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Monday, April 29, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 29, 2019

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1105)

[*English*]

FEDERAL COURTS ACT

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP) moved that Bill C-331, An Act to amend the Federal Courts Act (international promotion and protection of human rights), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-331, which is an act to amend the Federal Courts Act (international protection and promotion of human rights).

For any members who might question the need for a bill like this to be brought forward to the House of Commons, I would like to reference a number of the cases that are directly referenced by this bill. As members know, there are Canadian corporations involved abroad. There is no doubt that we live in a global economy. When it comes to mining operations in particular, many Canadian mining companies operate in a very effective and thoughtful manner, respecting human rights.

However, there are a number of cases of bad apples: Canadian mining companies that have not operated in public interest or in respecting basic human rights. That is why this bill is vitally needed. As well, we have had over 50 national organizations, representing over one million Canadians, that have stepped forward and asked members of Parliament to vote for and support this bill. Those are national organizations, including notable human rights organizations and major labour organizations across the country. They feel that it is in the public interest for Parliament to adopt this legislation. They see the need for it.

Debate starts today and continues over the course of the next few weeks. Now it is up to members of Parliament to make the vital decision on whether Canada is going to stand up for human rights and become a best practice model globally. Sadly, it has not been the case. I only have to cite a few of the many examples, some of which have come before Canadian courts, that were not able to work their way through the justice system because Bill C-331 was not in place. Of the many dozens of cases that have been brought forward, I would like to reference a few important ones that show the extent of the problem.

Average Canadians believe fundamentally in human rights. As a people, Canadians believe and understand the importance of having human rights at home and globally. When we look at these tragic cases, there is no doubt that Canadians would say it is vitally important that members of Parliament adopt Bill C-331.

There is the case of Nevsun Resources. Nevsun is a mining company that is currently being sued for its alleged complicity in forced labour, slavery and torture of workers at the Bisha gold, zinc and copper mine in Eritrea. In this case in Eritrea, these workers were enslaved. They were beaten if they did not comply. They were tortured. These are all activities taking place at a mine that has connections to Canada. Canadians would understand the importance of adopting this legislation so that these victims have a clear path of compensation.

There is the case of Hudbay Minerals. On the grounds of those mining operations in Guatemala, security personnel employed by the local subsidiary of the company shot and killed school teacher and anti-mining activist, Adolfo Ich Chaman. They shot and paralyzed a local youth activist, German Chub Choc, who was speaking out against the mining operations. They also perpetrated the most egregious sexual violence against 11 women in the community. If asked whether that is acceptable behaviour, no Canadian would agree. All Canadians would say that the perpetrators need to be brought to justice and the victims compensated for these most egregious human rights violations.

In 2017, Everlyn Guape and Joycelyn Mandi came to Canada to speak about the appalling levels of sexual violence, and violence generally, that has been perpetrated on the grounds of the Barrick Gold co-owned mining operations in Papua New Guinea.

They cited the village of Porgera. In Porgera, the security guards from the mining operations came to that village. The villagers had spoken out about the mining operations, and particularly the appalling level of environmental destruction that was taking place. Eighteen homes were burnt to the ground and there were appalling levels of sexual violence and beating of the villagers. In fact, those two witnesses who came to Canada spoke of 80% of the women in the communities surrounding the mine having been the victims of appalling levels of sexual violence. No Canadian would say that is acceptable. All Canadians would say that parliamentarians should take action.

In El Salvador, just a few years ago, an environmental activist who had spoken out against Canadian mining operations was found killed at the bottom of a well; his fingernails had been pulled out. In dozens of cases, we have heard of activists who have spoken up against mining operations disappearing or being killed through extrajudicial means. No Canadian would say that is acceptable behaviour. That is why it is vitally important to adopt Bill C-331. Bill C-331 would provide grounds and the means by which those victims could go to the Federal Court of Canada and seek compensation for these appalling human rights violations.

In the bill, there are 17 sections of grounds for actions that could be undertaken in the Federal Court of Canada. They include systemic sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, torture, slavery and wanton environmental destruction. All of those are part of what we consider in Canada to be grounds for a solid judicial framework. We believe that Canadians who violate human rights and who exhibit wanton environmental destruction should be brought to justice. We need to have that same clarity of vision when it comes to what we do internationally.

Most Canadian companies work within the framework of what are acceptable standards in Canada, but some companies do not. It is for that reason that we need to bring forward this legislation, so we can assure that all people around the world, when they are touched by the operations of Canadian companies, are subject to a process that allows them to seek compensation. It would be a best standard. It would, as well, allow Canadian companies around the world to say that Canadians hold their companies and their corporations to a higher standard than other countries. It would, in a very real, meaningful way, enhance Canadians' reputations abroad as well as serve as a deterrent for anyone who attempts to besmirch Canada's reputation by engaging in the most reprehensible human rights violations.

I would like to give credit to the co-authors of this important landmark legislation: Nick Milanovic, who is an adjunct professor at Carleton University in law; and Mark Rowlandson, who is a noted labour lawyer, the assistant to the national director of the steelworkers union in Canada. Mr. Rowlandson is watching us today from the galleries, and I believe he deserves the thanks of Canadians for the work that he has done.

● (1110)

[*Translation*]

This is an important bill. Bill C-331 will put an end to the current era in which Canadian companies can act with no regard for the impact on human rights.

It truly responds to all of the issues surrounding systemic sexual violence, killings, slavery and torture.

All these issues were raised when we looked at the operations of Canadian companies outside Canada. This bill truly responds to all of those issues. The bill enables victims of human rights violations outside Canada to take these Canadian companies before the Federal Court of Canada and get the compensation they deserve. That gives judges the opportunity to judge. Why are some of these victims not able to take legal action in their own country? The answer is very clear: it is because the justice systems of some countries are not well developed or are corrupt. In some countries, the police are getting money directly from the companies. Consequently, they are not impartial, and they are not able to uphold the human rights we enjoy in Canada.

If this bill is passed, these victims will finally be able to seek justice here in Canada. That is why it is so important that the House pass it. Over 50 major national organizations that advocate for human rights and workers' rights want members of the House, here, to vote on and pass this bill.

This bill will really create a framework for the best example of human rights policy in the world. Canada can be a leader. Canada can be the first country in the world to implement something that other nations will probably look to. I should mention that Canada is not the only country considering this kind of legislation. Other countries are doing it too. Europe is doing it as well. The origins of this bill actually lie in a bill introduced in the United States. Canada could be the first, and it could lead the way on the international stage.

● (1115)

[*English*]

Today, there are more than 50 national organizations, representing more than a million Canadians, that are calling upon the Parliament of Canada to adopt this important legislation. The number of organizations is growing: It is 56 as of today, and we expect that within a few days' time it will pass 60 or 70. The question would be how we could possibly vote against this legislation. People who are opponents of this kind of legislation say that it is not in the constitutional framework of the federal government. We went out and got constitutional opinions that actually show that it is constitutional and very clearly within the framework of the federal government.

Some might say that the announcement a few weeks ago of a special adviser on these issues that the Liberal government announced means that this issue has been dealt with. I could not but disagree with that. The ombudsperson, the special adviser who has been appointed, has been criticized by a number of important organizations, such as the steelworkers and the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability. All of them have said that there are not the powers that need to be put in place for this ombudsperson's office. The reality is that in any event, even if we have a robust ombudsperson, and we in the NDP certainly believe that this should take place, all that would do is complement the important provisions in Bill C-331.

This is landmark legislation. Other countries are looking for the judgment of this Parliament to move forward on progressive human rights legislation that would put Canada on the forefront of human rights, and I hope members of Parliament will vote yes for this important legislation.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on speaking without notes. In the mother Parliament, the tradition was that members were not allowed to have notes or read speeches, so I would like to compliment him on staying with that precedent.

The member mentioned that other countries were planning, or have, legislation like this. I wonder if he could elaborate on that. That is part one of the question. The member said there was a law similar to his proposed law in the United States. Part two is, could the member mention a couple of the results of that law or cases, and how that law has been used?

● (1120)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the origin of this particular legislation is based on the Alien Tort Claims Act that existed in the United States. It was a piece of legislation dating back decades and decades.

As I am sure members are aware, what happened was that activists who were concerned about human rights violations and environmental despoiling started to use the Alien Tort Claims Act in American courts. As a result of that, because of the use of this legislation, a number of times they were able to obtain out-of-court settlements for people who had seen their human rights profoundly violated, in the same way as in the cases that I have just mentioned. There are so many other cases we could bring forward, but unfortunately I have only 15 minutes. In the same way, the Alien Tort Claims Act in the United States has been used to that extent.

As for other countries looking at this, there are many European countries that are looking to have in place a framework that allows for a more active dealing with human rights issues, regardless of whether they take place in the country itself or around the world. That is why so many countries and so many parliamentarians in other countries are taking an active look, with some interest, at how parliamentarians decide, in the end, on Bill C-331.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and his work. This is certainly not the first version of this bill. I believe he has gone through the 40th Parliament, the 41st Parliament and now the 42nd Parliament.

I know there may be some members who have qualms about this bill, but what is important to underline is that through this important amendment to the Federal Courts Act, we are not making the determination whether a case has merit; we are simply allowing an additional forum for plaintiffs to access the justice system. Ultimately, it is the justice system that will determine whether a case has merit and whether the plaintiffs are to be awarded funds.

In past parliaments, we have seen the Liberals support bills like Bill C-300. We know there are good intentions on the other side of the House to support these kinds of initiatives. I would like the member to just underline the important fact of his bill, for anyone who might have qualms about this, that this is simply enabling an avenue and it will still ultimately be up to the justice system to determine the merit of a case.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for his great work in the House of Commons and his standing up for human rights. He does an exceptional job on behalf of his constituents.

The member is absolutely right to point out that currently there are no provisions. Currently, with the appalling levels of sexual violence in Papua New Guinea that I spoke of earlier, those victims have no recourse. There is a judicial system that is corrupt and local police that have been paid off, and there is no way for those victims to have their voices heard, to seek justice and to seek compensation.

In the Federal Court, the merits of their case would be evaluated in the same way the merits of any other case would be evaluated in Canadian courts. It provides an impartial and effective means of addressing those victims' concerns. If the case has no merit, of course it will not proceed.

That is why it is so important and essential for members of Parliament to adopt Bill C-331.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to address what I believe is a very important issue, one which members on the government benches had talked about in opposition. It is an idea that I believe this government has addressed in a very tangible way, which the member across the way, the sponsor of this piece of legislation, somewhat pushed to the side, and that is the creation of the ombudsperson for responsible enterprise.

Let me make it very clear that Canadians have an expectation regarding corporate or company responsibility, not only within the boundaries of Canada, but even outside of our country. There is an expectation that our companies and corporations would behave in a manner that would reflect the kind of values we have here in Canadian society.

I know that, in a previous session, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood brought forward legislation, Bill C-300, that attempted to ensure there was more of a social conscience or accountability for mining corporations. It was my local high school, Sisler, that brought it to my attention and asked that I get behind my colleague and friend from Scarborough—Guildwood, someone who I believe has been a very strong advocate, not only in the last couple of years but for many years, for this critically important issue of the social responsibility of corporations and companies that go abroad. This government has taken that issue seriously.

As coincidence would have it, we just had the appointment of a Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise, Ms. Sheri Meyerhoffer. The Minister of International Trade Diversification appointed her on April 8, 2019. The ombudsperson will review allegations of human rights abuses arising from activities of Canadian companies abroad. For companies found to be involved in wrongdoing abroad, the ombudsperson can recommend measures, which could include the withdrawal of certain government services, such as trade advocacy. The ombudsperson can also make specific recommendations to companies, including in relation to compensation, apology or corporate policy changes. I think that clearly demonstrates a government that is really in tune with the type of values Canadians have.

We can take a look at the fine work that members, and I have cited my colleague, have done over the years, reflecting what I believe his constituents and the constituents of many of my colleagues on both sides of the chamber have been able to express, which is the expectation and value system we have, that it is not good to violate basic human rights outside of our boundaries and we need to be able to support that in whatever way we can. In a relatively short span, we had a very aggressive agenda on a wide variety of things that have had a real impact on Canada's middle class. I can tell members that this critically important issue has become a top priority and we have seen specific action taken by this government. When I look at the issue, I feel very comfortable knowing that, with this ombudsperson, we will have a positive impact.

I come from the city of Winnipeg, where we have the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. I drive by it every other week, when I am in Winnipeg and not in Ottawa. It is a beautiful symbol that constantly reminds Winnipeggers who drive by it or see it in Google searches just how important the issue of human rights really is for the constituents I represent and indeed anyone who is associated with Winnipeg and far beyond.

● (1125)

However, it is fair to say that Canadians recognize the importance of that issue. It is one of the reasons why this government has seen such an aggressive approach to provide some sort of action that would see tangible results. That will happen with the appointment of the Canadian ombudsperson, who will be responsible for enterprise. That is a good thing.

The proposed bill will amend the Federal Courts Act to provide that the Federal Court has jurisdiction with respect to certain claims involving violations of international law outside of Canada. Under existing law, the superior courts of the provinces and territories can hear lawsuits involving events that occur outside of Canada if there is enough of a connection to Canada. Lawsuits alleging that Canadian companies have been involved in violations of international human rights abroad, which involve claims for negligence or other violations of Canadian or foreign law, are based on existing bodies of law.

The question of whether the common law also allows a person to claim damages in a superior court, specifically for a violation of customary international law, is at issue in the case of Nevsun v. Araya, which was heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in January.

Unlike the superior courts, the Federal Court generally does not handle cases against companies or individuals for actions taken outside of Canada. The Federal Court's jurisdiction is limited both by the Federal Courts Act and by the Constitution. The Federal Court mostly hears cases involving judicial review of the decisions of federal boards and tribunals, lawsuits against the federal government and cases involving patents or maritime law. Civil claims between private parties do not usually end up in Federal Court except in those areas.

The bill would amend the Federal Courts Act to provide that the court may exercise jurisdiction over certain cases involving violations of international law outside of Canada. As the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has said, the bill was modelled on the U.S. Alien Tort Statute, or ATS. It provides "The district courts shall have original jurisdiction of any civil action by an alien for a tort only, committed in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States."

The ATS has been controversial in the United States and there has been a lot of litigation about its scope. This has included disagreements about what kinds of claims are covered and the application of the statute to foreign defendants and corporations. Bill C-331's main provision is more complicated than the ATS, but the idea is very similar.

I would like to make some observations about the kinds of cases in which the federal court would have jurisdiction.

First, Bill C-331 appears to give Federal Court jurisdiction over existing types of legal things rather than creating new ones. It provides that the Federal Court will have jurisdiction to hear cases involving claims respecting conduct that arises from violation of international law. Jurisdiction delineates the scope of the court's authority, either territorially or by subject matter. Jurisdiction is not the same as the right of legal remedy.

For example, the Federal Courts Act gives the Federal Court jurisdiction in all case in which relief is a claim against the Crown. However, that does not mean the Federal Court can address any complaint a Canadian might have about the federal government. The act gives the court jurisdiction, but the court can only give a remedy if one is provided by Canadian law, for example, by a law governing contracts if the claim is one of breach of contract.

Second, the bill would grant jurisdiction to the Federal Court rather than the provincial superior courts. The Supreme Court of Canada has held that the Federal Court can only hear certain kinds of cases. It needs permission from Parliament in the form of a statutory grant of jurisdiction. In addition, the case must also be governed by an existing body of federal law.

I want to emphasize why it is important for us to recognize what this government has been able to accomplish on the trade file. We recognize the importance of international trade. We have also recognized the very critical importance of ensuring that companies and corporations behave in such a way that reflects what Canadian values truly are all about.

That is why, on April 8, we put in place the first Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise. It is all a part of corporate responsibility. It is about international trade. It is about protecting Canadians, not only in Canada but also to protect people and human rights abroad.

● (1130)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-331, an act to amend the Federal Courts Act, introduced by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

The legislation seeks to amend the Federal Courts Act, to provide the Federal Court of Canada with jurisdiction to hear claims brought by foreign claimants with respect to causes of actions that took place outside of the territory of Canada, where the acts or omissions alleged contravened international law or a treaty to which Canada was a party. Without more, there are a number of problems with Bill C-331.

To begin with, the legislation would radically transform the mandate and jurisdiction of the Federal Court of Canada.

When the Federal Court of Canada was established, it was established to deal with certain types of matters that fell within the legislative jurisdiction of the federal government. The legislation would fundamentally change that. The Federal Court of Canada would be transformed into essentially an international court dealing with international claims brought by international claimants with little to no connection to Canada whatsoever.

Aside from the issues and principles such as the presumption against extraterritoriality, comity and the principles respecting the sovereignty of foreign states under customary international law, all of which are implicated by Bill C-331, from a practical standpoint, there is a question about the appropriateness of the Federal Court of Canada becoming such an international forum.

By virtue of the international actions that would be invited to be brought forward to the Federal Court of Canada, such actions would necessarily implicate the interests of foreign states. As such, the court would be required to consider questions relating to foreign affairs, international human rights law and international commerce. This is far outside the jurisdiction and mandate of the Federal Court and its area of expertise. Moreover, the legislation would completely upend Canadian and international law respecting the assertion of extraterritorial jurisdiction.

The universal test for the assertion of jurisdiction is a bona fide substantial connection between the subject matter and the source of jurisdiction. As the Supreme Court of Canada stated in the Hape decision, citing the Permanent Court of International Justice in the Lotus case:

> ... that jurisdiction "cannot be exercised by a State outside its territory except by virtue of a permissive rule derived from international custom or from a convention"... According to the decision in the Lotus case, extraterritorial jurisdiction is governed by international law rather than being at the absolute discretion of individual states. While extraterritorial jurisdiction—prescriptive, enforcement or adjudicative — exists under international law, it is subject to strict limits under international law that are based on sovereign equality, non-intervention and the territoriality principle.

Moreover the Supreme Court in the Terry decision stated:

> This Court has repeatedly affirmed the territorial limitations imposed on Canadian law by the principles of state sovereignty and international comity.

The Supreme Court in the Hape decision did make clear, at paragraph 68, that it was within the jurisdiction of Parliament to pass laws that would have the effect of asserting jurisdiction over non-Canadians outside the sovereign territory of Canada. However, in doing so, the question would become whether it would "violate international law and offend the comity of nations."

● (1135)

Parliament has passed legislation that would have an extraterritorial effect in some very narrow and limited circumstances.

For example, Parliament has passed the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act. Pursuant to section 6 of that legislation, every person who commits genocide, a crime against humanity or a war crime outside of Canada is guilty of an indictable offence. However, under section 8 of that act, to be prosecuted, the accused person would have to have some substantial connection to Canada. More specifically, section 8 provides that an individual can be prosecuted only if at the time of the offence the person was a Canadian citizen or a citizen of a state engaged in armed conflict against Canada; or the victim was a Canadian citizen or a citizen of a state allied with Canada in an armed conflict; or, if after the time the offence was committed, the person was present in Canada.

Additionally, section 7 of the Criminal Code contains a number of provisions that deem certain acts that occurred outside of Canada to be deemed to have occurred inside of Canada, including attacks on internationally-protected persons and UN personnel. However, to be prosecuted under those sections of the Criminal Code, the act must be deemed to have been committed in Canada only if the accused was a Canadian citizen or normally resided in Canada.

However, the legislation clearly is inconsistent with any basis for a real and substantial connection that is the basis for the lawful assertion of extraterritorial jurisdiction. Indeed, claimants could bring civil suits in the Federal Court of Canada with virtually no connection whatsoever to Canada.

Additionally, there is some question about the basis of whether it is consistent with international law to permit civil actions against foreign corporations. This issue was considered recently in the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Jesner, which was considering the alien tort statute. In the Jesner decision, the U.S. Supreme Court considered whether common law liability under the ATS extended to a foreign corporate defendant. In considering that question, Justice Kennedy, writing for the court, determined that he was not satisfied that it would be consistent with international law or at least that it was not established that it was so. Justice Kennedy stated:

> It does not follow, however, that current principles of international law extend liability—civil or criminal—for human-rights violations to corporations or other artificial entities. This is confirmed by the fact that the charters of respective international criminal tribunals often exclude corporations from their jurisdictional reach.

In so stating that, Justice Kennedy cited the Nuremberg tribunal as well as the statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the statute of the international tribunal for Rwanda, as well as the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court, all of which are limited to natural persons.

Justice Kennedy concluded:

> In the American legal system, of course, corporations are often subject to liability for the conduct of their human employees, and so it may seem necessary and natural that corporate entities are liable for violations of international law under the ATS.... But the international community has not yet taken that step.

Therefore, for these and other reasons, I cannot support Bill C-331.

● (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to this very important bill introduced by my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby. It is important to the New Democratic Party, because we have introduced it ourselves in several different forms in the past. I think this is really interesting. I am going to come at this subject from a different angle, by focusing on the Canadian aspect and the international aspect. I will also respond to the member for Winnipeg North's intervention.

First off, I want to point out that Canada already offers many advantages to mining companies. That goes a long way to explaining why over 50% of the world's mining and mineral exploration companies are headquartered in Canada. It is because we have a very permissive tax system and regulatory system, making Canada highly appealing to these corporations. On that note, I urge my colleagues to check out the work of Alain Deneault. He has written two fascinating books on this subject, *Imperial Canada Inc.* and *Canada: A New Tax Haven*. These books clearly demonstrate that the Canadian tax system was designed to minimize mining companies' tax obligations and corporate responsibility.

My colleague spoke of human rights violations in a number of countries. Over half of the world's mining companies are headquartered in Canada, which is why we need a way to hold them to account. We need to give the Federal Court the power to make these companies take responsibility for their actions and those of their executives and employees. We see that as crucial to ensuring true accountability, not just lip service.

Governments used to say that these companies were out of reach because they operate internationally. My colleague shared some examples of the many excuses that have been used, but none of them hold water. The excuses we have heard from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons do not hold water either. He said we do not necessarily need to give the Federal Court that power or have the Canadian justice system handle these issues because the government created the office of the ombudsperson for responsible enterprise.

The Liberals announced the creation of this office during their election campaign in 2015. Fifteen months ago, the government announced that the position was finally being created. The ombudsperson was appointed just this month, in April, but we still have not been given a breakdown of the duties of the office of the Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise. Organizations that monitor this file very closely, such as MiningWatch and the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability, are not terribly impressed with the government's efforts. It makes no sense that the creation of the office of the Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise was announced 15 months ago, and we still have no idea what her job description entails.

● (1145)

[*English*]

This is crucial, because right now, the government, especially the minister of international trade, is under heavy lobbying from mining companies that are basically against increased powers for this office. They are opposed to the office being able to compel documents when it is investigating cases of mining company abuse in the world. They are opposed to the fact that this body could compel testimony from executives in mining companies. They have been heavily lobbied, as can be demonstrated through the lobby registry.

[*Translation*]

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons claims that we do not need this legislation and its ramifications because the government has created something, but that simply does not cut it.

[*English*]

I find it interesting that he also referred to the efforts of one of his Liberal MP colleagues, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood. He tabled Bill C-300, which was a step in the right direction. He said that it was a demonstration of the goodwill of the federal government on this file.

What he neglected to say is that at report stage for Bill C-300, back in October 2010, it failed by six votes. The bill was defeated by six votes. Fourteen Liberal MPs were missing during that vote, including the party leader, Michael Ignatieff, Scott Brison and John McCallum. Most of the front bench did not show up for the vote on that bill. If there had been seven or eight more MPs, that bill would have passed. That shows that the Liberals had no intention of letting the bill through.

[*Translation*]

A bill like this is necessary because of the countless examples of abuse we have seen in the past, especially in the mining sector. The environment has been destroyed by these companies, and entire communities have suffered as a result.

People in these countries have been abused and even murdered, particularly those who were concerned with the workers' situation and tried to advocate on their behalf. Unspeakable atrocities have been committed, and the mining industry does not want to take responsibility for its actions.

● (1150)

[*English*]

The acting president of the Mining Association of Canada said that his organization does not support the investigative powers that human rights advocates and groups like MiningWatch want the office of the ombudsman for responsible enterprise to have.

[*Translation*]

I doubt they agree with my colleague's bill.

Mining companies will say that they have improved their practices and that they are better than they were at the end of the 2000s and early 2010s, but that is no excuse. I hope they have improved their practices because many of them were indefensible. It goes without saying that we are pleased that this is happening.

Does that mean we do not have to have a stronger framework and better tools, given that these practices may well re-emerge? Is this an excuse to get Canada out of requiring a minimum level of accountability and responsibility in exchange for the extremely good benefits it gives to mining companies?

The bill introduced by my colleague is indeed necessary. I sincerely hope that the government will take note and do what it should have done when it was in this position in 2010, namely stand up and vote in favour.

The bill is currently at second reading stage. We want the bill to at least be studied in committee, which would allow us to debate it and call witnesses from around the world. We want the countries that are currently being exploited by some of these mining companies to inform us of what has happened and why Canada should introduce measures to protect ourselves. The courts, police, and the systems of law and order in many countries where mining companies do business are not as developed and robust as ours.

We have the means to ensure that this accountability is not just lip service. Words are often forgotten and fade away. Accountability must be written into the law and the judicial process so that mining companies operating abroad start conducting themselves as they would here and be subject to the same monitoring and oversight they would have in Canada.

For all these reasons I will be voting for my colleague's bill and strongly urging all members of the House, whether in government or the opposition, to vote in favour of it. This will ensure that the bill is sent to committee and that we can start working on it to advance objectives and ideas that should have materialized a long time ago.

[*English*]

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 have the opportunity to speak today to Bill C-331. The international promotion and protection of human rights is something I take great interest in as a representative of a very engaged community of global citizens in Parkdale—High Park and as someone who was a former war crimes prosecutor on a Rwandan genocide tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania. I thank the NDP member opposite for moving this bill and prompting this very important discussion this morning.

Under existing law, the superior courts of the provinces and territories can hear lawsuits involving events that occur outside of Canada if there is enough of a connection to Canada. This was raised by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton. Lawsuits alleging that Canadian companies have been involved in violations of international human rights abroad that involve claims for negligence or other violations of Canadian or foreign law are based on existing bodies of law.

The question of whether the common law also allows a person to claim damages in a superior court specifically for a violation of customary international law is the issue in the case of Nevsun v. Araya, which was heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in January. That decision is under reserve, and it is important that we hear from the court on this particular issue.

● (1155)

[*Translation*]

Unlike the superior courts, the Federal Court generally does not handle cases against companies or individuals for actions taken outside of Canada. The Federal Court's jurisdiction is limited both by the Federal Courts Act and by the Constitution.

The Federal Court mostly hears cases involving judicial review of decisions of federal boards and tribunals, lawsuits against the federal government, and cases involving patents or maritime law. Civil claims between private parties don't usually end up in Federal Court, except in those areas.

The bill would amend the Federal Courts Act to provide that the court may exercise jurisdiction over certain cases involving violations of international law outside of Canada. As the member for New Westminster—Burnaby has said, this bill was modelled on the U.S. Alien Tort Statute, or ATS. It provides, in full, that "[t]he district courts shall have original jurisdiction of any civil action by an alien for a tort only, committed in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States."

[*English*]

The ATS has been controversial in the United States, and there has been a great deal of litigation about its scope. This has included disagreements about what kinds of claims are covered and about the application of the statute to foreign defendants and corporations, again something that has already been mentioned in the course of this morning's debate.

Bill C-331's main provision is a little more complicated than the ATS, but the idea and the targets are similar. I want to make three observations about the kinds of cases in which the Federal Court would have jurisdiction.

First, Bill C-331 appears to give the Federal Court jurisdiction over existing types of legal claims and would not create new ones. It would provide that the Federal Court would have jurisdiction to hear cases involving claims respecting conduct that "arises from a violation of international law".

Jurisdiction delineates the scope of the court's authority, either in terms of territory or in terms of subject matter. Jurisdiction is not the same thing as the right to a legal remedy, and that is an important distinction. For example, the Federal Courts Act gives the Federal Court "jurisdiction in all cases in which relief is claimed against the Crown." However, that does not mean that the Federal Court can address any complaint a Canadian might have about the federal government. The act gives the court jurisdiction, but the court can only give a remedy if one is provided for by Canadian law, such as the law governing Crown contracts if the claim is one of breach of contract.

[*Translation*]

Second, the bill grants jurisdiction to the Federal Court rather than to the provincial Superior Courts. The Supreme Court of Canada has held that the Federal Court can only hear certain kinds of cases. It needs permission from Parliament, in the form of a statutory grant of jurisdiction. In addition, the case must also be governed by an existing body of federal law.

Accordingly, Bill C-331 will allow the Federal Court to hear cases based on federal law, rather than on provincial law or foreign law. This could include cases where there is a violation of both international law and a federal statute, such as the Carriage by Air Act.

[*English*]

The third point I want to make is that lawsuits under Bill C-331 would appear to involve only defendants who are subject to the jurisdiction of Canadian courts. According to the State Immunity Act, as well as international law, foreign governments and their officials generally cannot be sued in Canadian courts. Because Bill C-331 would not amend the State Immunity Act, these rules would remain in place. Similarly, Bill C-331 would not modify the principle that Canadian courts only hear cases that have a sufficient connection to Canada. That nexus was elaborated on again by the member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

In summary, Bill C-331 could allow the Federal Court to hear some new cases involving violations of international law abroad. However, it appears that those cases would need to fit within existing legal remedies or pre-existing causes of action. They would need to be based on federal law, and they would need to have a sufficient connection to Canada.

● (1200)

[*Translation*]

I would also like to speak briefly to two procedural aspects of the bill. Bill C-331 would provide that the cases to which it applies would not be subject to limitation periods provided in federal law. This would allow people to bring certain old claims even if they missed the deadlines that ordinarily apply. For example, claims against the Crown in respect of matters outside of a province are ordinarily subject to a six-year limitation period. This limitation period would no longer apply under the bill.

Bill C-331 would also specify when the Federal Court could stay proceedings to allow a case to go forward in a different court. This would roughly echo the principle of *forum non conveniens*, which Canadian courts use to decide when to stay a lawsuit because it would be more appropriate for it to proceed in a different court.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the sponsor of the bill for bringing this important issue before the House, and I look forward to hearing more of the second reading debate on this bill.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the recent appointment of the first Canadian ombudsperson for responsible enterprise, Ms. Sheri Meyerhoffer. The Minister of International Trade Diversification appointed her on April 8, 2019. The ombudsperson will review allegations of human rights abuses arising from the activities of Canadian companies abroad.

[*English*]

This is a role that I have heard extensively about, and not just from my constituents in Parkdale—High Park but from people around the country who share the concern of the member for New Westminster—Burnaby about ensuring that international human rights are protected not just in Canada but abroad, including when Canadian corporations are involved.

[*Translation*]

For companies found to be involved in wrongdoing abroad, the ombudsperson can recommend measures, which could include the withdrawal of certain government services, such as trade advocacy. The ombudsperson can also make specific recommendations to companies, including in relation to compensation, an apology or corporate policy changes.

[*English*]

Giving the ombudsman's role some enforceable powers and some teeth is a critical aspect of this mechanism.

[*Translation*]

The appointment of this ombudsperson underscores Canada's commitment to advancing responsible business conduct by Canadian companies abroad and respect for the fundamental rights of people around the world.

[*English*]

That is exactly the type of reform that we need more of in this country. It is the type of reform that I am sure the member for New Westminster—Burnaby would share with us, as all parliamentarians should, in terms of promoting the understanding and enforcement of international human rights obligations.

The Deputy Speaker: The time for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1205)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, corporate executives and their lobbyists have had too much access to and influence over the Government of Canada, setting working Canadians and their families back by:

(a) encouraging attempts by the Prime Minister to undermine the independence of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada and the integrity of Canada's rule of law;

(b) forcing Canadians to pay high prices for prescription drugs by blocking the establishment of a single, public and universal drug insurance plan;

(c) providing huge subsidies to large oil and gas companies, while putting corporate interests over the protection of Canada's Pacific coastal waters in the Kinder Morgan pipeline approval process;

(d) motivating the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to give a handout of $12 million to a multi-billion-dollar corporation owned by one of Canada's wealthiest families;

(e) giving Canada's most profitable banks the chance to review and revise a report intended to shed light on anti-consumer banking practices; and

(f) leaving intact a host of tax loopholes that allow the richest Canadians to avoid paying their fair share for Canada's public services like health care, pensions and housing;

and that therefore, as a first step toward addressing these failings, the government should immediately move to recover the $12 million given to Loblaws and reinvest it to the benefit of working Canadians and their families.

He said: Mr. Speaker, there has been a fair bit of outrage across the country lately at examples of major corporations getting special treatment by the Liberal government.

We think, of course, of the many weeks of the SNC-Lavalin saga. Here the government stands accused of having interfered in what should be Canada's independent legal system on behalf of one particular corporation in an attempt to avoid having it face criminal charges for alleged international bribery. That is an example of a big ask by a corporation. It asked the government to pass a whole new body of legislation in order to create an exit ramp out of the criminal charges, and we saw the entire artifice of government jump to the pump to try to get it done. When some people in government stood up to that, said no and said that they thought it was wrong, they were shown the door. That was the case of a very big ask, and we saw just how willing the government was to try to make that happen for a large corporation.

On the other end of the spectrum, we had what appeared to be a relatively small ask, which was $12 million for Loblaws. The thing about Loblaws is that it is one of the biggest and most profitable corporations in the country. One of Canada's billionaires with one of the most profitable companies came cap in hand to the government and asked for $12 million to help upgrade fridges, and the government was all too happy to say yes. It did not say that the $12 million could be better used to leverage new investment from companies that do not already have the capital to green their infrastructure and operations. It did not say that it wanted to make sure public dollars were spent in the most efficient way possible to help those who otherwise would not have any investment at all and who would not otherwise be reducing their emissions at all. Instead, the government was quick to say that it sounded like a great announcement happening at Loblaws and wanted to know what it would cost to get to the podium. The government wanted to know how it could get a piece of that action and be part of a good-news story.

That is not the way to fight climate change. It might be the way to fight an election, but it is not the way to fight climate change. That is an example of just how prepared the Liberals are to accede to demands by corporate Canada, no matter how small. The big asks get the yes and the small asks get the yes, and it seems that everything in between gets a yes too.

What will it take? What is the threshold? What will it take for this government to say that the interests of large corporations are not in line with the interests of everyday working Canadians?

This will not come as an epiphany to anybody listening at home, but it may came as one to some members on the government bench, given their behaviour: Sometimes the interests of large corporations are not in line with the interests of everyday working Canadians. That happens, but we would not know it from looking at the activity of this government. When big companies come with an ask for the government, the answer is yes. Companies know it is going to be a yes, more and more, which is why the asks are getting more and more outrageous, right down a $12-million ask to supplement what Loblaws was already doing in order to upgrade and green its infrastructure.

That is where the sense of outrage comes from. What our motion today is trying to do is name the elephant in Ottawa, which is corporate influence. It is trying to draw what we believe is the very direct line between the influence those big corporations have here in Ottawa with the government and governments of the past and the pocketbooks of Canadians, as well as the effects this kind of friendly relationship between the Canadian government and corporate lobbyists have on the quality of life of everyday Canadians across the country.

To put that sense of outrage in context, it is because these big corporate asks and acquiescences by government are coming at a time when almost half of Canadians are within $200 of not being able to pay their bills and having to declare insolvency.

That is a real hardship. It is of course a hardship for people who have a loss of employment, a serious health issue, or other situations that mean they may not be able to report to work every day and make that extra $200, and therefore they end up in a financial catastrophe and have to declare bankruptcy. It also a real issue for those living with the stress and anxiety of knowing that if something takes a wrong turn or does not go quite right, they could end up there as well. Even if it does not happen to them, it could happen to their neighbour, friends or family, and they have to live with the stress of knowing that it may happen to them.

● (1210)

Therefore, in the NDP we believe that the goal of government activity and government policy should be to try to bring together people who are facing all of these common challenges, such as the common challenge of finding reasonably affordable child care close to home, the challenge of ensuring that everybody who is retiring from work has an adequate pension income to allow them to continue to live with dignity, and the common challenge of getting good access to health care services in their community.

In my community right now, the big battle is making sure that the provincial Conservative government does not close the Concordia emergency room, as it has promised to do and seems hell-bent on doing this June. That would mean that for the entirety of northeast Winnipeg, there would be no 24-7 access to the health care system close to home in their community. For Canadians across the country, there is the issue of the high cost of prescription drugs, because we know that Canadians pay among the highest costs for prescription drugs.

The NDP approach is to bring together people who are facing those common challenges, and the job of government is to implement solutions that bring those costs down and make life easier for Canadians through facing our challenges together. It is not to hobnob with corporate lobbyists at receptions in Ottawa and then change the law for their benefit. It is not to let them off the hook for their big tax bills, which are not measured in the thousands or tens of thousands of dollars, but in the tens of millions and hundreds of millions of dollars. When we talk about the tax havens they use to hide their money so that they do not have pay their fair share, we are talking about tens of billions of dollars. It is not the job of government to look out for those guys and their interests, and that is what we are here to say today. That has been going on for far too long, and it is time that Canadians got to see this place act in their interests.

It is in this context that Canadians are rightly angry when they hear these stories, whether it is a big story like the SNC-Lavalin story or the smaller story like the money given to Loblaws to repair its fridges, which is a symbol. It is not just the amount of money; it is a symbol of government just never really being willing to say no when corporate Canada comes asking.

