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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Monday, October 31, 2016**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 31, 2016

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

### POVERTY REDUCTION ACT

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP)** moved that Bill C-245, An Act concerning the development of a national poverty reduction strategy in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, none of my Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot constituents were surprised when I introduced Bill C-245 concerning a national poverty reduction strategy. I have worked for community organizations in various capacities and been involved in groups, associations, and cooperatives, so they know that I have always been driven by a desire to reduce poverty in our community.

In choosing to introduce this bill, I have chosen to build on the work of Ed Broadbent. In 1989, he got the House to unanimously approve a motion to eliminate child poverty. I am also building on the work of Tony Martin, a member who was dedicated to laying the groundwork for this bill and working out how best to develop such a strategy. He held consultations and met with anti-poverty groups across Canada. Jean Crowder and several of my other colleagues in the House also took up the torch and fought for this kind of bill.

I would also like to thank all the organizations and individuals across this country who have expressed their support for my bill since I introduced it at first reading on February 26, 2016. I am very proud to have the support of several Canadian anti-poverty organizations.

Federal leadership is needed to reduce poverty. Canada has signed international human rights treaties that require us to make very clear commitments to guarantee each and every Canadian citizen the right to a decent standard of living. Poverty reduction is a non-partisan issue. Every member in the House represents a riding in which poverty is a reality. We all witness this when we return to our ridings. Every time I travel around my riding, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, I see poverty on the faces of all kinds of people, including children, families, people who live alone, and seniors. When I meet with anti-poverty organizations in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, I see how hard

they are working on the ground to distribute food and clothing to help all those families.

It costs more to do nothing about poverty than it does to address it. We can do something to reduce poverty. Poverty greatly hinders both individual and community development. Grocery store and retail store owners in Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot tell me that they are also concerned about the growing gap between the rich and the poor. When wealth is concentrated in the hands of one group, the purchasing power of regular Canadians keeps diminishing. That is what store owners in my riding are talking to me about. They tell me that they are still struggling to recover from the 2008 economic crisis because too many people continue to get poorer.

Another growing problem these days is that some people are working 40 hours a week and are still poor. Youth employment is increasingly precarious. A third of all young people have part-time employment. The use of food banks is the ultimate proof. Representatives from the Moisson Maskoutaine food bank in my riding tell me that they are seeing a growing number of workers using food banks such as Accueil Fraternel, in Saint-Hyacinthe, or the soup kitchen in Acton Vale. More and more workers need food aid. We also see many immigrants using food aid.

• (1115)

In some Canadian communities the cost of living, including rent and food, is high. We have to put in place a strong social and economic safety net because poverty affects everyone. We should all be concerned by the fact that, in a country as rich as ours, inequality is growing and worrisome.

In this bill I am presenting a very comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. As I mentioned, over the past decade there have been many consultations that have led to the plan put forward by this bill. This bill focuses on our obligation to produce results, not the means. All members of the House should therefore focus on the poverty reduction goal we want to achieve. Voting for this bill at second reading stage will ensure it is referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

*Private Members' Business*

The committee has undertaken a study on poverty that will wrap up next June. By adopting this bill at second reading, the ideas it contains can be discussed at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. I will be a member of the committee studying poverty until June, since I am replacing my colleague from Churchill—Keewatinook Aski who usually sits on the committee. Some witnesses have already appeared and presented other tools that are consistent with the objective of this bill. Let us at least give ourselves the opportunity to use the ideas in the bill as the basis for the discussions that will take place at the committee and compare them to other ideas that will be presented so that we can make the best possible recommendations when we table our report.

As I said earlier, in 1989, the House unanimously adopted a motion to eliminate child poverty. In 2009, the House of Commons reaffirmed its desire to reduce poverty. We are now at the point where we need more than empty words. We need to establish a real strategy. Establishing a strategy means setting goals: where do we want to be in five or 10 years when it comes to reducing poverty? We also need mechanisms to measure poverty. Right now, in Canada, we still have not agreed on an official definition of poverty. We still have not established how to measure poverty. If we want to be able to see how well a program to eliminate poverty is working from year to year, we have to have mechanisms to measure progress and determine whether poverty has been reduced or not.

That is what my bill proposes. Let us develop mechanisms for measuring poverty so that, year after year, we can take steps toward reducing it. My bill would also add social condition to the Canadian Human Rights Act. We know that poverty is a ground for discrimination, but right now it is not in the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination.

We need mechanisms and indicators, but the most important point that this bill makes is that we, the federal government, need to show leadership in order to reduce poverty, but we cannot do it alone. We need to work with community organizations.

In my riding, like in those of my colleagues, day after day, community organizations work to reduce poverty by giving people food and clothing and helping families in need. In Saint-Hyacinthe, we even have the Fonds d'aide Optimiste, which helps children participate in sports so that poor children can take part in these activities, just like their friends do.

● (1120)

Community organizations in our ridings are doing what needs to be done. They are also working to tackle poverty at its roots because we have to focus not just on the consequences, though that is part of it, but also on the causes. We have to work with these community organizations and truly partner with them.

Municipalities have to be partners in our poverty reduction strategy too. We know they are responsible for providing social housing. In Saint-Hyacinthe, there are 200 households on the waiting list for social housing. I am sure that MPs who meet with these organizations in their ridings will hear about households waiting for social housing. Food banks and soup kitchens cannot meet the demand. Municipalities are putting strategies in place to ensure their services and activities are available to everyone.

We have to partner with the provinces too. Many provinces, including Quebec, already have poverty elimination strategies. Other provinces tell us that Quebec's strategy is a model. Provinces that do not have strategies are thinking of adopting them, and all provinces are urging the federal government to develop its own poverty reduction strategy so we can coordinate our efforts and work better together. That is what it will take to reduce poverty.

Education is a big part of the conversation about poverty, so the provinces are involved at that level too. No child should come to school with an empty stomach. Children's academic performance should not suffer because they move too often or are worried about a parent having lost a job. Such children are less likely than others to graduate or go on to university. Those are some of the effects of poverty, and we have to work with the provinces to tackle the causes of poverty.

Children raised in poverty require more support, and there are costs associated with that. I talked about this earlier. It will be more expensive in the long run to not address poverty and let it persist. Poverty also means more health care costs, as many studies have shown. People living in poverty are ill more often and have a hard time paying for their medication.

Although I represent Quebec's agri-food capital, we still have food deserts, that is, areas where people have little or no access to fresh fruits and vegetables within walking distance. Unfortunately, some people have to get some of their groceries at Dollarama, and that is unacceptable. Everyone knows how important nutrition is to health, so we need to take action on this.

There are too many statistics right now that should frighten us. Having one in seven people living in poverty in Canada is unacceptable. We have a duty to act. The poverty rate is higher in Canada than in the other OECD countries.

When talking about poverty rates, we need to see the face of poverty. For instance, 15% of the children in my riding live in poverty, and among indigenous people, it is one out of every two children. In addition, 6% of seniors in Canada live in poverty, and 63% of low-income, single seniors are women. The median income for seniors in Quebec is \$20,200 for those aged 65 to 74, and for those 75 or over it is less than \$20,000. There are real people behind the statistics. Lastly, the median income for indigenous people is even less. As for immigrants, they are twice as likely to find themselves living in poverty.

In closing, we must pass this bill at second reading so it can be studied by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

● (1125)

We have to think of the faces of poverty in our ridings.

*Private Members' Business*

I will close with a quote by Nelson Mandela:

Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.

Together we can make a difference.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member. She talks a great deal on the issue of poverty and income inequality.

When we look at the past year, particularly at the last budget that was presented, we saw probably the most profound and significant movement toward more equality in income. We saw that in the increase in taxes for Canada's wealthiest. We saw a substantial decrease for Canada's middle class. We saw a huge increase in the Canada child benefit, a redistribution of wealth that I would argue has not been seen for many years.

Could the member provide comment on the last federal budget and its contribution to the redistribution of wealth? Can she think of another budget that has done as much for Canada's poor?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:** Madam Speaker, what this bill is saying is that it is nice to include poverty reduction measures in the budget, but the problem is that we cannot measure poverty.

Researchers who appeared before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities told us that they did not have any data.

According to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the new Canada child benefit will reduce poverty. However, there is currently no data available to verify and validate that.

My bill will give us the mechanisms to help us back up our claims that we are reducing poverty.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's words. I think we all in this House want to tackle poverty.

The member mentioned a few things in her speech about the problem around poverty, but the system we have is that the government needs to do more. More government to solve the problem that government cannot do confuses me.

If the hon. member wants to eradicate poverty, maybe the NDP should not adopt policies that put people out of work, take more off their paycheques, and put businesses out of business. We all know that small businesses hire people. What happens when they leave? Business close up and we have blight. Blight moves in.

Instead of more taxes, more government regulation, maybe we should see less of that. I would like to hear her comments.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I am sure that all hon. members would like to see full employment in the medium and long terms.

I have worked with troubled teenagers who wanted to change their situation. We all want everyone to have a job that values them, gives them a sense of pride, and gives them a place in our society. However, we are not there. Until then, the government has a role to play in ensuring that all the mechanisms are in place to give every individual an opportunity to improve their economic situation.

I personally think that spending this money now will enable us to save in the medium and long terms.

Doing nothing about poverty will cost us twice as much as doing something. This has been proven.

• (1130)

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Madam Speaker, what my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot is proposing today is that we develop an integrated strategy to eliminate poverty rather than working in a silo.

I would like my colleague to comment briefly on what advantages an integrated strategy would have over small projects here and there.

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:** Madam Speaker, I think that reality shows us what those advantages are. For too long, we have been working in a silo when it comes to reducing poverty. The proof that it is not working is that, today, the gap between the rich and poor is still growing. We have more and more poor people.

I think it is important to work together with community organizations, the municipalities, and the provinces, but it is also important to have an interdepartmental vision when it comes to eliminating poverty.

[*English*]

**Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very proud and feel privileged to rise today to speak about Bill C-245.

