill at committee that do, in fact, strengthen it. One in particular was the issue about ensuring people can indeed come forward and receive counselling and other supports they may need. The issue had to do with who they would be dealing with and the professional qualifications that should be required of those individuals who are delivering the counselling. Perhaps the member opposite could speak to that important amendment.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice for his support of this bill.

There were three very minor amendments at the Senate. One was to deal with the translation issue. Another was to provide a 90-day period upon royal assent to ensure enough time to consult with the provinces and territories to let them know of this change. The third amendment, which the hon. parliamentary secretary spoke to, was to clarify that a medical health professional who would be engaged in this would be a medical health professional who is licensed to practise in the provinces.

[*Translation*]

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, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-417. I want to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for their study on the bill and the hard work they did to advance discussions and debate on the issue of juror mental health.

I support the amendments made by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights and I urge all hon. members to do the same. Before I address the amendments made to the bill, I would like to talk about the bill itself and about the purpose of section 649 of the Criminal Code and the way it compares to offences in other countries.

The underlying objective of this bill is no doubt a laudable one, as it proposes a Criminal Code amendment that seeks to help jurors who face mental health challenges following jury duty. It proposes to do so by amending section 649 of the Criminal Code, which has been identified as posing an impediment for jurors needing mental health support after the completion of a jury trial. Like other members of this House, I believe that it is important for jurors to get the support they need in the aftermath of their jury service.

Specifically, the amendment proposed in Bill C-417 would permit jurors to discuss jury deliberations with health care professionals after the trial in order to address health issues that have arisen as a result of their jury duties. It would do so by adding an exception to the offence of disclosure of jury proceedings under section 649 of the Criminal Code.

As has been mentioned by the sponsor and other members of this House, the proposal seeks to implement a unanimous recommendation of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights' May 2018 report entitled "Improving Support for Jurors in Canada".

With few exceptions, section 649 prohibits jurors from disclosing any information relating to jury deliberations or other information not shared in open court. The prohibition in section 649 applies to matters intrinsic to the jury deliberation process, such as the opinions, thoughts, statements, arguments and votes of individual jurors. It also applies, for example, to the slightest comment between jurors while walking out of the courtroom or while exiting the courthouse.

The purpose of the prohibition is to promote free and frank debate in the jury room and allow for an independent and effective jury free from the pressures of public scrutiny or fear of reprisal. It also supports the finality of verdicts and public confidence in the administration of justice.

Jurors may discuss evidence or other information disclosed in the courtroom, since such information is publicly available. What this means, for example, is that there is currently no legal impediment if a juror wishes to seek mental health support in relation to a gruesome video or photograph presented as evidence in court.

Indeed, as was mentioned in earlier debates, many provinces and territories—Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Yukon—offer juror support programs that tackle the mental health consequences of this aspect of jury duty.

Section 649 targets out-of-court discussions about jury deliberations and makes it a summary conviction offence to disclose such information.

● (1340)

The offence applies to every juror and every person providing support services to a juror with a physical disability.

It may also interest members of the House to know that some provincial and territorial legislation, applying to both criminal and civil jury proceedings, establish an offence that seeks to address a similar issue as that in section 649. For example, Yukon's Jury Act prohibits any person who was a member of the jury from disclosing or discussing in any manner the nature or content of jury discussions.

[*English*]

In testimony provided to the justice committee during its study on jurors, Ms. Tina Daenzer, who had been a juror for the Paul Bernardo trial in the 1990s, described that part of the trauma of serving on a jury came from what jurors were not allowed to discuss.

More recent, Mr. Mark Farrant told the justice committee during its study of Bill C-417 that after he had served on a jury in a murder trial, many mental health professionals were unwilling to take him on as a client at all because of perceived legal conflicts due to the jury secrecy rule, which I was describing. Even though jurors are able to talk about whatever becomes part of the court record, including horrific and traumatic evidence, jury secrecy still operates as a barrier to some jurors in accessing mental health care for their own trauma. Bill C-417 would change that, which makes this such an important bill.

Internationally, a similar rule prohibiting the disclosure of jury deliberations is found in the United Kingdom and in various states in Australia. The justice committee's report takes note of legislation in the Australian state of Victoria, which includes an exception that permits a former juror to disclose information related to deliberations to a registered medical practitioner or a registered psychologist while being treated in relation to issues arising out of their service.

In the United States, once a trial is over, jurors are generally free to discuss the events of the trial and jury deliberations, unless a specific court order bars them from doing so. What that means is that jurors in the United States can talk with nearly anyone about juror deliberations, including a talk show host on national television or across the Internet. This approach, which offers limited protection for juror privacy, is significantly different from the Canadian model.

I think we would all agree that Canadian citizens may be reluctant to serve on juries if it is contemplated that their deliberations would be made public or if they may be subjected to probing and intrusive questioning about discussions and opinions expressed during deliberations. It thus remains critical to ensure the privacy, safety and security of jurors who perform the invaluable civic duty of serving on a jury.

Against this backdrop, I would like to turn my attention to the substance of Bill C-417 and why, as I have already mentioned, the government supports the bill with the amendments that were adopted at committee. The amendments have added clarity to the proposed change to section 649 and they are consistent with what the bill seeks to achieve. One of the amendments was discussed earlier. It is about specifying who is a health care professional by clarifying that it must be a professional who is regulated or licensed in the province or territory, similar to what is found in the Australian example. The impact of this amendment is that it would provide for greater clarity that jurors could only disclose information to a member of a regulated health profession with governing rules of conduct and codes of ethics, including duties of confidentiality.