When it comes to Canada's effort to tackle climate change and reduce our carbon footprint, corporate interests once again get in the way, so much so that the government decided to spend over $4 billion of Canadians' money not to buy a new pipeline, not to build a new pipeline, but to buy an existing pipeline, just as a gift to Kinder Morgan for having come and tried but not being able to get it done. “Thanks for trying, so we will give you billions of dollars in taxpayers' money.”

That money could have been invested in other priorities. It could provide job training for workers in the energy sector to help their skills align better with the new energy economy that is already under way and already developing. It could also be used to invest in new infrastructure projects that would create more of those kinds of jobs and more opportunity for on-the-job training in that new sector and new economy.

However, we did not see that and we did not get that.

Instead, what we have seen is a government that was silent and has not done anything for workers like those at Stelco and Sears who, when their companies went bankrupt, lost their pension income. Workers still do not have protection to prevent that from happening again. Not only did the government do nothing for them except remind them that they could apply for EI, but it has not done anything for workers of the future to head off the problems that we know are coming because of the sorry example of Sears and Stelco workers. A long time ago, when we knew these kinds of things would be happening and the NDP was proposing that we protect workers' pensions, the government did not come to their defence and did not put laws on the books to protect them,

The government also turned its back on GM workers in an award-winning plant known for its productivity when GM said that it was closing the doors and moving the plant out of Canada. Once again the Liberals were there to remind them that they too could apply for employment insurance, as if that was something they did not already know or as if that was all they expected from the government.

This is a government that did not require VIA, a publicly owned corporation, to have a Canadian content requirement when sourcing a renewal of its railcar fleet. That should have been a requirement, because when public funds are being used at that level of investment, we should be ensuring that Canadians are getting a piece of the action and that we are creating employment in Canada.

● (1215)

The current government has not only favoured corporate interests over those of ordinary Canadians by doing nothing, and there has been a lot of that, it has gone out of its way to help corporate interests when they conflict with the interests of everyday and working Canadians.

One of the first real acts of the government was to change the law for Air Canada to make it easier for it to outsource its aircraft maintenance work. That was a shame, particularly in light of the Liberals protesting with those same workers before the election, saying that the previous government should apply the law. I suppose the current government is applying the law, because it changed it to make it easy for Air Canada to outsource its work and is now applying the law that does not protect workers.

The Liberals have signed trade deals, which were negotiated and applauded by the Conservatives, that enshrine and give real protection of law to corporate rights, but only pay lip service to the rights of workers and the environment.

When Canada Post, another Crown corporation, was in a conflict with its workers in the fall, instead of changing management or giving it a direction to bargain in good faith, the current government passed back-to-work legislation and rewarded the intransigence of Canada Post's management instead of standing up for those workers.

Subsidies to large oil and gas companies continue, even though we know we have to transition to a green economy. That money could be used to retrain workers from the energy sector. It could be used to invest in projects like what the NDP has announced, which is to retrofit every home in Canada to improve efficiency, to not just reduce our carbon footprint but also the monthly heating costs of Canadians. That money could be used for a fund to help Canadians and their pocketbooks while also reducing our carbon footprint. Instead, it is going to the largest oil and gas producers in the country, whose production continues to go up while royalty revenue goes down and the effects of climate change manifest evermore seriously and urgently.

The promises made by the Liberals to eliminate tax loopholes and havens have been ignored. That is all revenue that can go to a just transition to a greener future, lowering the cost of prescription drugs or building more affordable housing. It is not innocent that the money goes away or that it does not have an impact on Canadians. The fact that we do not see it does not mean it is not having an impact when we compare it to what we could be doing if that money were here and people were paying their fair share, as they should. Canadians are seriously losing out.

Internet giants are another example. They are competing with Canadian businesses that are paying their taxes, but they do not have to pay any themselves. That comes at a real cost to Canadians.

All of these things are a continuation of an approach that we saw under the last Conservative government, which was to deregulate, privatize and give major corporate tax cuts, presumably to invest in the economy. The late Jim Flaherty said to corporate Canada at the time that the money was supposed to be invested back into the economy and that it ought to be doing that. That is a nice thing to say, but he did not compel it or raise the corporate tax rate back up, because they were keeping it for themselves, their investors and executives instead. He let them have the money. That money still sits either in bank accounts in Canada or across the world where those executives and investors pay less tax.

When we see the lengths to which the government is willing to go to get SNC-Lavalin off the hook, which was a big ask, and even what it is willing to do with respect to the smaller things, we can start to understand the sense of outrage.

● (1220)

[*Translation*]

The purpose of our motion today is to shine a light on the corporate influence that pervades Ottawa and draw attention to the very real and concrete effect this has on Canadians who work hard every day, who are worried about the cost of their prescriptions and their housing, and who want to fight climate change.

They see a government that makes promises but refuses to deliver on them when those promises are not in line with the interests of big business. It has failed to take action and will never do anything to enable us to tackle climate change, lower the price of prescription drugs and protect our cultural industries. We need to stand up to large corporations like Netflix and insist that they pay their fair share of taxes to support our cultural industries.

[*English*]

These are the issues. There has been a lot of frustration about the SNC-Lavalin affair. People have talked about it a lot, and although they think something wrong has happened in the case, they are not sure of the way forward. They are concerned about a lot of other issues as well.

How does this all tie together? People should care about that issue, not just because it appears that the rule of law is being undermined in Canada, which has a lot of long-standing consequences, but for the reasons I mentioned.

Canadians who are looking for income security in retirement should be concerned that the government has done nothing to legislate against the kind of pension theft we saw in in the case of Sears workers. The government has not done it. It has talked about it in the budget, but it did not put this in the budget bill in the way that deferred prosecution agreement clauses were put in the budget bill. Let us see the government put the pension theft provisions into the budget bill. Then, we will know that the government is serious. It does not do this, because with regard to workers, it pays lip service. With regard to corporations, it takes real, tangible action. We can see this in the news, in the House and in the behaviour of the government.

The finance minister, who comes from the retirement benefits industry, introduced legislation in the House, Bill C-27, that is an attack on Canadians' pensions. There has been no degree of separation such that the government is responding to corporate lobbying. In that case, the corporate lobbyists are in government, doing the job of that industry from the seat of the finance minister. That is how closely tied the government is to the corporate lobby.

We have not seen any action when it comes to pay equity. We know pay equity will come at a cost to Canadian companies, and rightly so. This is the money that Canadian women have been working to earn for decades. They deserve to be paid. However, the government has dragged its feet. It did not drag its feet with respect to DPAs or when Galen Weston asked for $12 million to replace his fridges. We have watched the government drag its feet for three years on the issue of pay equity. Canadian women deserve to get paid fairly for the work they are doing.

Where is the action on that? Where is time allocation on that? Where is that in the omnibus budget bill? It is not there. In the budget, there is also no money for implementation either. There is a pittance in the budget to begin consultative work on how to implement pay equity. It is about the same amount that Galen Weston got for his fridges this year.

Let us talk about pharmacare. With respect to the importance of reducing the cost of prescription drugs for Canadians, study after study has said that the best way to do this is to have one universal publicly administered plan that covers everyone from coast to coast to coast, no matter where people live or how much money they make. What we hear from the Liberals all the time are hints that the plan they are proposing will not protect Canadians against the high cost of prescription drugs but will protect the pharmaceutical industry's profits and the insurance industry's profits. This is from a policy that would create an expansion of service to Canadians while reducing the overall cost of prescription drugs.

We already spend the money it would cost to create a proper pharmacare plan. In fact, we spend more than that. The NDP proposes that we spend less and cover more people. We know that this is possible.

The call to action in the motion asks the government to get the $12 million back and invest it concretely in some of the ways I have suggested today. This will provide a real benefit to working families. The $12 million amount over the entire federal budget may not sound like a lot, but it is an important symbol of the government finally finding the spine to say no to corporate interests and putting the interests of regular everyday working Canadians first.

We have been waiting for the government to do this. It has not done it yet. This is the smallest possible start to this that the government could make, so let us get started and keep going.

● (1225)

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech and his passion on these subjects.

It is interesting, in the motion and in his speech, the member leaves out the carbon equivalent of 50,000 cars being removed from the road. However, I will leave that for now.

The member condemns government providing money to corporations. I am wondering if the member could stand in this House today and condemn the NDP Government of British Columbia for the tax credit it is giving to LNG companies to develop their resources. It is the largest polluter in B.C. Is the member going to condemn that, or just what Liberal governments do? Is it that when NDP governments do it, it is okay?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the member's question. He said that I am opposed to the government working with corporations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but that is not true. There is room for corporate partnership. It is just that the threshold has to be that public funds are leveraging new investment. It cannot be a company like Loblaws, which is investing $36 million of its own dollars, which is appropriate and which it was doing anyway to renovate its fridges.

The impression is not of a government that is looking for real investment opportunities and saying, "How do we further reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions? How do we leverage investment from the private sector?" Instead, there is the impression of a government that is looking around and saying, "Who is already doing some of this work? How do we get to the podium? What is the cost of buying our way into announcements that are happening anyway?"

The government is happy to spend the money because it is not government money; it is the money of Canadians. The government is roaming around, buying its place at a podium for things that are happening anyway, rather than leveraging new investment that will create reductions in carbon emissions.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, certainly we in the Conservative caucus share many of the criticisms of corporate welfare. We feel that when Canadians pay taxes, first of all, their taxes should be lower, and second, when they pay taxes to the government, they expect those taxes to be used for vital services, not for things like buying fridges for an already well-off company.

An area where we disagree, though, is on the importance of policies that facilitate competitiveness. The NDP approach, as we heard it outlined in the speech, generally emphasizes more regulation as a tool to keep jobs in Canada.

If the goal is creating jobs in Canada, does the member agree that we need to be attentive to the competitiveness of the Canadian business environment, and measures like lowering business taxes, ensuring fair processes for small business and counteracting the attack on small business that we saw from the government? Those things are very important for facilitating employment, because they make it easier for people to invest, grow and create jobs here in Canada.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the NDP is sensitive to concerns of competitiveness, but the question is how we measure those things and how we define those things.

What we saw with the previous government, of which the member was a supporter, was that the answer was always another tax cut, more deregulation, more privatization of services. It is a theme. We are seeing it in Manitoba under a Conservative government. We see it in Ontario under a Conservative government. Where there are Conservative governments, that is what we see. We see big corporate tax cuts, deregulation and privatization. That is not a way to protect the interests of Canadians.

When government is making policy and devising regulation, competitiveness has to be one of the concerns. However, it cannot be just asking corporate Canada to go out and regulate itself and expect that there will be optimal outcomes for Canadians. That is not the way it works.

I was at a presentation for the Day of Mourning in Winnipeg on Friday, and we heard about the early days of bringing in a factories act in Manitoba. Many of the same arguments were heard then, that there could not be a six-day workweek because that would hurt competitiveness, that kids under 16 could not be banned from working because it would not be competitive with other jurisdictions.

Progress was not made by ceding ground to those companies. Progress was made by making rules that were fair, that considered competitiveness as an important consideration but not the only one, and by implementing and enforcing those regulations.

● (1230)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am hoping for something that probably is not possible, and that is if we could take some of the partisanship out of this motion and look at it as a deeply generic problem of every government in the country, provincial and federal, regardless of who is in the PMO. Corporate lobbies have too much influence.

There is an excellent book by the former leader of the Alberta Liberal Party, Kevin Taft. His book is called *Oil's Deep State*, in which he chronicles how it was that even with a change of government in Alberta, the control over government policy, particularly energy policy, was deeply held by big oil. The term that is used by academics a lot is the problem of "captive" regulators. The National Energy Board is captive to the industry it regulates and so is Health Canada quite captive to big pharma. We could go issue by issue, department by department.

I would ask my hon. colleague if he thinks we could elevate this debate by looking at the problem generically and not targeting just one party. I would put to him that it is endemic.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, the point the hon. member is raising, to which I am sympathetic, is that power does not just reside in the halls of government. The power of capital, the power of people with money, is very real. The power of people who employ other people is real power as well. Therefore, any government of the day only has its hands on the levers of so much power.

What I am trying to get to by noticing a pattern of behaviour in the current government, just as there was a pattern of behaviour in the previous government, and there have been only two parties ever in power in Canada, is that when it comes to those levers, those levers of power we can get democratically through elections and democratically governments are just some of them. This is why it is so important that people who control those levers fight for the right causes and the interests of everyday Canadians instead of acquiescing to the demands of corporate Canada. There is no guarantee of success in those things, because not all the power resides here.

I take the point, but if we want to talk about how to fix that problem, surely part of that, which I imagine is why the hon. member decided to run for politics, is to replace people who are too beholding to those interests and do not see the conflict of interest between corporate Canada's interests sometimes and the interests of everyday working Canadians. This is the other point that is very important to address in this debate. Therefore, I do not apologize for spending time on it.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, part of the whole issue with Liberals giving $12 million to Galen Weston's fridges is that they thought this was a great idea that would inspire Canadians on climate change. Think of the huge crisis we are facing and the massive subsidies they give to oil and gas. They thought they could change the channel on the SNC scandal by having a press conference and announcing they were giving $12 million to not just one of the richest men in Canada, but a guy who lives in a gated community in Florida and who fought against a basic living wage for his own employees.

I would ask my hon. colleague what it suggests about the complete disconnect of the Prime Minister, who has very much become like a head butler for the uber rich instead of a defender of working-class Canadians.

● (1235)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I do think this was a bit of an attempt to try to change the channel, to stop talking about SNC-Lavalin and start talking about Loblaws replacing its fridges. The Liberals were desperate to talk about anything else. I do not think it was successful and it spurred a similar sense of outrage, because of the theme we are talking about. That announcement comes, just as much as the SNC-Lavalin controversy, out of the same problem, which is that when big corporate companies ask Ottawa for something, particularly the current government, they get what they ask for. It is a species of the same problem. We did not get away from one of the central problems: the SNC-Lavalin affair. The Liberals continued right on that track and part of the problem is they do not see that.

The Liberals are not making the connection between the corporate lobbyists who are paid to be nice guys. They go to their fundraisers and wine and dine them at receptions on the Hill. They think it is nice to be friends with those people. They know people and so it is cool to know people who know people. However, they are not making the connection between what those corporate lobbyists are asking them to do and how that affects the pocketbooks of Canadians, how it affects the ability of Canadians to find affordable places to live, how it affects the price of their prescription drugs or how it affects the effects of climate change. We know Canada is surely not doing enough to fight climate change because we still have Stephen Harper's old targets and we are not even on track to meet them.

Today, we are trying to make the connection between that corporate culture and the real effects it has on everyday Canadians.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against the opposition motion on the floor of the House of Commons today.

One of the issues I have with the motion, which purports to discuss the role of corporate Canada in Canadian politics, is that it entirely misconstrues our government's agenda and tries to paint, with one brush, an entire group of parliamentarians who are concerned about the well-being of Canadian families and ensuring the Canadian economy works for everyone and not just the wealthy few.

Before I get into my remarks, I have some real concerns about a democratic deficit we have in the chamber. We like to label one another with names or pretend that other parties may disagree with us with respect to our substantive ideas. However, I think every member in the House and all parties sincerely care about people and want to serve their communities well. However, the political narrative that the NDP are trying to put forward, that somehow the Government of Canada does not carry about families as much as it cares about corporations is bizarre. I hope to cover a bit of this in my remarks.

I do want to focus about the portion of today's motion that concerns itself with one investment we have made, given my role in the environment portfolio. I also want to dig in a little more on the nature of the political conversation we are having versus the one we could be having.

When it comes to the investment at issue that the NDP would like to reverse, I would like to lay out a little for the members where this came from. The starting point for me is that most members in the House would recognize that climate change is real and that we have an opportunity and an obligation to do something about it, not just to do something but to do the most effective things we know how.

Our plan to fight climate change includes things like putting a price on pollution, ensuring it is not free to pollute anywhere in Canada. By 2030, we expect to have 90% of the electricity generated in Canada come from clean sources. We are making the largest investments in the history of public transit in our country to encourage more people to take their cars off the road and take mass transit. We are phasing out coal by 2030, more than 30 years ahead of the previously scheduled date. We are investing in green technology and green infrastructure as well as energy efficiency.

Before I discuss the specific investment that is the subject of today's motion, I want to point out that our investments in energy efficiency are not limited to large organizations. In Nova Scotia, I personally made an announcement of the province's share of part of the low-carbon economy fund that was directed toward energy efficiency initiatives, which benefited home owners who were retrofitting their homes, making it cheaper for them to buy things like smart thermostats, more energy-efficient refrigerators and other equipment or technology that would help reduce their carbon footprint and, importantly, reduce their monthly home heating bill.

We are also setting funds aside to help small businesses with the cost of becoming more efficient. Through the low-carbon economy fund, large organizations were eligible to apply to certain components of that fund. In particular, part of this $2-billion fund had $450 million set aside to identify certain projects that would lead to the greatest amount of emissions reductions at the lowest cost to Canadians. Officials from the Department of Environment and Climate Change assessed the applications that came in and selected the best projects that would make the biggest difference and have our dollar provide the greatest return on investment.

Fifty-four projects were identified as being successful through the fund. These are projects like energy efficiency at McGill University. These are projects in cities like Calgary and, I believe, Regina that will help them do really interesting things with waste diversion and create more environmentally-friendly fuel by the way they deal with their waste. In addition, the $12-million investment, which is the subject of this motion, will go to leverage $36 million to help make refrigeration in one of the largest grocery retail organizations in Canada more efficient. However, it is important to dig into this a little.

One of the things I think people do not appreciate is that hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, found in refrigerants are one of the fastest growing contributors to climate change worldwide. I note in particular that our government entered into the Kigali accord to the Montreal protocol to deal with the proliferation of refrigerants across the world. The measures it found in that document are expected to prevent 0.5° in warming across the planet as a result of the measures that will be implemented.

● (1240)

The investment at issue is not only going to help bring down the emissions across the entire country; it is going to impact 370 communities. The equipment that is being purchased is from a supplier in Mississauga, which is going to create jobs at that company. It is going to create jobs for skilled workers who install the units at 370 different franchises across Canada. The fact is that this was motivated by the finding of the Environment and Climate Change Canada officials that this project was one of 54 that would have the greatest impact on our emissions for the lowest cost.

While we are on the subject of climate change, I have sat on panels with members of the NDP who tell me they support investments in energy efficiency, yet when we actually start making them, they find a reason to oppose them. I would be remiss if I failed to point out that on the Conservative side of the House, it has been a year since the Conservative leader promised he would introduce a plan to combat climate change. Despite many objections to our plan, the Conservatives have yet to put one forward.

The fact is that our plan includes over 50 different measures, and I have laid some of them out: putting a price on pollution, having 90% of our electricity generated from renewable resources, making the largest investment in public transit in our history, phasing out coal, investing in green infrastructure, green technology and in energy efficiency. These are meaningful pillars to an important plan that will see the most aggressive action on climate change the Government of Canada has ever put forward.

However, one of the things that really bothers me is the severe effort the NDP has gone through to ignore the facts around our plan to help Canadians and to build an economy that works for everyone, not just for the wealthiest members of society.

Our record includes investments like the Canada child benefit. It has lifted 300,000 children in our country out of poverty. It is unconscionable to me that in a country as wealthy as Canada there are still kids who do not have enough food to eat or have a roof over their head. This is putting more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families. We have stopped sending cheques to millionaires, who, frankly, did not need the money. In the area that I represent, this is sending $48 million into the communities each year. This money is going straight to the pockets of families that could use the money. It is helping over 12,000 kids. This is serious policy that is making a tangible difference for the people who live in Central Nova.

It is not a single policy that is going to shift the economic benefits of the global economy to those who need it. There is a suite of policies that we need to put forward. For seniors, we have rolled back the age of eligibility for the old age security, from 67 to 65. We have beefed up the guaranteed income supplement so the most vulnerable low-income single seniors will have almost $1,000 extra each year. We created a new tax bracket for the wealthiest Canadians, who will pay more, so we could cut taxes for nine million middle-class Canadian families. We are investing $40 billion, along with provinces and communities. It is part of a national housing strategy that will help people who do not have a place to sleep at night or who are potentially underserved in their housing needs.

When I look at some of the investments around health, which are criticized in the motion on the floor today, I can see that in my province not only are we making the largest single transfer of funds to the Province of Nova Scotia to help with care at home, we have set aside $280 million to go to two key strategic areas, in particular mental health and in-home care for seniors. We are moving forward with the creation of the Canadian drug agency, which will help bring the cost of prescription drugs down. We have appointed Dr. Hoskins to lead a committee on the implementation of a national pharmacare in our country, a fact that is conveniently left out of the motion on the floor.

We have made investments in students and universities. We have made investments in communities through infrastructure to create jobs. Does that mean we are beholden to the interests of students or academia or to the interests of communities and job creators? This does not sound like a scandal or some nefarious political narrative; this sounds like good governance to me. This is thoughtful policy that has been developed with the feedback of stakeholders and is making a tangible difference in the lives of the people whom I represent.

The good news is that the investments we are making are working for our economy as well. Not only are people better off; there are more people working today. Since we took office in 2015, the Canadian economy has added over 900,000 jobs. These are having benefits in provinces like Nova Scotia and in fact from coast to coast to coast. Our unemployment rate is at the lowest it has ever been since we started to keep track of those statistics over 40 years ago.

● (1245)

There are more people being lifted out of poverty every day as a result of the measures our government has implemented.

I note that the NDP has criticized us for failing to take action on loopholes that exist for the wealthiest. The fact is that we put forward a number of measures, and the CRA is cracking down on people who are trying to evade those taxes. It is charging, prosecuting and convicting people who are evading taxes in Canada contrary to the principles of law that apply in our land.

I worry about the discourse in this chamber and in Canadian politics. We have motions being tabled that ignore facts to create a political narrative, but facts can be very stubborn. It is important that we engage in debates based on facts, science and evidence, not on what we want people to believe about one another. Every party is guilty to some extent of doing this, and we all have to commit to be better.

In question period, I find that we have an exercise of talking past one another and seeing who can yell loudest to get attention in the media. I find people scrubbing through the video clips from this place to get that perfect clip that makes them look good on Facebook, rather than developing policy that would help people who live in our communities.

It is essential that we try to engage with each other in a thoughtful way, and with respect to the colleagues who are making comments across the way, that we speak when it is our turn so we can listen and understand where others are coming from and respond with thoughtful questions or comments.

I sincerely wish that Canadians could see us when we turn the cameras off. When I have a conversation with the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley about a private member's bill he wants to put forward that came from one of his constituents, I seek to understand what it is and commit to going to officials to see whether they have identified any unintended consequences of the policy. If people at home knew that this is the kind of engagement that takes place when the cameras are not watching us, I think they would be pretty happy with us. It might be boring, but it is effective.

I wish people would show up at committee meetings when the cameras are not on or when a minister is not in the room, when we have thoughtful engagement about whether a particular policy is effective or is going in a different direction than we think is right for Canadians. It might be boring, but it is effective.

The level of civility sometimes disappears here. I know we are all probably guilty to some degree, but I want to communicate that this motion on the floor today is trying to develop a whole narrative about being beholden to the interests of some big, bad corporate executive who sits in the top floor of an office building in a big city. The fact is that our mission from day one has been to create an economy that works for everyone, not just the wealthiest Canadians, one that will have a meaningful impact on our environment by reducing our emissions so we can preserve our natural environment for future generations.

I want to communicate that it is essential that we take action on climate change. It is essential that this place include investments in energy efficiency. It is one of the main reasons I am going to oppose the motion. In addition to the component that deals with climate change, it is essential, before we start trying to label one another as being one kind of party or another kind of party, that we realize that everyone here is in it for the right reasons: to try to help people who live in our communities, to make life a little better and to use the platform we have been given to advocate for positive social change.

● (1250)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. I note that when the Liberals get really emotional and touchy it is when we start talking about lobbyists.

The member is worried about civil discourse in the House. Why? It is because we are talking about the power of lobbyists over the government. That is what we should be talking about in the House, because we are seeing policies that are interfered with time and time again. The discussions in the House become irrelevant when they call into the Prime Minister's Office.

We do not have a pharmacare strategy and will not have a pharmacare strategy. Why? It is because big pharma is going to talk to the finance minister. We have nothing to protect pensions in this country, whether it is Stelco, Nortel or Sears. Why? The Liberals said how much they cared about it, but what do they care about more? They care about the family business of the finance minister, which got the contract to wrap up those pensions.

Now the Liberals are talking about climate change. I always love it when they talk about nice things that will happen. We are further from our Paris targets this year than we were last year, which is further than we were the year before. Why? It is because the Liberals are following Stephen Harper's numbers, and that is because they continue to be beholden to the lobbyists.

The member said he was tired of us sending cheques to millionaires who do not deserve it. Does he not think Galen Weston is an example of a millionaire who does not deserve it?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, to begin, one of the problems I described during my remarks was reflected in the hon. member's question. He is actually a great guy and is my sister's representative.

The member suggested, for example, that the finance minister cares more about the business he used to be part of than about the people he has been elected to serve, which I do not believe to be true. I do not believe that to be true of anyone who sits in this House. We are talking about a finance minister who has introduced measures, despite his immensely privileged position in life, that are going to help those who are most vulnerable. These measures are going to send more money to nine out of 10 Canadian families, and families like his will not receive those benefits anymore. He will pay a higher personal income tax rate as a result of the policies we are introducing so that nine million middle-class families can benefit.

Now, regarding the investment the hon. member finished with during his remarks, we had a competitive process and asked the officials at Environment and Climate Change Canada to specifically identify the projects that would have the greatest impact, in terms of emissions reductions, at the lowest price. These officials indicated that there were 54 projects they thought should be funded. One of them involved the replacement of refrigeration units in 370 stores, which will bring emissions down and create good jobs, and we are okay with that.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is very bad about Liberal environmental policy is that they never do any math. Nobody does any math or numbers, and they throw around words like "pollution" without even understanding what pollution is. Sulphur dioxide is pollution. It is a compound that our industry has largely gotten rid of in this country. Carbon dioxide, on the other hand, and there can be too much of a good thing, for sure, is the first element of the photosynthetic equation, which is without a doubt the most important equation on earth.

The member's comments about the efficacy of alternate energy I found quite amusing, because the Liberals never quantify the effects of their so-called clean energy. For example, I am looking at a paper from the American Bird Conservancy, which wrote, "We estimate that hundreds of thousands of birds and bats die every year when they accidentally collide with turbine blades". Having said that, the current government has allowed the wind energy industry complete exemption from the Species at Risk Act.

He talked about mass transit and that Canadians should use it more. Well, I have to point out to him that in my 60,000 square kilometre constituency, there is no mass transit. The Liberals are completely leaving rural Canadians behind. Why do the Liberals care so little about the people in rural Canada, who put a roof over their heads and food on the their plates?

● (1255)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member, who I did not know was paying close attention to my remarks. I enjoy sometimes when we use big words, such as photosynthesis, in this House.

Despite the criticism of the policies in a number of ways, one of the dangerous narratives I see coming through Canadian society is the rejection of the idea that carbon dioxide is pollution. Of course it occurs naturally. Of course it is part of the natural life cycle. However, the poison is in the dose. Scientists have been sounding alarm bells for decades upon decades, telling us that the planet's atmosphere cannot handle the concentration of CO2 that is being perpetuated by industrial development around the world. The idea that CO2 should be treated as plant food rather than as pollution that we need to address is something we need to move past so that we can implement effective solutions.

To the member's concern about windmills and the impact on birds, I will note, in particular, that the number of birds killed by windmills is less than 1% of those killed by buildings and less than 0.1% of those killed by cats. This is not an excuse to reject climate action.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to follow up on the scientific theories of the member opposite, the human body is made up of water; 93% is water. By his reasoning, one cannot drown, floods are not dangerous and massive rain storms are actually good for people, regardless of how much rain dumps on a particular community. In other words, science simply adds a set of statistics. Thrown out as sort of ad hoc attacks on real research and peer-reviewed science they are simply statistics being thrown into debate for the sake of trying to make a point. Would the member on our side agree?

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, it is important that we actually deal in facts, science and evidence and not just throw things out there for the sake of trying to perpetuate a discussion to oppose meaningful action.

I find it extraordinarily frustrating when I see things like what we see going on in Ontario right now. I look at the Ford government's decision to cut programs to plant 50 million trees. I look at the Premier visiting flood plains and saying that something must be happening shortly after he has cut funding to prevent floods across the province of Ontario.

The reality is that the federal government has access to an incredible body of scientists. In Nova Scotia, one of the things that frustrated me and inspired me to get involved in politics in the first place was the decision of the previous government to eliminate the research that was already completed and on hand at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography.

The fact is that we have experts whose careers have been dedicated to providing us with the solutions. All we need to do is find the political will to implement them.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary for environment and climate change, knows how deeply I lament the weakness of the government's plan, just as much or more than I lament the fact that the Conservatives have no plan. The Liberal plan will take us nowhere near Stephen Harper's old target, which puts us on a path, as the hon. parliamentary secretary well knows, to catastrophic climate breakdown that could deprive our own children of a livable world.

We are in a climate emergency, yet in this place, as in many parliaments around the world, we continue to pretend that the incremental efforts to do something in the right direction should be applauded, even as we know, and this is a really enormous example of cognitive dissonance, that what we are doing now is not enough to protect our children.

The Conservatives may not know it. Some do. Certainly some hon. Conservative members know it. The NDP should know it, but its plans are also nowhere near achieving the kinds of reductions that actually are about phasing out fossil fuels, 100%, by 2050 and cutting Canada's use of fossil fuels by at least 50% within a decade.

I do not think it is solely corporate influence, but can the hon. parliamentary secretary deny that corporate influence is a big part of why a government tries to have its cake and eat it too? It brings in carbon taxes and then buys a pipeline.

● (1300)

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the hon. member on her recent nuptials. I have a few friends who attended, and they said it was an incredible time. I want to personally congratulate her, on the record.

When it comes to the member's question, she is absolutely right that we need to be doing more and more. We have to have a plan that is based on science that is going to protect us against the kind of catastrophic danger she warns of.

The fact is that we are trying to implement the solutions that will have the greatest impact. That is why we are accepting the advice of people like Professor William Nordhaus, who won the Nobel Prize in economics last year for his development of the kind of approach to pricing pollution we are now implementing. That is why we are making the largest investment in the history of public transit and embracing green technology and green infrastructure. I look forward to continuing to put forward more and more.

On the issue the member raised about corporate influence, it is important that when we are developing policy, we pay attention to how it is going to have an impact on Canadian industry and the Canadian economy as well. I believe that climate change is not just a great challenge for us but is an extraordinary opportunity. If we can work with companies to help them become more efficient and put people to work converting us towards a more effective and efficient future, then I think we are on the right track. I look forward to getting there one day alongside the member.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou.

It is a real honour to rise in this House. The parliamentary secretary's comments must have been hard to make when serving under a prime minister who has exhibited very stunning hypocrisy on the climate file. The Prime Minister spends more time flying to his vacations than most Canadians have spent on a vacation in the last five years, whether that is private flights by jet and helicopter to the Aga Khan's island; private trips to Florida, and then back to Ottawa, back to Florida and back to Ottawa again in the same week; or taking the jet to Tofino for the weekend to go flying again.

Therefore, I will take no lessons regarding my carbon footprint from the Liberals, when my carbon footprint comes from heating my home, as most Canadians do here in Canada, one of the world's harshest climates. That is not a luxury or a behaviour to be corrected. I drive my car to work, but I would love the opportunity to take public transit across the great riding of Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes—but we are not going to be taking lessons from the Liberals.

An hon. member: Is Ford building you a subway, too?

Mr. Michael Barrett: The parliamentary secretary made some great comments about civil discourse in the House. I agree that all members come here with the best interests of their constituents and all Canadians in mind. However, to get a lesson on conduct in the House, when his peers around him have already heckled me during my speech, is pretty rich coming from these folks who are speaking against a motion, as they continue, in their shining example of conduct in the House, to speak over top of me. We talk about ethical conduct. The current government gets an F on the report card, for sure.

An hon. member: Stop whining and speak.

Mr. Michael Barrett: There is a member speaking over me right now who is actually so poorly engaged in the democratic process that he suggested that the Premier of Ontario be whacked or have a hit taken out on him. Again, it is very disappointing from these folks over here.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Regarding respect for this House, one cannot do indirectly what one cannot do directly. Therefore, if someone is making accusations that a member from the other side is threatening a premier, he should at least have the decency to name him or withdraw the comment.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay for his comment. Certainly, when it comes to this kind of speech, if it is directed to a person who is a member of the chamber, the rules on parliamentary language are fairly clear. That said, we encourage all hon. members to use styling and phrasing of their ideas and arguments that do not invoke a conclusion of that nature. Therefore, while I did not hear anything specifically unparliamentary in the comments by the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, I encourage him to avoid that kind of speech.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

● (1305)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member opposite to be judicious in his choice of words when speaking about democratically elected provincial leaders in this country. That kind of language used by the member was not honourable or parliamentary. In fact, it was not said in this House; it was said on the public record. Therefore, I am not going to take the opportunity or any of my time to withdraw the comments. The member knows what he said, and he knows that is was absolutely inappropriate.

Since taking my seat in this chamber in December, I have had a front row seat to some of the most disturbing and troubling behaviour by a government in modern history. No one who is engaged in pop culture will be surprised that the government made it all the way to *The Simpsons* last night. I know my hon. colleagues were excited to have one of their co-workers portrayed on *The Simpsons*, but it was in a shameful way. We are talking about the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

Going back to 2015, lobbyists' influence started to take hold on the Liberal government. The sunny ways promised in the election are not what Canadians received. Instead, we see a company accused of bribery to the tune of $48 million, a company that had yachts and prostitutes on offer for Libyan government officials and that is alleged to have defrauded the Libyan people to the tune of $130 million. This has been the undertone of the SNC-Lavalin issue and why it will be facing a judge.

Had SNC-Lavalin gotten its wish, it would have received a deferred prosecution agreement. That remedy was not available in law at the time, so SNC-Lavalin began working on the government. It started working on ministers, backbenchers and the Prime Minister's Office. Because it had that access and was able to get access to the chief clerk of the Privy Council Office, in 2018 it was able to get the deferred prosecution agreement introduced through the budget, and now that tool is available.

However, what the government did not count on was that it had people in cabinet who would stand up against that type of unethical behaviour. There were horrendous actions by this company, which took advantage of the Libyan people trying to recover from a bloody civil war. It offered no contrition for its actions but said that it had hired new people, that it had changed and that it was a new company, so it should not be punished for the actions of people who had the job before. The Liberal government thought it would be a great idea to give it a DPA, so that it would not have its day in court and it would face some much more modest penalties.

Liberals will say that it is not a get out of jail free card. If it is not something sought after, then why did they work so hard and engage in so many meetings to do it? Why have we learned since then that the Prime Minister would fire his Attorney General for not following through on the actions that the lobbyists had the government insert in the budget bill? Liberals went on to see another cabinet minister resign. The Prime Minister's principal secretary resigned, as did the chief clerk of the Privy Council. This was all born out of those meetings, the meetings those lobbyists were able to effect over and over again.

Inserting the DPA in the 2018 budget, giving the possibility of that remedy to the courts, was another broken promise by the government. It took lobbyists to convince the government to do that. The broken promise was that there would be no more sweeping omnibus bills under the sunny ways of the Prime Minister. However, in the back of a 500-page omnibus financial document, the government sought to help out its friends in a powerful corporation. That powerful corporation is well known to the Liberals. It cut them donations to the tune of over $100,000, which they later had to return.

● (1310)

Liberals will deny this. They will deny that there has been unethical behaviour, which the Prime Minister has done several times. They will say there is nothing to see here. However, whether through providing DPAs for friends or providing $12 million for fridges for Canada's most wealthy, the government has not heard a good idea from a corporate lobbyist that it has not tried to get Canadians to pay for.

These decisions are made by a prime minister who is flying from coast to coast, north to south, on vacation getaways that most Canadians can only dream about. They can only dream about them because Canadians are just a couple of hundred bucks away from insolvency under the government. They only wish that they could get the kind of access the corporate elite gets from the government.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope the member opposite can tell that I was listening intently to this debate and his speech, because it provoked many responses in me.

The SNC-Lavalin affair, the event the member is so concerned about, happened under the Harper government's watch. In fact, the very trip to Libya that is under investigation is a trip on which John Baird accompanied SNC-Lavalin. John Baird had to resign his post in government two weeks after he accompanied SNC-Lavalin to Libya. Conservatives may want to release cabinet details about that. A month after his resignation, charges were laid.

Is the member opposite prepared to release the cabinet documents, as well as the conversations between John Baird and Stephen Harper, that relate to what John Baird was doing in Libya with SNC-Lavalin, noting what relationship that might have with some of the allegations the member referenced regarding prostitution?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that the member for Spadina—Fort York knows that it is his turn to speak when he is recognized by the Speaker. He is, of course, the member I referenced who made the egregious comments about the Premier of Ontario. He should be ashamed.