As members know, I am from the riding of Saint John—Rothesay, which is in southern New Brunswick. I am very proud of that riding. It is a riding with many success stories, but it also has many challenges that beget opportunities on the poverty front.

This is why I feel privileged to speak to the private member's bill put forward by my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. I would like to thank the member for her leadership and for taking a stand on poverty reduction.

*Private Members' Business*

I had the opportunity to meet with my colleague face to face last week, and we talked about poverty, a national poverty reduction strategy, and our passion about helping those in need. We are both very aligned and agree that the federal government can lead the way in a national poverty reduction strategy. I look forward to working with the member hand in hand to help our government come up with the proper strategy.

Our government is working hard to reduce poverty from coast to coast. When a colleague, especially one who is sitting on the other side of the House, rises to show the same dedication as we have, it is very encouraging. A big part of Bill C-245 is in tune with our agenda and with what we are aiming for, which is an inclusive society where everyone will be able to take part to the fullest.

For those who are not familiar with piece of legislation, I will explain what it is.

Bill C-245 is also known as the poverty reduction act. This act will provide not only for the development and implementation of a national strategy to reduce poverty in Canada, but also for the appointment of an independent poverty reduction commissioner. As well, it would amend the Canadian Human Rights Act, to add “social condition” as a prohibited ground of discrimination. Finally, it would amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act to establish a national council on poverty elimination and social inclusion.

This government is in agreement that we must reduce social inequality and build stronger communities. Today, it is hard to believe that there are more three million Canadians who are living in poverty. This is clearly unacceptable.

Let us take the year 2014, as an example, and look at some numbers from Statistics Canada. The figures show that 8.8% of the Canadian population lived in low income in 2014. In 2014, 8.5% of children aged 17 and under lived in low income.

Let us not forget seniors, because 1.3% of seniors in families lived in low income, and the rate for those living by themselves was close to 11.3%. Speaking of seniors, we have to keep in mind that they will account for close to one-quarter of our country's population by the year 2030, which is a staggering number.

When we look at this picture, we realize that the clock is ticking. As a government, as members of Parliament, we all need to work together. We need to act now on poverty reduction. We need to draw on the efforts of all Canadians to address these social and economic challenges, which is clearly reflected in Bill C-245.

The bill states that a national poverty reduction strategy must encourage the participation of Canadians, nonprofit organizations, and private sector suppliers in an effort to reduce poverty. We could not agree more.

Bill C-245 shows an understanding that the face of poverty is changing. Many groups are affected. I am thinking about youth, children, indigenous people, women fleeing from violence, veterans, and people living with a disability.

●(1135)

Bill C-245 states that a national poverty reduction strategy must take some specific factors into account. Here, I am talking about the way that poverty affects different genders, the specific needs of urban, rural, and remote communities, as well as the factors that put some individuals at higher than average risk of poverty.

On that last note, Bill C-245 does mention factors such as indigenous status, single parenthood, low-wage and precarious employment, immigration, lack of education, and prolonged illness and disability. In addition to all of that, Bill C-245 acknowledges that several provinces and some municipalities have either implemented or are delivering poverty reduction strategies. That is good news. Real work has been done here.

Now that we have looked at this piece of legislation more closely, we see how in tune it is with what our government is already doing to reduce poverty in Canada. For example, there is the Canada poverty reduction strategy, which Employment and Social Development Canada is currently working on. This strategy will support and be aligned with those that already exist at the provincial and municipal levels. It is clear and extremely important that all three levels of government are aligned and work together to reduce poverty across our country.

We will work in collaboration with our partners. They include all Canadians, all levels of government, non-profit organizations, academics, the private sector, and, of course, people who have experienced or who are experiencing poverty. It is absolutely crucial that we involve those on the front lines and those experiencing poverty across our country. This problem will not be solved from the top down.

In fact, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development recently appeared before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, also known as HUMA, which I am very proud to say that I, along with the member opposite, are members of. He tabled a discussion paper entitled “Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy”. This document was designed to open a dialogue on the subject of poverty reduction in Canada. Basically, it will help us and aid us in developing a national poverty reduction strategy.

That is not all. The minister also recently launched the tackling poverty together project. This important research project will consist of six extensive case studies across Canada. I am thrilled and very pleased that the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development came to my riding of Saint John—Rothesay to announce this wonderful project and that my riding will be included in this project. It will help us better understand the impact of poverty reduction programs in communities that have identified poverty as an important issue.

Now, let us talk about the issue of housing. To lift people out of poverty, as a national government we have to address it. There is no other way around it. In fact, I would like to note that Bill C-245 also acknowledges the need to address this issue. Canadians know that housing matters. Unfortunately, too many of them are unable to find or afford a decent place to live. Again, that is unacceptable in our country.

Therefore, we are developing a national housing strategy to chart the course for better housing, and socio-economic and environmental outcomes for all Canadians, including those living in indigenous and northern communities. This strategy will also rely on existing collaboration between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. I am glad to highlight the fact that consultations are already under way. We are reaching out to get Canadians' views on a vision for housing so that all Canadians can have access to housing that is sustainable, affordable, inclusive, and flexible.

Our government is fighting poverty through different ways and through different initiatives. In particular, there is the Canada child benefit, the increased guaranteed income supplement for seniors living alone, as well as our investments in social infrastructure.

● (1140)

We are working hand in hand with our partners to reduce poverty coast to coast. This bill would add greatly to our progress and contribute to our efforts, which we will make even stronger in the weeks and months ahead.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am truly honoured to stand here today to speak about such an important piece of legislation introduced by my NDP colleague. Bill C-245 is an act concerning the development of a national poverty reduction strategy in Canada. Regardless of where one sits in the chamber, I believe everyone here wants the same thing. We want what is best for Canadians, but we have different ways of getting to that goal.

The purpose of this legislation is to create a national poverty reduction strategy, an independent poverty reduction commissioner, a national poverty reduction advisory council, and to alter the Canadian Human Rights Act to add social condition as a prohibited ground of discrimination. Those are the key points in this bill. As my colleagues had said, these are very important facts and when we come to a national strategy and look at what we can do for Canadians, everyone in the chamber needs to be onside.

However, I have some observations and concerns about the bill. I too have had the opportunity to speak to the sponsor of this bill and know she has great passion and focus and has done her homework on this, so I appreciate all of the work she has done.

In this bill, many of the measures are open-ended. A big concern I have is that it would create permanent levels of red tape. There are also some financial considerations that we should look at in the bill. When we sit in the chamber, we have to recognize that debate is not about saying it is good, bad, or ugly, or anything in that sense. Rather, it is important that we have this dialogue so that we do what is best for all Canadians. This is where we start to differ in some of our approaches to poverty reduction.

The effects of Bill C-245 cannot be accurately forecasted because there are a number of issues that need to be considered. First, we need to look at how a strategy is going to be implemented, at the number and salaries of employees of the commissioner and the 16 members of the national council, and what the spending estimates are for those.

Data from six federal offices allow us to make an estimate of what the costs will be. This is what I find very difficult to comprehend.

### *Private Members' Business*

The costs range anywhere from \$7.6 million to \$719 million. That was the forecast spending that we just received. I believe it was on October 25 or 26 that the report was released. Just on that, there is a gap of almost \$700 million. That is a big concern for me, because \$700 million could do a lot. It could put more people into job training or put more food on people's tables. At the end of the day, it would put more money into the pockets of Canadians if dealt with properly.

Another of my concerns is that duplication could occur. The one thing this government is very well known for is its duplication. Many studies have been done over and over again. Studies are really important to do, but unless action follows these studies, they are truly worthless.

Starting in June of 2016, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities adopted a motion to study poverty in Canada. The committee is currently studying four main areas, including government administered savings and income support programs, education and training, housing assistance, and community initiatives.

As of now, the study will continue until, I believe, June 2017. Indeed, I had the opportunity to sit in committee as a spectator, because I sit with three other members on that committee who are doing a great job, and it is very important that we allow the study to continue and for witnesses to bring forward some of their ideas for a strategy.

It is being studied and continues to be a major issue for Canadians, and there is a reason it is being studied. Poverty has continued for decades and decades and there needs to be a stop to this issue. We know that a reduction of poverty could strengthen the economy, reduce health care spending, increase the level of children's education, and reduce crime. I would like to commend the committee for doing this study and looking at some very important key points that would help all Canadians.

I am not denying the importance of any of these factors. However, as I said, Conservatives on this side of the House have different approaches to this. We believe that the government should develop a dynamic solution that relieves the pressure felt by many seniors and those with disabilities. We must work with our provincial and territorial governments and communities to coordinate, by integrating education, job creation, and employment strategies as part of this plan.

● (1145)

People do lots of studies when in government, whether federal, provincial, or municipal. There was a study completed in 2010 by the human resources committee. We have all of these studies, but we need to look at them and ask, "All these facts were found, how can we start implementing them into action?" That is something we need to start doing.

*Private Members' Business*

Creating more bureaucracy does not eliminate poverty. That is one of the biggest concerns. We can continue to study, but we need boots on the ground doing the work. Canadian Families need to have the skills and opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency, and we must target support for those who face barriers.

Reviewing the bill in its entirety, there are a few recommendations I wish to be considered. Rather than creating a new position of commissioner, this role should be under the deputy minister of the Department for Families, Children, and Social Development, since many of the programs, such as our income support programs, old age security, and CCB, are monitored by this department. This would become part of the deputy minister's role. It is also very important because in the same department they are looking at the disabilities act. It is also responsible for the guaranteed income supplement, which is very important to many people suffering from poverty in Canada.

Through the duties of the deputy minister, he would have access to and the ability to review all of these programs. The information on how much is being spent is available there, and how many families are receiving the benefits. There is a great link in that regard, and he or she, working as the deputy minister, would have access to all of these programs and have insight that is second to none. He or she would also have the ability to prepare reports from the data available, providing a measurable benefit for Canadians. As the member who sponsored the bill noted, we do not always have the appropriate data, so we need to make sure that when data is collected, we put it together so we can look at the intersectionality of it all so that it is best for all Canadians. The deputy minister would be able to develop and monitor, as well as report the findings from, the poverty data to the minister and to the House.