Such a change is consistent with ensuring that the integrity of the jury secrecy rule is maintained, notwithstanding the new exception to section 649 that is being proposed.

The other amendment is relatively minor, addressing a discrepancy in the language versions of the bill.

Finally, the justice committee agreed on an amendment to the bill to provide for a coming into force date of 90 days after royal assent, to give the provinces and territories time to prepare for the implementation of the change in the law. As the sponsor of the bill noted at committee, the purpose of the amendment is to give provinces and territories the time to get up to speed with the change.

The justice committee's amendments strengthen this bill, responding to the issues raised before the committee. As such, the government will be accepting the committee's recommendation to adopt this bill, as amended, at third reading.

● (1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the NDP caucus to express my support for Bill C-417. I will be brief, because I know everyone wants to see this bill sent to the other place as quickly as possible.

This is a truly common-sense measure, as recognized by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, which recommended that the government bring in such an exception for jurors so that they can access mental health services. In many cases, jurors go through traumatic experiences as a result of difficult deliberations. It can be really tough to be part of a jury, to reach a consensus and a final decision, and to come through all that without any lasting effects, any remorse or anything weighing on one's conscience. Offering this support is crucial. Existing legislation prevents jurors from accessing such services and disclosing information relating to jury deliberations, which of course are secret.

It makes sense to let jurors talk to health care professionals who, in any case, are bound by patient confidentiality and cannot disclose anything they hear during their appointments. That would reassure everyone with regard to the importance of the confidentiality of jury deliberations.

It goes without saying that we support such an initiative and that we are asking the other chamber to pass this quickly. It is clear that the senators do not seem to be in any rush on other files, which is unfortunate, because they have in their hands a number of other bills that had the unanimous support of the House. It seems that this bill will also have unanimous support, so we hope that the Senate will study and pass it quickly.

I do not want to take up any more time, because I know that there is not much time left before the end of this 42nd Parliament. I sincerely hope that my colleagues will be brief and that we can move this common-sense bill forward to help those who are having a difficult time dealing with their role and their obligations as jurors.

● (1350)

[*English*]

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on Bill C-417 and also to state that I am in full support of the bill.

As we know, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has studied this proposed legislation and has reported it back with three amendments. In my view, the amendments to Bill C-417 that were made by the justice committee have improved the drafting of this legislation and will ensure that it will better achieve its stated objective. I encourage all hon. members to support these amendments as soon as possible so that it can go to the other place and be tabled in second reading.

Along with other members of this House, I applaud the small but important change proposed in Bill C-417, which would facilitate better access to mental health support for jurors. As a person who has dealt with mental health issues, I totally understand the need for jurors to be able to have access to professional services so that they can share their story and gain the support that they need.

It became clear through the justice committee's study on counselling and other mental health supports for jurors, which culminated in its May 22, 2018, report, called “Improving Support for Jurors in Canada”, that section 649 of the Criminal Code has been an impediment to jurors seeking support following their service. I appreciate that this bill addresses the serious issue of mental health as it relates to individuals who participate in the criminal justice system.

Our consideration of this bill has been informed by the justice committee's report, which documents the evidence and perspectives of witnesses regarding the impact of the criminal justice system on jurors. As my colleague across the aisle mentioned, a number of former jurors who served on difficult and disturbing criminal jury trials provided testimony before the committee that has highlighted the importance of ensuring that jurors are not left without any means to address the stresses and trauma they may experience as a result of their important civic duty.

In addition, the justice committee heard from a variety of experts, including criminal justice professionals, academics, government representatives of juror support programs, and mental health and lawyers' associations. These experts expressed a common view that the stresses associated with jury service can be prevented or reduced by better preparing jurors, improving the conditions under which they carry out their duty and offering psychological support.

The 11 recommendations made in the report touch upon these issues, including recommendation 4, which calls for an amendment to section 649 of the Criminal Code. Bill C-417 addresses this recommendation, which if implemented will contribute to better psychological support for jurors.

I believe that jurors would continue to feel confident that discussions taking place among them and in the jury room would continue to remain private so that they would be able to continue to engage in full and frank discussions despite the change in the law, yet be able to receive the services they needed once they felt those services were necessary.

As said, we in the government support the objectives of the bill, and that is why our government seeks certain targeted amendments. Those amendments have been identified.

There are three specific amendments. The first one specifically deals with ensuring the health care professional is licensed, as my colleague across the aisle mentioned. The second amendment is a minor amendment making sure that the English and French versions are in sync. The third amendment is basically looking for 90 days after the bill receives royal assent to ensure that all the necessary preparation is carried out for its effective implementation.

I believe that this bill, with the amendments adopted at the committee, strikes the appropriate balance between protecting the privacy interests of jurors and ensuring that jurors can access effective mental health treatment following their service, should they need it.

As I said at the outset, I support Bill C-417 and the amendments adopted by the justice committee, which will ensure it better achieves its objectives. I also believe that this bill aligns with other government initiatives, such as Bill C-75, to improve the juror regime in Canada. I will be voting in favour of this bill.

I thank my colleague for his advocacy for mental health and the great work he is doing. As I have said, I will be voting in favour at third reading of this bill.

● (1355)

As I am the last speaker from this side before the House rises for the next two weeks, I would like to wish all my colleagues and all Canadians a happy Easter.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 1:55 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday, April 29 at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

I want to wish all members a very happy Easter.

(The House adjourned at 1:57 p.m.)

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