There is smoke and mirrors from the Liberals when they say SNC-Lavalin committed a crime when the Conservatives were in government. We would like to see SNC prosecuted for those crimes. We do not want it to get a special deal. We do not want the elite Laurentian Liberals to decide judicial outcomes in this country. Just because they did not like the course that was charted by the former attorney general, that does not mean she should have been summarily fired.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to my hon. colleague from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, I am again going to point out that the differences are not so much differences but continuing evidence that companies like SNC-Lavalin, or the large corporate influencers in Canada, get through doors that other Canadians cannot get through, whether they are civil service doors or political election doors.

We heard the earlier example of the trip to Libya involving then Conservative foreign affairs minister John Baird. However, the elevation of the people associated with this scandal by former prime minister Stephen Harper includes Arthur Porter, who was implicated in a bribery scandal with SNC-Lavalin over the McGill hospital issue. He was given the highest security clearance in this country and was made the head of the Security Intelligence Review Committee by former prime minister Harper.

The man who was the chair of SNC-Lavalin through all of the dealings that are before the court at the moment, and who was also chair of the governance committee, was another one of Stephen Harper's most trusted and closest corporate friends. That was Gwyn Morgan. He has a career in the energy business, but Stephen Harper put him forward to be the head of the national public appointments commission.

My point here is not to attack any one individual, but to say that the pattern of government influence by corporations like SNC-Lavalin, regardless of who is in office, is a real problem. We should be getting at that. How do we root out what is essentially systemic levels of corruption, because our governments in general have become too beholden to corporate interests and influence?

● (1315)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands will get that Senate appointment that she is looking for from the Liberals quite soon.

When it comes to this SNC-Lavalin scandal and the Liberals, we have never seen anything like it. When people were called on the carpet, it resulted in, as was predicted by the then attorney general, a Saturday night massacre. Everybody lost their jobs. We lost the attorney general, we lost the Treasury Board president, we lost the Clerk of the Privy Council and we lost the Prime Minister's BFF, Gerry Butts. Everybody was fired. Then we had a game of cabinet shuffles every week. This is unprecedented, and it is all born from corruption that is sourced and rooted at the highest levels of the Liberal government.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege. There is no need whatsoever for the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes to suggest for one minute that I want anything other than to be the elected member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I have no interest in personal advancement and I am not pandering to any political interest for personal advancement. I ask him to withdraw his unnecessary and absolutely unworthy comment.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her comments. I do not think it constitutes a point of order. It is certainly something that could be found in the realm of debate. Perhaps there will be another occasion when she will be able to raise that matter.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to the NDP motion. I would first like to say hello to the many people of Beauport—Limoilou who are watching us live or who will watch later on social media.

I just spent two weeks in my riding, where I met thousands of my constituents at events and activities organized by different organizations. Last Thursday, the Corporation de développement communautaire de Beauport, or CDCB, held a unique and innovative event. For the first time, all elected municipal, provincial and federal officials in the riding attended a breakfast meet and greet for constituents and representatives of organizations. It was a type of round table with elected members from all levels of government. It was an exemplary exercise in good democratic practices for our country. We had some great conversations. I would like to congratulate the CDCB for this very interesting event, which I hope will become an annual tradition.

I also want to mention that my beautiful Quebec is experiencing serious flooding across the province. When I left Quebec City this morning around six o'clock I could see damage all along the road between Trois-Rivières and Montreal and in the Maskinongé area. There is always a little water there in the spring, but there is a lot of water this year. When I got to the Gatineau-Ottawa area I saw houses flooded. Nearly 8,000 people, men, women and families, have been displaced. These are tough times, and I want them to know that my heart is with them. I wish them much strength. I am pleased to see that the Government of Quebec has announced assistance, as has the federal government, of course.

The NDP's motion is an interesting one. It addresses the fact that the current Prime Minister of Canada tried to influence the course of justice a couple of ways, in particular with the SNC-Lavalin matter, which has had a lot of media coverage in the past three months.

The NDP also raised the issue of drug prices. Conservatives know that, in NAFTA 2.0, which has not yet been ratified by any of the countries involved, the Liberals sadly gave in to pressure from President Trump to extend drug patents. If the agreement is ratified, Canadians will pay more for prescription drugs. People are also wondering when the Liberals will initiate serious talks about the steel and aluminum tariffs and when they will bring NAFTA ratification to the House for debate.

The NDP motion also mentions Loblaws' lobbying activities. People thought it was some kind of joke. They could not believe their eyes or their ears. The government gave Loblaws, a super-rich company, $12 million to replace its fridges. The mind boggles.

The NDP also talks about banking practices in Canada. Conservatives know that banks are important, but we think some of them, especially those run by the government, are unnecessary. As NDP members often point out, for good reason, the Canada Infrastructure Bank is designed to help big interest groups, but Canadians should not have to finance private infrastructure projects.

We could also talk about the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is totally ridiculous. Canada sends nearly $250 million offshore to finance infrastructure projects, when right here at home, the federal government's $187-billion infrastructure plan is barely functioning. Over the past three years, only $14 billion of that $187 billion has been spent. It is deplorable, considering how great the needs are in that area. The issue of banking practices mentioned in the NDP's motion is therefore interesting to me.

Another thing that really bothers me as a citizen is tax evasion. Combatting tax evasion should really begin with education in our schools. Unfortunately, that is more of a provincial responsibility. We need to put patriotism back on the agenda. Many wealthy Canadians shamelessly and unscrupulously evade taxes because they have no sense of patriotism. They have no love for their country.

● (1320)

Schools and people in positions of authority should have instilled this notion at a very young age by teaching them that patriotism includes making sure that Canadian money stays in Canada for Canadians, for our social programs, our companies, our roads and our communities.

In my opinion, a lack of love for one's country is one of the main causes of tax evasion. Young people must be taught that they should not be complaining about our democratic system, but rather participating in it. They should be taught to love Canada.

That is my opinion piece for today.

It is difficult for us to support the NDP's fine motion, however, because, as usual, it includes a direct attack against the Canadian oil industry and all oil-related jobs.

Canadian oil is the most ethical oil in the world. Of course, in the past, there were some concerns about how the oil sands were processed, but I think a lot of effort has been made in recent years to find amazing technologies to capture the carbon released in the oil sands production process.

Since the government's mandate is almost at an end, I would like to take this opportunity to mention that this motion reminded me of some of the rather troubling ethical problems that the Liberal government has had over the past few years.

First the Prime Minister, the member for Papineau took a trip to a private island that belongs to our beloved and popular Aga Khan. The trip was not permissible under Canadian law, under our justice system. For the first time in Canadian history, a prime minister of Canada was found guilty of several charges under federal law because he took a private family vacation that had nothing to do with state interests and was largely paid by the Aga Khan. It was all very questionable, because at the very same time he was making this trip to the Aga Khan's private island, the Prime Minister was involved in dealings with the Aga Khan's office regarding certain investments.

Next we have the fascinating tale of the Minister of Finance, who brought forward a reform aimed at small and medium-sized businesses, a reform that was supposed to be robust and rigorous, when all the while he was hiding shares of his former family business, Morneau Shepell, in numbered companies in Alberta. On top of that, he forgot to tell the Ethics Commissioner about a villa he owned in France.

The young people watching us must find it rather unbelievable that someone could forget to tell the Ethics Commissioner about a wonderful villa on the Mediterranean in France, on some kind of lake or the sea, I assume.

Then there is the clam scandal as well. The former minister of fisheries and oceans is in my thoughts since he is now fighting cancer. It is sad, but that does not excuse his deplorable ethics behaviour two years ago when he tried to influence a bidding process for clam harvesters in order to award a clam fishing quota to a company with ties to his family.

SNC-Lavalin is another case. It seems clear that there were several ethics problems all along. What I find rather unbelievable is that the Liberals are still trying to claim that there was absolutely nothing fishy going on. I am sorry, but when two ministers resign, when the Prime Minister's principal secretary resigns, and when the Clerk of the Privy Council resigns, something fishy is going on.

I want to close with a word on ethics and recent media reports about judicial appointments. There is something called the “Liberal-ist”, a word I find a bit strange. It is a list of everyone who has donated to the Liberal Party of Canada. Of course, all political parties have lists of their members, but the Liberals use their list to vet candidates and identify potential judicial appointees.

In other words, those who want the Prime Minister and member for Papineau to give them a seat on the bench would be well advised to donate to the Liberal Party of Canada so their name appears on the Liberalist. If not, they can forget about it because actual legal skills are not a factor in gaining access to the highest court in the land and other superior federal courts.

● (1325)

When it comes to lobbying, I just cannot believe how often the Liberals have bowed down to constant pressure from big business, like they did with Loblaws. It is a shame. Unfortunately, the NDP motion is once again attacking the people who work in our oil industry.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we can see, in the current official opposition there really is no change from Stephen Harper. All the Conservatives focus their attention on is personal attacks, consistently through the years, whether the leader of the Liberal Party was the Prime Minister of Canada or the leader of the Liberal Party was the leader of the third party inside the House.

As the opposition continues to persist in that, this government and this Prime Minister will continue to focus on Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it by developing solid social policies that will benefit Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

While I am speaking about policy, do members know that it has been 365 days since the Leader of the Opposition promised to come up with the Conservative plan on the environment? Where is that elusive Conservative plan on the environment? Could the member opposite enlighten Canadians and tell us where the Conservatives are when it comes to the environment?

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has no climate change plan. It has a taxation plan. That is exactly what it is doing.

On the reverse side, under Stephen Harper, a great and honourable Canadian, we had the ecoENERGY efficiency initiative. All the young guys listening to us should google that right now, please. The ecoENERGY efficiency initiative in 2007 was even recognized by Steven Guilbeault, a great ecologist in Canada.

The ecoENERGY efficiency initiative was a decentralized way of doing things in Canada to make sure that we were strong on the climate change problem in the world. For example, there was an envelope of $1.3 billion that was divided among the provinces. About $300 million or $400 million was sent to Quebec at the time, to the Charest government, which used this money to put forward the province's ecological plan. At the same time, there were other projects in Ontario that received money from the ecoENERGY efficiency initiative.

All that put together gave us one important result that Canadians should remember every single day: There was a reduction of carbon dioxide in Canada of 2.2% under the great leadership of the Conservative Party from 2006 to 2015.

We did not do that by taxing more Canadians; we did it through decentralization and through respect for federalism.

● (1330)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

If he will be voting against the motion because he feels it is an attack on the oil industry, I would like to say to him that he is probably a little thin-skinned and sensitive.

With respect to the oil and gas industry, the motion simply states that the government provides huge subsidies to large oil and gas companies. It is a matter of public record that the federal government provides $1.6 billion to the oil and gas industry year after year.

I would like to know if my colleague is denying or agreeing that this is true, which it is. Is he saying that, in the end, the oil and gas industry should continue to receive these subsidies or perhaps not receive more? The motion clearly states that the oil and gas industry receives subsidies. I would like to now where he stands on this.

Mr. Alupa Clarke: Mr. Speaker, I believe in a free market with safeguards to protect everyone's rights. However, we must never ignore the fierce global competition.

Contrary to popular belief, Mr. Harper's government eliminated many subsidies for big oil.

An article published by CBC this morning indicated:

> The total volume of Canadian imports from Saudi Arabia has increased by 66 per cent since 2014...
>
> Saudi oil accounted for roughly 10 per cent of Canadian consumption, up from about eight per cent in 2017...
>
> Saudi Arabia is the second-largest source of foreign oil for Canada, after the U.S.

Even human rights groups are saying that we need to stop importing oil from Saudi Arabia.

One of the reasons why I believe we need to support the Canadian oil industry is the great Canadian paradox. The article goes on to say:

> Canada is the fourth-largest producer and fourth-largest exporter of oil in the world...and 99 per cent of Canadian oil exports go to the U.S.
>
> Canada is also an oil importer, which is rare for an exporting country.

The paradox is that we have one of the world's largest energy resources. Importing oil for our country is ridiculous. We need to put an end to that.

Under the leadership of the Conservative leader, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, Canada would become self-sufficient. That is a commendable goal that everyone in the country should support.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the fantastic member for Vancouver East.

Everyday families are being told by the government in Ottawa that while they are paying more and more, they cannot receive the help they need, that the government is unable to help them out when it comes to their concerns about improving health care to make sure it covers everyone who needs it.

Families are being told that they are not a priority when it comes to making sure life is more affordable. They are being told they are not able to have a sustainable income or a place to call home or a future without student debt. The Liberal government in Ottawa is telling them that it cannot afford to ensure that families have clean air and water and that we cannot have a sustainable economy.

I reject the government's proposal that this is not attainable.

[*Translation*]

The Liberals say they cannot afford to pay for the things Canadians need, yet they keep giving handouts to rich corporations at the expense of workers.

● (1335)

[*English*]

There are many examples of the government showing who it has prioritized over everyday Canadians who need help. The Liberal government has chosen to purchase a pipeline for $4.5 billion, it has given $12 million to Loblaws, and in the last fall economic statement, it gave $14 billion to the wealthiest corporations in tax giveaways.

I want to focus on one area in particular. The Liberals continue to subsidize the oil and gas sector. They gave more than $1.6 billion in subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. Why is the government subsidizing the fossil fuel industry that is polluting our air, land and water? Why is the government stalling the development of new, clean energy that would help save our planet and create sustainable good local jobs?

[*Translation*]

I do not understand how they can make that choice, when experts in Canada and around the world are making it clear that we need to act right now.

I do not understand how they can make that choice when thousands of young people are taking to the streets to demand that politicians make different choices, when doctors and health experts are warning that climate change has become the greatest risk to health, and when about 20% of asthma in Canadian children is directly tied to pollution.

[*English*]

Why are the Liberals putting the profits of rich corporations over the needs of Canadians? It is clear we need to move off subsidizing fossil fuels and instead invest our public dollars in clean energy and clean infrastructure. We need to build stronger, healthier communities. We need to create good long-term jobs in more of our communities. Canada needs to become a world leader in innovation in the clean energy jobs of the future, from green aviation to electric cars and buses to retrofitting buildings. That is the future for our country. That is the opportunity for our Canadian economy and for our kids, but it is not going to happen on its own. It is not going to happen unless we make a commitment to change our ways now.

I have always set strong conditions for future development. Any future development has to achieve our climate goals and has to lower emissions. It has to respect the rights of indigenous communities under the framework of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and it has to create good jobs for Canadians in Canadian communities. Those are the goals that have to be met every time. We will continue to be vigilant in ensuring that these conditions are met.

Some people think we can tackle climate change justice without taking on social justice and first nations reconciliation. I disagree; they must go hand in hand. We cannot achieve environmental justice without economic justice. That means we cannot fight climate change and reduce our emissions without ensuring that people are not left behind and that they have good opportunities to build a good life for themselves and their families.

We need a federal government that is prepared to put up real action, concrete action, and not just words. That is why we need a firm commitment today. That is why we need to stop spending our public dollars on fossil fuel subsidies.

[*Translation*]

This Liberal government's track record is disappointing. We expected more. The Liberals said things would get better, but that did not happen. The Liberal government not only continued to help the fossil fuel industry, but it also created new ways to subsidize the industry, when it should have been helping workers and their families, who want secure, long-term jobs.

● (1340)

[*English*]

It is our workers' security that we should be concerned about. It is our workers and their families' livelihoods that we should be focused on.

[*Translation*]

We should be investing in creating good jobs in new clean energy industries in every community in Canada.

[*English*]

That is why we also need to be on guard for the risk of another Conservative government in Canada. The last one set us back decades when it came to wages keeping up with costs. The last Conservative government set us back when it came to corporations getting ahead while people were paying the price. The Conservatives continue this tradition of hurting people when it comes to the things they count on: health care, clean air and water, strong transportation and good jobs.

Just last week, the Conservatives again showed Canadians their true colours. They secretly met with oil and gas executives to stop Canada from becoming a world leader in the new clean energy economy of the future. Why can Conservatives not see that changing our economy to a clean energy economy, a green economy, is a necessity and not a luxury? How do we get this done?

[*Translation*]

We cannot go back to life under the Conservatives. We need to pull together and get to work for the environment and for Canadians. We need to build a sustainable economy that works for everyone.

[*English*]

I want to build a future in which we are not fracking and burning. I want to build a future in which we are not subsidizing fossil fuels. I want to build a future in which we have good jobs in Canada, clean energy everywhere in our country, a future that does not rely on fossil fuel and the pollution that comes with it.

We can do this. This is possible. We need to make better choices and get better results. If we commit today to green energy and a green economy, we can change the direction of this country and we can be leaders in the world.

We need to make investments. We need to follow through on ideas that are long term, such as our plan to retrofit all homes in Canada by 2050. We need to invest in green energy. We need to encourage the development that we know is possible, sustainable development that creates great jobs while defending our environment. That is the future New Democrats will fight for.

With the rest of this House, together we can achieve this difference.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I put this question to the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona and he sidestepped it, so I would like to put it directly to the leader of the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: That is because you made a smarmy comment.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona is really excited about this question.

The New Democratic Party in British Columbia is offering tax credits to LNG resource development. I am wondering if the hon. member could explain why that is okay for the largest polluting industry in British Columbia, but that what this government is doing is not okay. Is it just because it is an NDP government in British Columbia?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, we made our commitment clear. We know what Canadians want. Thousands of young people took to the streets because they are worried about the future. The reality is that the future is not a distant and far-off concept. We know that climate change has real impacts on people's lives today. We are seeing the massive impact of environmental damage that is hurting families across this country: forest fires and flooding. We know that the impact of climate change is real. That is why, at the federal level, we need to commit to ending the subsidies for fossil fuels. That is our responsibility in this House. Let us make decisions that are forward thinking. Let us end those fossil fuel subsidies.

How dare the government continue to subsidize fossil fuel industries at the cost of climate change, the cost of our future, and the cost of our present, because we know the impacts are being felt right now everywhere across our country. That is the NDP commitment. We are going to invest our resources, our public dollars, in a green economy, green energy and renewable energy.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate everything I heard from the member and I congratulate him on his leadership.

However, I hear from everyday Canadians, blue-collar workers. In particular, I heard from one this morning, who is very upset. His utility bills now show the carbon tax that has been put in place by the Liberals. That alone was frustrating to him, as an employee of a large corporation in Saskatchewan that does a great deal of good for that province. However, what angered him even more was that the carbon tax also had the GST applied. A question that was asked in this House over and over again was whether there would be GST on the carbon tax. It was never answered, but here it is.

Would the member indicate whether his party would keep the carbon tax and the GST applied to the carbon tax?

● (1345)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' approach to the problem of climate change has been to impose a cost on pollution. While New Democrats support the reality that there is a cost to pollution, the Liberals' approach has been to put the burden, all of the weight, on everyday families, while the biggest polluters are exempt. That is not going to reduce emissions in the way that we need to. In fact, putting a price on pollution alone is not the way forward, and that is why New Democrats are providing more plans, concrete solutions to the problem.

The New Democrats' plan to retrofit all homes by 2050 is a concrete way to create jobs, to create opportunities for people to work, while defending the environment, reducing emissions and also saving families. Those retrofits are going to save money for families. That is what we need to do. Our solutions are going to do all three of those things. We are going to provide solutions where we create jobs, reduce the costs that families are incurring because the cost of living is so high and also defend the environment. We need to do all three. Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives are prepared to do it or have the courage to do what is necessary. New Democrats are ready to do what the planet needs and what Canadians want. We are ready to do it.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have heard members in the third party rise several times today to talk about the contract with Loblaws, and the member made reference to that. I am curious as to whether the member opposite understands that while Loblaws is the recipient of this grant and is tripling its contribution as a result of it, the purchase is actually being made from a factory in Mississauga, where good, hard-working Canadians are at work delivering the new technology that the member just spoke about. In fact, while Loblaws receives the grant as a flow through, the real investments being made are with a company with new technology and new chemicals, which are going to revolutionize the way in which refrigeration is done and therefore food is protected in this country.

Is the member opposite prepared to pull the money out of Mississauga and bankrupt that small manufacturing company?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, let me speak a little about Liberal logic. Instead of helping a small business, the Liberals plan to give millions of dollars to a company worth billions. They somehow think that by giving a company that had already committed $36 million on its own, $12 million more, it would somehow change its decision. That shows their lack of understanding. Canadians see through this. Canadians see that this is not helping families who need help. This shows Canadians that the government does not understand that small and medium-sized businesses need direct help and direct investments. Helping a massively profitable business is an irresponsible use of our taxpayer dollars. It shows a lack of understanding of what Canadians are going through. It shows a lack of understanding of how we can make real changes.

What we need to do is to make investments that encourage new action, not something that is already going to happen. We need to support small and medium-sized businesses. We need to invest aggressively in green energy. On one end, we have $12 million. Let us look at the billions of dollars that go toward subsidizing the fossil fuel sectors. Let us end those subsidies and invest them.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank our leader for his comments earlier today. He raised exactly the points that Canadians want answers to from the government, and frankly from the Conservatives as well.

I would like to take a moment to thank my colleague, the member for Elmwood—Transcona, for bringing forward the motion we are debating today.

As we know, the previous Conservative government and the current Liberal government have shown Canadians that they are no different when it comes to access for big corporations and the well-connected. The level of access to the corridors of powers for corporate executives and lobbyists is deeply disturbing.

As we know, SNC launched a multi-year lobbying effort to convince the Liberal government to change the Criminal Code so that when big corporations are charged with white-collar crimes, they can access plea deals. For SNC, that would mean it would escape criminal prosecution and the threat of a 10-year ban on government contracts. This lobbying began as far back as February 2016, and it has continued since. Top officials, senior ministerial staff, ministers themselves and even the Prime Minister's Office were on the hit list. By the end of 2016, its lobbying effort reached the Privy Council Office, Export Development Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada and Public Safety. Then, in 2017, it expanded to include the Treasury Board, Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage. Twenty-one months later, 51 meetings had occurred. The end result, hidden in the 500-page omnibus budget bill in 2018, was the provision that SNC wanted: access to a get out of jail free card. Effectively, big corporations charged with bribery, fraud, insider trading and other offences could all have their charges dropped.

What followed after that was exposed by the former attorney general. It was plain as day that SNC had tremendous access to the PMO and was succeeding in convincing the PMO to do its bidding. Had the former attorney general caved to the pressure from the PMO, we might never have known about the depth and reach of big corporations like SNC. This episode has confirmed for us what we knew in our hearts but could never quite put a finger on, which is that big corporations have incredible access, influence and power over the Canadian government.

The power that corporations wield showed us that the people the Prime Minister once valued as a part of his elite team were at the end of the day expendable. The former attorney general, gone. The president of the treasury board, gone. The former clerk of the Privy Council, gone. The Prime Minister's former principal secretary, gone.

We also know that it is not just SNC. As it happened, the year that the Liberals launched the advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare, big pharma stepped right up and lobbied the government 104 times. Would we not know that the Liberals are dragging their feet and failing to implement a national, universal, public pharmacare program for all Canadians. It does not matter that Canada is the only country with a publicly funded health care system that does not have a national pharmacare plan. It does not matter that at least 640 Canadians die every year due to financial barriers that prevent access to medication. In fact, just this past weekend, I met a senior who told me that she is taking her medication every other day because she cannot afford it.

By the way, the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that a universal program would result in $4.2 billion in savings each year. However, the government drags its feet, failing to implement a national pharmacare plan. Why? It is because big pharma stands to lose. Its wealthy, well-connected lobbyist friends tell them it would hurt their profit margin and reduce their executive bonuses and stock dividend payouts. That is why.

● (1350)

Worth noting is the fact that during this period of intense lobbying, drug costs and profit margins for the top 25 pharma companies in Canada continued to grow.

Why stop at big pharma? Let us turn to big oil for a minute. We also know, despite the government repeating a million times a day that the environment and the economy go hand in hand, the only hand-in-hand relationship that it cares about is with big oil. It kept the Harper climate targets and bought a pipeline. What did the money go toward? Millions of dollars in executive bonuses. The wealthy and well connected always have the ear of the government. Let us be real. Climate leaders do not buy a 65-year-old leaky pipeline.

As a result of listening to big oil lobbyists for four years, our emissions are not going down. In fact, they are going up. There was a 12 million tonne increase in CO_2 emissions last year. Under current trends, we will only reach our weak Paris agreement reduction targets in 2230. That is 200 years behind schedule.

Meanwhile, from coast to coast to coast, Canadians are reeling from the impacts of inaction on climate change: extreme weather conditions, forest fires, floods, droughts, rising sea levels, ocean acidification and species at risk. In fact, the IPCC has said that a 1.5°C average rise may put 20% to 30% of species at risk at risk of extinction.

Young people are demanding action. They are saying, “We care. Why don't you?” Instead of being a climate leader, we have a government that buys a pipeline. The Prime Minister promised to stop subsidizing fossil fuels in 2025. We actually saw the Liberals locking in some fossil fuel subsidies for another 20 years instead. The International Institute for Sustainable Development estimates that there are $3.3 billion in subsidies given to oil and gas producers each year.

We also have a government that has provided $12 million to a multi-million dollar corporation, which is owned by one of the wealthiest families in the country, so it can buy new refrigerators. Then the Liberals tell Canadians this is what climate leadership looks like. Are they serious? This is the same multi-billion dollar corporation that recently came clean and admitted it participated in a bread price-fixing arrangement, ripping off Canadians on a loaf of bread for 15 years. This is the same multi-billion dollar corporation that last year went to tax court to fight the Canada Revenue Agency over allegations it had been hoarding cash in an aggressive tax-avoidance scheme in Barbados, potentially hiding $400 million in taxes that should have been paid in Canada.

Meanwhile, the chairman and CEO of Loblaws is estimated to have received over $6 million in total compensation in 2017 alone. After ripping off Canadians on bread for a decade, hiding hundreds of millions in taxes that could have gone toward Canadian public services and fighting the government when it was caught doing it, it still gets to show up for a photo op with the Minister of Environment to receive a $12 million cheque to buy new refrigerators. That is unbelievable. This has to stop.

I proudly stand today to support the motion before us. The very least the government can do is recoup the $12 million in Canadian tax dollars.

The Conservatives are no different from the Liberals. We have seen this play over and over again. It is time for us to turn the channel and vote for change. That could happen in October.

● (1355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in speech after speech, we have heard members of the New Democratic Party say that they will spend unlimited amounts of money. It is as if they will just click their heels, magic will appear and everyone will given a house and things of that nature.

My question is related the NDP's campaign in the last election. Its former leader said that it would have a balanced budget. Going forward, is the current NDP leadership committed to a balanced budget or does it understand what we have understood for many years, that we need to invest in Canada, our economy and our people?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I am so happy the member asked that question. If we look at what the Liberals said they would do in 2015 and what has happened three and a half years later, it is clear as day that their empty promises will never be reality.

On pharmacare, we have seen decade after decade what has happened. I am growing old watching the same play over and over again. What happened in this budget? There is no money for universal pharmacare. The Liberals are going to consult once again. They promise Canadians the sky. They sound so nice and say it with smiles. They talk about sunny ways and all of that. They say that they are different from the Conservatives: Liberal, Tory, same old story.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*Translation*]

JOSH UNDERHAY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured and very pleased to rise today.

[*English*]

When I booked this member's statement, it is a reflection on how much can change in two weeks. I booked it with the sole purpose of saying to all my friends in this place that I had now been happily married for a whole week. My husband and I are hoping all members can come to a small party this evening. All the details are in the inbox of members' email.

I also want to say that this week brought great sadness. I lost a dear friend, Josh Underhay, who was a candidate in Prince Edward Island for the Green Party. He and his son, Oliver, drowned on Good Friday.

It is hard to hold in my heart more happiness than I have known and at the same time grieving. However, it is possible for us in this place to be more like Prince Edward Islanders to gather together to celebrate love and grief and to be more civil with one another as we go into this election.

* * *

ANNE MARIE D'AMICO FOUNDATION

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember nearly one year ago, on April 23, all those who were affected by the Toronto van attack, a deliberate and cowardly act that claimed 10 lives and injured 16 others.

The first victim identified was Anne Marie D'Amico, a resident from my riding of Davenport. She was described by her brother as a fighting spirit, someone who would go the extra mile showing she cared. She always did things that had enormous impact because she did everything with her whole heart.

Inspired by her character and in remembrance of her spirit, the D'Amico family has started the Anne Marie D'Amico Foundation, with the goal to promote positive change to help end violence against women. This year's donations will support the North York Women's Shelter in building a new state-of-the-art shelter and community hub, which will house up to 40 women and children impacted by violence.

One year on, we as Canadians must continue to stand together against violent acts like these and always keep those, like Anne Marie D'Amico, who have been impacted in our hearts. We will remember.

* * *

LACOMBE GENERALS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my absolute honour to rise in the House today to congratulate the Lacombe Generals on their recent Allan Cup victory. This is the fourth time in the team's 20 year history that it has won the national title. The Generals have advanced to the finals in six other years. It is certainly a dynasty team if there ever was one.

What made this win extra special is that it took place on home ice and featured, for the first time ever, an all Alberta final as the Innisfail Eagles also advanced to the final game in their first Allan Cup appearance in the team's 71-year history. The two teams played before a sold out crowd and did not disappoint. The final score was 5:2 and the Lacombe Generals emerged victorious. It was truly a story that wrote itself, and I could not be more proud to represent such a fine organization and such great and skilled players.

I thank the 2019 Viking Projects Allan Cup organizers, sponsors, volunteers and all of the hockey fans who made this event one for the ages. Go Generals, go.

* * *

OBESITY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obesity is a disease that affects millions of Canadians and, sadly, it is getting worse in Canada. Obesity is a condition with a number of contributing factors, many of which are not under the control of the individual.

Combatting obesity has become a health priority of our government, as we have seen through the introduction of Canada's new and revised food guide, plus product package labelling and advertising restrictions.

As chair of the health committee, I was glad the committee could play a part in ensuring that Canada's new food guide would reflect healthy eating habits for all. This evening, from 5 p.m to 7 p.m., in the Wellington Building, Room 330, we will be hosting a reception by Obesity Canada to help parliamentarians and their staff to understand obesity.

Members of Obesity Canada's senior staff will be in attendance, and I invite everyone in the House to attend.

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● (1405)

CANCER

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite Canadians to participate in the Canadian Cancer Society's daffodil campaign. This campaign matters.

I think today, as I think every day, of my sister Kathleen. Wherever there was the loudest table or the greatest laughter, there was Kathleen. Wherever there was a shout-out for one more song and one more story, there was my sis. Even as a little girl, she blew through our lives like a defiant summer storm.

She suffered grievously from cancer. It was not bloody fair, but it never is. I have never seen anyone tougher and more resolute in the face of death. Doc Holliday had nothing on my sis. Kathleen taught me that what we have is the time we have and that our only wealth is the investment we make in the ones who love us and who can love us back. She fought like hell to carve out a space where pain and sadness had no domain.

For all the families dealing with cancer, to all the researchers and hospital workers who work every day, we wear the daffodil to support them. Cancer can be beaten. I love my sis.

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AYVERIE CASTER

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, I met a spunky young lady named Ayverie Caster at a Terry Fox fundraiser at Sammy's Famous Chip Wagon in Oakville, where she was picking up her favourite chicken fingers. Ayverie was returning for her treatment for brain cancer at McMaster Children's Hospital.

Sadly, the cancer she had courageously lived with since she was eight years old took her young life on April 3, at the age of 14. Ayverie's favourite Toronto Raptor, and mine, Pascal Siakam, wore kicks in her favourite colour, and sporting her name, after she passed. I am sure she is cheering on her team from above as it competes in the playoffs.

Ayverie was a warrior queen whose life was cut short by the number-one disease killer of children in Canada. Ayverie advocated for more money for childhood cancer. We must do more for kids like Ayverie to give them their best shot at life.

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CROSSING ALL BRIDGES

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 16 years ago, four moms who wanted more for their developmentally disabled adult children established Crossing All Bridges Learning Centre in Brantford. From humble beginnings to serving over 70 individuals and their families, Crossing All Bridges provides lifelong education, meaning and social connection.

A social enterprise, Shredding Barriers, was started three years ago, providing employment to over 16 participants and empowering them with skills to move into the mainstream workforce. Tears of joy flowed when they received their first paycheques.

Having operated out of rented facilities, Crossing All Bridges has embarked on a campaign to have a home of its own. There is a wish list and a wait-list, and the new premises will serve to help the centre grow and achieve its goals.

I thank the founding moms for their vision: Nancy Tew Seberras, Debbie Brown, Nancy Gowing and Carol Cain.

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JOSH AND OLIVER UNDERHAY

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the tragic passing of Josh Underhay and his six-year-old son Oliver, on Good Friday, in a canoeing accident.

Josh had an enthusiastic, almost effervescent personality.

[*Translation*]

He represented Prince Edward Island a few years ago here in Ottawa at the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy. He was passionate and keenly interested in everything. He invited me to speak to his French immersion class, and it was easy to see that his energy was infectious. He spoke several languages and was an incredible trumpet player.

[*English*]

He came by my office to lobby for a cycling lane on the Hillsborough Bridge and was conspicuously present when it was announced just a few days later. In his final days, Josh campaigned as a candidate in the P.E.I. election for the only reason one should: to make his community better.

Josh and Oliver have left a gaping hole in the hearts of so many. Our hearts go out to Karri Shea and young Linden.

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70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the modern Commonwealth of nations is celebrating 70 years since it was given a renewed purpose in 1949. The Commonwealth is a free association of sovereign states that have maintained ties of friendship and practical co-operation and that acknowledge Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as the Commonwealth's symbolic head.

We can all unite in celebrating this milestone, an occasion to recognize the aspirational and inspirational objectives of this family of nations. I firmly believe in this organization's raison d'être, namely, to promote democracy, human rights, international peace and security, and the rule of law and good governance. Among many other accomplishments, the Commonwealth made history with its decisive action to end white minority rule in South Africa. It provides useful tools for effective democracy, such as election observation and peace-building initiatives.

The 70th anniversary will be celebrated across the continents for the next year through conferences, literature, ceremonies or other events. Once again, I wish a happy anniversary to the Commonwealth of nations.

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● (1410)

CHINA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's China policy has been a train wreck. The Liberals wanted a warm relationship at all costs, championing free trade with communist China and even agreeing to negotiate an extradition treaty. Concession and capitulation did not bring about some imagined golden age. It simply led China's leaders to see the Prime Minister as weak and to continue to push the envelope.

The Liberal policy of concession and capitulation brought about the canola crisis currently facing farmers in my community and beyond. Farmers understand that weak leadership on the world stage costs all of us. They want strong Conservative leadership once again.

We are calling on the government to actually appoint an ambassador to replace former Liberal minister John McCallum, who resigned in disgrace.

The government must support our farmers by increasing the cap and interest-free period in the federal advance payments program and by launching a complaint against China's actions at the WTO.

Canadians know that our canola is world class, but China's basic dictatorship will continue to take liberties with our vital industries until we restore strong Canadian leadership on the world stage.

Statements by Members

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, "*Am Yisrael Chai*. We are a Jewish nation that will stand tall.... Terrorism...will not take us down." These were the defiant words of Rabbi Yisroel Goldstein this weekend after a gunman with an assault rifle opened fire at his synagogue, after he saw his friend Lori Gilbert-Kaye lying dead on the floor, after he saw eight-year-old Noya Dayan carried away bleeding, after he himself had been shot and wounded, and yes, six months after 11 other Jews were killed at another shooting at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Before these murders, attacks on Jews at prayer did not happen in North America. Now, with neo-Nazis marching in Charlottesville chanting, "Jews will not replace us", with an anti-Semitic cartoon being run in the New York Times and with B'nai Brith reporting that over 2,000 anti-Semitic incidents occurred in Canada in 2018, we need a national action plan on anti-Semitism, and we need it now.

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ATTACKS ON PLACES OF WORSHIP

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people of faith go to their churches, temples, synagogues, mosques and gurudwaras to seek peace and to connect with their faith. Far too often, these places of sanctuary are shattered because of hatred and violence. We saw it this weekend at Chabad of Poway, in California, and last month at mosques in New Zealand. On Easter Sunday, in Sri Lanka, terrorists bombed St. Sebastian's Church and St. Anthony's Shrine in Colombo and Zion Church in Batticaloa. Worshippers there were celebrating Easter mass on one of the holiest days in the Christian calendar.

We condemn these acts of hate unconditionally, mourn the loss of lives and pray for all those who have been affected.

We are living in a world where hate is used to divide neighbours and pit one community against another. We must speak up against hatred and division and work toward building societies free of racism and discrimination, because ultimately, an attack on one faith is an attack on all faiths.

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PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what do islanders and Albertans have most in common? They live in provinces named after royals, they name their kids after today's royals, and they defeated provincial allies of the Prime Minister at the ballot box.

In Alberta, after a long winter of discontent, voters came out in record numbers and rejected the NDP's politics of fear and division. On April 16, Albertans put an end to one half of the NDP-federal Liberal carbon tax alliance. We look forward to Albertans joining the carbon tax fight.

In P.E.I., islanders opted for Dennis King of the PC Party to serve in only the second minority government since Confederation, banishing the three-term provincial Liberals to a distant third.

I want to congratulate incoming Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and his United Conservative team. I want to congratulate incoming Premier Dennis King and his PC team. It is a Tory blue morning again in Canada. October cannot come soon enough so that Canadians can ensure that it is one and done for the carbon-tax-loving Prime Minister.

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[*Translation*]

NATIONAL ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week ended on Sunday. This awareness week is an opportunity to bring attention to the cause and encourage the public to take action.

In Quebec, as of December 31, 2018, there were 164 donors, 451 transplant recipients, and 805 people waiting for a transplant.