We also need to ensure that the council is not just made up of anti-poverty organizations. Just a few weeks ago, I went to a poverty panel and there was not one person in the room who talked about job creation. That has to be part of the conversation. What else can we do for Canadians? Therefore, job creators have to be at that table as well. It just cannot be people talking about poverty; we need to involve those people who are going to be part of the solution at the end of the day. We need to take action and work together to reduce poverty in Canada, but adding more bureaucracy and red tape is not the solution. We must provide lower taxes and put money back in the pockets of Canadians.

Can we do more? Absolutely, and I think all of us in the House recognize that we can do more. From 2004 to 2014, we did see a reduction in poverty from 11.4%, as reported in 2004, to 8.8% in 2014.

The one concern I have with this is that we need to make sure we do not have a one-size-fits-all approach. We see a lot of programs implemented throughout Canada, and not all Canadians are the same. Not every region is the same. Whether rural, urban, or on reserve, we need to recognize that communities and the people who reside in them have different needs. We have to recognize the differences between the provinces as well. Even cities in my own riding are very different. I am very fortunate to represent Elgin—Middlesex—London, where I have a number of communities, ranging from 100 people to 380,000 people, so I recognize that even

in the riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, there are communities that are very different.

I know that the sponsor of the bill truly has pure intentions, but I fear a new level of bureaucracy that will do nothing for those who need assistance now. We need more action and opportunities for Canadians, and we need to focus on how we can help them. This role, I believe, should be under ESDC and be that of the deputy minister.

This is a very important conversation we are going to have, and I appreciate all the work that has been done by the member of Parliament on this. I continue to look at the good work that is going to be done by the human resources committee, but I think that some of the considerations I put forward should be looked at if we are to support this bill.

● (1150)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is important for me to support Bill C-245, an act concerning the development of a national poverty reduction strategy in Canada.

I sincerely thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for taking up the torch that the NDP has been carrying for many years now. The fight against poverty is an issue that is very dear to me, as it is to her and the entire NDP caucus. In fact, I am a member of the all-party anti-poverty caucus.

This issue is not new. In 1989, NDP leader Ed Broadbent moved a motion to eliminate child poverty in Canada before 2000. That motion was unanimously adopted by the House. However, obviously, the Conservatives and the Liberals, who have shared office almost equally since that time, have not taken the necessary measures to eradicate this scourge. In my riding of Hochelaga, one merely has to take a walk down Ontario Street or Saint-Catherine Street to see that poverty is all too real.

This bill was first introduced by New Democrat Tony Martin. Later, my colleague from British Columbia, Jean Crowder, took over. Now the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot has taken up the torch. I hope, from the bottom of my heart, that the bill will be passed this time.

It is difficult to believe that Liberal members would oppose this bill to reduce poverty given that they made so many promises to that effect during the last election campaign. The Prime Minister even came to my riding to stage an announcement and promised that he would lift out of poverty the equivalent of an Olympic stadium filled with children. With this bill, the NDP is reaching out to him so he can put his words into action. It is high time, given that the House voted unanimously in favour of eliminating poverty in Canada twenty-seven years ago.



The purpose of this bill is to put in place an effective poverty reduction strategy that will take into account the needs of all communities by analyzing all factors and indicators of poverty. It has the support of many community groups and organizations that have long been calling for a comprehensive and concerted strategy to reduce poverty, even eliminate it entirely.

The purpose of this bill is to help eliminate poverty and foster social inclusion. It would establish and implement a poverty reduction strategy to ensure that, together with the provinces and territories, municipalities, service providers, and other stakeholders, the government takes real steps to reduce poverty in Canada.

It should be noted that six Canadian provinces have already passed similar legislation. It is therefore very important that they be involved in the process.

This bill would create the office of the poverty reduction commissioner, provided with a team and a budget, which would report annually to the House of Commons. It would also appoint a national council on poverty elimination and social inclusion, which would be charged with finding effective and viable solutions, to help Canada eliminate poverty.

In terms of concrete measures, the government would be forced to strengthen the social and economic safety net so as to leave no one behind. Let us remember that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives everyone the right to dignity and that it is the government's responsibility to give effect to the charter.

Some of my colleagues in the other political parties seem nervous when we talk about strengthening the social fabric, whether because this would increase expenditures or out of pure ideological blindness. Also, to the advocates of austerity and the stone-age economists, I would say that many of the figures appearing in the budget expenditures column should be regarded as investments, and that poverty is detrimental to the economic and social development of our society.

For example, more and more studies are showing that providing funding for housing and combatting homelessness is much more than simple spending but, on the contrary, constitutes investment, both economic and social.

For instance, the "Impact Study on the Activities of the Société d'habitation du Québec" estimates that every dollar invested in its programs and its projects to replace, upgrade, and modernize public low-cost housing has injected \$2.30 into the Quebec economy, mostly in the residential construction sector. Obviously, this does not take into account the social repercussions, which generate further savings.

• (1155)

It is also now generally accepted that it costs the Canadian economy more to ignore the problems of housing and homelessness than it would cost to solve them. The most conservative estimates show that homelessness costs the Canadian economy close to \$4.5 billion every year. Other studies estimate this cost to be as high as \$7 billion. For the government, eradicating homelessness and poverty would be a well-considered investment. The victims of homelessness and poverty are more vulnerable to physical and mental health problems and therefore more likely, that is, more than the average, to

### *Private Members' Business*

find themselves in hospitals and prisons, thereby generating substantial costs for the state. Therefore this is what really should be making some of my colleagues nervous, rather than the simple fact of investing to eliminate poverty and homelessness.

I have not finished yet. By way of comparison, every month it costs \$10,900 to house a person in a hospital room, \$4,333 in a provincial prison, and \$1,932 in a shelter. Those costs are exorbitant when compared to the \$701 it costs on average to grant a rent supplement and the \$199.92 it costs for social housing. When are we going to start investing in the Canadian economy by embarking on a new wave of social housing construction? This bill would also target access to affordable housing that is safe and satisfactory for all.

Naturally, as the NDP's housing critic, this aspect of the bill is particularly appealing to me, since it echoes my bill C-265, tabled on April 3, 2016. The act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians is designed to introduce a real pan-Canadian housing strategy, in partnership with elected officials in the other levels of government and with housing stakeholders, and in compliance with the international obligations of Canada, which recognized the right of every person to housing when it ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1976.

I would like to offer a picture of the current housing situation in Canada. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the CMHC, considers housing unaffordable when a household devotes more than 30% of its income to it. When we look at certain statistics from the 2011 National Household Survey, we see that 3.3 million households spend over 30% of their total income on housing.

Looking more specifically at the 4.1 million tenant households, we note that over 40% of these allocate more than 30% of their income to rent. Indeed, 19% of them spend over 50% of their income on rent, and 10% of them over 80%. Therefore, it appears that a much higher percentage of Canadian tenant households have been exceeding the affordability threshold established by the CMHC.

Consequently, the households in urgent need of housing are too often faced with choosing between the essential needs they have to meet. In a rich country like ours, we think it is totally unacceptable that people should have to choose, for example, between paying for groceries and paying for rent.

Obviously, Canada's housing situation has even greater repercussions on the most vulnerable and venerable in our society. Single-parent families headed by a woman, seniors living alone, indigenous households on or off reserve, recent immigrants and persons living with disabilities are among the populations most likely to be victims of this affordability crisis.

*Private Members' Business*

Incidentally, this bill would also take account of the needs of all communities, and would introduce social condition to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination. More specifically with regard to first nations members living on reserve, the National Household Survey shows that nearly 40% of their dwelling units, which are the responsibility of the federal government, are in need of major repairs, while nearly 35% of them are not suited to the size of the family. In certain Inuit communities, the percentage of dwelling units not suitable to family size is in excess of 50%.

It is high time that Canada adopted a strategy to combat poverty as well as the means necessary to eliminate it.

● (1200)

**Mr. Yves Robillard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to take the floor today regarding a very special bill, a bill that clearly shows that our government has scored a bull's-eye with its efforts to reduce poverty all across the country. I am of course speaking of Bill C-245.

First of all, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for having tabled this piece of legislation. She has worked hard and has shown leadership. Indeed, she shows that it is possible to have a shared vision, even if we do not sit on the same side of the House.

Bill C-245 would develop a national poverty reduction strategy in Canada. Such a strategy is perfectly consistent with our government's intention to reduce poverty throughout the country. We have truly made this our key theme. It is even an integral part of the mandate of my colleague, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. Needless to say, we looked very favourably on the tabling of such a bill.

Like us, this bill wants to lift as many Canadians as possible out of poverty. It states that, among other things, a national poverty reduction strategy should take into account the factors that put some Canadians at higher-than-average risk of poverty. It also mentions the need to focus on the consequences of poverty for society at large. In addition, Bill C-245 aims to encourage everyone to get involved in poverty reduction. This is most welcome, for it is perfectly in line with the work we have already started.

Indeed, Employment and Social Development Canada is developing a poverty reduction strategy. Its ultimate goal is of course to reduce poverty, but it is also to make our society more inclusive. Whether we like it or not, poverty is everybody's business, because everybody suffers its consequences. If every person can thrive and participate in the life of his or her community, all of society will be the winner for it.

To attain our goals, we are consulting all of our partners. Among other things I refer to the general public, community and not-for-profit organizations, academics, businesses, and of course those who have lived in poverty.

The Minister of Families, Children and Social Development recently appeared before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, also known as HUMA. There, he tabled a discussion paper on poverty entitled, "Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy". This document was drafted in the hopes that it would get

Canadians talking about poverty reduction, and it will inform the development of our poverty reduction strategy.

We also just launched the tackling poverty together project, which will also help us in developing our strategy. As part of this project, the government will conduct case studies in six communities in order to obtain a regional perspective and a better understanding of poverty in communities in Canada. It will also allow us to hear directly from Canadians living in poverty and receive recommendations from organizations that deliver poverty reduction programs. As hon. members can see, we are working in a spirit of collaboration.

I want to point out that our strategy will support existing provincial and municipal poverty reduction strategies and harmonize with them. We are consulting our provincial and territorial counterparts and our other partners to ensure that we are getting this right.

● (1205)

Bill C-245 is in line with what we are doing. One of its goals is to take the needs of communities into account, particularly indigenous communities. That is what we are focusing on too, especially in terms of housing.

I will turn now to a second strategy we have implemented. The national housing strategy will enable us to improve the housing situation of all Canadians, including those in indigenous communities and the far north. We are currently holding targeted consultations with Canadians, governments, indigenous organizations, the private sector, non-profit organizations, municipalities, and housing experts. As everyone can see, our government is very active on this file.

We see the introduction of Bill C-245 as very encouraging. It proves that we are moving in the right direction. This is clearly the right time for Bill C-245.

At this point, I would be remiss if I did not mention some of the measures we have taken recently. Of course, we introduced the Canada child benefit, which will give nine out of ten families more benefits for children than they were receiving before. This new benefit will reduce child poverty by about 40%. The Canada child benefit is about more than just giving families more money. It represents the most important innovation in social policy in a generation.

Speaking of generations, my colleagues in the House will recall that we also enhanced the guaranteed income supplement for single seniors. For some people, this means an increase of up to almost \$1,000 per year.

Lastly, we have also made massive investments in social infrastructure. More specifically, we will be making initial investments totalling \$3.4 billion over five years.

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We also reached an agreement with the provinces to enhance the Canada pension plan to address the fact that many Canadians might not be saving enough for their retirement and therefore face a greater risk of living in poverty in their old age. From a poverty reduction standpoint, enhancing the CPP is good news, because it will help low-income workers, now and in the long term.

Furthermore, although low-income earners will have to contribute to the enhanced CPP, these higher contributions will generally be more than offset by an increase in the working income tax benefit, which will help almost 6,000 Canadians escape poverty. Not only will the enhanced CPP ensure that the middle class in Canada enjoys a more secure retirement, but it will also help current and future efforts to reduce poverty.

All these measures I just spoke about reflect my personal determination as the member for Marc-Aurèle-Fortin and our collective determination as government to reduce social inequality and ensure the prosperity of all Canadians. The intent of Bill C-245 is closely aligned with our objectives and our actions.

I could continue, but I believe that everything I mentioned demonstrates that our government is taking the necessary steps to reduce poverty in Canada. The introduction of Bill C-245 by my colleague only proves beyond a doubt that we must continue in this direction.

• (1210)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The time provided 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.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 2

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-29, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to the second part of the government's budget implementation bill, Bill C-29. This second budget bill contains the technical legislative amendments that would make budget 2016 law.

I could get into great detail about these technical amendments. It is an area that has been of particular interest to me as a trained economist, someone who sat on the Canadian Accounting Standards Board's user advisory council for many years and someone who understands the importance of a strong banking system with relevant proper oversight.

Prior to being elected to Parliament, I had more than two decades of experience in the global financial markets, first in New York City working for J.P. Morgan for nearly a decade in corporate finance; then in Canada where I was employed by Dominion Bond Rating

Service with the responsibility of coverage of the global auto sector; and then as a corporate debt analyst for Scotiabank, with coverage of over 100 companies and where the market value of the Canadian corporate debt market stands today at \$418 billion.

I can speak to specific technical elements of the bill that deal with changes of the Income Tax Act, which exclude derivatives from the application of inventory evaluation rules or ensures that the return on linked notes retains the same character, whether it is earned at maturity or reflected in a secondary market sale. I can also talk at great length about the amendments to the Bank Act to consolidate and streamline provisions that apply to a bank or to an authorized foreign bank in relation to the protection of customers in the public. However, as much as these concerns are of great interest to me and as important as they are, I know I would put many people here potentially to sleep.

While the items contained in the legislation may not be the most exciting things, I cannot stress enough the importance of getting the fundamental economic variables correct. This means ensuring that all the technical elements are there and that all the regulations and legislation are in place to help move the Canadian economy and the country forward. I am very proud of our government's commitment to Canada's economic and fiscal strength, to tax fairness, and a strong financial sector. Perhaps most of all, I am proud of our commitment to helping the middle class and those working hard to join it.

I know that a strong economy starts with a strong middle class. While Canadians have more money to save, invest, and grow the economy, everyone benefits. Strengthening the middle class means that hard-working Canadians can look forward to a good standard of living and better prospects for their kids.

However, for too long, many Canadians have been working harder than ever without getting further ahead. I am proud that our government has recognized this and is taking concrete steps to address this. Certainly the measures contained in budget 2016 were designed to set the stage for future growth.

There is a growing consensus, both in Canada and around the globe, that governments need to invest, not only to boost short-term economic growth but to set the stage for long-term growth as well. We know that when we have historically low interest rates and when the debt to GDP ratio is the lowest of any G7 country, we have the fiscal capacity and it is the perfect time to invest in infrastructure.

When talking about infrastructure, I am not talking simply about roads and bridges, which are very important. I am also talking about our social, health, and education infrastructure. Investing in infrastructure will boost Canada's productivity, strengthening our economic foundation, and put us on a higher growth path trajectory. As commented recently by Bank of Canada governor, Stephen Poloz:

### *Government Orders*

In the case of a targeted investment by government which is identified in such a way that it will be growth enabling, it's very likely to pay off very well...That is, it creates more economic growth for all those that use that infrastructure and that, of course, creates tax revenues and the system keeps turning.

Those are not my words. Those are the Bank of Canada governor's words.

In my constituency of Vaughan—Woodbridge, which incidentally the city of Vaughan is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, we have experienced unprecedented levels of growth. Vaughan is the largest employment centre in York region, accounting for 38% of jobs. With over 10,000 businesses employing more than 194,000 people, the city of Vaughan is ranked the second best place in Ontario to do business and among the top 25-best places to live in Canada. While our community has grown, much of the federal infrastructure has not kept pace.

Since our government took over, we have seen real substantial investment in Canada's physical, green, and social infrastructure. We have doubled funding for Canada student jobs, increased funding for new horizons seniors' grants, and boosted FedDev assistance to several businesses in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, including Cutler Forest Products. Just a few weeks ago, in my riding at the Kortright Centre, I, along with my colleague from Hamilton, announced a \$4.3 million dollar FedDev grant to Mohawk College for the development of new green energy solutions, a very real and tangible example of our government's commitment to clean innovative technology.

• (1215)

We have a lot of young families in my constituency, which is one of the many realities that attracted my wife and I to Vaughan. We are fortunate to have two wonderful daughters and both successful careers. However, like most parents, I want to ensure that my children have brighter prospects and are afforded even greater opportunities for success than I have had.

I am proud to be part of a government that believes we must do for our kids and grandkids what our parents and grandparents did for us to give us the promise of a better future. Toward that end, budget 2016 has invested in Canadian families through the transformational program like the new Canada child benefit that provides help to those families that need it the most with the high cost of raising children.

The child benefit system we inherited from the previous Conservative government was complicated, consisting of a taxable income-tested Canada child tax benefit with two components: the base benefits and the national child benefit supplement. It was a taxable universal child care benefit received by all families, regardless of income, even millionaires. It was system that was both inadequate in that it did not provide families with the support they needed as well as insufficiently targeted for those who needed it the most.

Under the Conservative government, for example, families with very high incomes were still receiving benefit. That is not a Canadian value. Our government's new CCB is simpler. Families will receive a single payment every month. It is tax free, so families will not have to pay back part of that amount received when they file their tax returns.

As well, the new CCB is better targeted to those who need it the most, specifically low and middle-income Canadian families. In addition, it is a far more generous program than the one it replaces. Nine out of ten Canadians will receive higher monthly benefits, and it is estimated that the new Canada child benefit will lift approximately 300,000 children out of poverty. Further, as contained in Bill C-29, in 2020, the Canada child benefit will be indexed to keep pace with rising costs.

Let me emphasize this point on how transformational Canada child benefit is in reducing income inequality. It is estimated that the CCB will allow for a reduction in the poverty rate for children in Canada from approximately 11.2% to 6.7%, or the Canada child benefit will lift approximately 40% of those children who currently find themselves living in the very tragic situation of poverty.

I was very fortunate to go to university, something that was not a possibility for my parents who immigrated to Canada through Pier 21 from Italy in the 1950s. My parents are ingenuous and hard-working people who benefited from having union jobs with decent pay and benefits. My parents helped as much as they could. Personally, I worked summers to pay for university at a pulp mill, a grain elevator and a fish cannery, and after school, including part-time jobs at McDonald's and Zellers, to help save and ultimately pay my way through two university degrees.

The costs for post-secondary education were significantly less than they are today. Now more than ever, in this highly-skilled global economy, it is of paramount importance that post-secondary education remains affordable and accessible to Canadians. To compete in today's knowledge economy requires an educated and highly-skilled workforce and more years of training. The cost of education, particularly professional training, has been increasing exponentially and a greater financial worry has been placed on the shoulders of students and their families.

We, as legislators, need to work to ensure that young Canadians have access to meaningful work at the beginning of their careers, which means paying for more education and training so as not to be burdened by an enormous debt load. That is why our government has put measures in budget 2016 that make post-secondary education more affordable for students from low and middle-income families, and provides provisions that make it easier for students to repay student loans once they enter the workforce. Budget 2016 also includes measures to help young Canadians gain experience, earn extra income and find good jobs after graduation.

This government knows that the road map to a better future lies in recognizing the needs of all Canadians, to our children, families, workers and our most vulnerable populations, including our seniors.