As everyone knows, this cause means a lot to me. I am proud that in its last budget, my government invested $36.5 million over five years to improve organ and tissue donation and make organ donation more effective in Canada.

There is still work to be done, which is why it is important to have awareness campaigns and national weeks like this. By promoting organ donation and raising public awareness, we will save more lives.

Have my colleagues signed their consent form? I have.

* * *

● (1415)

[*English*]

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many of us take it for granted that when we leave for work in the morning, we will come home safely at the end of the day. Yesterday's National Day of Mourning is a reminder that too many of us do not.

When we commemorated the day in Winnipeg, we heard Cindy Skanderberg tell the story of her son, Michael. In 1999, Michael was a young man learning the electrical trade. He was killed when his company, which should have ensured his safety and supervision, sent him off alone to work live on 347V lighting. Cindy has honoured her son's memory by fighting for changes to make safety in the workplace a priority and to hold delinquent employers to account.

Better government and workplace policies make a difference. The political advocacy and bargaining work of the labour movement over many decades has been an important part of making work more safe and ensuring that more people get home at the end of the work day. As we prepare to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, and as many governments across Canada continue to challenge the collective bargaining rights of Canadian workers, the National Day of Mourning is an important reminder of the need to defend those rights.

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the world has witnessed horrific attacks against Christians because of their faith. On Easter Sunday, Islamic extremists bombed churches and hotels, targeting the Christian community in Sri Lanka, brutally murdering more than 250 people and injuring hundreds more.

Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world. They are targeted by Islamic extremists in countries like Pakistan, Iran and Nigeria and by communist regimes in China and North Korea. Here in the west, we see a subtle persecution. For example, Christians in the west who believe in creation or in the teachings of the Bible have to be prepared to be mocked and ridiculed by many, including some of their own political leaders. If they have social beliefs based on their Christian convictions, they might be denied government funding.

This is shameful, and as uncomfortable as it might make some, it must be called out. It is time we stand up for all religious freedom. We must lead by example and reject all violence and persecution of people because of their faith and beliefs.

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[*Translation*]

2019 FLOODING

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we speak, Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick are experiencing major flooding. Our communities have been put to the test. The Government of Canada is monitoring the situation very closely and working with our provincial and municipal partners to maintain public safety, with support from the Canadian Armed Forces.

In Gatineau, as in other communities, I was again touched by residents' resilience and the solidarity they have shown with their neighbours. The coming days will hold new challenges, but I believe in the resilience of Canadians. I want to highlight the hard work of our municipal employees and the many volunteers across Canada.

In the span of three years, my city, Gatineau, will have experienced two major floods and a tornado. The climate is changing, and our ability to respond needs to change, too. My heart goes out to the disaster victims. We will not let them down.

[*English*]

SRI LANKA ATTACKS

The Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all the parties in the House, I understand that there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the Sri Lanka Easter bombings. I now invite hon. members to rise.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as various regions in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick are dealing with severe flooding, we are all very concerned for the lives, families and businesses that are being impacted by the high water. I know we are all grateful to the thousands of volunteers, first responders and the Canadian Armed Forces who are working around the clock trying to keep people and their properties safe.

Can the government provide this House with an update on the current situation and inform us as to what immediate actions are being taken to assist those who are affected by the current flooding?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are standing shoulder to shoulder in combatting dangerous and damaging floods this spring across four provinces. The provinces have, of course, the front-line jurisdiction for emergency response, but when they need help they make a specific request to the Government of Canada. We have responded quickly and positively in every case.

I have spoken with Minister Urquhart in New Brunswick, Minister Guilbault in Quebec and Minister Jones in Ontario. Our collaboration in response has been seamless. All governments and thousands of volunteers will continue to work together to help support one another, because that is what Canadians do.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the canola crisis with China has been ongoing for over a month now, and it has been devastating for Canadian producers. However, the Prime Minister has been so embroiled in his SNC-Lavalin scandal that he has not offered any solutions. Sadly, he does not even appear to know the difference between China and Japan. He has been more consumed with saving his own political skin rather than address the real issues that Canadians are facing.

What will the Prime Minister do for canola farmers who are facing this immediate and growing crisis?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been standing shoulder to shoulder with our canola farmers from the very beginning. We stand with them and their families. We know that we have the best canola in the world. We have a very robust inspection system, and we are having an ongoing conversation with the Chinese authorities to resolve this issue as quickly as we can.

We remain committed to resolving this issue and we are also looking at the best ways to support our farmers even more. We look forward to having more on this issue.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have been meeting and consulting with leaders and members of the agriculture sector, and earlier today, our leader put forward concrete proposals to addressing the canola crisis.

Conservatives are happy to do the work and offer solutions while the Prime Minister and the Liberals are clearly asleep at the wheel. Our plan offers real solutions and it has the support of canola producers.

Will the Prime Minister take the work that we have done and implement these proposals immediately?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were working on this issue from the first day while our Conservative colleagues kept asking questions on other issues. It took them six weeks to ask the first question on the canola issue.

I have been working on this, and our team has been working with the industry, with our provincial colleagues, with the businesses involved and with the farmers for more than two months now. We have been there, standing by our farmers and their families since the beginning.

The Speaker: Order. It is difficult to hear the answer when the hon. member for Prince Albert is yelling throughout the answer. I would ask him to restrain himself and show respect for this House.

There are seven weeks ahead, and I know we can manage to contain ourselves.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

● (1425)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning, they have refused nine times to have an emergency debate on canola.

[*Translation*]

The Prime Minister's inaction on the canola crisis is costing the economy a lot of money. Richardson was blocked from the Chinese market on March 5, nearly two months ago now.

What did the Liberal government do? Absolutely nothing. It is waiting for the crisis to fix itself.

Will the Prime Minister listen to the Leader of the Opposition and appoint an ambassador, increase emergency financial aid to farmers, and launch an official trade complaint against China?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working on this issue since the beginning. It took six weeks for my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable to ask me the first question about canola. Since the very beginning, I have been working with our farmers, with our producers, with the industry, with our provincial colleagues and with businesses that are directly affected. We have created a working group. We are looking at all the options. I will shortly be announcing some good news to further support our farmers.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food has been refusing to appear before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food to talk about the canola crisis since before the holidays. She does not want to talk to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food about it. A month ago, the minister asked China to allow a delegation of experts to travel to China, but China has been completely ignoring the Liberal government ever since. Now it seems the crisis is spreading to other products. The new minister might have time to wait, but our farmers do not.

Will the Prime Minister listen to the Leader of the Opposition and appoint an ambassador, increase assistance for farmers and file an official complaint against China?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ever since I was appointed to my new position on March 1, I have been working very hard on this issue with my colleagues, the Minister of International Trade Diversification, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister, as well as our provincial counterparts.

As a team, we are working tirelessly on ongoing technical discussions with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Chinese officials. We are standing by our farmers.

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[*English*]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the scandal around the Prime Minister's role in political interference has shown Canadians that Liberals have one set of rules for their powerful friends and another for everyone else. It is not just shielding a giant corporation from criminal prosecution. KPMG was let off the hook for tax avoidance. Sears financiers were protected, but workers were not. Pharmaceutical companies were put ahead of Canadians who are unable to afford their medication.

Will Liberals now change their course and help people by implementing our plan for pharmacare for all?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are proud of their health care system, we believe that no one should have to choose between paying for prescriptions and putting food on the table. That is why we are laying the foundation for national pharmacare with several bold, concrete steps in budget 2019 that could lower drug costs by up to $3 billion a year. We look forward to continuing this progress when we receive the pharmacare council's final report in the coming months.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that answer was an embarrassment.

Liberals are also missing an opportunity for Canada to become a leader in the green economy, and instead continue to pile billions on billions in corporate welfare to highly profitable companies. Investing in a green economy can create thousands of jobs while fighting climate change. Let us start by helping Canadians reduce their carbon footprints and their monthly bills.

Will Liberals stop subsidizing oil companies, stop giving millions to Loblaws and instead agree to our plan to retrofit all homes by 2050?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have developed a comprehensive plan to address carbon emissions across this country that focuses not only on reducing emissions and adapting to some of the changes we are seeing in climate change but focuses very much on generating the new economy.

As somebody who has spent 20 years as a CEO in green tech, I understand this area very well. This government has a comprehensive plan to ensure we are addressing this on a go-forward basis in a responsible and thoughtful way.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for a long time, rich corporations have had someone on their side, and ordinary Canadians are paying the price. Canadians deserve a government that is on their side, but the Liberal government maintained the billions of dollars in oil subsidies brought in by the Conservatives. That is unacceptable.

When will the Liberals put an end to those subsidies in order to protect our environment and help Canadians?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have implemented many measures to fight climate change. We implemented measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We addressed the economic issues and we have a plan to adapt to climate change. We have demonstrated leadership and will continue to do so.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that answer is still unacceptable.

It is high time Canadians elected a government that works for ordinary people, not for those who are already rich. Giving millions of dollars to one of the richest corporations is not going to help fight climate change. Families and workers need help.

When will the Liberal government admit that it made a mistake and reinvest that $12 million to help workers and their families?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we developed our plan with the help of Canadians. Our serious and affordable approach will get good results. We have a plan that includes over 50 measures to fight climate change and make the economy clean and affordable for everyone. Canadians want real action, not the Conservatives' status quo or the NDP's talk.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a Prime Minister who is letting our diplomatic relations with China deteriorate. The Huawei case has led to the canola crisis and the unjust detention of two Canadians.

This weekend, during a meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan, our Prime Minister did the impossible. He mixed up Japan and China in the same sentence not once, but twice.

What is the Prime Minister going to do to restore diplomatic relations with China?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our priority, which is also my personal priority, is the well-being and safety of Canadians detained in China. We have rallied an unprecedented number of partners around the world to support Canada's position: Australia, the European Union, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Latvia, and others. I will continue by answering the second question.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Prime Minister and his government have not provided Canadian canola producers with any support, and that is also the case for the two Canadians detained in China.

The Prime Minister must immediately appoint an ambassador to China that will defend Canadians who are unfairly arrested and restore stable trade and diplomatic relationship.

When will this Prime Minister demonstrate a modicum of responsibility and leadership?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I promised, I will continue to name the countries that have publicly supported Canada: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Spain, Denmark, the United States and 140 academics and diplomats from around the world. NATO's secretary general appealed directly and publicly to China to consider our serious concerns.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is in the midst of the deepest diplomatic crisis we have ever experienced with China, and we have had no ambassador on the ground since the Prime Minister's hand-picked Liberal insider had to resign three months ago due to his own incompetence. The crisis gets worse each week. Canadian citizens are in prison and are being mistreated. Exporters, including canola producers, are suffering.

When will the Prime Minister step up and nominate a new ambassador to start turning this crisis around?

● (1435)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure every member of this House, and above all the detained Canadians, that their well-being is our government's paramount priority and my paramount concern. We have rallied an unprecedented number of countries around the world to publicly speak out about these detained Canadians and to call for their release, and I will give you the full list, Mr. Speaker, when I answer the next question.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): It is reassuring that she has already predicted what her answer will be to my question, Mr. Speaker.

I will remind her that the Prime Minister famously said that "Canada is back". I am sure that hollow Liberal slogan is warm comfort to our two prisoners in China who have the lights on 24/7.

I am not concerned about the other countries the minister is calling. I would like her to speak to her Prime Minister. Will she answer this simple question. Will she appoint a new ambassador for China to stop or turn around this dispute by the end of the month, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am able to predict my answers, because the questions are so easily predictable and repetitive.

Canada absolutely is back, which is why we have rallied an unprecedented—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. Members might not like questions or the answers, but we still have to hear them.

The hon. member for Carleton.

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FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister shattered his promise that the budget would balance itself this year. He has added three times as much debt as he said he would. The cost of government is up 25% in just over three years. Among the wasteful spending is the quarter billion dollars for the Asian Infrastructure Bank to build pipelines and roads in China.

Will the Prime Minister show even a modicum of respect for Canadian taxpayers and cancel that quarter-billion-dollar waste of money?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we were pleased to make an investment into the Asian Infrastructure Bank. We know it makes an important difference. There is in fact one project that the bank has taken on in China. It is a project to reduce the use of coal so we can reduce pollution. The other projects, of course, are in less developed countries.

We think it is important to fund infrastructure around the world. It helps Canadians companies and helps our world be a more prosperous place.

The Speaker: There is far too much noise. This must not continue or there will be fewer questions.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister famously said that his favourite model of government was the basic Chinese dictatorship. In response, the foreign minister tells us that the Chinese government gave him a nickname: little potato. To thank them for that, he gave a quarter billion tax dollars to the Asian Infrastructure Bank to build pipelines and roads in that country that we cannot even build in our own.

Will the Prime Minister finally show some respect for Canadian tax dollars and cancel this quarter-billion-dollar hand-out to the Chinese government?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I continue to live in a world where facts matter.

Again, there has been one investment by the Asian Infrastructure Bank in China to help it get off coal to reduce pollution. We know this is important. We also know that the other investments the bank is making around less developed countries in Asia so they can actually improve their situation are critically important for our world. They are helpful for Canadian companies that are making those investments as well.

We continue to support this infrastructure bank and we will continue to work with those countries to improve their situation.

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● (1440)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was back home talking with people about job and pension insecurity, talking with Kashechewan evacuees facing another year of devastating floods and broken promises. Everyone asked me to explain why the Prime Minister gave $12 million to Galen Weston to fix his fridges. This is a guy who lives in a gated community in Florida and fought against a living wage for his employees. It is the disconnect of the government that offends people.

Why is the Prime Minister preferring to act like a head butler for the uber-rich and the lobbyists rather than stand up for the interests of working-class Canadians?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has misconstrued our government's agenda, which is to ensure we create an economy that works for everyone.

I have sat on panels with members of the NDP who have said that they support investments in energy efficiency. Now that we are actually doing it, they seem to oppose it.

The fact is that under the low-carbon economy fund, officials from Environment and Climate Change Canada nominated 54 projects for funding through this fund based on what would achieve the greatest amount of emission reductions at the lowest cost to Canadians. This investment will help reduce emissions and create jobs in places like Mississauga and 370 communities across our entire country.

PENSIONS

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that this announcement had all the hallmarks of a government that was shopping around to participate in an announcement that was happening anyway, because Loblaws was moving ahead to renovate their fridges, and it wanted to be at the podium. That is the issue.

The problem is that it is part of a theme of the government, caving to corporate interests, as it did when it passed special legislation for SNC-Lavalin, while at the same time saying it needed a long, drawn-out consultation to see if it was worthwhile protecting the pensions of Sears workers and Stelco workers.

Why is that Canadian workers cannot get the same protection for their pensions that SNC-Lavalin is getting from criminal charges?

Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that workplace pension security is a decades old problem. It is our government that committed the resources, the time and the energy to get this right.

We are taking an evidence-based approach. We had consultations. As a result of those consultations, budget 2019 has introduced measures that will help our pensioners. We have created a process that is more fair, open and transparent. We heard a great deal about executive bonuses. We have given the courts the power to set aside those executive bonuses when pensioners are compromised.

This is a very important file, and we will continue to work hard to protect our pensioners.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three years of Liberal fumbles, failures and delays on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion have cost Canadians jobs and prosperity as investment flees the country.

The Prime Minister moves heaven and earth to help his billionaire friends, but for struggling middle-class families dependent on the energy sector, they can just wait and wait.

On what day will construction begin on the Trans Mountain pipeline?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to remind Canadians that it was the Conservative opposition members who voted to de-fund and kill the process that we had put in place for meaningful consultation with indigenous communities.

If Conservatives are really serious about expanding our energy sector and getting our resources to global markets, they should have supported that process so we could move forward in consultation with indigenous peoples, and move forward on the project in the right way.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, construction season is upon us, but the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion lays dormant.

As of today, there are no shovels in the ground, no jobs have been created and no community benefits. Gas prices are soaring sky-high and people are hurting. The government spent $4.5 billion to buy a pipeline and now it cannot even guarantee that it will be approved. This is insulting and the constituents do not like to be played for fools.

On what date will construction begin?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are following a path that was given to us by the Federal Court of Appeal, which means a process for meaningful consultation with indigenous communities to get this project right, to listen to their concerns and to offer them accommodation on their concerns.

It was surprising to see the members of the opposition actually vote in favour of de-funding and killing that process that we were following to get this project right.

● (1445)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the finance minister said that they spent $4.5 billion tax dollars to buy the Trans Mountain pipeline to start building the expansion "immediately". It is now over 11 months since the Liberals told Canadians construction would begin "right away".

On what date will construction of the Trans Mountain expansion start?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is surprising that the Conservatives would like us to follow a failed process they followed for 10 years that did not get a single pipeline built to get our resources to non-U.S. markets.

Ninety-nine per cent of the oil that we sell to the outside world is going to one country, the United States. We need to expand our global market. In order to do that, we need to ensure we follow the right process to move forward on projects, such as the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Conservatives, four major pipelines were built, with more access to new markets.

The reality is that the Liberals already killed two pipelines. Three companies that wanted to build pipelines in Canada are gone. Not a single new inch of pipeline is in service right now. The Liberals said that they spent $4.5 billion tax dollars to build the Trans Mountain expansion immediately.

All the minister has to do is answer the question. When will the Trans Mountain expansion be built?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member well knows that one of the projects she is talking about was actually the reversal of the existing pipeline. If that is considered a new pipeline, then I am surprised by what the Conservatives' definition of a new pipeline is.

We are moving forward in the right way on this process to ensure that we are consulting with indigenous communities in a meaningful way. We have extended the time over three weeks to give them enough time to ensure they are included in this process.

* * *

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the current government has abandoned steelworkers once again. After steel safeguards expired last week, the Liberals failed to extend them for five crucial Canadian steel products. Now thousands of steelworkers are left exposed to even more uncertainty, thanks to a government that removed protections and has now allowed foreign dumping to flood our Canadian markets.

The European Union has already put in place permanent safeguards. Instead of spending its time protecting the interests of its rich friends, why will the government not get to work and protect the jobs of Canadian steelworkers?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is critically important that we do protect steelworkers and the steel industry. We have said that we are moving forward with two safeguards, as recommended by the CITT. We are clearly focused on how we can eliminate these unjust tariffs that have been imposed on us by the United States. We have said that over the next 30 days we will work intensively with the industry to make sure we can protect the industry and steelworkers so we can ensure we have a long-term capacity in this sector.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking.

Quebec workers, including those in the aluminum industry back home in Jonquière, have been mired in uncertainty for several months already. Now the same is true for steelworkers. The Liberals announced late Friday that they would not be making the steel industry safeguards permanent. Thousands of jobs are at stake.

The Prime Minister is much quicker to act when his millionaire friends need help.

Will the government finally stand up for our workers and make all safeguards permanent in the steel industry?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe that protecting our steelworkers is extremely important. We will maintain our approach of working with the steel industry. We will continue to explore ways to protect the industry. Of course, this is very important to the 23,000 workers, but it is also very important to the future of that industry.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, flooding in four provinces is devastating our communities, including mine. Rising waters continue to destroy houses, roads and communities.

[*English*]

When crisis hits, we see our neighbours stepping up and our first responders working hard to keep us safe. Could the Minister of Public Safety please update the House on how the government is supporting Canadians who are being affected by the flooding?

● (1450)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the federal government must respond quickly to every provincial request.

[*English*]

I have spoken with my three provincial counterparts and we are working seamlessly together. Since receiving requests from New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec, some 2,000 Canadian Armed Forces personnel have been deployed. They have been crucial in assisting with evacuations, sandbagging and other duties. The Coast Guard, DFO, Indigenous Services, Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Public Safety Canada, Transport Canada, Revenue Canada and thousands of volunteers are working their hearts out to keep everyone safe.

* * *

ETHICS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner found that the Prime Minister violated the Conflict of Interest Act by accepting an illegal vacation seen as a gift designed to influence the PM. This past week a federal court ruled that the Lobbying Commissioner must also investigate this illegal vacation. Now the Liberals are fighting that order.

Why is the government spending public money trying to cover up the Prime Minister's illegal holiday?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said on numerous occasions in the House, we support the independence of officers of Parliament. As we all know, the lobbying commissioner investigates lobbyists. As the interpretation of the act continues to be considered by the courts, we will not comment.

I can assure all members, as well as all Canadians, that the Prime Minister and his office were not part of the decision to appeal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the investigation into the Prime Minister's illegal holiday will no doubt be delayed, since the Liberals are appealing a judge's decision. This shows how the Liberal government only respects our justice system when it helps them benefit, conspire or cheat.

We must do everything we can to maintain confidence in our justice system. Why is the Prime Minister not setting an example for all Canadians?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we support the independence of officers of Parliament. As we all know, the lobbying commissioner investigates lobbyists. As the interpretation of the act continues to be considered by the courts, we will not comment. The Prime Minister and his office were not part of the decision to appeal.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a friend is a friend, but being a Liberal friend gets you an untendered contract.

The Minister of Justice pulled some strings to make sure that a lawyer with ties to the Liberal Party of Canada would be awarded a consultation contract worth $711 an hour. This lawyer just happens to be a dedicated Liberal Party fundraiser.

Is the government hiding a new scandal from Canadians with these paybacks?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure the hon. member, the House and all Canadians that all of the rules were followed. In fact, a number of firms are working with the Department of Justice. This decision was made by the department, and the rules were followed.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us get this straight. We have a Liberal-connected law firm that was initially offered a big contract without having to compete with other firms. The two lead lawyers are both regular contributors to the Liberal Party, one a former chief speech writer for the Liberals, the other the Liberals' 2015 campaign lawyer. Although other firms were belatedly invited to bid, none did, and the Liberal-connected firm won the big contract.

Why is it with the Liberals that it is always about who you know?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said a moment ago in French, I can reassure the hon. member, the House and all Canadians that this kind of contract was well within the power of the deputy minister and the department to accord. They did so in a transparent process that followed all rules and regulations. That firm is one of many firms that work with our justice department.

● (1455)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I call the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix to order.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

* * *

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, decades of Liberal and Conservative mismanagement of our fisheries have left chinook salmon populations in a desperate situation. Instead of acting with urgency, Liberals just keep reannouncing the same funding they promised for restoration enhancement and lost habitat protections, but the money is not flowing. The Liberals can find $4.5 billion for their pipeline expansion, but they cannot get the money out the door to support local fishers and communities affected by fisheries closures.

Will the minister finally commit to immediately rolling out these necessary funds? What are the Liberals waiting for?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to stand with Premier John Horgan about a month or so ago to announce the B.C. salmon restoration and innovation fund, which is $142 million focused on habitat restoration in British Columbia, the largest investment ever made in habitat restoration.

We have expedited the process to ensure that we are taking in applications with respect to that fund and we will be commencing decisions on those applications by early June. I think that a two and a half month period to solicit applications and to make decisions is a pretty darn fast period of time.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, waiting for that announcement certainly took a lot of time, and wild salmon on our coastline are suffering every single day. We know this and we have known this for years.

The Liberals had a consultation process that was shoddy at best. The late announcement left small businesses scrambling. This problem is the result of decades of mismanagement and broken Liberal promises on habitat restoration. Hatcheries along the coast have not seen an increase in funding for over 35 years.

They have $12 million for Loblaws' fridges. Where is the money for the hatcheries? When will the government take responsibility and stop—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Fisheries.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, addressing the decline in the Fraser River chinook is obviously a complicated process. It involves money going into habitat restoration, which we announced with Premier Horgan of British Columbia. It involves the new Fisheries Act, which brings back the protections that were lost under the previous Conservative government. It focuses on ensuring that appropriate fisheries management is taking place, which was the announcement I made last week. It also focuses on ensuring that we are discussing issues relating to supplementation in hatcheries. There are certainly pros and cons associated with that from a science perspective. We are engaging in that conversation with the recreational fishery and we will continue to do so.

[*Translation*]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Liberals will never change. Last week we learned that they sold access to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. They sold a ticket for a Liberal fundraising gala to the CEO of an American cannabis company. They had to reimburse him when they got caught because what they did is illegal. The Prime Minister said that there was no problem, that he was going to introduce the company's CEO to his Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development.

We would like to know when, on what date, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development is going to meet the American company's CEO.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, we introduced new legislative measures on political donations. They are the most transparent and open measures we have had at the federal level. It is important that everyone respects them. That is why we are here. I am very proud of this legislative measure.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has been caught red-handed in another illegal cash-for-access scandal. American CEO Ian Jenkins attended a $1,600-a-ticket Liberal fundraiser. It is illegal for Americans to donate to Canadian politicians, but Jenkins boasted about being there. He got a picture with the Prime Minister, who said he would open doors of access to the Minister of Innovation. Talk about a "thank you for your donation".

Why does the Prime Minister continue to give preferred access to the wealthy and well connected as long as they pony up to the Liberal Party of Canada?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague in the opposition knows, we introduced Bill C-50, which made fundraising events here in Canada more transparent. That is precisely why events that are attended by the Prime Minister, ministers or the leaders of parties represented in this House are made publicly available, as well as the names of those who attended, and that is very important for transparency purposes in Canada.

● (1500)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals only paid back the illegal donation after they were caught, and now their story is that this American CEO was gifted the ticket from another Liberal donor who was also in attendance at the event. That would mean that the person gave $3,200 to the Liberal Party of Canada, something that is also illegal, but of course to Liberals it is only illegal if they get caught, and if they do not, it is "thank you for your donation."

Why, when it comes to the Prime Minister's own behaviour, does he find it so hard to follow ethical guidelines?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will remind my hon. colleague that even before this legislation came into effect in January of this year, the Liberal Party began disclosing its events and began disclosing the participants, something the Leader of the Opposition did not do, and we can only ask why.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since the leader of the party opposite promised Canadians a climate plan. Now it is 365 days later, and the Conservatives still have no plan. Canadians cannot afford politicians who ignore climate change. They—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I remind the hon. member not to use personal names in the House. I ask him to finish.

Mr. Mike Bossio: Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford politicians who ignore climate change. They expect us to lead the fight against climate change to protect Canadians and our communities.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment tell this House how our government is taking real action, while the opposition is just—

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish the leader of the official opposition a happy anniversary. It was one year ago today that he committed to bring forward a plan that would actually meet the Paris Agreement targets. He cannot bring himself to even talk about that plan or the Paris Agreement anymore.

While we move forward with a climate plan, the Conservatives are busy meeting behind closed doors with wealthy executives to discuss how they can take less action on climate change. It is reprehensible. We are putting a price on pollution. We are taking plastics out of our ocean. We are investing in public transit and making life more affordable and more efficient for Canadians.

Canadians want action on climate change. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to take note.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government threw a trusted and respected Manitoba chief justice under the bus for callous political reasons. The Liberals leaked Justice Joyal's confidential application to the Supreme Court, and now they are under investigation by the Privacy Commissioner. They trampled on his rights and slandered his good name, all so they could trash the reputation of the former justice minister.

Will the current justice minister confirm if he or his office has been contacted by the Privacy Commissioner regarding this leak?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has taken significant steps to ensure that the process for appointing judges is transparent and accountable to Canadians and promotes a greater diversity on the bench.

Our new process is effective. To date, we have appointed or elevated over 290 judges, and the diversity of these judges and the diversity of the bench is becoming unprecedented. Fifty-five per cent of these judicial appointments are women. We will continue to ensure that our process is merit-based, that it is secure and that confidentiality and the opinions given in confidence are secure.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts are with all those in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick who are affected by the floods.

Unfortunately, we know that with climate change this is only going to keep happening and that the map of flood-prone areas is outdated in many places. A $200-million fund was made available to the provinces to address this problem. To date, Quebec has not benefited from it.

Will the federal government promise to work with the provinces to ensure that the program meets their needs and, most importantly, that money is kept available for as long as necessary?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the natural disaster mitigation program has been in place for the last number of years, and a number of provinces and municipalities have taken advantage of the program. It is now in its final days. The government will have to make a decision in the future about whether the program will continue.

The hon. gentleman makes an important point, which is that flood mapping is an extremely important priority. There is huge expertise within the department of natural resources in the Government of Canada, and we will do our very best to collaborate with provinces and municipalities to make sure that this service is appropriately available across the country.

* * *

● (1505)

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our trade committee has been very active over the past few years with many trade agreements that our government has ratified. We understand the importance of these agreements, not only to our businesses but for all Canadians. The CPTPP will help us access new markets with millions of consumers.

This weekend, the Prime Minister welcomed the Japanese prime minister to Canada, where they reconfirmed the strength of our bilateral relationship, and it was a good one.

Can the Minister of International Trade Diversification please update this House on the successes of this agreement and our trade strategy?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Sydney—Victoria for his leadership and for all his work on the trade committee.

While it is still early, I am delighted to report that the results are nothing short of outstanding. Canada's exports of dutiable products to Japan rose by 17.1% in January and February, and some Canadian beef exports have doubled compared to last year.

Our trade diversification strategy is working. We are creating wealth. We are creating new markets and new jobs for Canadians.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a month ago the Prime Minister threatened to sue the leader of the official opposition for telling Canadians the truth about the Prime Minister's role in the SNC-Lavalin scandal. At the time, the Leader of the Opposition said he would see the Prime Minister in court. Well, the opposition leader is still waiting: waiting for the suit to be filed, waiting for a trial to start and waiting for the Prime Minister to take the stand and testify under oath.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians when he will follow through on his threats and testify under oath in the SNC-Lavalin scandal?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows very well, and as I have answered on numerous occasions, the leader of the official opposition has been served notice on numerous occasions. What he does is he changes his wording and deletes tweets. Then he steps out with a new narrative and believes that it is all of a sudden his new truth.

It is important to note that what Canadians have been waiting for 365 days for is a climate plan from the Conservatives. Rather than worrying about Conservatives advancing policy ideas, we will continue focusing on Canadians, making sure that we are delivering on a plan and on commitments that they expect from us, while the Conservatives continue playing silly politics.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I do not need to tell members of the House that our country is in the midst of a climate emergency. We see flooding throughout Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, killer wind storms in British Columbia in the winter and forest fires in the summer. What we do not need is to weaken the already inadequate plan that we have from the federal government.

I would like assurances that Canada will stand firm on its equivalency agreement for vehicle emission standards with the State of California no matter what the White House does.

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member pointed out, climate change is real and the consequences are too great to ignore. We know that transportation accounts for almost one quarter of Canada's emissions, and smart fuel efficiency rules for cars and light trucks are going to help reduce those emissions.

When we first adopted rules in 2014 under the previous government, we actually made a commitment to review those in light of the review that was going on in the U.S. We are partway through that right now. We are going to be carefully considering environmental and economic impacts as we make policy that is based here in Canada, not south of the border in Washington.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, many young Canadians dream of owning a home. However, that dream is becoming more difficult each and every day. Many residents are concerned about the mortgage stress test rules and the impact they are having on home ownership, and about the continued slowdown of the real estate markets across this country.

Could the finance minister please update the House on what measures he and the government are taking to make home ownership more affordable for all Canadians?

● (1510)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know how important it is for Canadians to have the opportunity to meet their dream of buying a home. We need to make sure that we keep the market stable, which we have been working to do, while at the same time creating opportunities for people to step forward and purchase a home.

That is why in this year's budget we had two important measures. Some Canadians will have their RRSP access increased if they have such a capacity. For other Canadians, we have a first-time homebuyers incentive. That will allow people to take a lower mortgage as they purchase their first home, giving many more Canadians access to the possibility of buying their first home.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, terrible floods are afflicting Canadians across the country, including in my riding of Parry Sound—Muskoka. While we appreciate the short-term efforts, there are also long-term solutions that have to be deployed.

One of these is the trillion trees movement around the globe, to plant a trillion trees across the world. This is a realistic plan to reduce emissions by 10 years' worth of emissions, to prevent flooding and to increase biodiversity.

To the Government of Canada, instead of these endless debates about taxing people more, why do we not sign on to the trillion trees movement and make a real difference for people?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the irony of the question is not lost on me, given the recent decision by the Ontario Conservative government to axe the program that would see 50 million trees planted.

Our plan to fight climate change is not just to put a price on pollution and put more money in the pockets of Canadians. It includes making record investments in public transit, making sure that 90% of our electricity is generated from clean resources by 2030, phasing out coal on the same schedule and making investments in green energy and green infrastructure.

I appreciate the urgency in the member's question. The time to act is now. If only the Conservatives would realize that, we would all be better off.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I believe I will have the consent of the House to adopt the following motion: That this House denounce the Government of Canada's decision to deny Carles Puigdemont entry into Quebec.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 2019-20

Hon. Joyce Murray (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of Digital Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 55 departments and agencies, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the report entitled "Supplementary Information regarding the Departmental Plans, Main Estimates, 2019-20".

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FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES ACT

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, a charter statement for Bill C-92, an act respecting first nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families.

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PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, entitled "Revisiting the Middle Class Tax Cut".

[*English*]

Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled "Fiscal and Distributional Analysis of the Federal Carbon Pricing System".

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, entitled "The Government's Expenditure Plan and Main Estimates for 2019-20".

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[*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 seven petitions.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SRI LANKA ATTACKS

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all members and all Canadians, myself included, were shocked and saddened by the terrorist attacks committed in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. April 21 was a tragic day for the world. Over 200 people were killed and hundreds of others were injured in the coordinated bombings that targeted three churches and three hotels in Colombo.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who died and wish those who were injured a quick recovery.

● (1515)

[*English*]

I would like to extend my particular sympathy to the diaspora community here in Canada and to those who gathered to grieve in churches here. Canada condemns these despicable attacks. Many of the victims were Christians, targeted at prayer, in church, on one of the holiest days in the Christian calendar.

Easter is a time of renewal and optimism for Christians, a time to reflect on hope for the year ahead, and on Jesus's message of compassion, inclusion and redemption. Christ is risen, we declare with joy. This year, especially for those affected by these attacks, but for all of us, Easter was marred by sadness and mourning. Houses of worship are sanctuaries where the faithful should be free to pray in peace. They are no place for terror.

In Colombo, on April 21, and sadly at a San Diego synagogue this weekend, this sanctity was violated. In San Diego, an anti-Semite opened fire on worshippers marking the end of Passover, killing one person and injuring three others, including the rabbi. Whenever people are targeted because of their faith, anywhere in the world, it is an attack on all of us, an attack on humanity itself.

In the wake of attacks like these, all peace-loving people must come together in sorrow, but we also must resolve, together, not to be bent or cowed by the horror of violence. Instead, we must, together, fight hatred and extremism in all its forms.

When combatting extremism, we must all be mindful of the importance of protecting human rights, particularly the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. We must ensure that all of our people are safe, and we must ensure that all of our rights are protected. We must be confident that we can do both. Indeed, they are mutually reinforcing.

To the people of Sri Lanka, to all Christians, and to all those around the world touched by the Easter Sunday attacks, Canada stands with them.

[*Translation*]

We will continue to work with them and with our allies and partners around the world to prevent terrorism and violent extremism from spreading further and creating more victims.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was with deep sadness that I learned of the attacks on Christians in Sri Lanka that took place one week ago, on April 21, Easter Sunday. In a few short moments, an act of pure evil and hatred took the lives of over 250 women and children and men, and injured over 500. In mere seconds, children lost fathers and mothers, parents lost children, and families were shattered.

The majority of victims were Sri Lankan nationals. They were targeted in three hotels and three churches: St. Anthony's Church in Colombo, St. Sebastian's Church in Negombo and Zion Church in Batticaloa. There is no doubt that the date of the attack was intentional. Easter Sunday is the holiest day on the Christian calendar. This brought back tragic memories of a similar attack on Christians just three years ago, when on Easter Sunday in 2016 the church community in Lahore, Pakistan was targeted, killing 75 people and injuring over 340; and of the Palm Sunday attacks on Coptic Christians in Egypt in 2017.

Let us be clear: These victims were targeted because they were Christian. As a Christian myself, seeing the statue of Christ in one of the churches covered in the blood of his followers was indescribably moving, for Jesus, out of love, shed his blood for us so that we might live.

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

This deadly violence occurred on Easter Sunday, the day that we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death. It is this example of love that enables Christians to follow Jesus's teachings, to love and forgive our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us.

[*English*]

It is this example of love and self-sacrifice that was demonstrated by Ramesh Raju of the Zion evangelical church in Batticaloa on the morning of April 21. This 40-year-old father of two gave his life to block the attacker at the church door, protecting over 600 people inside the church. Sadly, the attacker persisted and the bomb was detonated outside, killing Ramesh and 14 children from a Sunday school class, many of whom were the same ages as my own children.

In these dark moments, Christians suffering in Sri Lanka can look to God knowing that the light shines in the darkness and that darkness has not overcome it. John, chapter 15, tell us that Christ told his disciples that they would suffer for their witness. He said, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you..”.

That does not mean that we should stand by, and that does not mean that we should not do all we can to fight those who would attack others simply because of their faith. As Canadians, we unequivocally condemn this act of violence and hatred toward Christians and the targeting of religious minorities throughout the world.

It was less than two months ago that we stood in this chamber to mark the massacre of Muslims in New Zealand. Over this past weekend, we heard again of a heinous and murderous attack on Jews marking Passover at a synagogue in California.

In the era of the 24-hour news cycle, it is easy to become desensitized to these attacks. We are shocked at the news footage as it comes in, but soon our attention is lost.

We must never get used to this kind of hatred and violence. We must never forget.