*Government Orders*

• (1220)

Our seniors built our country. I believe very strongly that we have a responsibility to assist those in their golden years live with dignity and a secure retirement, and treat them as valued members of our national community. It is another reason I am proud of our government's initiatives in budget 2016. By rolling back the retirement age from 67 to 65, which placed \$13,000 into the hands of new retirees over that two-year period, increasing benefits to the guaranteed income supplement by nearly \$1 billion, which will help nearly one million seniors, including three-quarters of whom are women, improving in the GIS for single seniors, and making significant new investments to support seniors, budget 2016 is helping to ensure our seniors have a dignified, comfortable, and secure retirement.

Bill C-29 proposes to amend the Old Age Security Act to provide that in the case of low-income couples that have to live apart for reasons not attributable to either of them, such as illness, and, for example, one spouse being in a nursing home and the other staying at their primary residence, the amount of the allowance is to be based on the income of the allowance recipient only. This proposed amendment ensures seniors are not unfairly penalized due to a situation they have no control over.

Making our most vulnerable populations a priority shows this government's vision in working toward a smart, ethically responsible, and fair society.

However, fair-mindedness has always guided our government. As a matter of fairness, our government is looking to crack down on tax evasion and underground economic activity, aiming to close corporate loopholes which threaten hard-working Canadians. I am proud to say that budget 2016 has invested approximately \$444 million over five years for the CRA to enhance its efforts to crack down on tax evasion and combat tax avoidance.

In fact, I am proud to state that I introduced the motion to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, calling for an investigation into offshore tax havens. I am very pleased with timely and decisive actions taken by our government to present tax evasions and aggressive tax avoidance, both at home and abroad.

The Government of Canada will continue to address unintended tax advantages, including limiting the ability of wealthy individuals to use private corporations to inappropriately reduce or defer tax.

Bill C-29 would amend the anti-avoidance rules in the Income Tax Act that prevents a multiplication of access to the small business deduction and the avoidance of the business limit and the taxable capital limit. In addition, through Bill C-29, to improve transparency and adhere to international standards, we will implement the country-by-country reporting standards, as recommended by the OECD, for corporations with operations in various geographies. In addition, we will introduce rules to prevent the avoidance of withholding tax or rents, royalties, and similar payments, using back-to-back arrangements.

There is still work to be done, but our initial efforts have improved the fairness and integrity of Canada's tax system, as well will contribute to fiscal sustainability.

We continue to work in the best interests of all Canadians to ensure they have confidence in our tax system, that no one unfairly subsidizes our tax system.

Having worked on Wall Street and in the Canadian banking sector, I can say first-hand that Canada has world-renowned and one of the most stable financial banking sectors. We were one of the only nations whose banks were left intact and came out unscathed from the 2008 global financial crisis.

However, our financial sector did not become world-renowned by accident, and it will not stay that way without continued maintenance and oversight by Canada's regulatory institutions, primarily, through the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions.

I had a first-hand view of the global financial crisis. The regulations that govern our financial institutions, including strong lending practices and solid levels of tier 1 capital held by the banks, along with the role of CMHC and OSFI, allowed Canada to exit the global financial crisis in a stellar manner. Part 4 of Bill C-29 would strengthen the framework regulating financial institutions, while balancing the need for stability and competition with the needs of consumers and businesses.

Our government makes it clear that the shareholders and creditors of Canada's largest banks are responsible for their bank's risk, not taxpayers, not depositors. Canadians will not be stuck with the tab in the event of an economic shock. The changes proposed in the Bank Act reflect enhancements in the areas of corporate governance, access to basic banking services, disclosure of information, business practices, and public reporting.

• (1225)

The same section would amend the Financial Administration Act, the Bank of Canada Act, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act to clarify certain powers of the Minister of Finance in relation to sound and efficient management of federal funds in the operational crown corporations.

It would amend the Financial Administration Act to allow the minister to lend, by way of auction, excess funds out of the consolidated revenue fund and, with the authorization of the Governor in Council, may enter into contracts and agreements of a financial nature for the purposes of managing risks relating to the financial position of the Government of Canada.

Also contained in part 4 are amendments to the Bank of Canada Act that would allow the Minister of Finance to delegate to the bank the management of the lending of money to agent corporations. Again, Bill C-29, the second part of the budget implementation bill, puts in place measures that would safeguard and strengthen Canada's world renowned financial institutions. The Government of Canada will balance the need for stability and competition with the needs of consumers and businesses.

*Government Orders*

Budget 2016 would not only strengthen the financial institutions, it would strengthen our social institutions and our country's social safety net. Canada's employment insurance program provides economic security to Canadians when they need it most. That is why Bill C-29 contains several changes to the current employment insurance system. These changes to the eligibility rules would make it easier for new workers and those re-entering the workforce to claim benefits.

In addition to the changes in eligibility rules, the waiting period to receive unemployment insurance would also be reduced from two weeks to one week. These measures would provide unemployed workers with hundreds of dollars more, when they need it most.

I am proud of our government's efforts to extend employment insurance benefits in regions that have been severely impacted by the collapse in the price of oil and other commodities. In budget 2016, we promised those impacted by the cyclical downturn in commodity prices assistance. We will deliver with approximately \$2.5 billion investment in employment insurance over the next two fiscal years.

Make no mistake, we all want Canadians working. We all want Canadians earning a good living, with decent wages and good benefits, but in those times when Canadians are laid off, the Government of Canada will be standing there with them to make sure that they are able to stand on their own two feet and get back to work as soon as possible.

Division 6 of part 4 of the act, which amends the Royal Canadian Mint Act, would remove the requirement that the directors of the mint have experience in respect of metal fabrication or production, industrial relations, or a related field. This amendment to the Royal Canadian Mint Act would allow the government to draw on a greater pool of candidates with diverse experiences.

As I wind down my comments I would like to say a few words about a very important group of our society, our veterans. In November, we wear poppies as a symbol to remember the sacrifices made by Canadian veterans. The Government of Canada has a social covenant with all veterans and their families, a sacred obligation we must meet with respect and gratitude. In the past, all too often that covenant has unfortunately been breached.

Canada's veterans have dedicated their lives to the defence of this nation and they deserve our unwavering support. Bill C-29 would give back to veterans who have given so much in the service to all Canadians, by restoring critical access to services and ensuring the long-term financial security that disabled veterans so deserve. Provisions in this bill would mean that Canada's veterans would receive more local, in-person government services, as well as better access to case managers.

In closing, I would like to say how privileged I am, and what an honour it is to represent and serve the residents of the riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, and how happy I am to have been able to speak on second reading on Bill C-29, the budget implementation act.

• (1230)

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am just wondering about something. During the election, the

Liberals never suggested that they would invest in Canadian infrastructure by privatization.

I noticed that the bill has some fancy words in it, like “asset recycling” and “flywheel for investment”. Could the member tell us what the government means by that? Is it for privatization or not?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, when I say our platform commitment was to invest \$120 billion over the phase one and phase two periods in infrastructure across Canada, I believe that is the right process for us to follow. We are in a period of low interest rates and we need to invest in infrastructure to enable our economy to improve productivity and to put it on a path of a higher long-term growth trajectory.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I admire the hon. member's sincerity, specifically the pride he shows not only in his area but his country, something we all could benefit from.

There are comprehensive common reporting standards in this budget implementation act. It is a one-size-fits-all program that was put in place by Ottawa to meet its OECD commitments. It really discriminates against small credit unions throughout this country and has caused a fair bit of grief, particularly as we already have similar American regulations to deal with, known as FATCA.

My question is this. Does the member support these common reporting standards as they are or does he believe, like many credit unions, that they do need to be changed taking into account the different structures of credit unions in this country?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the question from my hon. member, who is an individual I have interacted with greatly in the House.

After the financial crisis in 2008, the world moved to common reporting standards for financial institutions globally across the board. What we are adopting in Bill C-29 are common reporting standards that all OECD countries have incorporated. If there are situations that present themselves where there is an anomaly, then those situations may be worth looking into. However, at the same time we need to ensure we have strong, stable financial systems and institutions that Canadians can have faith in, and that can lend to borrowers, to creditors, and to people wanting to buy a home while remaining sound.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in his speech the member referred to his experience in the banking sector and the strength of our rules and regulations over the last while. Could the member tell us a little about the impacts of weaker regulatory structures in other countries throughout the financial crisis in the last decade?

*Government Orders*

•(1235)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, if we look at the experience of the financial crisis, where regulatory structures were insufficient to deal with the complexity of products that were being sold in the market, and where legislation dealing with subprime mortgages allowed for no verification of income and jobs when lending by certain institutions globally, we ended up with very bad and tragic results. We entered into a financial crisis not seen since the Great Depression. However, that was not the case in Canada. We had a robust regulatory system for our banks and financial institutions, and lending practices that were prudent. Therefore, our banks came out of the financial crisis unscathed. We cannot say that for many of the global banks both in the United States and Europe.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Madam Speaker, during the election campaign the Liberals promised to reduce the small business tax from 11% to 9%. This is not found in Bill C-29, which is a budget implementation bill.

When will this measure be introduced, and why is it not in Bill C-29?

[*English*]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy. Yesterday morning, I met a lot of local business owners at a health and wellness expo in Vaughan—Woodbridge. I know these small and medium-sized businesses. Most, if not all, of the entrepreneurs put their heart and passion into running their businesses. It is something I am concerned about, and I want to make sure that they all succeed. In budget 2016, we have lowered, and will lower, the employment insurance premiums, which is a very significant step for them. Our small business tax rate is very competitive in Canada and globally. We offer a number of credits for our SMEs in Canada, which are the backbone of our Canadian economy. We introduced a tax cut that has benefited nine million Canadians. The introduction of the Canada child benefit will give Canadians \$2,300 more tax-free income on average to spend at their local small business enterprise. That is a good thing. We need aggregate demand to drive our economy, and that is what we are doing.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, again I go back to the issue of credit unions and the common reporting standards.

Credit unions, as we heard right across the country in pre-budget consultations, have had extreme issues in dealing with some of these FATCA regulations. I believe we heard from Desjardins that they have to submit 300-plus separate reports while some other banks only have to produce one. These common reporting standards will add to that, particularly to smaller credit unions.

The member heard the Canadian Credit Union Association request that the same kind of exemption for low risk, under 2%, assets that are held by a foreign national in a credit union be waived.

Will the member agree that we should be looking at trying to make the burden on these small credit unions less, to help grow our economy?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very important question.

When FATCA was introduced by the United States, there was much negotiation between our two countries on this issue. I will say that we do not want to overburden any institution with regulatory burden and extra cost, but we need to balance that with having institutions conform to global financial standards that are introduced, whether it is with the United States or Europe, that we agree to, and we have agreed to that.

Of course, if there are anomalies that we need to look at, we should look at them. We do not want to hinder the intermediation process in financial institutions. We want to encourage competition among credit unions and banks, and we want to keep that healthy.

I am very cognizant that many credit unions exist and are operating in rural communities. Therefore, we do not want to hinder their competitive landscape. We want to make sure that they are there to serve the local residents. I fully understand that.

•(1240)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the parliamentary budget officer was quite clear about the fact that we left a surplus at the end of the last fiscal year. We are very proud of that. In addition to leaving a surplus, we also planned to invest a significant amount in infrastructure.

The Liberals decided to add to that amount. The difference between us is that they are running a deficit of over \$30 billion this year in order to invest a bit more in infrastructure.

Can my colleague tell the House who will foot the bill?

[*English*]

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, it is important that we maintain our fiscal capacity. In Canada right now, we have the fiscal capacity to invest in our economy, to invest in Canadians, and to grow our economy.

We have committed, as the Minister of Finance stated last week, to maintain our commitments and reduce our debt-to-GDP ratio as we move along in our infrastructure program which, again, is growing our country and making sure that all Canadians who want to work have good-paying jobs.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to stand in this place and contribute to the debate on the budget implementation act. In this case, however, there are going to be some measures I will not be criticizing, such as the Liberals' favourite talking point, the middle-class tax cut.

*Government Orders*

Obviously, I would not be alone in pointing out that it seems almost unfathomable to give a tax cut to people who earn between \$100,000 and \$199,000, as the Liberals are doing, and to give absolutely no tax relief to those who are most in need, those earning under \$45,000 per year. As much as this seems incredible, I will not criticize this measure, as it was a promise clearly outlined in the Liberals' election platform, and thus my view is that they have a mandate to make these changes.

The same applies to the Liberal child care benefit changes, as much as once upon a time the Liberals mocked our Conservative government for introducing direct-to-parent support for families, suggesting that it would be for a beer and popcorn fund. Today we know that the Liberals fundamentally supported this Conservative program, with the exception of adding a fiscal means limit for the benefits. Once again, these changes were part of an election platform, and in my view, there is a mandate from the public to carry them out.

However, beyond that, I have some serious concerns about the implementation act. For example, the Prime Minister promised modest deficits of \$10 billion a year. I will not use unparliamentary language, as that is not my style. However, we all know that the Liberals have broken their promise. The only thing we do not know yet is by how much. The debt and deficit numbers seem to be growing by the fiscal quarter.

I suppose that if Canada was witnessing upgraded economic growth and increased employment, one could be more tolerant and supportive of deficit spending. After all, the former Conservative government took a similar approach. However, that approach was different in three substantial ways.

First, the spending was targeted specifically to real infrastructure and was basically targeted to shovel-ready projects. In this case, many regions of Canada are still wondering when they will see the promised Liberal infrastructure spending.

The second difference is that because the former Conservative government spent the money in the right places, we got results. Canada came out of the financial crisis atop all the G7 countries.

Finally, the Conservative economic action plan always involved a sincere commitment to return to a balanced budget, something the parliamentary budget office just confirmed would have happened for the past fiscal year had the Liberals not booked extra spending.

The Liberals promised Canadians a return to balanced budgets by the 2019-20 fiscal year, but I doubt that even Liberal MPs seriously believe that this will happen. That is my first major objection to the budget implementation bill, as it breaks the promise the Prime Minister made to get elected, and that should trouble all of us.

Another major concern I am hearing about is the proposed changes to the common reporting standard. I was fortunate to hear from a member of the finance committee earlier, the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge. Both at home in my riding and on the finance committee, credit union after credit union has warned of the very serious impact this one-size-fits-all, Liberal-imposed red tape will have on their ability to help generate economic growth and to focus on those things. To be clear, credit unions are absolutely non-partisan. The concerns we are hearing from them are very real.

I would add that credit unions in many parts of my riding, especially in smaller, rural areas, are critically important for the fiscal well-being of the community. Frankly, I am surprised that a Liberal government as obsessed with consultations and reviews to the extent this one is turning a blind eye to this and ignoring what every single credit union, large or small, has been telling us. That is concerning and raises another interesting part in the debate.

By including measures such as the common reporting standard in the budget implementation act, ultimately the BIA becomes omnibus legislation. I am not necessarily opposed to omnibus bills. However, I would point out that this is yet another broken promise from the Prime Minister, who promised not to use omnibus bills when he was in opposition.

On the same topic of broken promises, and one could say hypocrisy, I find it curious that when in opposition and when running for election, the Liberals told us that what they view as boutique tax credits were bad, and that is why they were eliminating the fitness tax credit for kids as well as eliminating the children's arts and cultural tax credit and the textbook credit for students. Parents of students lost what the Liberals called boutique tax credits for their children, then the Liberals introduced their own boutique tax credit for teachers who buy schools supplies.

● (1245)

I mention this because in effect, what the Prime Minister is really saying is that Conservative tax credits that helped children and their parents pay for those activities were bad but that Liberal tax credits that help teachers are good.

On the same theme, we now know that the Liberals will force a national carbon tax on Canadians that will also increase costs for families. It is not directly related to this BIA. However, it is curious that the Prime Minister promised a new relationship with the provinces only to turn around and force unwanted Ottawa-imposed taxation on them once elected.

That brings me to another subject that is provincially related. The budget implementation bill calls for additional money to subsidize ferry services in Atlantic Canada. Over \$50 million is quoted. While it is not my intent to pit different regions of the country against each other, there is a question of fairness, and I question why B.C. Liberal MPs are silent that no additional funding has been promised to help B.C.'s ferries in this budget.

One other troubling action in this budget implementation bill is the Liberal proposal to dramatically increase costs for small business. The section I am referring to is big CPP. The Liberal government believes that increasing the cost of creating new jobs is somehow a good idea. To be clear, the Liberal government proposal will also increase payroll costs for employers not just for any new jobs but also for existing employees.



*Government Orders*

What is extremely alarming is that in the last week, the CBC revealed that even internal documents, obtained from the finance minister's own department, have revealed that an expanded, big CPP, whatever we want to call it, will actually be a drag on the Canadian economy at least until 2030. Even worse, this misguided policy will actually suppress jobs until 2035.

Let us all think about that for a moment. At a time when everyone in this room knows that our economic forecasts are being downgraded, at a time when everyone knows that our job numbers are a serious concern, the Liberal government is forcing a policy on Canadians that they know will harm the economy and hurt jobs for the next 15 to 20 years. That is completely unacceptable.

Worse is that this open and transparent government is hiding these internal documents. Is it any wonder that the CFIB is strongly opposed to this policy? The Liberals clearly do not care. They are forcing these increased payroll costs on Canadians anyway. That should concern all of us.

I could continue to criticize other aspects of this budget implementation bill, and there are many. However, I believe that it is important to also point out a few points that I support. One of those is the continued support for mineral exploration tax credits. Mining is an important industry in several areas in my riding and for that matter in areas nearby in my former riding.

I also recognize the government for continuing to support the CETA deal, the comprehensive economic trade agreement with the European Union. The former government spent considerable energy and effort getting to where we are now. Trade is not only important to many employers in my riding but provides expanded opportunities for farmers and other producers. As much as a former Liberal government used NAFTA as a political chip, it is refreshing that it is not the case with CETA. Now if only we could get such a clear position from the Liberal government regarding the trans-Pacific partnership.

While there are certainly some measures in the bill I support, which I have briefly touched on, there are of course some omissions, and frankly, I remain stunned that the Liberal government continues to do nothing to better promote internal trade.

I may no longer be the critic for internal trade, but I will point out that the government is willing to impose a national carbon tax on the provinces. How could it be afraid to elevate the Comeau decision of the Supreme Court and seek clarification that internal trade is the right of all Canadians?

• (1250)

Not everyone supports international trade, but I have yet to meet someone, aside from, apparently, the Liberals, who does not support the principle of buying Canadian, and that means all Canadians in all jurisdictions.

When people from Europe or the U.S.A. visit Canada and hear that it is still illegal for a winery in British Columbia to directly sell to a customer in Ontario, they shake their heads in disbelief. There are a few people shaking their heads in disbelief over in the corner, and that is a good thing. I am glad to see that we all find that component contemptible.

This budget implementation act could have attempted to fix it. In fact, in the budget document, there is one word on internal trade, and that is the word "internal". It is no secret that the former Conservative government made strides to eliminate federal barriers against internal trade, and I will continue to encourage the Liberal government to do the same.

One other measure missing from this budget, which I am sure will raise some eyebrows, is the restoration of a \$10,000 tax-free savings account contribution. I mention this because it is not a secret that investment in Canada is currently on the decline. We need investment. Investment is what helps create jobs and often produces the shiny new green technologies that Liberals are often very keen to subsidize. For many Canadians, their TFSAs are invested, more often than not, in Canadian companies. Even if they are invested in savings, those savings are then loaned out to Canadian companies.

Expanding the TFSA contribution is a great way to encourage not just savings but investment. Let us not forget that all deposits going into tax-free savings accounts are net after-tax dollars. While the returns people make in tax-free savings accounts may be tax free, rest assured that when they withdraw that money, often to complete a major purchase, they typically pay sales tax or excise tax on that purchase. Expanded tax-free savings account contributions would be a great way to encourage investment in our economy.