[*Translation*]

Together, we must resist those who attack someone because of their religious beliefs.

[*English*]

As Canadians visit our respective places of worship for our various religious festivals and holy occasions, we are reminded of the freedom and safety we are blessed with here in Canada. Would that we never take that for granted. On behalf of Canada's Conservatives, I reaffirm our commitment to combat all forms of hatred and injustice and pledge to continue to defend Canada's proud heritage of religious freedom.

For all who are recovering from injuries and the loss of loved ones due to these bombings in Sri Lanka, Canadians stand with them, and we mourn with them.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to add my voice on behalf of New Democrats on this horrible and heinous attack against our Christian brothers and sisters on April 21, 2019, in Sri Lanka. The attacks have impacted community members across the country and claimed the lives of 250 people, with 500 injured. People from 18 nationalities were killed.

[*Translation*]

On behalf of the NDP, I would first like to extend my condolences to the families that were torn apart, to this country in mourning and to the entire Christian community.

[*English*]

This terrorist attack was particularly heinous because of its targeting of Christians during the most holy celebration of Easter. Let us be clear: The attack on the Christian community during this time of holy reverence was intended to plant fear. It was intended to strike fear into the community, particularly in a place of prayer, which is supposed to be a place of safety, solace and peace. The fact that it was targeted makes this terrorist attack even more heinous.

Easter is a time for hope, and it is my hope that this violence did not mar the community's attempt to celebrate the importance of Easter. I want to send all my love and support to Christians across the world who have been impacted by this.

We are seeing hate on the rise. We are seeing hate for the Christian community in events throughout the years. Most recently, we have again seen an attack on the Jewish community in California.

● (1525)

[*Translation*]

I would also like to offer my condolences to the families of the victims of the attack on a synagogue in southern California.

[*English*]

This was also targeted at a place of prayer, a place of peace and solace, during another significant celebration for the Jewish community, which is Passover. It is another example of the rising anti-Semitism.

In general, we are seeing hate on the rise. We are seeing acts of terrorism on the rise. More than ever, we have to acknowledge that hate is like a fire. Once allowed to spread, it consumes all.

We are all hurt by this attack. This is an attack that was targeted at one community but its impact is felt by all of us. All of us shared in that moment of sadness and pain. That is why, more than ever, we have to come together to denounce this act of terrorism, denounce all forms of hate and commit to ending the climate that allows hate to grow.

[*Translation*]

We were all shocked by this terrible event and we all condemned the brutality of these acts, but we must do more. We must protect what we cherish most: the right to live together.

[*English*]

With this idea of living together, living in unity with people, of showing and feeling that shared connection we all have as humanity, this attack against our Christian brothers and sisters needs to reignite a passion in all of us to fight for a world where everyone is included, where everyone is safe to practice their faith. This means not only denouncing this act of terrorism, but committing to ending all forms of hate and language which allows hate to be inflamed, divisive language and politics and policies of division that allow hate to grow. We need to also get at some of the root causes, the fear and insecurity that people feel, to create more safety and security for people to build a society where hate is not allowed to grow but where we can build more inclusive societies.

I want to again share my condolences on behalf of all New Democrats for this horrible act of terrorism on the Christian community in Sri Lanka to the families and victims who have been impacted. I also share my solidarity with Christians across the world and all minority communities who suffer violence from acts of terrorism.

Once again, I send my thoughts and prayers to the victims.

[*Translation*]

We stand with them in this sad time and I share their pain.

The Speaker: Does the member for Montcalm have the unanimous consent of the House to add his remarks?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, April 21 became a dark and sombre day for the entire world when over 250 people were killed at the hands of terrorists and over 500 more were injured in Sri Lanka. The vast majority of these people were families who were gathering to celebrate Easter. Islamist terrorists detonated explosives in three churches and set off three more bombs in hotels around the capital.

The Bloc Québécois denounces and condemns this unspeakably barbaric terrorist attack. We wish to offer our sincere condolences to the victims' loved ones and to the entire Sri Lankan population. We wish a speedy recovery for those injured. We hope the entire population will be able to unite to find the courage to get through this terrible ordeal together. We wish all Sri Lankans the strength to heal this deep wound suffered by the entire nation, without getting sucked into darkness and violence, which is what the cowards who perpetrated these terrible crimes want.

Humanity as a whole has a duty to stand by them and fight all extremists. It is our duty to fight religiously motivated violence. It is our duty not to respond to these crimes with cynicism or complacency. More and more of these crimes are happening. Things are getting more and more dangerous. Violence is on the rise in a world where sectarianism finds fertile ground everywhere.

It is our duty to remember that all individuals are free to practice the religion of their choice or no religion at all and should be able to do so safely and securely. That is one of the pillars of our society and a fundamental value in every democratic society that holds freedom dear.

In response to the rise of extremism around the world, we must stand up for the founding principles of free societies, for freedom, for the conviction that all men and women are equal, that all are equal in the eyes of the law. These principles that unite us are the best defence against extremists who seek to divide us.

I will close by expressing our solidarity with the Christian community of Sri Lanka and Christians around the world who feel less safe today than they did yesterday.

● (1530)

[*English*]

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands have the unanimous consent of the House to add her comments?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues.

It is with great sadness that I rise today to add my voice to those of my colleagues who have expressed their deepest condolences to the Sri Lankan people.

[*English*]

I appreciate the words of our minister of global affairs, the leader of the official opposition and the leader of the New Democrats.

[*Translation*]

I would also like to thank my Bloc Québécois colleague. Today, this is something we can all agree on.

[*English*]

We agree entirely and appreciate the position the Government of Canada has taken to extend solidarity messages to the Government of Sri Lanka.

I want to reflect both on what happened in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday and on what happened near San Diego on the last day of Passover, but I want to differentiate these acts of hatred.

As a fellow Christian, I appreciate what the leader of the official opposition said. As the Minister of Global Affairs also mentioned, we recognize that Easter is a day of celebrating resurrection. It is a day when if one was seeking to create a massive disaster, with more people dead, one would find no other Sunday on which all the churches would be as full as they are on either Christmas Day or Easter Sunday. In that sense, the targeting was horrific, seeking to kill as many people as possible in a coordinated attack on several places of worship and on several hotels, on Christians, on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka. It could not be more devastating.

It is also a society in which one should not look at this event as a one-off. There is a historical context. This is a country living under a fragile peace in a post-conflict society. I am sure the Minister of Global Affairs is familiar with the advice of Kitana Ananda, who is a well known expert on Sri Lankan politics and sectarian violence. I thought her plea was useful to share in this place. She said that the international community "need(s) to listen to Sri Lankan civilian society's calls for strength in unity against all hate". She went on to say:

> Sri Lanka must not be pulled into yet another "war on terror"—this time on a global scale—at the expense of minorities' rights. We must listen to Sri Lankans who are working across communities to implement long-lasting solutions and support efforts to end divisive, majoritarian politics. The people of Sri Lanka have suffered through generations of violence and war, and they deserve better as they mourn and attempt to heal.

These are words of caution against some in other countries who, for their own politics, may seek to use this horrific attack on Sri Lankan Christians at prayer on Easter Sunday to advance a different agenda.

The agenda is clear. We must support Sri Lanka in its post-conflict, fragile peace through all the efforts our government is so good at offering to support Sri Lankan civil society. We mourn with them. We grieve with them, but we do not walk away. They will need help and support to ensure that this kind of violence does not seize the country in another great spasm of violence and grief.

As has been mentioned in this place, less than seven days later, on the last day of Passover, we had another event fuelled by hate. It was different. It was definitely political, but it was fuelled by white supremacists within this continent who are gaining ground. We need to reflect on the fact that the killings, the murders, in the mosque in Quebec City gave fuel to a kind of online horrific community, which is growing. We cannot deny that it is growing.

The white supremacists who attacked the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh drew some strength and inspiration from the killing of Canadian Muslims at prayer in Quebec City and then fuelled the attack, on the last day of Passover, at the congregation Chabad outside of San Diego, claiming the life of one woman. We can say the name of one woman who has passed away, Lori Gilbert-Kaye. We do not say the names of all 250 and more Sri Lankans who died, but we do unite in this moment.

We must call out anyone who thinks white supremacy is a movement we are tolerating. It must be stopped in Canada, and around the world we must unify with all those who recognize that violence is never a solution. It is only a pathway to further human misery. We will not tolerate it in this country, not in Sri Lanka, not in California, not in Pittsburgh, never again.

● (1535)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: I thank the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Burnaby South, the hon. member for Montcalm and the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for their comments.

[*English*]

I appreciate the eloquent words said today.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, entitled "Impacts of Canada's Regulatory Structure on Small Business: Between Protection and Competition".

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the Member for Elmwood—Transcona, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, April 30, 2019, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition with respect to Bill S-240, which would discourage forced organ harvesting. The bill will be up for debate tomorrow, and I hope it will pass quickly.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition with respect to two bills before Parliament to impede the trafficking of human organs, Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. The petitioners support the rapid passage of Bill S-240.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present several petitions signed by women from my riding of Jonquière regarding universal access to employment insurance.

EI unfairly penalizes women in terms of their access to benefits. Only 35.2% of unemployed women are eligible for regular EI benefits, compared to 52.5% of unemployed men. We are calling on the Government of Canada to enhance the current EI system to ensure universal access to it and, above all, to help all women so that absences related to pregnancy, maternity or parental responsibilities do not prevent access to regular EI benefits.

[*English*]

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am pleased to present nine petitions, with hundreds of signatures, all of which address the horror of the abhorrent and illegal harvesting of organs, as documented by the independent Matas and Kilgour investigation. To put a stop to the barbaric practice of harvesting and trafficking in human organs and body parts, the petitioners urge Parliament to adopt Bill C-350 and Bill S-240. These bills are based on Bill C-500 and Bill C-381, which I first introduced in 2008 and 2009, and Bill C-561, introduced by former justice minister Irwin Cotler in 2013. This legislation would make it illegal to obtain organs or body parts from unwilling donors or as part of a financial transaction.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition in support of Bill S-240, which would combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting. The bill will be up for debate tomorrow. The petitioners hope it will be passed quickly.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to table a petition in support of Bill S-240, which is up for debate tomorrow and which we hope to see passed as quickly as possible.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too rise to table a petition in support of Bill S-240. This bill will be up for debate tomorrow, and I hope it is passed quickly.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to table a petition. This petition is calling for the quick and fast passing of Bill S-240, which will be up for debate tomorrow. I look forward to supporting it.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to table a petition in support of Bill C-350 and Bill S-240, which would amend the Criminal Code as well as the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad for the purpose of forced organ harvesting.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition today in support of Bill S-240 bearing signatures from Canadians from across this country, including in my riding of Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. This bill would combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting. It is the hope of the petitioners that the bill that is up for debate tomorrow will be passed quickly.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling two petitions today, signed by people from Ontario and Quebec, in support of Bill S-240, which would combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting. The petitioners are hoping that this bill will be passed expeditiously.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition calling on Parliament to enshrine in legislation the inalienable rights of farmers and other Canadians to freely save, reuse, select, exchange, condition, store and sell seeds.

In addition, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to refrain from making any regulations under the Plant Breeders' Rights Act that would further erode farmers' rights and add to farmers' costs by restricting or eliminating farmers' privilege.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I too am tabling a petition in support of Bill S-240. This bill will be up for debate tomorrow, and I hope it will pass quickly.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on a chronic problem within Saanich—Gulf Islands. Many of the petitioners reside within Nanaimo—Ladysmith. The problem to which I refer is the use of the waters of the Salish Sea as a free parking lot for freighters that back up container ships that back up from the Port of Vancouver.

The petitioners call on the government to suspend the use of these outside-of-port anchorages in the area targeted by an interim protocol put in place by the Minister of Transport until it has come to a final conclusion and that the government require the development of a comprehensive plan to deal with the congestion at the Port of Vancouver and the subsequent backup that is quite destructive to the floor of our ocean and to the quality of life for residents of our areas.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition signed by dozens of people primarily from eastern Quebec. The petitioners are calling for universal access to employment insurance.

The petition mentions that only 35% of unemployed women have access to EI benefits compared to 52% of men. The petition also calls on the government to lower the eligibility threshold to 350 hours or 13 weeks, establish a minimum threshold of 35 weeks of benefits and increase the benefit rate to 70% of salary based on the best 12 weeks of salary, among other things.

I am pleased to present this petition.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of Bill S-240, which we will be debating tomorrow.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of Bill S-240, which will help fight the scourge of forced organ harvesting.

We will be debating this legislation tomorrow, and I hope it passes quickly.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, keenly aware that the 42nd Parliament is coming to an end, the people of Trois-Rivières still want to make their voices heard as they call on the government to announce a high-frequency rail project that would contribute to regional economic development, help reduce greenhouse gases and make it much easier to travel between cities.

[*English*]

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of constituents, including a family on Rockwood Crescent in my constituency of Thornhill, to table a petition.

The petitioners support Bill S-240, the organ harvesting bill, which seeks to impede trafficking in human organs obtained without consent or as the result of financial transactions.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition in support of Bill S-240, which will help fight against forced organ harvesting. This bill will be debated tomorrow and I hope it will be passed quickly.

[*English*]

PALLIATIVE CARE

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present two petitions to the House of Commons about establishing a national strategy on palliative care.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2281, 2282, 2285, 2304 and 2307 to 2309.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2281—**Ms. Rachael Harder**:

> With regard to the government's decision to change Status of Women Canada to the Department for Women and Gender Equality on December 13, 2018: (*a*) did the Minister responsible for the department receive a new mandate letter which indicates the new responsibilities and, if so, when was the letter (i) sent to the Minister, (ii) made available to the public; and (*b*) what are the details, including total of all costs associated with changing the name of the department?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Minister for Women and Gender Equality did not receive a new mandate letter.

In response to (b), regarding the costs associated with changing the name of the department, business card rebranding cost $692.78 and an update to the department's web encryption certificate cost $3,558.

Question No. 2282—**Mr. Luc Berthold**:

> With regard to the new animal transport regulations announced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA): (*a*) why did the CFIA not wait until the research funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada into the issue was finalized prior to releasing the new regulations; (*b*) what is the CFIA's reaction to the concerns by industry associations that the new regulations will likely increase stress to cattle and opportunity for injury; and (*c*) has either Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada or the CFIA done any analysis or studies on the impact of these changes to the various livestock or transportation industries and, if so, what are the details, including results?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA, recognizes the work and research pertaining to animal welfare that the beef industry has been doing and continues to do. Important research regarding animal welfare during transport is routinely under way on many fronts, both domestically and internationally. The duration of research projects is often measured in years, and outcomes are not predetermined. Such is the case with the cattle industry study funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC, which is not scheduled to conclude until 2022. The amendments to the health of animals regulations have been in progress for over 10 years. They were published in the Canada Gazette, part I, in 2016, with a clear forward regulatory plan of final publication in fall 2018-winter 2019. We received an unprecedented number of comments during the public comment period: over 51,000 comments from 11,000 respondents. These comments were taken into account, along with the latest research on animal transportation and international standards. Over 400 scientific articles were examined to help develop clear and science-informed requirements that better reflect the needs of animals and improve overall animal welfare in Canada. These are balanced regulations that, given the existing infrastructure, industry trends and evolving consumer demands, are expected to work for stakeholders while protecting the well-being of animals. It is recognized that any new research will need to be considered and could inform future revisions to the regulations.

In response to (b), the maximum intervals without feed, water and rest for the different species were based on available science, international standards, consumer expectations, and industry logistics.

The CFIA consulted experts in the animal transportation field from industry and academia. Relevant scientific articles were also examined to ensure that the most current research available on the subject of animal transportation and its effects on animals was used to draft the amendments. The resulting maximum feed, water and rest intervals during animal transport were the outcome of all relevant inputs regarding the relative stress responses of rest stops versus the stress to animals of exhaustion, extreme hunger and dehydration resulting from prolonged feed, water and rest deprivation.

The amendments also contain an option for the use of fully equipped conveyances that meet specific required conditions such as temperature monitoring, adequate ventilation, and feed and water dispensing systems. These conveyances will mitigate but not eliminate the negative effects of transport. As such, those stakeholders that move animals in fully equipped conveyances are exempted from the prescribed maximum intervals for feed, water and rest. This provision will promote innovation and will provide regulated parties with additional flexibility regarding time in transport and confinement. It is important to note that all other provisions, including the animal-based outcomes relating to the effects of feed, water and rest deprivation will require full compliance.

In response to (c), the CFIA sent out two economic questionnaires to stakeholders to assess the economic impact of potential changes to the regulations and the timing of their coming into force. The second questionnaire was sent to over 1,000 recipients with a request to forward the questionnaire to any other interested party that the CFIA may have missed. CFIA economists reviewed the incoming data and provided a detailed summary of the costs and benefits to industry in the regulatory impact analysis statement, which can be found at www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2019/2019-02-20/html/sor-dors38-eng.html, immediately below the regulatory amendment.

Question No. 2285—**Ms. Sheri Benson**:

> With regard to Canada's Homelessness Strategy "Reaching Home", and the February 20, 2019 public announcement of $638 million to address urban Indigenous homelessness: (*a*) what are the details of the strategy, including, if available, the (i) summary of the rationale of the strategy, (ii) objectives, (iii) goals; (*b*) what are the specific budgetary envelopes and programs that the government will use to deliver these funds; (*c*) what are the criterias that will be used to evaluate applications; (*d*) what is the projected allocation of these funds, broken down by fiscal year; (*e*) what are the expected policy outcomes; and (*f*) what are the methods the government will use to evaluate the success or failure of this strategy and the individual projects that receive funding?

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, homelessness has an economic and social impact on every community in Canada. The Government of Canada is committed to helping those who are in need and believes that one homeless Canadian is one too many. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home.

The Government of Canada's homelessness programs have undergone various reforms and renewals over the years. In recognition of the fact that indigenous people are overrepresented in homeless populations, the programs have provided Indigenous-specific funding. The government's current program, the homelessness partnering strategy, or HPS, is a community-based approach that aims to prevent and reduce homelessness in Canada. It includes an aboriginal homelessness funding stream.

Reaching Home, the redesigned HPS, was launched on April 1, 2019. The purpose of Reaching Home is to support Canadian communities in their efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness by mobilizing partners at the federal, provincial/territorial and community levels, as well as the private and voluntary sectors, to address barriers to well-being faced by those who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. The program is part of Canada's first-ever national housing strategy, which is a 10-year, $40-billion plan to lift hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of housing need. The development of Reaching Home was informed by research and broad public consultations, engagement with first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and organizations, and advice from the advisory committee on homelessness, which included indigenous representation.

The engagement and advice that informed Reaching Home identified that more funding and a greater understanding of indigenous homelessness was needed. In large part due to the engagement with indigenous peoples, Reaching Home includes increased funding to be directed toward indigenous homelessness supports, and expanded flexibility for first nations, Inuit and Métis-led initiatives.

Reaching Home is providing more than $1.6 billion in funding over the next nine years for services and supports for all Canadians, including indigenous peoples, who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness. In addition to that, a total of $413 million is dedicated for addressing indigenous homelessness. The indigenous-specific funding will provide $261 million through an indigenous homelessness stream over a nine-year period to maintain the community-based approach and continue to address local priorities, and $152 million over nine years that will be invested on priorities determined in collaboration with first nations, Inuit and Métis partners, to be phased in over three years.

Reaching Home is not—with some exceptions in Quebec—a proposal or application-driven program; funding agreements are negotiated between the department and service providers. The eligibility criteria—terms and conditions, and directives are outlined in detail within the program authorities. Reaching Home supports community-based approaches by providing funding directly to municipalities and local service providers, while providing communities more flexibility to design appropriate responses to local challenges. This includes greater flexibility for culturally appropriate responses to help meet the unique needs of first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Funding through the indigenous homelessness stream will continue to flow to Indigenous service providers, and the additional investments for identifying and establishing priorities to help meet the needs of first nations, Inuit and Métis will be determined in collaboration with indigenous partners.

In terms of outcomes, Reaching Home aims to prevent and reduce homelessness across Canada. It supports the goals of the national housing strategy, in particular to support the most vulnerable Canadians in maintaining safe, stable and affordable housing and to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by 2027–2028. It also supports the goals of "Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy".

To evaluate the effectiveness of its programs, including Reaching Home, the government will be tracking the rate of homelessness along with other socio-economic indicators. The poverty reduction strategy is developing a dashboard of indicators to track progress on the many aspects of poverty, ranging from different measures of low income to the number of Canadians in housing need. Indicators that reflect first nations, Inuit, and Métis concepts of poverty and well-being are being co-developed with indigenous partners for inclusion on the dashboard. The publicly available online dashboard will allow all Canadians to monitor progress, and it will be regularly updated as new information becomes available. Reaching Home is participating in and supports the development of the poverty reduction strategy dashboard.

The Government of Canada is committed to achieving reconciliation with indigenous peoples through a renewed relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. Reaching Home includes increased and targeted funding to help address the unique needs of first nations, Inuit, and Métis, and provisions so that the priorities and approaches will be determined in collaboration with indigenous partners. Under Reaching Home, the government is demonstrating its commitment to ensuring that first nations, Inuit and Métis people across Canada have a safe and affordable place to call home, where they can enjoy a bright future for themselves and their families.

Members should note that as part of the national housing strategy, the Government of Canada announced a total investment of $2.2 billion for homelessness over 10 years, building on budget 2016 funding of $111.8 million over two years. By 2021–22, this will double annual investments compared to 2015–16.

Question No. 2304—**Ms. Elizabeth May**:

> With regard to the acquisition and construction of the Trans Mountain pipeline: (*a*) what was the source of funds for the $4.5 billion reportedly paid to Kinder Morgan at the closing date of August 31, 2018; (*b*) where is (i) that $4.5 billion accounted for in the Finance Ministry's November 2018 Budget Update and (ii) is the NEB facility of $500 000 also accounted for in that Budget Update; (*c*) is the outstanding balance of $4.67 billion for the acquisition facility reported by the Canada Development Investment Corporation (CDEV) in its 2018 third quarterly report the final acquisition figure; (*d*) is the project (i) in compliance with spending benchmarks identified in the Construction Facility, and (ii) if the answer to (i) is negative, what corrective actions are being or will be taken; (*e*) do any documents exist pertaining to contract extensions and financial costs incurred through construction delays, and, if so, what are the details; and (*f*) what sources of revenues is CDEV pursuing to finance construction once the credit facility expires in August 2019?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), on August 31, 2018, the Trans Mountain Corporation, TMC, paid Kinder Morgan Cochin ULC $4.427 billion in order to acquire the Trans Mountain entities, these being Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC; Trans Mountain Canada Inc., which was formerly Kinder Morgan Canada Inc.; Trans Mountain Pipeline LP; and Trans Mountain Pipeline (Puget Sound) LLC. TMC financed the acquisition with loans and other funds from its parent corporation, Canada TMP Finance Ltd.

With regard to (b), the $4.427 billion TMC paid to Kinder Morgan Cochin ULC and the $500 million facility with the National Energy Board are not specifically reflected in the government's November 2018 Fall Economic Statement. However, the loans issued by Export Development Canada to Canada TMP Finance Ltd., which were relied upon by affiliates of Canada TMP Finance Ltd. for the acquisition and for the National Energy Board facility, are reflected on pages 93-94 of the Fall Economic Statement.

With regard to (c), as the ultimate parent corporation for TMC, the Canada Development Investment Corporation, or CDEV, will report the final acquisition price for the Trans Mountain entities in its 2018 consolidated financial statements. CDEV's Q3 financial statements contained a preliminary acquisition price of $4.427 billion.

With regard to (d), Canada TMP Finance Ltd. is in full compliance with the construction credit agreement with Export Development Canada.

With regard to (e), Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC is the applicant and proponent for the proposed Trans Mountain expansion project. The proposed project does not currently have a valid National Energy Board Act certificate or Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 decision statement. The authoritative documents on the expected schedule and costs of the proposed project are those filed by Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC with the National Energy Board as part of the board's review of the proposed project, including its recent reconsideration. These documents are publicly available on the National Energy Board's public registry.

With regard to (f), Trans Mountain Pipeline ULC is the applicant and proponent for the proposed Trans Mountain expansion project. The proposed project does not currently have a valid National Energy Board Act certificate or Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012 decision statement. Should the Governor in Council approve the proposed project, Canada TMP Finance Ltd. would renew the construction facility for an additional year as per the credit agreement. TMP Finance Ltd. will work with its shareholder to secure long-term funding.

Question No. 2307—**Mr. François Choquette**:

> With regard to biometric data collection procedures: (*a*) what are the exact criteria that were used to determine that Greenland and St. Pierre and Miquelon would be exempt from biometric data collection before entering Canada; (*b*) what are the exact criteria that would constitute an exceptional situation justifying an exemption in other cases; (*c*) is the procedure for collecting data at the border going to be extended to other countries or territories; (*d*) why (i) are only Greenland and St. Pierre and Miquelon exempt and (ii) could the French West Indies not benefit from the same exemption, given their similar administrative status as a French overseas territory near North America; and (*e*) does the government plan to publish the studies that led it to say that "it is not expected to result in significant declines in demand over the medium or long-term" and that the "implications for Canada's competitiveness in attracting visitors, business people and students are expected to be overall neutral", as described in the Canada Gazette, Part I, Volume 152, Number 14: "Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations" of April 7, 2018?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, IRCC, is concerned, with regard to (a), the requirement to provide biometrics when applying to come to Canada depends on the document a client is applying for and is aligned with Canada's entry document requirements. Generally, biometrics are required when applying for a visitor visa; a work or study permit, except for U.S. nationals; permanent residence; and refugee or asylum status. However, there are some exemptions. Travelers from countries that are visa-exempt are not required to provide biometrics before entering Canada.

As per section 190 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, residents of Greenland as well as St. Pierre and Miquelon who are coming to Canada as visitors are visa-exempt and therefore not subject to biometrics requirements. Those coming to Canada to study or work in Canada are required to provide biometrics in support of their applications.

For more information about Canada's entry requirements by country/territory and requirements for providing biometrics, members may visit https://www.canada.ca/en/ immigration-refugees-citizenship/ services/ visit-canada/ entry-requirements-country.html.

With regard to (b), if the collection of biometric information is impossible or not feasible, an exemption from the biometrics requirements could be warranted. These exceptional circumstances are determined on a case-by-case basis. Some examples of the criteria that may be used to assess whether it is impossible or not feasible to collect biometric information and an exemption could therefore be justified include a situation in which the client has a temporary or permanent medical condition that prevents the operator or system from capturing the biometric information; the collection equipment or system is not operational, and it is not known how long the system will be down; or the case is exceptionally vulnerable and requires accelerated processing, but biometric information cannot be collected in a timely manner.

With regard to (c), at this time there are no plans to extend the collection of biometrics at the border to any other countries or territories.

With regard to (d)(i), in general, most people are required to make their application and comply with requirements—such as providing biometric data in support of their application—from outside Canada. This is to ensure that applicants are assessed appropriately before they arrive to Canada. On the other hand, to ensure that a balanced strategy is taken when managing the flow of people into Canada, efforts are taken to facilitate the travel of known and low-risk applicants. Residents of Greenland, and St. Pierre and Miquelon are among the very few who may apply for a study or work permit at the port of entry. It should be noted that on average, approximately six work permits and 19 study permits are processed at the port of entry each year from these two territories. The low numbers are operationally manageable for processing at the port of entry.

With regard to (d)(ii), territories in the French West Indies that are part of France—that is, the French Republic—are visa-exempt, and as such, people there do in fact benefit from the biometric exemption when they are seeking to come to Canada as visitors. As well, if they meet the requirements set out in the regulations, they are also eligible to apply for a work permit at the port of entry. However, they are not eligible to apply for a study permit at the port of entry.

With regard to (e), these findings will be included in the program's evaluation report, entitled "Evaluation of Biometrics (Steady State) and Canada-United States Immigration Information Sharing (IIS)", which the government anticipates will be published by September 2019.

Question No. 2308—**Mr. Harold Albrecht**:

> With regard to expenditures on catering at the Global Affairs Canada buildings on Sussex Drive in Ottawa : (*a*) what was the total catering bill in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018; and (*b*) what are the details of each expenditure including (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) amount, (iv) description of related event, if known?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this answer reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers. Global Affairs Canada undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. Global Affairs Canada concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 2309—**Mr. Arnold Viersen**:

> With regard to the directive provided by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development to the CRTC in February 2019, which he claimed would lower the prices of internet and cell phone services: (*a*) what specific evidence does the government have that the Minister's directive will actually lead to lower prices; and (*b*) what are the specific projections on how much the average Canadian's cell phone and internet services bill will be lowered as a result of this directive for each of the next 5 years?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (b) and (c), to clarify the statement in the House of Commons, the policy direction would promote competition and choice so that Canadians can have more affordable plans.

Competition is the best way to bring down prices of telecommunications services, including Internet and cellphone plans. The latest price comparisons of wireline, wireless and Internet services in Canada and with foreign jurisdictions, commissioned by ISED, highlighted the importance of new and smaller service providers in Canada. In regions with strong competition, wireless data plans are up to 32% cheaper than the national average. The same study found that average broadband Internet prices offered by smaller service providers were up to 35% lower than those of the large companies.

The proposed policy direction to the CRTC would require it to clearly consider competition, affordability, consumer policy interests and innovation in all its telecommunications regulatory decisions and to demonstrate to Canadians that it has done so. The CRTC has a number of upcoming decisions that the policy direction, if implemented, could affect, thereby leading to better outcomes for Canadians.

For example, on February 28, 2019, the CRTC launched a review of mobile wireless services in Canada. The review will focus on competition in the retail market, the wholesale regulatory framework, and the future of mobile wireless services in Canada. Specifically, the CRTC has taken the preliminary view that it would be appropriate to mandate that the national wireless carriers provide wholesale mobile virtual network operator, or MVNO, access as an outcome of the proceeding. MVNOs are a form of wireless competition that has the potential to offer more affordable wireless services.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2283, 2284, 2286 to 2303, 2305 and 2306 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2283—**Ms. Leona Alleslev**:

With regard to government consultations in relation to the Pickering Airport: (*a*) what are the details of the "Pickering Lands Aviation Sector Analysis" study conducted by KPMG, including (i) when the study or report was commissioned, (ii) the value of the contract, (iii) date on which the study will be, or has been, completed, (iv) the terms of reference for the study, (v) date on which the findings will be released to the public, (vi) findings of the study, if available, (vii) who was interviewed for the study, including any current or former ministers or ministerial exempt staff, and on what dates; and (*b*) what is the government's official position on the Pickering Airport and, if the government is planning on allowing construction on such an airport, what is the projected start and completion date of such a project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2284—**Mr. Tom Lukiwski**:

With regard to contracts awarded by Public Services and Procurement Canada since January 1, 2016, in relation to the ongoing renovations of Centre Block: what are the details of all such contracts, including (i) date contract was awarded, (ii) duration of contract, (iii) amount, (iv) vendor, (v) description of goods or services, (vi) was the contract sole-sourced or competitively bid, (vii) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2286—**Ms. Sheri Benson**:

With regard to federal spending within the electoral district of Saskatoon West for each fiscal year from 2011-12 to the current: what is the list of grants, loans, contributions and contracts awarded by the government, broken down by (i) department and agency, (ii) municipality, (iii) name of recipient, (iv) amount received, (v) program under which the spending was made, (vi) date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2287—**Mr. Luc Berthold**:

With regard to funding provided through The Canadian Initiative for the Economic Diversification of Communities Reliant on Chrysotile program: (*a*) how much funding has been delivered through the program, broken down by year since the program came into forced in 2013; (*b*) what are the details of all funding recipients, including (i) date and duration of funding, (ii) name, (iii) location, (iv) amount, (v) description or project or purpose of funding; and (*c*) what criteria were used to determine how much funding each of the organizations in (*b*) would receive?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2288—**Mr. Mario Beaulieu**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of La Pointe-de-l'Île, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2289—**Mr. Mario Beaulieu**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Ahuntsic-Cartierville, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2290—**Mrs. Marilène Gill**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Manicouagan, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2291—**Mr. Harold Albrecht**:

With regard to the government operating booths or displays at trade shows or similar type events, since January 1, 2016, and broken down by department, agency, Crown Corporation or other government entity: what are the details of each event including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) title of event, (iv) amount paid by the government for space at the event, (v) amount spent by the government in relation to the displays and a breakdown of such expenses, if known?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2292—**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Rivière-du-Nord, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2293—**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Laurentides—Labelle, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2294—**Ms. Monique Pauzé**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Repentigny, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2295—**Ms. Monique Pauzé**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Québec, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2296—**Mr. Michel Boudrias**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Terrebonne, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2297—**Mr. Michel Boudrias**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Rivière-des-Mille-îles, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2298—**Mr. Louis Plamondon**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2299—**Mr. Louis Plamondon**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Papineau, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2300—**Mr. Simon Marcil**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Mirabel, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2301—**Mr. Simon Marcil**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Compton—Stanstead, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2302—**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Joliette, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2303—**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie**:

With regard to federal spending in the riding of Honoré-Mercier, for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to every organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality of the recipient, (iii) date on which the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) department or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Speaker's Ruling

Question No. 2305—**Ms. Elizabeth May**:

With regard to the Credit Agreement between Trans Mountain Pipeline Finance and Her Majesty in Right of Canada: (*a*) what was the source of funds used to secure the environmental obligation required by the National Energy Board and how will Export Development Canada (EDC) report on this transaction in the future; (*b*) how was the interest rate of 4.7% determined, who authorized it and were any officials outside of Export Development Corporation involved in the decision; (*c*) does the Trans Mountain Corporation have a legal obligation to repay the $6.5 billion borrowed from the Canada Account; (*d*) what will be the source or sources of revenue the Canada Development Investment Corporation (CDEV) will draw upon to satisfy repayment provisions of the Credit Agreement; (*e*) was any portion of the $70 million (EBITDA) in revenue reported for Trans Mountain by the Finance Ministry in its November 2018 Budget Update transmitted, and, if so, to what entities was it transmitted; (*f*) how will monies allocated by the TMC to give to CDEV for repayment of the debt to the Canada Account be identified in annual financial reports by the TMC and its subsidiaries; (*g*) does an amortization chart exist detailing how TMC operations will repay borrowed funds, and if so, what are the details of that chart; (*h*) if generated revenues are insufficient to cover CDEV's debt to the Canada Account, what organization or organizations within government will be responsible for repayment; (*i*) how will payment for the purpose of paying down the principal and interest owed to the Canada Account be described in CDEV's future financial disclosures; and (*j*) how will EDC identify the receipt of repayment funds from CDEV to the Canada Account?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2306—**Mr. François Choquette**:

With regard to the official languages: (*a*) what official forums and conferences discussing linguistic duality or minorities were hosted by the federal government between January 2016 and February 2019; (*b*) what concrete actions taken by the federal government between January 2016 and February 2019 show that linguistic duality was a genuine priority; (*c*) what role did the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie play in the forums and conferences mentioned in (*a*); (*d*) what are the details of each of the forums and conferences in (*a*), including (i) their specific topics, (ii) their results; (*e*) have public debates, public consultations or public reports regarding linguistic duality in Canada and the situation of official-language minority communities been released or made accessible and, if so, to whom, when and where; (*f*) what processes will be used to make them public; and (*g*) who has access to the final reports of the studies conducted on the status of linguistic duality?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-97—PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the point of order raised on April 10 by the hon. member for Vancouver East concerning the applicability of Standing Order 69.1 to Bill C-97, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures.

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the member for Vancouver East for raising this matter, as well as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons for his comments.

[*English*]

The member for Vancouver East asked that the Chair use the authority granted under Standing Order 69.1 to divide the question on the motions for second and, if necessary, third reading of Bill C-97, as she argued the bill contained measures not announced in the budget of March 19, 2019.

She argued that the measures in subdivisions B, D, E, F, G, J, K and L of division 9 of part 4 amending a number of different acts did not appear to have been announced in the budget. The member also argued that divisions 15 and 16 of part 4, creating the college of immigration and citizenship consultants act and amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, should be separated out of Bill C-97, as these two measures would significantly transform the Canadian immigration system.

[*Translation*]

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, in his intervention, sought to reassure the House that these measures were indeed arising out of the budget. He pointed out that many of the amendments arise out of a commitment made at page 326 of budget 2019 where it is written, and I quote:

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.

● (1550)

[*English*]

He also mentioned that subdivision D in division 9 of part 4 was explicitly referenced at page 119, which 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.

Finally, the parliamentary secretary stated that divisions 15 and 16 of part 4, which relate to the creation of the college of immigration and citizenship consultants act and make changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, were dealt with at pages 184, 185 and 326 of the budget.

[*Translation*]

Standing Order 69.1 empowers the Speaker to divide the question on the motion for second and third reading of a bill in circumstances where the bill contains a number of unrelated provisions. It could certainly be argued that this is precisely the case with Bill C-97. However, the matter before us today concerns section (2) of that standing order, which makes an exception for budget implementation bills. That section reads as follows:

69.1(2) The present Standing Order shall not apply if the bill has as its main purpose the implementation of a budget and contains only provisions that were announced in the budget presentation or in the documents tabled during the budget presentation.

[*English*]

The question for the Speaker then is whether the measures identified by the member for Vancouver East correspond to provisions announced in budget 2019.