Also missing, in my view, is any incentive to increase the supply of new housing. If we can increase the supply of new housing, we could help combat higher prices and significantly support local economies and create jobs. More importantly, if we could increase home ownership down the road, we would increase home equity, not to mention that if we could get more people out of rentals and into home ownership, thanks to new supply, that would open up the rental market and increase affordability.

There are changes in this budget implementation act that focus specifically on the Excise Act. Offering a change in the amount that is rebated, the threshold amount, would help with affordability and would have the benefit of stimulating growth, particularly in markets where growth is desperately needed.

In fact, this budget implementation act is totally silent on these points. Based on the changes the Liberals made to the mortgage rules, it is obvious that the Liberals' answer to unaffordable housing is to ensure that fewer Canadians will qualify to buy homes. Frankly, that is unacceptable. Even documents from the finance minister suggest that these one-size-fits-all Liberal-imposed mortgage changes could lower the housing market by almost 10% in the first year.

*Government Orders*

Let us not forget what that really means. It means that 10% of Canadian families who have been scrimping and saving to buy homes will be told, sorry, it is not that they cannot afford their own homes, it is that they just do not qualify under the new rules that have been put in place. This is from the government that is all about the middle class, as long as they are not middle-class prospective home owners.

Yes, Toronto and Vancouver have troubles, but these Liberal government-imposed mortgage restrictions adversely impact all Canadians. Yet Vancouver area Liberal MPs say that they were not even consulted on the changes, nor for that matter were mortgage brokers, realtors, or anyone else who makes a living in the real estate industry. I suppose the message to them is that it would be better to attend a \$1,500-a-plate fundraiser with the minister next time around.

Before I close, I am going to make a few predictions. The first is that this budget implementation act, which already breaks the Prime Minister's promise of a modest \$10-billion-a-year deficit, will only be the tip of the iceberg for massive amounts of more Liberal debt. I will also predict that economic growth will continue to be downgraded over the next few years. That is something we have heard at the finance committee. That is something we have heard from the Governor of the Bank of Canada. It is something we have heard from the parliamentary budget office.

•(1255)

I also think that job numbers will not significantly rebound, nor investment dramatically increase, yet taxes will continue to rise. Eventually, at some point down the road, some very difficult decisions will need to be made. This is where the budget implementation act is taking us, which is why I am opposing it.

I would like to thank the members of this place for taking the time to hear my comments today. We often have our disagreements. However, I know that those who come here all care considerably for their constituents, for the success of our country, and for the opportunities we can grow for our people in the short term and the long term. That is something we all take very seriously.

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear from the member from the opposite side about the decade of darkness. They had over 10 years to act on the housing market, to make sure it was a sustainable market. Instead of ensuring that they did something, they watched that market overheat and overheat, and did not do anything. They did not even do any studying on the issue. Finally, we are faced with a tough decision of how to make sure that what the economists call “a bubble” does not happen, that we do not see a bursting of that bubble, that we can ensure that people do not lose value in their homes and lose their homes eventually, like in the United States in 2008. Therefore, I am surprised by what the member is saying, because he is essentially asking us to do nothing.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite. I certainly appreciate his contributions here and also in finance committee.

First, for a reservist to be talking about the decade of darkness and to somehow allude that it came from the previous Conservative government, I do not think is necessarily the right term to use. He

knows very clearly that the decade of darkness was in the 1990s and had to do with the military.

Former minister Flaherty, and after that minister Oliver, worked very hard to work with the financial industry. We removed the ability to utilize 40-year mortgages. We brought it down to keep the market in a stable position. His is the party that has suggested to young people, “Vote for us. We'll increase growth. We'll increase opportunities for you.” However, they made it more difficult to save for a home by cutting the tax-free savings account. They have made it more difficult to qualify for a home. They have made it more difficult to pay off student debt by adding extra carbon taxes and adding on to CPP. Most of the students will not benefit from the middle-income tax cut they have offered. I think that is wrong.

•(1300)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have an individual in my riding who called me this last week. His name is Brian. He is a young husband, father, raising a family, making ends meet. He called and was very distraught about what he is seeing coming down the pike from this government for young families in regard to a carbon tax and CPP. He indicated that his wife is a stay-at-home mom, and wants to be that, but now they are facing the reality that she will have to go to work to try to make ends meet.

I would like the member to comment a bit more on what he sees as the hazards of this particular—

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate what the member is saying. I am hearing many similar concerns in Summerland and West Kelowna in regard to the qualification regarding mortgage. The signal they are being sent is that the goalposts have been pushed back, they would say almost indefinitely, and with little or no consultation. It seems that this is about appeasing concerns about the Vancouver market. We have heard from credit unions, and they have asked us not to do anymore market interference. The changes from the B.C. government's foreign held property tax are new, and they want to let the market adapt to that. However, the government has added more things to it.

This goes, again, to the way that the Liberal government talks and then the way it does not follow through. The Liberals talked about Canada summer jobs. They gave more money to it. They gave more jobs, but they actually reduced the amount of weeks that someone could qualify. Everyone got a little less, and they spread it out a lot more.

These are the differences. As opposition, I know it is our job to scrutinize and criticize. I want to support things happening in Canada. I want to see growth. However, let us be up front with Canadians with what is actually happening. I am concerned about economic growth. I am concerned that the plan that the government has put us on will not provide the jobs and investment we need.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, when we look back at what the Liberal platform involved in October 2015, in last year's election, specifically on the subject of infrastructure, there was mention of the establishment of a Canadian infrastructure bank to provide low-cost financing for new infrastructure projects, and the federal government using its strong credit rating and lending authority to make it easier for municipalities to make these kind of investments.

What we were starting to hear last week, though, and I expect more details will come in tomorrow's economic update, is this new phrase of "asset recycling". We are quite concerned in the NDP that this is opening the door to privatization of some of the major infrastructure projects that our tax dollars have funded over the years. We are concerned, of course, about the higher rates of holds and user fees that might be passed on to the Canadian consumer.

While I appreciate that the Conservative Party may have a different philosophical approach to this, I am wondering if the member could comment on the differences between what was promised in the Liberal platform and what seems to be emerging during this week's economic update.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate that member is a fellow British Columbian. It is always welcome to talk about issues that are close to our province.

First, I may not always agree with the NDP. Quite frankly, when we have campaigns in my riding, usually the NDP is very firm and very principled. However, New Democrats ran on a platform, just like I did. We may have disagreements on what is good for Canada, but we both put out to the people what we think is the right remedy, given this time and space.

What we have seen is that the Liberals ran on a very clear program, and, once in office, they did not want to talk about that program as much. We have seen economic forecasts continually constrict, and now we know why. It is because the plan is not what Mr. Barton, the head of the government's own Advisory Council on Economic Growth, has said. He has put forward a program, a menu, that was not put to the people, and I think that is a tacit admission that the government is in trouble. I think all parties need to start being very clear with Canadians on where we are and what it will take.

I do not know if it is because governments become insulated or want to only see their view prevail, but I do not see that the government is going to admit that its programs, its whole stimulus of \$30 billion, that it has proposed in this year's budget, is doing what it should. The government might want to use tomorrow as an opportunity to step back from that dangerous path and maybe get on to an economic program that will put us on the path for jobs and growth.

• (1305)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am sure the member would not be surprised if I said I totally disagree with his assessment. At the end of the day, what we have seen is a proactive government that has come up with a plan that will put more money in the pockets of Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. It enhances the child

benefit program. It has the most significant infrastructure from every region of our country.

I believe that Canadians understand and appreciate the degree to which the government truly cares about the economy, and we see that in the actions the government has taken. We could also talk about trade and so forth.

Would the member not agree, at the very least, that the Canadian economy as a whole is doing better than other countries around the world in economic performance, and acknowledge that there is a different approach and style of government between this government and the Harper government? We have a more proactive government wanting to see the economy do better, and, in particular, a special focus on the middle class. That was lacking from the previous Harper government.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Madam Speaker, if the member had listened to my speech, he would know that I said there are areas, such as the child care benefit changes, as well as the middle income tax cut, as the Liberals like to call it, that were part of the platform and they had a mandate to implement that.

I would step back and say that we have projections from the parliamentary budget office that the tax cut will cause us to go into deficit. If we are reducing taxes for people who are in the \$100,000 to \$199,000 income range, and they end up having to pay that money back later on, it is a wash.

Going to the child benefit, all you are doing is redistributing the same amount of money but in fewer hands. Bloomberg did a study that said only 15% of that amount has actually gone out, when your government expected 50% of that to be invested in the economy.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind the member that when you are speaking, you need to be speaking to the Chair and not to the individual members. Resuming debate.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to share my time with the member for Gatineau.

It is with immense pleasure and pride that I rise to speak in favour of Bill C-29, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures.

Our government knows that many Canadians are struggling to get ahead. These struggles are very real in my home province of Alberta, where people are continuing to face an economic downturn brought on by the extended low price of natural resource products.

The people of Edmonton Centre, and Albertans at large, asked for a partner in the federal government, and our government has responded with historic investments. It did so and will continue to do so because it knows that Alberta helped the Canadian economy for years. It is committed to helping Alberta in its time of need. It also did so and will continue to do so because it makes good economic sense at this time.

*Government Orders*

What exactly has the federal government done? It has provided \$250 million to the Government of Alberta as a fiscal stabilization fund; \$750 million to the EDC to assist with companies that are looking to export and provide financial services to SMEs in the oil and gas sector; \$500 million from the Business Development Corporation for loan guarantees and services to SMEs directly in the oil and gas sector; and recently, another \$0.5 billion from the BDC, matched by the Alberta Treasury Branch Financial corporation, to help with stressed businesses.

In addition to that, there was \$307 million through the disaster financial assistance arrangement, through the Government of Canada to the Province of Alberta, to help Fort McMurray recover. That was the first time in history that the Government of Canada has moved so quickly to respond to a natural disaster in partnership with a provincial government.

There is a growing consensus in Canada and around the world that governments need to invest, not only to boost short-term economic growth, but to set the stage for long-term and sustainable growth as well. In fact, Christine Lagarde, president and CEO of the International Monetary Fund, has said that Canada's investment strategy needs to let loose, needs to go viral around the world, because our policies are smart economic policies for the long term.