Let me first deal with the measures in subdivisions B, E, F, G, K and L of division 9 of part 4 of Bill C-97. I am willing to accept the arguments from the parliamentary secretary that the amendments to the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the Precious Metals Marking Act, the Textile Labelling Act, the Weights and Measures Act, the Quarantine Act and the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act are all part of the effort to modernize existing regulatory powers and obligations. I believe it is appropriate that those measures be included in the general vote at second reading and, if necessary, at third reading.

[*Translation*]

The measures in subdivision J of division 9 of part 4, contained in clauses 217 to 219 of Bill C-97, concern amendments to the Pest Control Products Act. They deal with changes to the special review process that a minister may initiate relating to the registration of pest control products. I understand from the parliamentary secretary's comments that these modifications also fall under the heading "Bringing Innovation to Regulations" at page 326. Pages 116 to 120 of the budget provide more detail on this initiative. While less explicitly linked to specific regulations, in my view, the amendments to the Pest Control Products Act in Bill C-97 are aimed at reducing the regulatory burden associated with re-evaluation and special review of a product. The act empowers the Governor in Council to make regulations respecting the registration process, as well as a number of subjects related to the registration process, including the evaluation of the health or environmental risks or the value of pest control products. As such, I am prepared to accept this argument and will allow it to be included in the general vote.

● (1555)

[*English*]

The measures in subdivision D of division 9 of part 4, contained in clauses 185 to 189 of Bill C-97, concern the amendments to the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act. As indicated in the summary of the bill, these amendments are to limit the application of the act to intoxicating liquors imported into Canada. It is mentioned at page 119 of the budget that the government intends to remove federal barriers to the interprovincial trade of alcohol.

When reading clauses 185 to 189 of Bill C-97, I understand that the Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act must be amended for it to apply only to the importation of alcohol into Canada and not to interprovincial trade. I therefore believe it is also appropriate that those measures be included in the general vote at second reading and, if necessary, at third reading.

Divisions 15 and 16 of part 4 deal with the creation of the college of immigration and citizenship consultants act and make changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. These measures are contained in clauses 291 to 310 of the bill. Each of these initiatives are explained at pages 184, 185 and 326 of the budget, under the headings of "Enhancing the Integrity of Canada's Borders and Asylum System" and "Protecting People from Unscrupulous Immigration Consultants". The provisions identified by the member for Vancouver East concerning these topics were therefore clearly announced in the budget.

[*Translation*]

The member for Vancouver East argued that the creation of the college of immigration and citizenship consultants act and the changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act should have been introduced as separate pieces of legislation. I do not believe that the Standing Orders allow the Chair, in the context of a budget implementation bill, to determine whether the significance of the proposed measures necessitates separate bills. If the measures are contained in the budget documents, the exemption of Standing Order 69.1(2) applies. As I mentioned in my ruling of November 6, 2018, which can be found at page 23342 of the Debates:

> …I believe the purpose of the Standing Order is to allow such a division in relation to those matters which are unrelated to the budget, accepting that the purpose of the remainder of the bill is to implement the budget.

[*English*]

As all of the measures contained in the bill appear to arise out of commitments made in budget 2019, I believe the criteria referenced in Standing Order 69.1(2) have been met and the question will not be divided. Accordingly, there will only be one vote at second reading for this bill.

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statements, government orders will be extended by 22 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

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, before I begin, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Spadina—Fort York.

I would like to address the House on the important aspect of this debate, one that our government takes very seriously: the independence of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada and the integrity of Canada's rule of law.

[*Translation*]

The Public Prosecution Service of Canada, or PPSC, is a federal government organization that was created on December 12, 2006. The Director of Public Prosecutions Act sets out the roles and responsibilities of the director of public prosecutions and the prosecutors that are authorized to act on the director's behalf. The PPSC fulfills the responsibilities of the Attorney General of Canada in the discharge of his criminal law mandate by prosecuting criminal offences under federal jurisdiction and by contributing to strengthening the criminal justice system.

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

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

The Attorney General's role in prosecutions must be independent, and he or she must receive orders from nobody, as an attorney general of England said in 1925. Specifically, he or she must act independently. The Supreme Court has found this to be a foundational constitutional principle of our democratic form of government.

● (1600)

[*English*]

The determination of who should be prosecuted for which crimes, which prosecutions should continue and which should not and what sentences or penalties ought to be sought must all be made solely on the basis of evidence and with regard to the fair and effective administration of criminal law and the criminal justice system. It remains, nevertheless, advisable for the Attorney General to inform him or herself of the relevant context, including the potential consequences of any given prosecution. The PPSC reports to Parliament through the Attorney General of Canada. The Director of Public Prosecutions Act states that the director of public prosecutions acts "under and on behalf of the Attorney General".

The relationship between the Attorney General and the director is premised on the principles of respect for the independence of the prosecution function and the need to consult on important matters of general interest.

In 2006, the Director of Public Prosecutions Act created the independent Public Prosecution Service of Canada. The act formalized the Attorney General's role in federal prosecutions by giving authority for the initiation and conduct of prosecutions to the director of public prosecutions, the DPP. The director acts as the deputy attorney general of Canada in initiating and conducting federal prosecutions on behalf of the Attorney General.

In most cases, the Attorney General him or herself will not be involved in prosecutorial decision-making, although the director of public prosecutions requires the director to inform the Attorney General of any prosecution that raises important questions of general interest. That is found at section 13 of the relevant legislation. Thus, the statutory framework ensures that the Attorney General will be advised of important criminal cases.

[*Translation*]

As we know, the Attorney General may issue directives to the director of public prosecutions, which may be general or about specific prosecutions. This is set out in section 10 of the act. When a directive is issued, it is issued through a fully transparent process. It is published in the Canada Gazette, where every Canadian can review it.

As well, a general directive must be preceded by consultation with the director of public prosecutions. The Attorney General may also, after consulting the director of public prosecutions, assume the conduct of a prosecution. This too is done through a transparent process where the Attorney General must publish notice of the intent to assume conduct of a prosecution in the Canada Gazette.

The notion of the director of public prosecutions' independence relates to the prosecutorial decision-making process and all step incidental to it. The director of criminal prosecutions is regarded as an independent officer, exercising quasi-judicial responsibilities.

● (1605)

[*English*]

Safeguarding the director's independence is the requirement that all instructions from the attorney general must be in writing and be published in the Canada Gazette, as I have mentioned. Additionally, the PPSC must provide the attorney general with an annual report for tabling in Parliament.

Prosecutorial independence is a cornerstone of our democracy, reflected in the relationship between the Attorney General of Canada and the director of public prosecutions. It reinforces confidence in the judicial system by ensuring that prosecutions are not seen to be improperly influenced by politics. Instead, prosecutions of federal offences are carried out by experienced and skilled prosecutors right across this country, many of whom I know as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and also in my former capacity as a former Crown counsel to the Attorney General of Ontario, where I had the opportunity to work with many distinguished legal minds and lawyers who prosecuted cases on behalf of the Department of Justice federally.

As confirmed in a statement published on February 12 of this year, the director of public prosecutions, Ms. Kathleen Roussel, stated that "I am confident that our prosecutors, in this and every other case, exercise their discretion independently and free from any political or partisan consideration."

[*Translation*]

Canada is a nation governed by the rule of law. This basic premise is not only written into our Constitution, but is also found in the actions of our political actors and in the structure of our executive, legislative and judicial institutions, as well as how they relate to one another. Upholding the Constitution requires not only respect for the supreme law of the land, as set out in the provisions of our Constitution, but also the rules and practices that reflect and support constitutional values.

[*English*]

In our parliamentary system, we strive to adhere to and respect well-established constitutional principles and conventions. Foremost among them is the principle of the separation of powers, which our Supreme Court has emphasized is a principle that is fundamental to the working of our Parliament and our courts.

Justice McLachlin, while a judge before the court in 1993, in a case called "New Brunswick Broadcasting Co. v. Nova Scotia", said that:

> It is fundamental to the working of government as a whole that all these parts play their proper role. It is equally fundamental that no one of them overstep its bounds, that each show proper deference for the legitimate sphere of activity of the other.

Our government is unwavering in its commitment to maintaining public confidence in the administration of justice, as well as the independence of the judiciary. Our government will always stand up for the rule of law, and the evidence before the judiciary committee earlier this year confirmed that the rule of law is indeed intact.

Let me refer to some of that evidence. The evidence from the former attorney general, the member for Vancouver Granville, before the justice committee was that:

> I do not want members of this committee or Canadians to think that the integrity of our institutions has somehow evaporated. The integrity of our justice system, the integrity of the director of public prosecutions and prosecutors, is intact.

The evidence continued from a different witness, who said:

> I think Canadians should feel assured that they work in a democracy under the rule of law....

The witness continued:

> I think Canadians need to be assured that their police and investigators, with the powers of the state, operate independently, and that the prosecution service, the state charging people with offences, is completely independent. There is a legislative and statutory shield around that, which demonstrably is working

That is the evidence of the former clerk of the Privy Council. It is important that there was complete alignment in the testimony from those two key witnesses before the justice committee on the important point raised today in this motion.

As a government, we will always strive to provide Canadians with the transparency they deserve in a way that preserves, rather than undermines, solicitor-client privilege, the right to a fair hearing in cases that are currently active, the integrity of the position of the director of public prosecutions and the rule of law in our country. It is fundamental to our democracy and fundamental to our legal system, and it is something that all parliamentarians would strive to uphold.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always find it so fascinating to hear the Liberals talk about the importance of protecting the independence of the judiciary. It is actually a fundamental principle of a democratic system and it is what cost the current government the former attorney general, the former president of the Treasury Board, the chief of staff to the Prime Minister and the former clerk of the Privy Council when the government attempted to interfere in the independence of the judiciary. However, I am not going to go there today, because I know my friend is still trying to build the walls to protect the damage that was done to the Prime Minister.

Among all the damage control the Liberals did, we found out that in an attempt to go after the former attorney general, someone leaked information about the nomination of Justice Joyal to the Supreme Court. That is a serious breach. In any other government, that would have been considered a very serious breach.

I would like to ask the member about the habit the Liberals have of using their Liberal fund to vet judges with respect to how much they donate to the Liberal Party. Does he understand that is a complete breach of the obligation to separate the pecuniary interests of the Liberal Party from the independence of the judiciary?

● (1610)

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for his contribution today and on other days. I appreciate that he finds it fascinating that I or anyone would stand up to defend the independence of the judiciary. As someone with 15 years' experience at the bar, I will always stand up for the independence of the judiciary and defend it. That is not what has been impugned in this case.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Are you standing up to defend the interference?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, now he is heckling me from across the way because he does not appreciate what I am saying, nor does he have the respect to listen to what I am saying.

The second response is that he again infers that some sort of interference occurred. Clearly, he did not listen to the evidence I just put into the record. The two key witnesses before the committee both reiterated, at length and with impassioned pleas, that the rule of law has not been jeopardized in this case. Nothing unlawful occurred. Nothing criminal occurred. It is a complete distortion on the part of the member opposite. It would become him to do much better in this House, since he is a man of some experience in the chamber.

With respect to the application process for Supreme Court judges, we will always defend an application process that ensures functional bilingualism and emphasizes the diversity of the bench. What we have done with the appointments process is like night and day compared to what was done by the previous government in terms of ensuring that we have qualified jurors who represent the faces of the Canadians before them.

The process we have put in place is a good one and a strong one. Are leaks a concern? Absolutely, leaks are a concern. They do not come from the Minister of Justice. He has said this in this House. They do not come from the Prime Minister's Office. The Prime Minister has reiterated that as well.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to point out an ironic thing, which is that the system held because of the member for Vancouver Granville. I was there at committee and I listened to her testimony. Yes, she said that nothing illegal happened. However, the system held because of her efforts. Let us make that very clear. She was sent off to another cabinet post because of her efforts, and then she had to resign. The member for Markham—Stouffville also resigned. Two principled women resigned because they could not sit in cabinet and defend the current government's actions.

The text of the motion before us today is about improper lobbying and the amount of power that corporate executives have over the current government. We know that all the meetings SNC-Lavalin had with the Prime Minister's Office are on the record and resulted not only in a change to the law but also in evidence of improper pressure having been put on the former attorney general in a coordinated and orchestrated campaign to get her to overrule the director of public prosecutions. How can the member stand in this place and say that the rule of law held, when his government did everything it could to overturn it?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, what I find fascinating is the continuing ability of the members opposite to distort actual evidence on the record. What was indicated in the testimony provided by the former attorney general was this. When she asked the Prime Minister a specific question, he indicated to her it was her decision and her decision alone. In fact, it remains a decision of the government and of the former attorney general alone. That has been reiterated over and over again. That is called the statutory framework and the rule of law doing exactly what they should.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Arif Virani: Clearly, the opposition members do not like the answers again. They are hollering at me across the aisle. If they had the ability to listen to the answers, maybe they would internalize some of the evidence before them.

The most important point in all of this is that they continue to mislead Canadians about the fact that paragraph 715.31(f) of the remediation agreement under the Criminal Code specifically states that what the Prime Minister's Office did was stand up for the employees, pensioners, suppliers and clients of a corporation. That is a perfectly valid purpose under the legislation, which I would urge them to read in the Criminal Code. That is what the Prime Minister did and what any government should do: stand up for jobs.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to resuming debate, I just want to remind members that when a member has the floor, other members should be listening. If they have anything further to add, they can certainly get up and provide questions and comments during the time for questions and comments.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

● (1615)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to take part in this debate and read into the record the extraordinary accomplishments of this government on everything from the national housing strategy to fighting poverty and lifting seniors out of poverty to making sure that we strengthen the social safety net of this country that so many Canadians rely on. Investments that have transformed communities, but more importantly transformed lives, are at the heart of the work we do on a day-by-day basis.

While we cannot prevent the cynicism of some or the pessimism of others in criticizing our record—and certainly we criticize ourselves as we try to do better and deliver more to Canadians—the reality is that the accomplishments of this government in the last four years are extraordinary. I am immensely proud of them, particularly those around the issue of housing.

We were elected on a promise—and the phrase has been used countless times in this House—to not only fortify and solidify people's presence in the middle class and their state in the middle class, but also to make sure that we can provide pathways, supports and opportunities to work hard and join that middle class. It has been the laser focus of this government in every single thing it does to make sure that those opportunities are presented to people.

Sometimes that involves protecting vulnerable parts of the economy. For example, when we saw Bombardier in trouble, there were moves to make sure that the organization stayed put and continued to produce. Other times we have struggled to convince corporations to stay in this country, GM being one of those corporations, but we have fought all the way along to make sure that auto jobs, the auto industry, and even today an expansion of the auto sector were front and centre as this Prime Minister, our party and this government continued to make sure that those jobs remained in Canada. Good, quality, high-paying jobs are the cornerstone of entering the middle class.

When we talk to corporations about protecting those jobs, we talk to sectors of this economy that some may refer to as corporate. We think that there is a responsible reason for doing that, which is that if those sectors are not sustaining their employment base and sustaining the quality of life that is delivered through those good jobs, Canadians would suffer and be in a great deal of trouble.

At the same time, we also know that small and medium-sized enterprises and social innovation are emerging all over this country in new sectors, and we have a responsibility there as well to make sure that the investments we make support and deliver prosperity to Canadians as they cement their position inside the middle class.

On the issue of housing, I think it is quite clear that we have a real contrast.

A previous government did virtually nothing on housing, and when it did touch on housing, it caused real hardship for Canadians.

The previous government had a policy under the homeless partnership strategy that would not allow rent to be supported for a youth coming out of care or out of a shelter unless they had lived on the street for six months, and the Conservatives continue to advocate that position. They think it is a good policy.

At the time, they said they did not want to create an incentive for kids to run away. The reality was that the homeless partnership strategy refused to help kids living in foster care as they exited care, aged out of care, and hit city streets. They had to be homeless for six months before they could get support from the previous program. That is unconscionable. In fact, studies have now shown that it created a superhighway to homelessness.

Additionally, women with kids, particularly indigenous and racialized women with kids, would have to live in a shelter for six months before they would get support for rent. That was again part of the HBS program that we inherited.

On this particular point—

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, although I find interesting what the parliamentary secretary is bringing forward, I am wondering about the relevance of his speech in the debate today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member who is bringing the point of order forward knows that there is some flexibility during speeches. However, I do want to remind the member that his speech has to be relevant to the motion before the House. I am sure the member will ensure that this is done.

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, to help the member opposite, the preamble to this motion refers to an assumption that our government would rather help corporations than Canadians who are struggling to get ahead. I was just defining one of the most critical components of that population of people struggling to get ahead, indigenous women with children, who find themselves in housing need.

The previous government refused to support those women unless they were in a shelter for six months. Going into a shelter is one of the quickest ways to have their children apprehended and taken away from them, and that puts them in a cycle where the rent would never match their needs. They would never get their children back into a domestic situation if they did not have the appropriate rent paid and the appropriate number of units in an apartment. It solidified the separation of children from their mothers systematically, and yet the previous government refused to change that policy.

As part of that, though, we also doubled the investments in homelessness. If we want to contrast that to the previous government, the previous government did not touch that program; it left the funding flat for the entire time it was government. The party opposite, in its previous election campaign, promised $10 million extra to fight homelessness in Canada. This government has invested well over $100 million more every year since we took office, and has now locked it in for the next five years with substantial agreements with municipalities and front-line workers right across the country.

On top of that, there has been a $55-billion investment in the housing sector to create new affordable housing. Last week, I was in Campbell River, Vancouver, Surrey, Orillia, Tillsonburg, Welland and Toronto, We announced $1.3 billion in Toronto alone, but hundreds of millions of dollars right across this country, to deliver new affordable housing that is more energy efficient and accessible than any program this country has ever seen. These investments are the way in which we are using a partnership with municipalities, provincial and territorial governments, indigenous governments, the private sector, the volunteer sector, and most importantly with the homeless and those with core housing needs, at the front and centre of our policies to deliver the most important social program that this country has seen in my lifetime: the national housing strategy. It is stronger and getting stronger. We are spending real dollars right now to help real people. If that is the kind of support with the private sector that the party opposite is worried about, it can worry all day long. I will continue to advocate for a strong housing sector that meets the needs of all Canadians, and I will continue to work with whomever I can find as a partner to deliver that affordability from coast to coast to coast.

There are additional programs like the Canada worker benefit, now helping more than two million low-income Canadians pay less in taxes and retain more of their earnings. There are additional investments like the $7.5 billion for child care and early learning across the country. These dollars are preventing Doug Ford from cancelling many day care programs right across the province, as I speak. There are additional dollars for programs like the Canada child benefit. The Canada child benefit has been the cornerstone of our government's success in lifting 900,000 Canadians out of poverty. In fact, in my city, in the census track of Toronto, half the single mom-led families in Toronto have been lifted above the poverty line in the last four years as a direct result of the investments we are making as a government. If that involves us also talking to corporations about employment, training and getting jobs, that is a good and solid partnership that is delivering real opportunities, but more importantly, real results in the lives of Canadians who, when we came to office, were languishing in poverty because of inaction by the previous government.

New Democrats will say that they do not like to work with the private sector to deliver some of these things. They will say that everything should be 100% delivered by the government. The reality is that it cannot be done in this day and age. Transit systems are not built by public entities; they are built by private corporations working with public entities. Therefore, when we invest in infrastructure and build or repair transit lines, there is a partnership. When it is described as a partnership, quite often New Democrats and other levels of government embrace the concept, but when we talk about partnerships here, we are accused of profiting private corporations through P3s. The reality is that public housing and public transit for generations in this country have been built with partnerships between the public and private sectors. We are proud to be investing tens of millions of dollars, $4.9 billion in the city that I represent, to deliver public transit to every corner of the city. We have to work with the private sector to get that done, but we also have to trust and work with municipalities.

At the end of the day, the focus of those transit investments is on people: getting people to school or work and getting families back home after work to make sure their quality of life is improved. These investments may be dismissed by the party opposite as some sort of terrible deal with the private sector, but in reality, it is the kind of strong investment that delivers real change for families right across the country, and in particular the city that I represent.

● (1620)

Let us also talk about the differences we have made in creating jobs in this country. Close to 900,000 new jobs have been created in Canada since we took office. Again, this is the direct result of our lowering taxes on small businesses, increasing taxes on the 1%, and more importantly, investing in a few key areas that stimulate, support and protect the economy.

With respect to university research, the government has provided the highest investment in the history of this country to post-secondary institutions for applied research and scientific research. Additionally, we have made investments in culture, one of the biggest employers in the city that I represent. We have invested significantly not only in the CBC and in the Canada Council for the Arts, but also on the ground by working with emerging arts organizations right across the country. This includes working with indigenous and racialized communities to make sure indigenous culture and economic opportunities are made stronger.

In every single department, transformational change is being delivered by a government that is unafraid to talk to the private sector if that is one of the ways to accomplish goals. We are absolutely committed to making sure that poverty and inequality in this country are addressed on a case-by-case, person-by-person, neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood, riding-by-riding basis.

We are proud of our record. I think we have the right split and the right approach to this, both of which require a balancing of public and private interests with the economic opportunities and social outcomes of policy.

Whether with respect to children, housing, cities, infrastructure or climate change, our government has delivered, because it has the imagination and the capacity to work with anyone in this country to make life better for Canadians.

● (1625)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think the purpose of today's motion is to zero in on some specific examples, so let us go through the legislative history of the 42nd Parliament.

This is a government that has serviced Air Canada by bringing in Bill C-10, which basically allowed Air Canada the freedom to ship maintenance jobs overseas. The government amended the Air Canada Public Participation Act to allow Air Canada that freedom. Part of Air Canada's privatization deal was that they would keep jobs in Canada.

The government has not done anything legislatively for pensioners. My colleague from Hamilton Mountain has brought in legislation that would amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. Again, there was nothing on this from the government.

With respect to the national pharmacare plan, the lobbying that the pharmaceutical industry associations have done with the government has gone up to almost double the average. They are telling Canadians that if the government proceeds with a publicly funded national pharmacare plan, certain prescriptions will not be covered and costs will go up. This is total misinformation when compared to the evidence.

Given these specific examples, does my colleague not think that corporations and industry insiders have in fact had improper influence on the government's policies?

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, I disagree. The lobbyists can say what they want to say. Where the rubber hits the road and where the progress is being charted is based on what the government does, not on what the lobbyists say on the public record.

The member opposite talked about what we have done for seniors. We have strengthened the CPP for a generation, which is something all parties except the Liberal Party said could not be done. Members should take note of what the Canadian Labour Congress has said about that achievement.

We have also increased the guaranteed income supplement by 10%, strengthening support for a particular subpopulation of seniors. It is largely women who are in this situation.

Additionally, legislation is pending on pension reform. It is in the budget implementation bill. It will ensure that when companies are insolvent, we have a way forward so that pensions are protected.

Case by case and issue by issue, even on pharmacare, we are getting things right. We are also listening to and talking with stakeholders. At the end of the day, there is only one measure we are focused on: Are Canadians doing better? It is absolutely unassailable that Canadians are doing better under this government than they were under the previous one. They are doing better now than in any other time in my lifetime. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country, and that is good news for Canadians.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member knows that on Friday, the leader of the Conservative Party went on social media to refuse to apologize for participating in a daylong election strategy session with wealthy oil executives at a luxury resort in Alberta. This was absolutely incredible to read about. He met and worked with four leaders of oil companies and with the oil patch lobby group, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, in order to impact the outcome of the next federal election.

This session was behind closed doors and was not reported to Canadian citizens. We only found out about it inadvertently.

Is this the type of politics we want from the Conservative Party and its leader?

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Madam Speaker, it does not surprise me that the Leader of the Opposition would need that explanation of how the private sector works. He has only been a private sector employee for I think about 12 days to 14 days in his entire life. The reality is that we have to work with all sectors when building a strong economy.

I have no trouble with him meeting with the oil company executives. I just think he should be talking about the economy and the sector rather than electoral politics. If that is where he gets his electoral politics instructions from, if that is the consultation he is doing with Canadians, all I can wish him is good luck.

However, when we talk to Canadians, what we get is a demand for an approach that balances economic, environmental and social benefits together as part of the equation. We do not meet with the oil industry to talk about electoral politics. We talk about how we get the resources to the appropriate markets to get the best return, as we also move forward to make sure we get the right jobs in places like Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and other provinces that are tied to the oil industry.

At the end of the day, as I said, I am not surprised that the official Leader of the Opposition is meeting with private sector folks to understand the Canadian economy. He has virtually never worked in the private sector. His entire life has been spent in politics. As a result, maybe it is time that he started to study how the economy works, because clearly his policies do not reflect an understanding of it.

● (1630)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Jonquière.

I am incredibly proud to rise in the House to speak to our opposition day motion, an NDP motion that makes it clear that the Liberal government has been governing in the interests of its rich friends at the expense of working Canadians, at the expense of Canadians who are struggling day-in and day-out.

Our motion touches on a number of key points and provides a clear contrast as to how the Liberals have looked out for their rich friends rather than Canadians. I also want to outline the last part of our opposition day motion that demands action. We say that at the very least the government should recover the $12 million given to Loblaws for fridges and reinvest it to the benefit of working Canadians and their families.

We are here in the House today demanding action on behalf of Canadians. I want to touch on two main themes coming out of this opposition day motion. The first is the misplaced priorities of the Liberal government. The second is the way in which the government is greenwashing its agenda, pretending that it is taking on climate change when in fact it is not.

We heard Liberal members of Parliament today, and in weeks and months prior, talk about their defence of middle-class Canadians. The title of their most recent budget touched on their defence of middle-class Canadians. I welcome them to speak to Canadians where I am from in northern Manitoba, to hear how their lives have become more challenging in the last few years, yes, under the previous Harper government but also under the current government.

My region has seen sustained job loss. My home town of Thompson has lost 600 jobs in the last few months. In a community of 13,000 people, that figure is devastating. All of those jobs were in the value-added sector of mining in our community. They are the best middle-class jobs that women and men have done for decades, jobs that are integrally linked to processing the wealth that belongs to the people in our region and our province.

Unfortunately, both the previous Harper government and the current Liberal government did not stand in defence of those jobs. The previous government was all too happy to ensure the foreign ownership of the company that existed in our area was without any protection for jobs. Fast forward a few years later, we were sold out and the current Liberal government was nowhere to be found to mitigate the kind of damage we have gone through.

Flin Flon, another proud mining town, has also experienced great instability. Hudson's Bay most recently talked about the impending major job losses in that region. The labour movement in that part of our region is fighting hard to try to find solutions for workers. Unfortunately, once again, the current federal government is nowhere to be found.

We are also seeing major issues with respect to chronic high unemployment in first nations across our region. I want to touch on that point particularly because it is repeatedly overlooked in the government's rhetoric with respect to the middle class. The reality is that so many indigenous communities in our country are struggling in third world living conditions. Many people can only aspire to attain that middle-class lifestyle. However, as a result of chronic underfunding, systemic racism and generally an overall disrespect of indigenous rights, too many indigenous peoples in our region and across the country live below or around the poverty line.

To bring it back to this opposition day motion, I did talk about the government's misplaced priorities, in particular, this gift of $12 million to Loblaws, a large, successful company, owned by the second richest Canadian, to buy fridges ostensibly to take on climate change when communities, especially indigenous communities, are struggling on the frontline of climate change right now.

● (1635)

In fact, when I raised it in the House, it was on the heels of asking a very poignant question on behalf of people in Lac Brochet, one of the farthest-north communities in my region. When I visited there a few weeks ago, I was told by elders and leaders that they were deeply concerned that the caribou herds had moved further north because of climate change. That means their community, which has relied on the caribou since time immemorial, is struggling because caribou are their way of life. They wanted some financial support from the federal government to support a community hunt. They also talked about the need for immediate, urgent action to take on climate change.

I brought that issue back to the House of Commons. The government dismissed the demand I made on behalf of the people of Lac Brochet. A few short days later, to great fanfare, unfortunately the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced that the government would be giving the famous $12 million to Loblaws to fight climate change. There is no money for Lac Brochet and no leadership on climate change for first nations and other Canadians, but there is all the money for some of the richest Canadians to greenwash their corporate agenda and the government's governing agenda.

What we are going through in our region is nothing short of a crisis in different ways. Repeatedly, when I go on the road when I am visiting in community after community, people tell me they feel abandoned by the federal government. I was just on the east side of Lake Winnipeg a couple of days ago, People were hopeful about the statements that were made by the Prime Minister. He talked about a new way of working with first nations. He committed to reconciliation and to working with first nations on a nation-to-nation relationship. Many people have seen almost nothing change in their daily reality.

It is no secret to many in the House that one of the biggest issues facing first nations and the on-reserve reality is a housing crisis. I visited Poplar River last week. I was told that there was a need for 80 to 100 homes. In Berens River, there is an average of seven to 10 people living in every house. The young man who works on housing made it very clear that the current housing that existed was not adequate for most families because it had mould and required major renovations. He asked where the federal government was.

While we hear a federal government that has, in rhetoric, a commitment to first nations, the reality on the ground is very different. It continues to govern in such a way that first nations people struggle, that people in resource-dependent areas struggle, for example where I come from, and repeatedly the federal government is nowhere to be found.

I will finish on the major question that we also ask through our opposition motion, which is the government's lack of action on climate change. I say this not just knowing the reality of our north where we live with climate change every day, but also in the Ottawa region where so many people are struggling right now to fight rising water levels.

I was moved by some powerful words of a young woman across the ocean. She is shaking people up and showing leadership on climate change. Most important, she is calling for leaders to do something about it.

Greta Thunberg, a 16 year old from Sweden, recently spoke to British parliamentarians. She talked about how she, "was fortunate to be born in a time and place where everyone told us to dream big." She went on to say:

> Now we probably don't even have a future any more.
>
> Because that future was sold so that a small number of people could make unimaginable amounts of money. It was stolen from us every time you said that the sky was the limit, and that you only live once.

Young people like Greta and young people and young indigenous people in our country are making the connection between the misplaced priorities of governments like the Liberal government to benefit its rich friends at the expense of so many Canadians and at the expense of truly showing leadership on climate change.

I am proud of the kind of leadership that we in the NDP are showing, not just today through this opposition motion but every day, in calling for urgent action on climate change, in making it clear that it is everyday Canadians who need and deserve a government on their side.

● (1640)

Mr. Dan Vandal (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as parliamentary secretary to indigenous services, I am very proud of the work we are doing all over the country. We have invested over $21 billion in indigenous communities, and no riding has probably benefited more than the riding of Churchill.

Several months ago we announced $250 million to build four new schools in the riding of Churchill. Shortly before that, we announced $100 million for a new health facility in Norway House; $42 million for health transportation, in partnership with MKO, for northern Manitoba; $50 million over two years to upgrade health facilities in God's Lake Narrows, Lac Brochet and Red Sucker Lake; $47 million to upgrade Internet service in northern Manitoba for 48 first nations; and $120 million to finally solve the Churchill crisis, with an indigenous-led rail company.

I am wondering if the hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski could acknowledge the investments we have made. Also, why does she refuse to acknowledge the close to $1 billion this government has made in the riding of Churchill?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, I will be very clear. Every community in our riding welcomes federal partnership. I know I have limited time to respond to the points raised across the way, but I welcome the member across and other members of the government to join me in visiting first nations on the ground to see and hear the reality.

When I said the housing crisis was the number one issue, I cannot understate the extent to which there has been no federal leadership on this front. We are talking about third world living conditions. That must be addressed if we are to talk about an actual change in the quality of life that first nations people live.

With respect to the other areas, are we here to celebrate that first nations fought tooth and nail for decades to have new schools? I would like to congratulate the leaders, elders and young people who fought for that to happen. On that point, that same hand of the federal government that gave is also threatening to take away. Just a few days ago, I heard from leadership in one of those first nations that had signed an agreement for a new school. It was told by the ministry of indigenous services that the amount of funding initially committed was no longer available and it would have to cut the plan, including cutting building a new playground as part of the school. I am sure the member across does not think that is a good idea. Madam Speaker—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to allow for one more question.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member opposite in many ways. This government placed great emphasis and priority on investing in Manitoba. My colleague made reference to Churchill. We talk about misplaced priorities. The greatest resource we have is indigenous children. In the last two decades, the peak of the worst was when there were thousands of children in care, and the provincial NDP government did nothing. We had a child care crisis for years under NDP rule, which chose to do nothing to try to fix the system. It did not want to assist in any fashion.

Could the member comment on that misplaced priority of the NDP government when contrasted to what we have been able to accomplish in the last few years, with hundreds of millions of dollars going to northern Manitoba and all regions dealing with indigenous issues?

● (1645)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, again, I welcome the member to join me and visit first nations on the ground across northern Manitoba to hear directly about the way in which the federal government is not there to respond to the major challenges people face on the ground.

As for the commitment to Churchill, why did the Liberal government privatize it in the first place? Why did the Liberal government take two years to act? I applaud the leaders on the ground who pushed for a solution that was finally supported by the Liberal government. We did not need to reach that point.

At the end of the day, I have made it very clear that people are facing immense challenges where we are. Like we have pointed out in this motion, unfortunately we have a government all too willing to support its rich billionaire friends instead of making the investments people on the ground need.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Bow River, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Fisheries and Oceans.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Jonquière.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to speak to the motion moved today by my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona. I know he works very hard in his riding and is very close to his constituents.

Every month, I receive dozens of meeting requests from lobbyists from various sectors. I can only imagine how many requests the ministers and the Prime Minister must receive. In the case of the SNC-Lavalin affair, for instance, where attempts were made to help the company avoid a criminal trial, the Prime Minister's Office and various departments had dozens of meetings.

In Ottawa, lobbying has grown out of control since the Liberals took office. Lobbyists with Liberal ties can boast of having greater access to the highest echelons of government. In fact, the number of communications reported by lobbyists with federal government representatives has almost doubled since the Liberals took office. Corporate executives and their lobbyists have too much access to and influence over the Canadian government. In many cases, this sets working Canadians back.

Take Loblaws for example. It posted nearly $800 million in profits in 2018, and it received $12 million to help convert the refrigeration systems in its stores across Canada. The government gives huge gifts to its rich friends while everyone else has to pay even more. That money should be going to small and medium-sized enterprises, average Canadians and workers instead of multi-millionaire companies. The government should claw back those millions of dollars and invest them elsewhere.

Ridings like Jonquière are in desperate need. Unfortunately, the Liberal government keeps subsidizing big oil and gas companies to keep them operating. It puts the interests of businesses ahead of protecting Canada's Pacific coastal waters in the Kinder Morgan pipeline approval process. It also prefers to give $12 million to a multi-billion dollar company, Loblaws, which is owned by one of the richest families in Canada, the Weston family. That money should be going directly to the public. I have a lot of ideas for the government to consider, especially when it comes to investments.

We just went back to our ridings for two weeks. I got to participate in several activities and hold quality meetings with Jonquière residents. It is a big riding, but I am always honoured and happy to meet with my constituents.

During the past two weeks, I heard a lot about the Liberal government's bad decisions, especially the one to give Loblaws $12 million to buy fridges. In several municipalities in my riding, there are small independent grocery stores struggling to stay afloat. These stores are local services that often serve as community hubs, but sadly, some of them have been forced to close down due to a lack of funding.

It would have been a lifeline for these small grocery stores to receive financial assistance to help improve Canadians' quality of life. Quality of life and local services are important for our municipalities. This money would have been put to better use on that, rather than helping a big grocery chain like Loblaws. There are urgent needs in municipalities like mine, and many of them could have benefited from this $12 million, as I just demonstrated with a concrete example.

Furthermore, we have had discussions in the House about problems with the Phoenix pay system. This is another problem that has yet to be fixed and that affects workers who are trying to support their families. This affects 1,000 jobs in Jonquière, which is significant.

● (1650)

Other employment sectors have been affected by this problem. I have spoken to bus drivers at the Bagotville military base who drive cadets back to their camp in the summer. Many of them have not received a dime.

The NDP used one of its opposition days to move a motion calling on the government to compensate those affected and to take the measures required to effectively fix the situation.

I still get constituents coming into my office to tell me that they have not been paid. They are not getting paid for the hours they worked. This has caused many problems, as we have seen. Some workers are going four, five, six or even eight months without receiving the amount they are due, the pay they worked for. Some of them have had problems with their mortgages. This has even broken up families.

Pension theft is another problem. The government could have taken the $12 million and eliminated pension theft. How many times have we asked this government questions in the House?

I met with people from my riding after Sears closed. Last weekend, someone told me that he is not receiving a certain percentage of his pension. This man worked his whole life thinking that he could relax and enjoy his retirement. Now, he is struggling to make ends meet. It is not right for people who worked hard their entire lives and contributed to a pension plan to be told when it comes time to retire that they will be receiving 30% less than they expected.

I would like to remind members that the $12 million was invested in a very successful company. I spoke about buying groceries, and we talk a lot about affordable housing. In my riding of Jonquière, there are two Loge m'entraide projects. The Coopérative d'habitation La Solidarité could very easily be set up in Jonquière. Such a housing project would give many families and people living alone a place to live. The right to housing is an issue that we talk about regularly here in the House, but it seems to be a dialogue of the deaf.

Organizations such as Loge m'entraide do not have the funding necessary to build and run a co-operative. The government is always announcing measures, but I do not understand why Loge m'entraide is still saying in statements and interviews that it has not seen any of that money. Unfortunately, the project has still not been carried out. We are talking about a lot of people who are alone and who have to consistently use food banks to be able to pay for their housing.

I still have a lot to say, but my time is quickly running out.

That said, one thing is for certain: an NDP government would invest in people rather than giving money to millionaire friends, like the Liberals are currently doing. Human welfare is important, and an NDP government would take that into account.

● (1655)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for her speech.

When she talked about investments the NDP promised to make, that brought back memories of the 2015 campaign. The NDP promised people the moon. The NDP was going to fix all of our problems and balance the budget to boot. It campaigned on the same budget as Mr. Harper: austerity and cuts. I would like her to comment on that.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss some issues I have not had a chance to talk about yet.

I remember the 2015 campaign very well. Even the Liberals promised people the moon. They claimed they were going to run a tiny little deficit. They promised all kinds of funding for infrastructure. Municipalities in my riding are still waiting for that money. Projects are in limbo and cannot proceed. People believed those promises. Promise after promise has been broken. There is no money and no investment.

Upping the ante and painting a rosy picture during election campaigns is nice and all, but I think the people who go to the polls in 2019 will not be fooled. They will do their homework and realize that all the promises made in 2015 were nothing but castles in the air.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, every time we get close to hitting a sore spot for the Liberals, they seem to want to reference the 2015 campaign, not understanding that it is now four years hence and that we are now in 2019.

However, I think my colleague brought up some good points. I was door-knocking in my riding in the great city of Langford over the last couple of weeks, and I went to a lot of constituents' doors and talked about a pharmacare plan. I was explaining that Canadian families have the potential of saving $550 a year, and some could benefit far more than that. The interesting thing is that the Liberals have promised pharmacare; I think their last major promise was in 1997. Here we are 22 years later, at the end of another majority government, and we are still waiting for the job to be done.

What is interesting is the amount of lobbying that happened with the government over the last couple of years. It went up quite a bit. In fact, it more than doubled in 2018, from the average, in their efforts to undermine what we are trying to achieve. I wonder if the member could comment on that and how it specifically fits into the motion we are debating today.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. He is doing excellent work. He sits on many committees and is very involved.

Pharmacare is really important to us. Several studies have already been done. In the last budget, the government told us that it was in place, that it was starting to look at it and begin consultations. I even heard some of my colleagues across the aisle say that the government was on the right track. However, that is not enough. We must act right now. I have had an opportunity to meet with some people, including a woman who had to remortgage her house because her prescription drugs are too expensive.

Saying that the government is going to do a study is not enough. In the meantime, the government needs to introduce policies that help Canadians. Universal pharmacare is one such policy. The government must have a much broader vision, one that goes much further than simply saying it is going to do a study. We have had plenty of studies and submissions on this topic.

I hope universal pharmacare becomes a reality, and I hope the government will bring in measures that really make a difference for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1700)

[*English*]

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House that Wednesday, May 1, 2019, shall be an allotted day.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2019, NO. 1

BILL C-97—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, while I am on my feet, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-97, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 19, 2019 and other measures. Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to participate in today's debate.

I first want to reassure the House that in spite of what the opposition motion claims, our government is committed to strengthening the middle class and ensuring economic growth. Since coming to power, our government has ensured that this growth and prosperity are inclusive and benefit as many Canadians as possible, and it will continue to do so.

When we were elected in 2015, we promised that our government would be open and responsible and that it would better reflect the values and expectations of Canadians. Our government continues to

be inspired by a simple but fundamental idea: everyone must benefit from the growth we have seen in Canada for decades and that we continue to enjoy. For our government, ensuring that Canadians have equal opportunities to succeed is not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do for the economy and for growth. We know that this is vital for a more just society and for growth that is more sustainable in the long term.

After decades of slow growth for the middle class and higher incomes for the wealthy, we made a real change. Almost four years ago, we asked the wealthiest 1% of Canadians to contribute just a little bit more so that we could lower taxes for the middle class. Single individuals who benefit from this tax reduction are saving an average of $330 a year, while couples who benefit are saving an average of $540 a year.

Our government also brought in the Canada child benefit. Compared to the previous child benefit system, the Canada child benefit is simpler, more generous, and better targeted to families who need it most. In fact, nine out of 10 families are better off with the Canada child benefit compared to the previous system.

Nearly 300,000 children have been lifted out of poverty thanks to the Canada child benefit. To make this effective benefit even better, the government is indexing it annually to keep pace with the cost of living effective July 2018, or two years earlier than planned. For this benefit year, families will be getting up to $6,500 for every child under six.

Thanks to the Canada child benefit, a working single parent with two children and an income of $30,000 a year now receives $3,000 more in benefits every year. That is $3,000 more to help a single-parent family pay for things like healthy food, sports activities and music lessons.

We made this investment because we realized that a better future for a child means a better future for our country. As a result of the middle-class tax cut and the Canada child benefit, a typical family of four has $2,000 more a year than before we were elected in 2015, and that includes this year and every year after. This figure does not come from me, it comes from the OECD. Last summer, the OECD published a report showing that a typical Canadian family of four was $2,000 better off than in 2015, thanks to more progressive, better targeted measures that were really helping families from coast to coast to coast.

However, we did not stop there. Our government also introduced the Canada workers benefit, or CWB, a strengthened version of the working income tax benefit. Over two million Canadians have benefited from the creation of the CWB, which is designed to encourage more people to enter or stay in the workforce. Under the new CWB, low-income workers earning $15,000 annually could get almost $500 more in benefits in 2019 than they were getting last year. In addition, the CWB's expanded eligible income range will ensure that more workers qualify and receive it.

Starting in 2019, we plan to make that benefit more accessible by allowing the Canada Revenue Agency to calculate the amount of the benefit for all eligible tax filers, even if they did not claim it. We expect this change to be particularly useful for people with limited mobility, those who live far from points of service and those without Internet access. Our government estimates that, as a result of these changes, an additional 300,000 low-income workers in Canada will receive the new CWB for the 2019 tax year. In general, the improved CWB will help lift roughly 70,000 Canadians out of poverty.

That is not all. As part of the government's plan, hard-working Canadians created over 900,000 new jobs, most of them full-time, bringing the unemployment rate down to the lowest it has been in nearly 40 years. There have been especially strong employment gains for women.

Our government continues to invest in people and to ensure the sustainable growth of the economy in a fiscally responsible manner while also ensuring that our debt-to-GDP ratio continues on the downward track.

● (1705)

However, we know that we cannot rest on our laurels if we want to continue to grow the economy and the middle class.

[*English*]

We are not just creating opportunities for the middle class to succeed. We are also creating opportunities for businesses to succeed: to create jobs, support their communities and grow the economy.

To support Canada's hard-working entrepreneurs, we cut the small business tax rate from 10% to 9.5% last year, and then to 9% at the start of this year. For small businesses, these cuts will mean up to $7,500 in federal tax savings each year, compared to 2017, savings that they can reinvest in purchasing new equipment, developing new products or creating new jobs.

Our government is committed to a tax system that is fair to all taxpayers and an economy that works for the middle class. By cracking down on tax evasion, particularly abroad, we can ensure that our government has the money needed to deliver programs that help the middle class and those working hard to join it. Preserving the integrity of the tax system also helps ensure that Canada remains positioned as an attractive place to work, to invest and to do business.

In recent years, our government has made significant investments to strengthen the CRA's ability to unravel complex tax schemes and to increase collaboration with international partners. These investments have already yielded positive results. Starting in 2015, the CRA expanded the number of audit teams that focus on high net worth individuals and their associated corporate structures. As a result, there are now more than 1,100 offshore audits under way, resulting in more than 50 criminal investigations with links to offshore transactions.

To further combat tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance, budget 2019 proposes to invest an additional $150 million over five years, starting in 2019-20. This investment will allow the CRA to fund new initiatives and extend existing programs. First, the CRA will be able to hire additional auditors, conduct outreach and build technical expertise to target non-compliance associated with cryptocurrency transactions and the digital economy. These investments will also help create a new data quality examination team to ensure proper withholding, remitting and reporting of income earned by non-residents in order to ensure tax compliance. Finally, these investments will allow the CRA to extend programs aimed at combatting offshore non-compliance.

Our government is also taking legislative actions, on both the international and domestic fronts, to enhance the integrity of Canada's tax system and give Canadians greater confidence that the system is fair for everyone. Let me share a few examples.

Legislation was enacted in December 2016 that requires large multinational enterprises to file country-by-country reports with revenue authorities to provide a clearer picture of their global operations. Budget 2017 introduced measures to prevent the avoidance or deferral of income tax through the use of derivatives. Budget 2018 introduced measures to strengthen international tax rules, including by preventing unintended, tax-free distributions by Canadian corporations to non-resident shareholders through the use of certain transactions involving partnerships and trusts. Budget 2019 proposes measures to keep mutual fund trusts from using a method of allocating capital gains to their unitholders in a way that inappropriately defers tax and to stop the use of individual pension plans to avoid limits that generally apply to transfers out of defined benefit pension plans.

There are many more examples of such measures. The one thing all of these measures have in common is that they are motivated by an understanding that an economy that works for everyone needs a tax system that is fair and we need all Canadians to pay their fair share of taxes. A fair tax system instills confidence and helps create opportunities for everyone.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

Another particularly important part of our plan is improving financial consumer protection. The government is committed to ensuring that a strong and effective banking system is in place to guarantee the best possible protection for all financial consumers when they do business with their bank online or in person. That is why we have strengthened and modernized the financial consumer protection framework.

To give all stakeholders an opportunity to express their views, our government asked the Commissioner of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, the FCAC, to consult a broad range of stakeholders, including provincial, federal and territorial regulators, to identify best practices in consumer protection for the banking sector.

That move enabled us to achieve our goal of ensuring the best possible overall protection for Canadians across the country. Canadians deserve a banking system that adheres to the highest consumer protection standards. That is why, following a comprehensive review of bank sales practices and consultations with the provinces and territories, as I mentioned, our government took significant measures to promote Canadians' rights and interests. By implementing a new set of rules to protect Canadians when they use their financial institutions, our government introduced the most significant change since the creation of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada in 2001.

These legislative measures targeted three main areas. First, they would ensure that banks had internal operational practices to further strengthen outcomes for consumers, including ensuring that consumers' financial needs are considered when selling them financial services and products. Second, they would ensure that the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada has the necessary tools to implement monitoring best practices, including requiring banks to comply with their legal obligations and ordering charges that have been improperly collected always be returned. Third, these measures require banks to provide timely electronic alerts to consumers when they are at risk of incurring fees, which further empowers and protects consumers. Our government will continue to hold banks to account, to treat Canadians fairly and to provide better results for consumers.

In closing, the government, guided by what is most important to Canadians, will continue to work on ensuring that as many Canadians as possible are better off while we ensure the growth of our economy today and in the long term. We believe that is the right thing to do for all Canadians.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I must say, there is one question I have been dying to ask all day. I will take my chances with my colleague from the Quebec City area.

When we ask about the $12 million given to Loblaws, the response we often get is that it was part of a standardized program. That is not the question. The member is probably in the same situation as me. Regardless of the salary we have earned throughout our lives, we always have more ideas about ways to spend money than actual money to spend on them.

The truly fundamental question is this: If the government really believes this is about fighting greenhouse gases effectively, why, with a limited budget, would it choose to give $12 million to someone who does not need it and who would have found a way to contribute without help from the government?

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, in response to my colleague's question, I would say that it is important to note that in the case of this particular company, 75% of the funding comes from private enterprise. This will be like taking 50,000 cars off the road in Canada, which is something very concrete to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is just one initiative among many. It was assessed on its merits through a very rigorous process.

Our government's plan to combat climate change goes beyond this initiative. We have made historic investments in public transit, and these investments are helping to develop a vision for public transit across the country. As members know, this is a good way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Other investments in the environment include programs like the clean water and wastewater fund, or CWWF, which helps municipalities across Quebec and the rest of Canada with their waste water treatment systems. These types of investments do not always make the headlines, but they are helping us protect the environment and do our part in combatting climate change.

Putting a price on pollution is another aspect. Phasing out coal is another. People like Steven Guilbeault and Sidney Ribaux, from Équiterre and who now work for the City of Montreal, say that they have never before seen a federal government so committed to climate action. We have a range of measures for combatting climate change, as I have demonstrated.

● (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is very interesting that when the NDP members speak about this debate and the $12 million, out of a $48-million investment, they do not mention the fact that it will be the equivalent of 50,000 cars taken off the road. I do not know why they would hide that. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is laughing, because he thinks it is funny that there will be a GHG reduction. I do not know why he finds that funny, coming from the north.

That being said, my question is in regard to the official opposition. It has been said that the Conservatives do not have a climate plan. It turns out that they do, but it seems that the only plank of that climate plan is to build a pipeline through Quebec. I was wondering if the hon. member could comment on the plan the Conservatives have put forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

Anyone willing to believe the Conservatives on the environment is extremely naive. For 10 years they did nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They did nothing to fight climate change. In fact, the only thing they did was embarrass us when it comes to Canada meeting its international obligations on climate change and environmental protection.

They won the fossil awards five years in a row for Canada's inability to acknowledge climate change. Let's not forget that Mr. Harper's science czar was a creationist, which says it all. This was all part of their fight against science that went on for 10 years, a fight against the environment where we saw inaction. Remaining inactive in the fight against climate change when we see what is happening all around the world is abject and shameful. The fact that they still have nothing to say about it is just as abject and shameful.

Canadians are no fools. Whatever the Conservative Party proposes, Canadians will see through that party leader's smile and find Stephen Harper's same old policies, if not worse ones. Faced with the choice, Canadians will agree that the Liberal government may be the one that has been willing to do the most for the environment in the history of Canada. Yes, there remains a lot to be done and yes, we must do more.

People can certainly count on me to keep advocating for that.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is very simple and very brief.

In view of what I just heard from my colleague from the Quebec City region, if we were so inept on the environment, why did the Liberals adopt the same environmental targets that we introduced? They are not even able to achieve those targets.

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, it is one thing to have targets and another to have a plan to reach them. That is what sets us apart from the Conservative Party, which never had a plan.

The only plan they could count on to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions was the 2008 financial crisis. Then there was the 2015 recession, into which they thrust us with their disastrous environmental and economic policies.

If greenhouse gas emissions were cut during that period it was mainly due to Ontario's Liberal government, which decided to eliminate carbon. No one in the House is naive enough to believe that the Conservatives have a serious environmental plan and that they can defend their record on environmental protection and fighting climate change.

● (1720)

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is fascinating to hear my hon. colleague talk in this debate about trying to deal with offshore tax havens and how the government is going to deal with them, when this is specifically about the $12 million we gave to Galen Weston, who lives in a gated community, who is now facing, through the justice department, the fact that Loblaws' financial holdings were seen to be holding upwards of hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes that should have been paid to Canada. It set up an offshore haven in Barbados so that it did not have to pay taxes.

People who are super-rich and friends with the Liberals get money, and then we are told what great people they are. However, when the people I represent do not pay their taxes and do tax cheating, they do not get gifts. They do not get people buying them fridges. They get charged.

Whether it is KPMG, where one of the KPMG directors was appointed to oversee the finances of the Liberal Party after KPMG was found to have set up an international tax fraud scheme, or whether it is Loblaws, which set up its offshore tax haven to avoid paying taxes, the government gives them gifts, because this is the government of the 1%.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague why he thinks it is good government policy to give tax money to tax cheats.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Madam Speaker, as usual, the member opposite is mixing up a number of issues to try to leave a certain impression. I think that is disingenuous.

He wants to talk about tax evasion, aggressive tax avoidance and what our government is doing, when the fight against tax evasion was not a priority for a decade. Minister Blackburn in the Harper government said on air on TVA last summer that it was a taboo subject, that they never talked about it and that it was never a priority.

Under our government, the Minister of National Revenue and the Minister of Finance have invested considerably to provide the Canada Revenue Agency with the resources needed to prosecute those who try to hide their assets, their fortune and their income through tax evasion or aggressive tax avoidance. Nearly $1 billion has been invested over the past three years. Before that, the agency did not have the necessary resources, because it was not a priority. It is for us. There have been more investigations and more criminal proceedings, but these things take time.

As for the project he referred to, it is important to remember that the company that makes the refrigerators is in Mississauga, that this will be like taking 50,000 cars off the road and that 75% of the money is coming from the company. It is important not to confuse matters.

If my colleague wants to talk about tax evasion or tax avoidance, unlike the previous Conservative government, our government is giving the Canada Revenue Agency the financial and legislative means to prosecute those who try to evade taxes and avoid paying their fair share.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am so proud to rise for the New Democratic Party today. I will be sharing my time with the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

I rise to talk about the corrosive power of the 1% with the current Liberal government. We have a Prime Minister who won so much support from Canadians, because coming after the years of Stephen Harper and the ugly scandals with Nigel Wright and the dodgy senators the Conservatives appointed, such as Pamela Wallin and Mike Duffy, we had the present Prime Minister promise to do government a different way. What we saw quickly after the Liberals came to power was the same old grotty, rum-bottle politics on the Rideau that have been the mark of the Liberal Party for the last 150 years. It is always about the friends. It is always about corruption.

When I talk to people back home, they cannot for the life of them understand why this Prime Minister thought it was a good idea to give $12 million to a guy who lives in a gated community in Florida, who fought against giving his employees a living wage and whose company was found guilty of cheating Canadian families out of bread. These are the people who belong to the Laurier Club, and these are the people who are invited to hang out with the Prime Minister and with the senior staff of the environment minister because they give money to the Liberal Party. Canadians know that it is wrong.

The Canadians I represent in the north work hard. They play by the rules. Many of them do not have pensions. Many of them are facing increasingly perilous short-term and contract work. We see not just an attack on the traditional working class but on the new white-collar working class of people who are working as professors with short-term contract work or as health care workers with short-term contract work. They see a system that is moving increasingly against them, yet they have this Prime Minister who said that the Liberals were there to support the middle class and those wanting to join it. This Prime Minister made them believe, but what we have seen with the current government is that it is always about the super-rich and the policies that favour them.

When we saw the Stelco pensions being undermined, just as the Nortel pensions before them had been undermined, and we saw the Sears workers being ripped off by hedge-fund predators, and we asked day after day in this House that the government do something, the Liberals were not going to do anything to help those pensioners. They got up and cried crocodile tears and showed their emotion, but the family business of the finance minister, Morneau Shepell, is the company that got the contracts to wrap up those pensions.

It is about the power of lobbyists. In fact, the Liberals are so tightly in with lobbyists that we had the present finance minister, in 2013, talk about the need to change legislation so that it would be easier for Morneau Shepell to take over the defined pension benefits. In 2014, Morneau Shepell gave recommendations about changing the legislation to make it easier for its business model. Instead of having to have a lobbyist, the company just got its guy elected as finance minister, and the very first thing he did was Bill C-27, which would have made it easy for the privatized pension industry to retroactively go after pension benefits. They were not here to represent working-class people. They were here to represent the investors and the 1%, of which this finance minister is a part.

We have been going after the Liberals for their unwillingness to go after international tax cheats. We have just heard from them that they are taking tax fairness seriously. Really? Loblaws has been found to have set up a Barbados bank. It is claiming that it was just holding the money, but hundreds of millions of dollars of tax money Canadians should have received to improve the system of services for Canadians are not being paid because of this offshore tax haven.

● (1725)

In Canada, when ordinary workers do not pay their taxes, the government comes down on them with all the power it has. However, when Loblaws does not pay its taxes because it has set up an offshore tax haven, it gets a $12 million gift. Then we get told how great it is for the environment. Thank God for Galen Weston.

Canadians might think I am just picking on Galen because he lives in a gated community in Florida and rips families off for the price of bread and does not want to pay a half-decent wage. Canadians might think I am just being mean; it is the whole class-conscious NDP who do not understand how things are with their betters. However, it is the pattern.

It is the pattern we saw with KPMG that established an international tax fraud scheme for the millionaires and billionaires. When it was caught, not a single person was found guilty. Nobody. I go back to folks back home, and my God if they got an overpayment on their EI, there is no mercy. However, KPMG set up this offshore account for rich billionaires to not have to pay taxes, and no one was charged. In fact, not only were there no charges, but, lo and behold, the same month that the Prime Minister stopped the investigation into KPMG, the Liberal Party of Canada hired a KPMG director to oversee the finances of the Liberal Party. I guess if they can set up offshore tax havens, they probably have the moral backbone to represent the Liberal Party.

It is the same with SNC-Lavalin. The government does not understand why it is in trouble. It thinks that getting someone to call into the Prime Minister's office because they worked on the Trudeau Foundation or they go to the same country clubs that it is, “Hey, what is the problem? We were just trying to change the law.” The law on deferred prosecutions was actually rewritten for SNC-Lavalin, and it still did not meet the criteria.

They had a whole series of efforts to intervene and undermine, and get to the director of public prosecutions, which is why the OECD anti-bribery unit is investigating and watching Canada. It said that the government's actions have lit all the alarm bells. We could go on about the SNC issue all day.

However, what I thought was fascinating is that the SNC lawyer fighting Canada is Frank Iacobucci. Michael Wernick told the former attorney general that she had to be careful with this guy, that he was not a shrinking violet. He is also the same guy who was appointed by the Prime Minister to oversee the Trans Mountain consultations. It is the same little circle of friends who look after each other time and time again.

We have a situation here. We need to have a system where Canadians can trust that there is fairness. They cannot have belief and trust when what is being run in Ottawa are the phone calls into the Prime Minister's office to change laws, to do favours, because of who people know in the PMO. That is the fundamental rot that makes people not believe in the system.

We are looking at the environmental crisis we are facing. The government came back, after the Prime Minister showed off his Haida tattoo, and said they would make everything work. It decided that it would stick with Stephen Harper's greenhouse gas emission targets and with Stephen Harper's investments into the oil sector. Our greenhouse gas emissions, because of what is going on in the oil sands, are higher this year than they were last year, which was higher than it was the year before. Year in, year out, the gas keeps rising. Year in, year out, the government continues to subsidize.

The government tells us that if we give $12 million to Galen Weston to fix his fridges, it will show a whole new commitment to environmental change. What it is really showing is that those who are the super-rich, the super-powerful, those who can get invited to the Laurier Club, can get the lobbyists in to see the key ministers and the Prime Minister and go to cash-for-access events will get their way. That is the broken trust that the Prime Minister is going to have to explain to the Canadian people.

I am more than willing to take questions.

● (1730)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened again to another New Democrat talk about the support for the greening of the refrigeration system at Loblaws. They refer to it as some sort of cheque that was being handed off to someone who lived in Florida in a gated community.

The member opposite is probably not aware that the technology, servicing and product being sourced is coming from a firm in Mississauga. In other words, there is a supply chain. While Loblaws is purchasing this technology and this upgrade, it is coming from a firm which has its headquarters in Mississauga.

Would the member opposite like to explain to the workers at the Mississauga firm why he thinks they should not get an investment and why their contribution to new technology, their innovation and their skills, should not be employed by programs that help to benefit the economy?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, oh dear Lord, how do we deal with the member for Spadina—Fort York who is now saying that giving $12 million to a billionaire who lives in a gated community is really about defending the workers? That is the disconnect of the Liberal Party. It is this belief that it is trickled down, and that if we give to the insider, to the powerful, somehow it is creating jobs. Well, we can create jobs in many ways. We can create jobs with a coherent energy strategy. We can create jobs with a national retrofit program. We can do a lot more than giving $12 million to Galen Weston. Then again, my hon. colleague is the one who told us about the million homes he said that the Liberals built that were never built. I mean, if we are going to talk fiction in the House, we could talk about a million mysterious houses that were never built or about how Galen Weston is helping the working class in Canada by us giving him money.

● (1735)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the member's speech. I would like to give him more of an opportunity to talk about how hopelessly and helplessly disconnected from the reality of regular everyday Canadian families these Liberals are.

I am sure that the member is aware of a well-known study that has been mentioned many times in the House of how some 47% of Canadian families are roughly about $200 away from financial catastrophe. The kind of financial catastrophe that such a family might worry about could be what would happen if they needed to buy a new refrigerator. Here we have a government that sees fit to hand over $12 million to a well-capitalized corporation for it to buy refrigerators. I would like him to comment on that further.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I think one of the really shocking things about Galen Weston's attitude was that when he was told he had to pay $15 an hour, which is barely a living wage in any urban centre right now, that he would respond by automating more of his shops so that he did not have to hire people. This is about taking away the jobs that people have. This is about putting people on contract work. This is about the growth of precarious work.

We know that the Prime Minister was against the $15 minimum wage in the federal work sector because he said it would not help anyone. Well it would not help anyone he hangs out with, because he grew up in a different middle class than where my family grew up in as the kids of miners. I know a lot of people who do not make minimum wage back home. I know a lot of people who work three jobs and still cannot make ends meet. The Prime Minister did not think it would help anyone. That is his problem. He is the Prime Minister of the 1%, and he does not have a clue what it is like to be working class or middle class. He thinks, like the member for Spadina—Fort York, that giving money to Galen Weston is somehow going to help workers, rather than just helping the uber-rich.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to rise in the House to speak to the opposition motion moved by my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona. I would like to approach this issue from a slightly different angle. I will begin by reading the preamble to the motion:

> That, in the opinion of the House, corporate executives and their lobbyists have had too much access to and influence over the Government of Canada, setting working Canadians and their families back....

The preamble is crucial. The rest of the motion lists examples of how that influence is exerted, but the fact that there is undue and excessive influence on the part of corporate executives and their lobbyists is a growing problem here in Canada.

This is interesting because we started the day off with a debate on my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby's Bill C-331, which is about giving Canadian courts the power to hold Canadian mining companies responsible for things they do in other countries. That makes perfect sense to me because they are Canadian companies. How interesting that the government was besieged by lobbyists representing the Mining Association of Canada and its members, who did not want the new ombudsperson for responsible enterprise to have more power over them. Although we still do not know exactly what the ombudsperson's duties are, we do know the position is vital to holding mining companies accountable, which explains why, even before the mandate was defined, there was a barrage of lobbying aimed at neutralizing the position.

There are many more examples. We have heard a lot about SNC-Lavalin, so I will not spend much time on that. Instead, let me talk about the web giants, also known as GAFA. In 2016, 2017 and 2018, while we were talking about them being given unfair advantages in Canada compared to Canadian companies, Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Netflix were unrelentingly lobbying the Liberal government.

Amazon lobbyists and executives had 99 meetings with the Canadian government in 2016-17. Google had 337 registered contacts. Microsoft, for its part, had 35 registered contacts. Netflix had 16. While all this was going on, we were debating whether companies like Google, Netflix, Facebook and Twitter should collect sales tax on their products and advertisements and pay income tax on their revenues. I did not include Amazon in this list, because Amazon Canada collects sales taxes.

This goes beyond lobbying. These companies have had privileged access to members of the government. For example, Google hired former Liberal chief of staff John Brodhead to run a program. Leslie Church, who worked as director of communications at Google, became the chief of staff to the then heritage minister.

As for Microsoft, its national director of corporate affairs used to be the director of operations and outreach for the then Liberal leader, who is now the Prime Minister. There are really a lot of ties between these people. Ultimately, the upshot of all this is that the status quo continues for telecommunications companies and American web giants. Nothing changes. Why? Because this lobbying is highly effective, and these companies can afford it.

My Conservative friends should not feel too smug, because they have some questions to answer about their own history with lobbying. The examples of Arthur Porter and KPMG have been raised in the House.

● (1740)

While CPA Canada, the organization that represents Canadian accounting firms, was seeking to intercede on behalf of its KPMG members, it signed a deal with the federal government to have a say in potential changes to CRA programs and services. This happened under the Conservative government.

Does anyone believe for one second that the whole SNC-Lavalin affair would not have happened under a Conservative government? We know that SNC-Lavalin secured a meeting with the Leader of the Opposition and several other MPs. That meeting was specifically about issues related to law and order and the administration of justice. It was clearly about the situation that has been making headlines for the past few months.

In 2012, I stumbled upon a CBC article published online under the following headline:

[*English*]

“Enbridge lobbying of Harper government a 'success story'.”

[*Translation*]

At that time, everyone was talking about the northern gateway pipeline. Apparently, there were dozens of meetings between the government and Enbridge lobbyists. In fact, in 2011-12 alone, meetings were held with 12 different lobbyists. In 2006 and in 2010, 27 different lobbyists lobbied the Conservative government to try to make northern gateway a done deal.

I find that interesting, because one of the groups that lobbied the government is called the Clean Air Renewable Energy Coalition, made up of groups as diverse as Enbridge, Shell and ConocoPhillips Canada.

I am not trying to blame anyone in particular, but rather point out the undue influence of the corporate sector in Canada. It is undue influence because it is not transparent and because these companies usually get whatever they want. If we really want to ensure transparency, we need to go further than just the registry of lobbyists. It is estimated that Canadian companies spend about $300 million a year on lobbying activities. Since this is considered to be part of their business activities, they are given tax credits worth about $100 million. This means that we are paying companies so that they can engage in lobbying in the hopes of influencing the government.

Perhaps that does not seem like a lot of money. Every year in the United States, roughly $2.6 billion are spent on lobbying. I want to illustrate just how much that is. That is more money spent on lobbying than is spent on funding the United States House of Representatives and Senate combined. American companies spend more money to appeal to and influence U.S. Congress than U.S. Congress budgets for its own operations. That shows just how powerful a force lobbying is in North America. That is true in the United States and it is true in Canada. Yes, we have the lobbyist registry, but no one knows exactly how much is spent. No one knows exactly how much money has been invested.

● (1745)

[*English*]

Our saving grace is probably the fact that we have a limit on contributions. Companies and corporations cannot contribute directly to campaigns, which makes our system different from the U.S. However, our lobbying system is not better than the U.S. There is more accountability and more transparency with respect to the lobbying that is done in the U.S. than there is in this country.

[*Translation*]

I will be voting in favour of the motion and I invite other members of the House to do likewise. The reason is simple. We need to be able to examine for ourselves the impact that lobbying has on the life of Parliament and the impact it has on the balance of forces in Canadian society. We do not talk about this enough, and we take for granted that the current reality cannot be changed. It is our responsibility to change that reality, to restore the balance that no longer exists, and to ensure that Parliament, the House of Commons, represents what it is supposed to represent, namely all of the ridings across Canada, not just the economic interests of corporations that are only looking out for number one.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am always interested in what my colleague has to say. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the subject.

I would like to take this a bit further. When we talk about lobbying, we are talking about a legal activity. I do not want to put words in his mouth and I have my own thoughts on this. When we talk about lobbying, of course there is lobbying by all the major corporations, but there are also interest groups that organize to lobby the government.

How is it that groups that have demonstrated for major changes to employment insurance, for instance, have never won?

When different points are raised about bringing in a pharmacare program, why do the pharmaceutical companies win and not the interest groups?

There are examples of this when it comes to the environment, but I am running out of time. I want to hear from my colleague.

Why is it always the major corporations who win?

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his very relevant question.

I am not trying to say that those meetings should not happen. I think that society's interest groups have to be able to meet with members to let them know where they stand and make them aware of certain issues. We are aware of many issues because we need to stay informed for our jobs, but it never hurts to have additional information.

I meet regularly with those types of groups. I also meet with companies, industry representatives and business people to find out more about what is going on.

The big difference is that, when a group is calling for improvements to EI or improvements relating to important social issues, they will meet with us once or maybe twice a year. The group meets with a limited number of MPs.

However, in less than two years, Google met with the government, which has the power to act, 99 times. Lobbyists for SNC-Lavalin and other companies have the ability to meet with MPs, ministers, cabinet members and senior Liberal officials dozens or even hundreds of times. They have the ability to exert pressure. They present economic arguments that scare the government. That is how we end up with governments that refuse to take action for the collective good. Instead, they act for the good of those companies.

● (1750)

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, whether it is the legislation that was put in the 2018 budget bill that helped out SNC-Lavalin or whether it is Bill C-27 that the Minister of Finance introduced but did not advance any further, we see concrete examples of legislation being changed to suit corporate interests.

One bill that passed three years ago now was Bill C-10, direct lobbying from Air Canada, to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act so it had the freedom to move its maintenance facilities offshore. Lo and behold, Liberal MPs from ridings where those maintenance workers lived supported that legislation.

I would like my colleague to comment on that bill. Memories are short in this place and it would serve us all well to remind Canadians of that particularly egregious example back in 2016 and what the Liberal government was prepared to do for its corporate friends in Air Canada to the detriment of the maintenance workers.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques has no more than 60 seconds left.

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, that means I will not have enough time to talk about the bill as a whole. My colleague is quite right.

I remember that bill well. Before being elected, I used to work as an economist with the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. It was not the same union, but we were keeping a close eye on that issue, especially because at the time, it was represented by the Canadian Auto Workers, or CAW.

During the last Parliament, when protests were being staged by workers from Aveos, the company contracted to do the work, Liberal members would join the protests in solidarity. Once they took office, however, they went along with what Air Canada wanted, and their first bill did exactly the opposite of what their own members, including the Prime Minister, had been calling for.

I certainly remember seeing him at the protests. He said he fully supported the workers, but he let them down the first chance he got.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to add some thoughts to the debate. It has been interesting. I am convinced there is no one better at distorting reality than the collective minds of the New Democrats. The member for Timmins—James Bay tried to contrast some of the things he said to reality. There is a fairly wide gap, so I would like to try to close that gap and take down some of the nonsensical rhetoric that comes almost on a daily basis from my New Democratic friends.

If we listen to the speeches from New Democrats, we would be of the opinion that all Canadians once they are born will be given a house. They never have to worry about the health care system. They will not have to worry about the environment because there will not be economic development that will affect the environment in any fashion whatsoever. It is truly amazing to listen to what they say and how wonderful it would be.

We might go back to the wilderness days, with no concrete, no asphalt or no real living conditions that we see as normal in modern society. When we add up all of the expenses, we would find over and above what we currently spend, not $1 billion or $2 billion of additional expenses, it would be billions and billions getting closer to half a trillion dollars in new expenses. That is what we would be talking about.

Put that in the context of the last federal election. When NDP members were knocking on doors, what did they say? They said that they were going to have a balanced budget. To get a snapshot of it, we should listen to what the member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski had to say earlier today. She tried to give the impression that the government was doing absolutely nothing in regard to northern Manitoba, nothing with respect to indigenous people. We can look at the hundreds of millions of dollars invested over the last few years under this administration. I would challenge members to find any previous government that has ever invested the type of financial resources this government has in the last three years. That commitment is there, it is real and it is tangible.

The government understands the importance of establishing a healthier relationship with indigenous people. We have made that a top priority. However, we need to listen to what the member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski is talking about, even though her riding is probably receiving more federal assistance in different areas than any other riding in the country. This government, by working with people on the ground, has been able to accomplish so much, including potentially the saving of Churchill as a community with our investments. The provincial government completely surrendered it.

We have taken many different actions on a wide variety of social policies. The only thing that is consistent with the New Democrats is that they vote against them. They continue to say that we are never doing enough, that we have to spend billions more. However, they have voted against many of the measures we have taken.

We can talk about pharmacare. It was not an issue of great debate when I was sitting in opposition. When the NDP was the official opposition in the House of Commons, how often did it raise the issue of pharmacare? It was not raising this issue in any way. It was not until this government, in particular the Prime Minister, started to talk about pharmacare that the NDP started to panic. It did not want the Liberals to get any sort of credit for such a progressive measure. The New Democrats then started to talk about how important it was, and they have been talking about it considerably ever since the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada, specifically the standing committee, raised the issue.

● (1755)

It should be no surprise. We have a government that continuously tells its members to go into the constituencies, listen to what Canadians have to say and bring it back to Ottawa. It wants the ideas that are coming from our communities, in all regions, brought back to Ottawa.

Hopefully I am not unveiling a caucus secret, but I can tell members that pharmacare is an important issue in all regions of this country, as virtually every Liberal member of Parliament continues to raise that particular issue. This is not a New Democratic Party issue. I would suggest that it is not even a Liberal Party issue. This is an issue that Canadians have been bringing forward to this government, and this government has been responding to it. For the first time in 40 years, four decades, we finally have a government that is responding to what Canadians see as something of great value, a national pharmacare program. In three years, this government has done more toward a national pharmacare program than the previous series of governments in the last 30 years or 40 years.

We understand the importance of a senior living on a fixed income in a community who wants to have the medications required to have a healthier lifestyle. Unfortunately, what happens far too often is that, because of the costs of food and shelter, some of the costs of pharmaceuticals are too prohibitive, so prescribed medications are put at a lower priority and that senior is not taking that medication. That is at a huge cost to society, because quite often many of these individuals end up in our health care system, such as hospitals and other facilities. They visit doctors' offices and are told, “Here is your medication. Take this medication and you will be healthier.” Unfortunately, many of these individuals are not able to take it because of the issue of affordability. Because it is an issue of affordability, it is an issue individuals have brought forward.

It is not just citizens. I have met with labour councils, unions and other stakeholders to talk about the benefits of pharmacare. This is not about one individual or political party. I believe that it is, in good part, because this government has been so good at progressive policy changes that we have finally seen a real opportunity to make a change. That is the reason why we are getting a lot more lobbying today from the pharmaceutical industry. The NDP members are saying that these big pharmaceutical companies and stakeholders are lobbying twice as much today as they were before. Because we are looking at making major changes, of course they are going to be lobbying. There is no surprise there.

This government is reflecting on what it is that Canadians want us to be doing. That is what we have seen in our budgets and in our planning virtually from day one, when we had a standing committee made up of all political parties, and I understand there was a unanimous report moving us forward on this issue. However, if we listen to the New Democrats, we would think that, were it not for them, this would not be debated. Nothing could be further from the truth.

This is being debated because Canadians want it debated. They want to see a government that is going to move on this plan. I believe the government will move forward on this issue, because we have demonstrated that in very tangible ways, whether it is the creation of buying groups, or the creation of a commitment in the last budget that will see billions of dollars being saved on the purchasing of health care, or a final report that will be coming out in a couple of months. Those are the types of things that have been happening.

Let us move on to this distortion of reality. The Conservatives like to pile in on this issue as well. We are talking about the environment. The New Democrats say they care about the environment. What is interesting is that when we talked about the price on pollution today, for the first time I think the poorest answer I have ever received with respect to that was from the leader of the New Democratic Party.

● (1800)

I am beginning to think that the NDP might be somewhat waffling on a price on pollution. I hope that the New Democrats will give more concrete responses as to what their position is on a price on pollution.

Here we have a national program that other institutions and stakeholders decide to participate in. What is the program? The federal government says that we want to reduce emissions. We are putting aside a pot of money, and we are looking for the private sector, non-profits and governments to come forward to have access to a portion of that money, whether it is municipalities, universities or even the private sector, which has a role to play. There were 50-plus applications received, and yes, Loblaws was one of them. Loblaws committed to invest $48 million to make changes in terms of its refrigeration, of which the federal government would contribute 25%.

In exchange for that, I would note two things. One is that once that investment is done, it will be the equivalent of 50,000 vehicles being taken off the road. To me, that is a good thing. I suspect that most environmentalists would agree that this is a good thing, but not the New Democrats, because they would rather twist and turn to try to make it seem as if this is some sort of elitist policy. That is absolute hogwash.

That is just one aspect of it. In Canada, we have some of the most proactive companies on the green file of any companies in the world. A company in Mississauga, for example, is one of the companies that is going to be providing that modernized refrigeration. It is going to have access to that $48 million, and that is going to employ many Canadians as a direct result.

The New Democrats will mock that. Who cares about those jobs? Whether they are union or not, who cares? They want to focus on that $12 million and the so-called fridge. At the end of the day, this $48-million project, which is the equivalent of taking the emissions of 50,000 cars annually off the road through this technology, would in fact have an impact on jobs. More important, it will advance the technology that is so badly needed to improve the conditions of refrigeration into the future. That is what I would suggest is forward thinking, something that has been lacking among New Democrats in recent years.

The New Democrats have caught on to what the Conservatives love doing. They would rather focus their attention on attacking the government. It does not matter what the Government of Canada actually does. It does not matter what kind of policies we bring in. They want to try to personalize it. They want to ramp it up. They want to twist reality.

When he talked about the policy I just enunciated, the member from Timmins—James Bay said that we are going to give $12 million to some rich dude who is living in the United States. That is how he has encapsulated that whole story. I suspect that if I were to have an intelligent discussion with the member from James Bay at a local university here in Ottawa, a vast majority of those students who participated would recognize that this is a smart thing to be doing by providing incentives to companies, governments and non-profit agencies that are going to move us forward on the issue of climate change.

● (1805)

I would have thought the NDP would recognize that and be supportive of it. The Conservatives do not surprise me on the issue. After all, let us remember, I think it has been 365 days and we are still waiting for a Conservative plan.

I think we will find that many Conservatives actually like the Liberal plan, even some of the former policy individuals in the Harper government like the idea of a price on pollution. In fact, I believe the original idea in North America can ultimately be rooted in the Province of Alberta. It had the idea of a price on pollution and then implemented it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I am just going to interrupt the hon. member for a couple of moments. I am trying to hear his speech and I am starting to hear some help for him. I do not know what it is, but when he gets up, the other side wants to coach him along. I am going to encourage the other side to maybe calm down a bit and maybe not coach him. I am sure he is very capable of doing it all on his own.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if they gave me leave to finish all of my comments, I would not mind having as many heckles. However, I suspect they will not give me the leave. It would take a great deal of time to go over the many different initiatives. Maybe that is something I should do.

Let us think about the last three and a half years and the types of things the government has been able to accomplish. There is a list. It starts off with the tax increase on Canada's wealthiest 1%. When we listen to the member for Timmins—James Bay, he says that the Government of Canada and the Prime Minister are all corrupted by the 1%. We put a tax on Canada's wealthiest 1%, something the member for Timmins—James Bay and his New Democratic colleagues voted against. Maybe they are the ones who have been corrupted by the ultimate wealthy, because they voted in that fashion.

What about the tax decrease?

● (1810)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I know my hon. colleague has been viciously attacking me all afternoon, but I am okay with that.

However, I was not sure if he was suggesting it was me or the people of Timmins—James Bay who were somehow corrupted by the 1%. I would just ask him, out of parliamentary respect for the personal attacks he has made all day against me, to retract that one comment. I am fine with the rest.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I believe that was more debate than a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would never pass judgment on any member's constituents. I will say that much.

Having said that, there are so many initiatives, and hopefully I will have the time to go through a good portion of them here.

I made reference already to the tax on Canada's wealthiest 1%. One of the most important pieces happened right at the beginning of the mandate. This was the tax decrease for Canada's middle class. We have put hundreds of millions of dollars, which is a lot of money, into the pockets of Canadians, increasing their disposable income.

That is one of the reasons that over 900,000 jobs have been created since the government was put into office, which has put money into the pockets of Canada's middle class. That is the group who deserves the credit for moving our economy along and growing it. By investing in Canada's middle class, we are investing in a much healthier and stronger Canada.

I will mention quickly that we have improved tax fairness, income sprinkling and passive income rules. We cut the small business tax rate from 12% to 9%. We have invested close to $1 billion in two budgets to go after tax evaders. We enhanced the working income tax benefit by an additional $500 million per year starting in 2019.

We introduced the Canada child benefit program, enhanced the guaranteed income supplement and moved the age for OAS from 67 to 65. We also enhanced the summer student program. In my riding, this more than doubled summer student employment in the program.

We have invested in infrastructure, providing billions of dollars to it, which is historical.

I made reference to trade as a very important issue. We have trade agreements, whether the European Union, Ukraine, the World Trade Organization, countries in Asia and Latin America, the United States and Mexico.

I also talked a lot about pharmacare. What about the health care accord and the Canada pension plan agreements?

There is also our national housing strategy and immigration changes related to wait times. We ordered a public inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women. This is not to mention the many different wonderful gender initiatives.

With this budget, equalization is up by $3.3 billion. There are also the health transfers and social transfers. The rate of interest for student loans has gone down.

There is so much good that the government has done in the last three and a half years that I look forward to the election in October. I believe that Canadians are going to see the value of what this government has done and will allow us to return for another four years.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to zero in on what my friend across the way referred to as the "so-called fridges". I am pretty sure that they were fridges, not just "so-called fridges". At least I hope they worked after all the money that was put into them.

Anytime that the government is talking about environmental policy, it means punitive approaches for those who are struggling economically and "incentives" for those who are already doing very well. Those in the middle class who are struggling have to pay the carbon tax, while the largest emitters get a break. For Loblaws, this means financial support from taxpayers for fridges. When it comes to small businesses that are struggling to get ahead under the burden of the government, paying higher taxes because of it, there are no incentives. For them, a more punitive approach is taken when it comes to increased taxation.

Why is it that the Liberals always find an incentive for their well-connected, wealthy friends and those who donate to their party; whereas when it comes to Canadians who cannot afford to adapt, the Liberals take a punitive approach? Why is there a different approach for the wealthy and well-connected than there is for everyone else?

● (1815)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that we take a holistic approach. Through tax breaks, we are giving money to millions of Canadians. We are giving millions of families money with respect to the enhanced Canada child benefit.

When we take a holistic approach to governance, we have to recognize, at least in part, that the private sector and other government agencies and non-profit agencies should also have a way to contribute to the betterment of society, by using the public purse to make enhancements. This will ensure that we are moving forward in a very progressive fashion. This is a positive thing, and it is progressive.

The Conservatives and the NDP members want to concentrate their efforts on Loblaws. Maybe they do not want government to work with the private sector. Maybe that is exactly what they are trying to say. If that is what they are trying to say, then they should say it. They should say that they do not want the Government of Canada to work with the private sector or provide any incentives.

The particular program mentioned is supporting not only the private sector but non-profits and governments as well, all with the goal of reducing emissions. That is exactly what is happening with this government.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, once again I sat through another incredible speech by the member for Winnipeg North. I have a couple of comments, and then I want to ask him a very specific question.

The first is on this question of fridges. He knows and everyone in this House knows that we have to make changes. We need more efficient appliances and we need to tackle climate change. However, if there is $12 million to spend and we want to get people to adopt better and new technology made in Canada, who are we going to give the money to? Do we give it to a big corporation that has $400 million sitting in an offshore tax haven and could clearly afford to buy these fridges all by itself, or do we give it to the mom-and-pop corner stores, the independent grocery stores? Do we give that help to the small businesses that would have trouble making that transition?

That is where the NDP disagrees with the government. It gives the money to its big corporate friends and not to the small businesses and independent businesses that might have trouble making the transition we all know they need to make.

When the member talks about pharmacare, I do not really care if the government wants to eat the NDP's lunch. It just has to deliver the main course.

If we look at housing in my riding, a bunch of people on social media were asking why I was saying that the Liberals had not done anything on housing. I challenged them to name one project in my riding that has actually been funded. There are not any. There are all kinds of promises about what will be done in the future and about all kinds of money that will be spent after the next election.

What did the government do? Last fall, it gave more than $14 billion in tax cuts to big corporations, and now it is running a deficit. That is a choice it made. The government made a choice to reward its corporate friends rather than to have the revenues it needs to do things for ordinary Canadians.

Let me ask a specific question on pharmacare. Are you going to put forward a pharmacare program that keeps the big business interests in place, big pharmacare and big insurance companies, or will the government support universal, comprehensive public pharmacare?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before the parliamentary secretary answers, I want to remind hon. members to place their questions through the Chair over to the member and not directly across. I want to assure the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke that the Speaker will not be making any of those decisions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there is just too much there for me to be able to respond. I am going to pick up on what the member started off with, the refrigerator issue, which is an issue I believe NDP members are trying to exploit, because they believe that it is going to be a vote-getter. Does the NDP support the government using public resources to access additional funds to move us forward on the road to reducing emissions? If the answer to that is yes, then that 25% contribution by the federal government is exceptionally effective, because it is going to take away the emissions of 50,000 vehicles on an annual basis.

When I talk about the private sector or the company, which happens to be Loblaws, we need to remember that Loblaws is not the only company. It is just the one the Conservative-NDP unholy alliance wants to focus on. There are civic governments, non-profits and others that have participated in the same program. Over 50 applicants were approved. The question the NDP and its friends in the Conservative Party need to answer is whether they believe that the private sector should be subsidized in any fashion.

The Conservatives say no. What does the NDP say? I must say to the Conservatives that I wish Harper did not believe that. However, let us wait and see. Maybe that is their new policy. They just made it very clear that the Government of Canada should not. I wonder what would have happened to GM, Chrysler and many other companies with that sort of attitude.

● (1820)

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the hon. member for Winnipeg North knew that the Conservative leader refused to apologize for participating in a day-long election strategy session with very wealthy oil executives at a luxury resort in Alberta. We only discovered this because of good work done by some journalists. This was a closed-door meeting with a group called the Modern Miracle Network. It included leaders of oil companies, Conservative election organizers and the president of one of the largest oil patch lobby groups.

Is this true transparency? When we talk about transparency, is this the transparency we want for our country? Is this what we want happening in our election? I would like to hear comments from the member for Winnipeg North, because I certainly know that it is not what we want in Winnipeg Centre. I spent my time today meeting with people who are local community people, people who came to Ottawa to talk about MS and came to talk and lobby about real community issues. That is what I spent my time doing. I know that we do not want from our government the type of transparency we are seeing from the Conservative leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, in the days I sat in the far corner over there in the third party, the leader of the Liberal Party indicated that we needed more proactive disclosure. We had to get the Conservatives and the New Democrats to support that.

Proactive disclosure means sharing with Canadians how we are spending tax dollars. Whether it was when the Prime Minister was the leader of the third party or today, the he has consistently ensured more transparency and accountability through legislation and very tangible, positive actions.

We can contrast that with the very closed-door attitude of the Conservatives. We had to force the Conservative Party by law to make changes to ensure there would be more transparency for taxpayers. I am not surprised the Conservative leader would have a think tank of sorts on how to manipulate the next federal election. However, I will leave that issue until I have a bit more knowledge of the content of it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I will point out that the hon. member has 12 minutes.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the member for Winnipeg North's speech, I would just like to remind my colleagues that this is only day one of the remaining seven weeks, so we should all pace ourselves.

As always, in these dying days of the 42nd Parliament, it is a great honour to stand in this place. It is a real privilege to be the voice of the amazing constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I appreciated, as I am sure all members did, the previous two weeks, when I got to go to my riding on beautiful Vancouver Island, where spring actually arrived when it was supposed to. I enjoyed the sunshine, speaking with constituents and going to many community events.

I was really excited when I saw the notice of the motion we had picked to debate today. I think it goes to the heart of the kind of message that we, as a party, want to put out there to differentiate ourselves from the other parties in this place.

Before I got into politics as an elected member, I used to work for a former member of Parliament, Jean Crowder. I can remember going to an event at someone's house and seeing an old poster by the CCF. The tag of the poster was “People Before Profits”. That is one of the principles that has always guided me personally, that the people of our great country are key.

We can look at the staggering amount of wealth that corporations have. Some people may see a corporation's wealth by how big its bank account is, how well its executives are paid and how well its shareholders do with dividends. However, in this corner of the House, we prefer to see the wealth of a company in the workers, the services they provide and the things they build. It is ultimately the workers of the company who are on the front line, providing those services to people and giving the company its reputation. In all of our efforts, by all parties, it would serve us well to remember that.

The main thrust of this motion today is that given the experiences over the last three and a half years of this Parliament, we feel there have been some demonstrations quite clearly that corporate executives and their lobbyists have had far too much access to and influence on the Government of Canada.

The most recent example of this, which I think many Canadians still quite clearly remember, is the SNC-Lavalin affair. When that news story broke in the The Globe and Mail on February 7, it very much altered the political landscape. I remember the Liberals first reaction to that story was to deny it, to say that it was not true, that there was no pressure. However, their narrative kept on changing as more facts kept coming out. Ultimately, what it resulted in was the loss of two of their most capable ministers, the member for Vancouver Granville and the member for Markham—Stouffville, the loss of the Prime Minister's principal secretary and the loss of the former clerk of the Privy Council.

Why is that whole affair relevant to the motion today? Last year, unbeknown to parliamentarians and even the Canadian public, a small section was hidden in one of the budget omnibus bills, which even the Liberal backbenchers found out about, with surprise, when they were studying the bill at the standing committee on finance. Of course that was the provision in the budget bill to bring in an amendment to the Criminal Code that would allow for deferred prosecution agreements. I am not against deferred prosecution agreements per se. They can in some cases be a very legitimate tool. The important thing, though, is that it is not up to me to decide that. It is not up to anyone in this chamber to decide that. That role falls squarely on the shoulders of the director of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

That brings me to the next step in this whole sordid affair. We found out that it was SNC-Lavalin that lobbied hard to get such an amendment into the Criminal Code and it succeeded with that. Then it started this coordinated orchestrated campaign with the Prime Minister's Office to get the former attorney general, the member for Vancouver Granville, to basically overrule the director of public prosecutions.

● (1825)

When I sat on the justice committee, I was at Ms. Kathleen Roussel's confirmation hearing. She is a very accomplished lady who has immense qualifications for the job. However, when she was looking at the request for a deferred prosecution agreement, she had all the relevant facts of the case before her, she knew what the provisions of the law were and in her capacity, she made the decision that the company was not eligible for a DPA. Of course, she referenced this to the former attorney general of Canada who agreed with that assessment.

The lobbying of the Prime Minister's Office to get the independence of that decision overturned is very worrying. Yes, no laws were broken, but the irony is that no laws were broken because of the efforts of the former attorney general of Canada, who very much stood on her principles and decided she would stand against that pressure and not overrule the director of public prosecutions. Ultimately, she was shuffled out of her cabinet post and then had to resign, followed by her colleague, the member for Markham—Stouffville. The two of them could no longer in good conscience sit in the cabinet and defend the government day to day when they knew the truth of what had really happened behind the scene.

That is item number one of the most clear and recent examples of the awesome power of corporate lobbying and what it was able to achieve with the current government.

I will take members back to 2016 to another example. The government introduced Bill C-10, an amendment to the Air Canada Public Participation Act. This was in spite of the fact that many Liberal MPs represented ridings where aircraft maintenance workers lived and worked and in spite of the fact that in the 2015 election campaign, the Prime Minister was right there with Avios workers, saying that he was there in solidarity with them and that he supported them. However, what did that government bill do? It basically amended the act so that Air Canada, which had done extensive lobbying of the government, would now be free to move its aircraft maintenance work offshore. It would no longer be constrained by the provisions in the act where it had to have maintenance facilities in places like Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. Again, this goes to the heart of where corporate lobbying led to a change in the law, which ultimately will and has hurt workers.

Of course, we have the Minister of Finance who brought in Bill C-27, which I am very happy to see remains in purgatory, stuck at first reading. The government has been far too timid to bring it forward for debate, because it knows the uproar that would happen. The Minister of Finance own company, Morneau Shepell, used to specialize in this kind of work of changing pension plans. The Liberals finally became aware of the uproar that would happen, and that bill has not proceeded any further, which I am glad to see. However, it did not stop the Minister of Finance who, in a clear conflict of interest, introduced that bill in the first place, showing what the Liberals' intent was all along.

Then, of course, I move to pharmacare. I was listening to the member for Winnipeg North as his volume got steadily higher and higher. We have short memories in this place. It was back in 1997, 22 years ago, when the old Liberal empire of the 1990s was at the height of its power. Members will remember that the Liberals won a majority in 1993, again in 1997 and again in 2000. This was a clear promise they made in 1997. They did not follow through with it then, they did not follow through with it in the 2000 government and here we are, three and a half years into the term of the current majority government, and what do we have? We have a paragraph in the budget, which is an intention to do more consultation. However, we can look at the lobbying records and the coordinated campaign that was brought about by the pharmaceutical industry. On average, pharmaceutical companies and their associations lobbied the government approximately 49 times, which is about the average over 11 years. However, in 2018 alone, it was 104 times.

● (1830)

The report by the Standing Committee on Health recommended a universal pharmacare plan, one that all Canadians can get behind, one that would save Canadian families $4.5 billion. On average, Canadian families would save about $550 and some families would save far more.

The proof is in the pudding, because instead of us being at a point where we could implement a national universal pharmacare plan, the lobbying has had its desired effect. What we are probably going to get from the Liberals, these masters of the long promise, the ones who like to tell people to re-elect them and they might get what they want, is that the lion's share of the national housing strategy is going to come after 2019, and the pharmacare plan is probably going to be some kind of a patchwork system. In other words, the pharmaceutical industry was able, through its lobbying efforts, to get what it wanted all along. It wanted to have a patchwork system where it still had that key role to play.

Finally, there is the Loblaws example. My friend from Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke had it perfectly in his intervention earlier when he asked why a company as wealthy as Loblaws is able to access $12 million, when it commands so much wealth and would have been able to do that itself, headed by a man who is worth more than $13 billion. For Mr. Weston, $12 million is pocket change. That is something he could lose in the blink of an eye, a rounding error for a billionaire.

The question is legitimate. Why is this money not being made available to the corner stores, to small businesses, which would use that $12 million to make significant upgrades to their bottom line to be energy-efficient. No one is arguing the fact that we need to take these steps. What we are trying to underline is the power of big corporations, the lobbying efforts they can employ with the government to get those kinds of corporate handouts, when small businesses, the ones that really need them, are being left behind far too often.

I appreciate this time to speak on behalf of the constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

● (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:37 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and the recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, April 30, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it grieves me to need to rise in this House today to speak about the rising tide of anti-Christian violence.

On January 31, I asked the minister about the government's response to a terrorist attack on a church in the Philippines. Canada has strong connections with the Philippines, strengthened by the large Filipino diaspora community here in Canada. We share in their grief, and we hope to see the government work to support the Philippines in its ongoing efforts to combat extremism, while seeking to ensure that happens in a way that respects fundamental human rights as well.

Since that day in January, we have unfortunately seen much more anti-Christian violence, and more violence targeting other faith communities at prayer in their houses of worship on sacred days. Today we had statements on the terrible terrorist attack in Sri Lanka, with hundreds of Christians targeted and killed in churches. Some people did not want to use the word "Christians" when they spoke about this attack, and instead spoke of those who were being targeted as Easter worshippers.

Let us just be clear: Christians do not worship Easter. Some of the tributes to victims of violence drew a contrast between the message of Jesus on the one hand, and the violence of the attackers on the other. This contrast is important, but it is not the full story. Easter is not just about the message of Jesus; it is about the person of Jesus and the hope that we have through his resurrection that victims of violence and persecution today will also enjoy the resurrection of the dead.

lt is this knowledge of the resurrection of the dead that inspires Christians to lovingly risk and give their lives for truth and justice. The message of Christ would be totally unintelligible apart from the resurrection of the dead. lt is because of the crucifixion and resurrection that Christians also seek to forgive their persecutors. We believe that Christ died to redeem all who accept his offer of forgiveness, including the most heinous and violent criminals. This affects how Christians relate to their persecution and to their persecutors.

Historically, we do not have an unblemished record, but when we embrace the teachings of Christ, we have a path to solving deep-seated communal tensions. Often violence gets worse and worse within communities, because violence begets reprisal. We must work to put a stop to that violence by forgiving instead of by responding in kind, insisting on the protection of the innocent while seeking reconciliation and peace between communities. People of all communities must seek to participate in this work. However, I note in this context in particular, the way in which this idea of forgiveness and reconciliation in the context of the events of Easter is what drives Christians to be involved in this work.

We hear of instances of violence against Christians, Muslims, and Jews in countries where the media is able to identify and cover these events. However, let us not forget, as well, the destruction of houses of worship and the persecution of believers in authoritarian nations where often these stories cannot be told. The persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and other believers in the People's Republic of China, a place where it has been state policy to mandate the physical destruction of houses of worship, like the Golden Lampstand Church or Larung Gar, must not be forgotten. ln fact, the perpetrator of the terrible shooting in New Zealand claimed to identify closely with the political values of the Chinese regime. On his own testimony, we have every reason to believe that China's state policy of anti-Muslim persecution was an inspiration to this killer.

Let me conclude with this. Easter, the day chosen for this most recent anti-Christian violence, is when we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, who was innocent and yet gave his life for the guilty. This understanding is core to Christian belief in terms of its implications for how we treat our persecutors. The forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead can be the basis for greater peace and harmony. lt is a message that all, whether Christian or not, can draw strength and inspiration from during these difficult times.

● (1840)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the attacks on a Roman Catholic cathedral in Jolo, the Philippines, were appalling and despicable attacks that claimed the lives of 20 people and left many more injured. This was a terrible act of violence and hatred, and the Government of Canada strongly condemns it, as it does all such occurrences. Such atrocities call on us to do more and to do better in communicating and helping, by reaching out a helping hand to counter hate and violent extremism.

Canada is engaged with the Philippines and other partners in the region to help address this issue by funding numerous initiatives to build greater regional institutional capacity to tackle extremism and terrorism. For example, Canada is working with Interpol on a regional counterterrorism maritime security program, which seeks to strengthen front-line institutional capacity in the region to combat terrorism, piracy and armed robbery. We have also partnered with the United Nations on a variety of projects focused on building regional capacity to combat terrorism and radicalization in Southeast Asia.

We all know of the incredibly tragic attack in Christchurch, New Zealand. Both the prime ministers of New Zealand and Canada called on world leaders to unite in the fight against hate and violent extremism, so eloquently mentioned by the hon. member opposite. Sadly, a week ago, we were yet again reminded of the scourge of hate and violent extremism when worshippers were targeted in coordinated bombings in Sri Lanka on April 21. Many of the victims of that attack were Christians who were targeted at prayer in church on one of the holiest days on the Christian calendar. Canada condemns these vicious attacks, and we mourn with the families and loved ones of those killed. In particular, our hearts are with the diaspora community in Canada, those who have suffered such tragedies in a variety of nations around the world, and who gathered to grieve in churches, mosques and synagogues across Canada.

Easter is a time of renewal and optimism for Christians, as mentioned by my colleague, and a time to reflect on hope for the year ahead. It is appalling that the hate behind these attacks should target those celebrating this message of peace. I could not agree more, and I am sure I am joined by all members in the House when I say that the faithful should always be free to pray in peace in their houses of worship. However, the peace of those sanctuaries was desecrated in Sri Lanka, Christchurch and again this weekend at a synagogue in San Diego.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs said earlier today, "In the wake of attacks like these, all peace-loving people must come together in sorrow, but we also must resolve, together, not to be bent or cowed by the horror of violence." Now is the time to stand together, sharing in our loss and our pain, as well as sharing in our resolve to not be broken by these acts of terror but rather to work together to mitigate and prevent it.

● (1845)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, in following up, I would like to underline again that I think all of us in the House share a desire to work together to combat terrorism and violence and the ideologies that underline them in all their forms. Different ideologies and different violent attacks claim different kinds of ideological associations, but the underlying point is that we must be strong and firm in our opposition to terrorism, violence and hatred, and our desire to build the kind of society in which people from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds can work together, collaborate and feel sympathy for each other.

What was inspiring to me after the shooting in Christchurch was to see Christian leaders visit the mosque in my community. I am sure visitation happens the other way as well when there is violence against churches. I hope that the parliamentary secretary and I will be able to work together going forward to combat these vital issues.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I know that I and my colleague across the way will work together in strongly condemning these heinous acts as a united Parliament, including the assaults on those at prayer during the January attacks in the Philippines, to which we referred so strongly. We will continue to work not only here in Parliament but across our nation with our allies and friends around the world to prevent terrorism and violent extremism to the best possible extent that we can. We have to do all that we can to make sure there are no more victims of the peaceful innocent and that violent extremism in all its forms does not spread further. That is a commitment that we avow.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to address a different topic. The question is about trade.

Canada is a trading nation and has been a trading nation for hundreds of years. We have some challenges. In my riding, we have some legislation that is not only hampering trade but is divisive, particularly in western Canada.

Bill C-69, for example, is a piece of legislation this government has brought forward that we find very divisive. Trade is important, but we have lots of issues in western Canada. For example, the government has never fixed the problems with Italy. Durham wheat, which we grow in my riding, is the best in the world, and we can no longer send it to Italy.

Regarding India, we grow a tremendous amount of lentils and peas in western Canada and in my area. We had the situation in India after the Prime Minister's visit, and now, with the tariffs, that trade is not a possibility.

The highest quality barley in the world, as of a year ago, is no longer traded with Saudi Arabia.

We then get to China. The issues we have with China started with officially shutting down trade in canola seed. However, there are two other parts to canola: the meal and the oil. The Chinese are refusing to offload it. There are boats in harbours sitting in China paying the demurrage fees back to the producers because they will not even unload it. Now we are hearing of more agricultural products produced in the west. We feel a lot of divisiveness in the sense of trade issues and the challenges we have.

Then we get to Bill C-69 and the tanker ban, Bill C-48, which basically says that we are not going to build pipelines anymore. Was there consultation on Bill C-48? I do not remember that one. Bill C-69 is here. Martha Hall Findlay says that it will significantly increase political interference in the regulatory process. The Canadian Energy Pipeline Association states, “It is difficult to imagine that a new major pipeline could be built in Canada under the Impact Assessment Act”.

Stephen Buffalo, president and CEO of the Indian Resource Council says, “Indigenous communities are on the verge of a major economic breakthrough, one that finally allows Indigenous people to share in Canada's economic prosperity. Bill C-69 will stop this progress in its tracks.”

We find that those two pieces of legislation, Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, are very divisive in western Canada and very much against what we are as a trading country.

● (1850)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-69 is about re-establishing the balance between economic prosperity and environmental protection. It is about restoring investor certainty, rebuilding public trust and advancing indigenous reconciliation, all the while ensuring that good projects are built in a timely, responsible and transparent way. That is what we have been doing since assuming office. We have approved the Line 3 replacement project, supported Keystone XL and done the hard work necessary to ensure we move forward in the right way on the Trans Mountain expansion project.

We know there is still more to be done, but our efforts are starting to pay off.

Let us look at the LNG Canada decision last fall to proceed with its $40-billion project on the west coast of British Columbia. It will create thousands of good jobs and generate billions of dollars in new revenue for government, all the while building the cleanest, large scale LNG facility in the world to bring Canadian natural gas to new global markets.

There are also plans for a $4.5-billion petrochemical facility in Sturgeon County.

Inter Pipeline, which is another example, is proceeding with two new facilities, valued at $3.5-billion, in Alberta's industrial heartland.

Nauticol has given its green light to develop a $2-billion methanol plant just south of Grande Prairie.

These are real investments in our energy sector, in Canadians and in Alberta. In fact, there are more than half a trillion dollars in new resource projects that have either been started or are planned over the next 10 years. In Alberta alone, that includes 102 energy projects, representing a total investment of $178 billion. That is good news.

At the same time, we have recently announced a $1.6 billion package to support workers in the energy sector and boost the industry's competitiveness. This includes a $1 billion program in commercial financial support from Export Development Canada to invest in innovative technologies.

There are another $500 million in new commercial funding from the Business Development Bank of Canada to support energy diversification, as well as $50 million from Natural Resources Canada's clean growth program that will leverage almost $900 million in new investments in oil and gas projects.

These investments reflect our confidence in Alberta and our belief in all Canadians with respect to making Canada the supplier of choice in this century of clean energy.

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, the reality is this. In the last year and a half I have talked with fund development managers. They have explained how the billion dollar funds they monitor have gone to the U.S. I have constituents in my riding who own oil rigs and have all sorts of pipeline. They have gone to Texas and are not coming back. The fund managers say that they are not coming back because of the legislation they are facing, which the government can delay for 600 days. The minister can intervene at any time.

We need to appoint an ambassador to China so we can get the canola going. We could take that quarter billion dollars back from the investment bank, which is building pipelines in Asia, and build pipelines here.

We need a different approach. Bill C-69 does not work. It is divisive.

Hon. Andrew Leslie: Mr. Speaker, I ran out of time in my previous 10 minutes to complete the list of all the investments we were making in Alberta with respect to pipeline capacity, so let me continue.

Another $72 million to fund three clean-tech projects in Alberta's oil and gas sector are coming into effect over the next 18 months, investments that will help leverage more than an additional $415 million in funding from other sources. That is why we are also investing another $49 million to support petrochemical innovation in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta.

Through budget 2019, we have proposed investing another $100 million to support the clean resource innovation network.

Alberta is receiving a great deal of federal investment to better its technology and products. Quite frankly, we are proud to be able to help.

● (1855)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard has taken bold action to protect chinook salmon and southern resident killer whales by closing chinook salmon fishing over a large area of the B.C. coast. This will impact hundreds of jobs in the sport, recreation, indigenous and commercial fisheries. However, he refuses to ask the salmon farming industry to accept its share of the pain to protect wild salmon.

How can the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans ask Canadians to risk their livelihoods while allowing foreign-run salmon farming companies to transfer fish infected with a virus reported to kill chinook salmon into farms throughout the southern half of British Columbia?

The minister's own scientists report that PRV can cause the red blood cells of chinook salmon to rupture en masse, causing organ failure, but the minister has chosen not to believe the science, even in the face of the collapse of most chinook salmon stocks exposed to salmon farms.

This is a repeat of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans' ignoring of DFO scientist Ransom Myers decades ago when he was warning that DFO's fishing policy was going to cause the collapse of the North Atlantic cod. Public research conducted in B.C. shows that wild salmon exposed to salmon farms are significantly more infected with PRV than wild salmon in the more northern reaches of the province, where first nations and others made sure no salmon farms were allowed, just as the current candidate for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for the NDP, Bob Chamberlin, has been asking for those farms to be removed from the east coast of Vancouver Island.

Mowi, one of the big companies operating in B.C., informed the Federal Court that it would be severely impacted if it was not allowed to grow PRV-infected fish in its farms, as all but one of its hatcheries was infected.

Section 56 of the fishery, general, regulations states that fish infected with a disease agent are prohibited from transfer into B.C. marine waters. The courts view PRV as a disease agent as a result of the research that has been published.

By not screening farm salmon for PRV, the minister ensures that he does not know if they are infected. Thus, he is issuing transfer permits in absence of information that may be critical to chinook salmon, British Columbians in the fishing industry and the southern resident killer whale.

The minister has offered his opinion that PRV is not a threat to wild salmon; however, his opinion is not above the law. The 2015 Federal Court ruling remains unacknowledged, and the 2018 decision gave the minister until June 4 to revise his policy of not screening for PRV and bring it into compliance with the law.

Why, at this time when wild salmon stocks are increasingly listed as species at risk, is the minister refusing to use and apply the precautionary principle to restore wild salmon to the benefit of all British Columbians?

The state of Washington recently began screening farm salmon for PRV, and in 2018 it halted 1.6 million infected young farm salmon from entering ocean pens in Puget Sound to protect wild salmon.

There no reason not to screen farm salmon for PRV, except to protect corporate interests. However, following the law would provide the industry with incentive to rid their livestock of this virus.

We have questions, and I hope the government can answer them.

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will do my best.

Our government is committed to protecting the health of Canada's wild and farmed fish from aquatic animal diseases. A stringent process exists to ensure the health of cultured finfish populations prior to their transfer into the marine environment.

The applications for transfer licences are reviewed by a committee of experts from the department and the Province of British Columbia. All transfers of aquaculture fish must also comply with requirements of the national aquatic animal health program, which aims to prevent the introduction and spread of disease in Canada. It is co-delivered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Our government is re-evaluating its decision not to test for PRV prior to transferring smolts to aquaculture marine grow-out facilities under section 56 of the fishery general regulations. We will complete this review by June 4, 2019. This work is currently under way and considers the latest scientific assessments of this virus.

Our government understands that a strong, science-based approach to regulating the aquaculture industry is essential. That is why we have conducted and will continue to conduct extensive research to inform our policies and regulations. Specifically, we are actively investigating the potential impacts that PRV and other aquatic pathogens may have on various Pacific salmon species. This work will help us further improve our understanding of disease transfer risks between wild and farmed fish.

In the near future, we will also clearly outline and explain how decisions on aquaculture are made, including how the precautionary approach is applied specifically for aquaculture decision-making when there is scientific uncertainty. This directly responds to recommendations from the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, from the panel on aquaculture led by the chief science adviser, from stakeholders and from Canadians who have asked for more transparency on how aquaculture decisions are made, on the information that was used in making decisions and on how the precautionary approach was used.

The framework for aquaculture risk management will outline a stepwise process to be followed, and it includes a commitment to publishing decisions, policies and the scientific advice that was received in support of aquaculture decisions. Our government is advancing this initiative in partnership with indigenous peoples, provincial governments, the public, industry, and environmental groups.

In December 2018, the minister announced a new area-based aquaculture management pilot project. As part of that new approach, we will be working with the Province of British Columbia, first nations and industry to develop an indigenous monitoring and inspection program in the Broughton Archipelago. This program will provide opportunities for first nations to take an active role in monitoring activities for fish health, and it will support implementation of the government-to-government recommendations for the Broughton Archipelago.

The restoration of our wild Pacific salmon stocks on the west coast of Canada is an extremely important priority. Our government is committed to supporting stocks that are in decline. Canada's wild salmon policy 2018 to 2022 implementation plan is a guide to addressing a range of issues, including science, habitat, assessments and the impacts of aquaculture and predation on wild salmon. We have made and continue to make unprecedented investments to support these issues.

Our government will continue working with partners on aquaculture management and on supporting wild salmon populations—

● (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough for coastal British Columbians. Ultimately, the behaviour of the minister is threatening wild salmon, B.C.'s coastal economy, the southern resident killer whales and the B.C. aquaculture industry as well. If there is no incentive to produce cleaner fish, the reputation of B.C. fish products in general will suffer in consumer opinion.

By refusing to follow our laws and pressure the salmon farming industry to become a clean industry, the minister is threatening Canada's reputation as a source of wholesome seafood. If the salmon farming industry is unable to rid its livestock of PRV, this is another reason for the industry's fish to be moved swiftly into closed containment tanks, where effluent can be treated. This would honour the bill that was put forward by my good friend and colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam, who has done great work regarding salmon.

The Liberals' refusal to screen farmed salmon for PRV provides short-term benefits to a foreign-owned industry while putting Canadian business at—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, we have made no such refusal. Right now we are following the direction of the court, which found issues with the policy and the decision. However, what the court did not do was grant the request of the plaintiffs to require PRV testing in the transfer of all fish. It did not order that. It did find problems with the policy and problems with the decision, which we are currently revisiting.

To be crystal clear, our DFO scientists, along with provincial and international colleagues, are conducting investigations to better understand the biology of PRV as well as other known potential pathogens in wild and farmed salmon in the Pacific Ocean. This work will further improve our understanding of disease transfer risk.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:05 p.m.)

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