Canada has the lowest debt to GDP ratio of any G7 country, and interest rates are at historic lows. Now is the ideal time for Canada to invest in its future success. That is why Canadians elected us on a platform to make historic investments in public transit, green infrastructure, and social infrastructure.

These investments mean good, well-paying jobs for tradespeople, engineers, architects, labourers, and suppliers. Each of these jobs has a family behind it, and each of these jobs mean that those families have income to support other businesses. Such investments are not only important, they are vital for Canadians and Albertans during these tough times.

That is why our government, working with the Government of Alberta, is investing \$1.08 billion in public transit, water maintenance, in Alberta. That multiplier effect will mean over \$3 billion in real projects taking place on the ground in Alberta. It is why we have worked with the Government of Alberta to invest \$130 million more into affordable housing. It is why we have made the historic down payment on the Fort McMurray rebuilding program.

This is only phase one. This government is there for Alberta now, and will continue to be a partner in growth for all Albertans. We understand, as well, that a strong economy starts with a strong middle class. When middle-class Canadians have more money to save, invest, and grow the economy, everyone benefits. A strengthened middle class means that hard-working Canadians can look forward to a good standard of living and better prospects for their children.

• (1310)

[Translation]

Too many middle-class families are having trouble making ends meet with the tough times in Alberta. Our government stepped up to the plate and implemented the Canada child benefit, a coherent, common sense policy that will help nearly nine million Canadians

every year. The time has come for the Government of Canada to help the families who need it most and give them the money they need to be able to afford to raise their children.

[English]

It is why our government created the new Canada child benefit, or CCB, which will directly help middle-class families with the costs of raising their children. I have heard it in my own riding. Time and time again, people have come up to me and said, "Thank you. I am receiving the monthly cheques. I no longer have to make the choice between food for my children or clothes on their backs. I no longer have to make the decision between school fees or paying my rent."

Edmonton families are using the support from the CCB to invest directly in our community in a variety of ways, from enrolling their children in after school care, sports programs, music lessons, leadership activities, and even saving for their own post-secondary education. It is startling to think that some of the most vulnerable families in our community have trouble even putting food on the table.

[Translation]

In this country, too many children are still living in poverty.

[English]

As members already know, on July 20, eligible Canadian families started receiving their CCB payments. These replace previous benefits and provide more support to nine out of 10 families in this country.

We ended the damaging legacy of the previous government's poorly thought out taxable benefit that left thousands of families with a surprise tax bill at the end of the year. I heard this at the door, that people were surprised and not happy. They were disappointed by that mis-thought-out policy.

[Translation]

The Canada child benefit is simple. It is tax free, and it targets the families who need it most.

[English]

Our Canada child benefit is improving the well-being of families across the country, and we are giving them an opportunity to succeed. In Alberta alone, it is raising 46,000 children out of poverty and giving each one of them the opportunity for a better life.

*Government Orders*

Now more than ever, it is important that post-secondary education remains affordable and accessible. I have four remarkable post-secondary institutions in my riding: NorQuest College; the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, otherwise known as NAIT; the MacEwan University; and the Enterprise Square campus of my alma mater, the University of Alberta. I am so proud to represent these campuses and the tens of thousands of students who attend them.

Students must have access to meaningful work at the beginning of their careers and not be burdened by increasing student debt. In this regard, budget 2016 makes post-secondary education more affordable for students from low and middle-income families and will make it easier to repay student debt. This is enabling the economy of tomorrow. I know, because I had the opportunity to access student loans and debt forgiveness. I paid my loans back, but that made all the difference in being able to pursue my own education when my family was not able to support my tuition or living costs. That is exactly what we are doing now to make post-secondary education more affordable for more Canadian students.

We also need to ensure that we are supporting Canadians who need support right now. Therefore, Canada's employment insurance program provides economic security to Canadians when they need it most. Whatever the circumstance, no Canadian should struggle to get the assistance they need.

To make sure these systems are in place, we have proposed several changes to the EI system. Changes to eligibility rules will make it easier for new workers and those re-entering the workforce to claim benefits. To ease the burden, our government has also extended employment insurance benefits in all regions in Alberta. The waiting period will also be reduced from two weeks to one week, which will provide unemployed workers with hundreds of more dollars at the time they need it the most.

Our budget has made significant new investments to support seniors in their retirement years. Increased benefits will ensure that Canadian seniors have a dignified, comfortable, and secure retirement so that my mom and all of our parents and grandparents are supported as they age.

As a matter of fairness for all taxpayers, Bill C-29 will prevent underground economic activity and tax evasion and will combat tax loopholes. We will take action to prevent tax evasion both at home and abroad. The government will invest in effective administration and enforcement of tax laws and will propose actions to improve the integrity of Canada's system.

Hard-working small business owners who create jobs and benefit the economy are the ones who need, and should be benefiting from, tax measures. Our efforts will improve the fairness and integrity of the tax system and contribute to fiscal sustainability. That is exactly what Albertans expect from us.

Finally, Canada's financial sector is world renowned and remained stable through the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath. We have the last Liberal government to thank for putting the fundamentals in place for the most robust financial system in the G20. To keep Canada's financial sectors strong, the government will strengthen the framework that regulates financial institutions, and we will balance

the need for stability and competition with the needs of consumers and businesses.

Bill C-29 also makes it clear that the shareholders and creditors of Canada's largest banks are responsible for their risks, not taxpayers. In this way, Canadians will not be stuck with the tab in the event of an economic shock.

• (1315)

[*Translation*]

The measures set out in this budget are essential to the proper development and well-being of all Canadians, including those who need it most, and that is why I am asking all of my colleagues in the House to vote in favour of Bill C-29.

[*English*]

Again, our budget is delivering on the needs of Albertans and Canadians. We were elected on a promise to increase prosperity for all Canadians, and that is a promise we are proudly delivering on.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the eloquence and quality of my hon. colleague's presentation are truly excellent. They were excellent as well during the election campaign. In his own speech, he himself raised the fact that the Liberals had promised a whole series of things in their latest plan, in the last election campaign, and one of those things was to incur just a little deficit of \$10 billion over three years.

The first thing we found out, and are now realizing, is that that little \$10 billion per year is mutating, not into \$15 billion, not \$20 billion or \$25 billion, but \$30 billion, maybe even \$35 billion. Some observers are even talking about \$40 billion for the first year.

Does my colleague consider that making promises during an election campaign and not keeping them afterward is a way of respecting all of his fellow citizens and Canadian voters?

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

It should be noted, now that we form the government of Canada, that our approach ensures that our economy will experience full growth. That is what is behind all of our planning.

Our two strategies, our two main themes, are to invest in our economy with historic infrastructure investments, and to provide impetus for and increase the number of immigrants we invite into our country.

It is important not to forget that the ratio of our deficit to our nearly \$3-trillion economy is among the lowest in the world. We are going to ensure that that ratio will continue to fall. That is what we will be talking about, and that is what we will be delivering to Canadians.

*Government Orders*

• (1320)

[English]

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Madam Speaker, during the election, we had 12 community debates in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia. In every one of them, the Liberal candidate talked about how the Liberal Party, if elected, would lower the small business tax rate from 11% to 9%.

Small businesses make up almost 95% of the businesses in Canada and are very important in my riding and across Canada.

I would like to ask the member, what happened to that promise? Should a promise made during an election not be kept once a party is actually in government?

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, I think what is important to note, and it is interesting that you had 12, and I think we had 13, and one of the things—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the parliamentary secretary to address the answers and questions to the House.

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

What was important in our campaign, and since, is to make sure as a government that the ratio of our deficit to the size of the economy remains among the lowest in G7, and certainly in the G20.

What is important is that we continue investing in small businesses.

As my hon. colleague knows, the more money we have in the pockets of middle-class Canadians, the more they will spend in their local economies and the more that will feed small business. We know, as well as the hon. member, that small businesses are the backbone of our community and our country. We will continue investing in programs that will benefit small businesses from coast to coast to coast.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada, in the last number of months, has increased the GIS, amended the CPP agreement, and decreased the age of retirement from 67 to 65.

Would my colleague comment on seniors and how they have benefited under the government thus far?

**Mr. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, it was important to us in the campaign and has been since we have been in government to make sure that we provide for the middle class, including seniors. After listening to Canadians for two years before the last election, it was clear that some of the most vulnerable Canadians are seniors. That is why we increased the GIS provisions for the most marginalized and poorest Canadian seniors; why we also made historic changes to the CPP; and why we are very committed to making sure that seniors, including my mom, aunts, and uncles, are able to retire in dignity across the country.

[Translation]

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Edmonton-Centre for sharing his time with me.

As always, it is an honour and a privilege to represent the citizens of Gatineau in the House. It is a great honour for any parliamentarian to represent the views and perspectives of their fellow citizens.

It is my great pleasure to add my support to Bill C-29, a second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures.

Last spring, our government tabled its first budget. On the whole, this is a budget that respects and keeps our election commitments. Furthermore, it is based on judicious investments to make our economy grow, to better help our middle class, and to ensure that our communities and our country continue to grow. Bill C-29 is also a follow-up to the plan of my hon. colleague the Minister of Finance, the plan for economic growth and fairness in Canada.

This bill provides measures that will help families, provide seniors with greater flexibility, protect consumers, and improve the fairness and integrity of the tax system.

[English]

When working-class and middle-class Canadians have more money to save, invest, and grow the economy, everyone benefits. That is why, in budget 2016, the government decided to invest in the Canadian economy to set the stage for long-term growth. Canada has the lowest debt to GDP ratio of any G7 country and interest rates are at historic lows. Now is the ideal time for Canada to invest in its future success: in our young people, in our communities, and in ourselves. When we have an economy that works for the middle class, we have a country that works for everyone.

• (1325)

[Translation]

My colleagues opposite spoke of the pressure on families. We all have in our ridings families looking for more flexibility, for help making ends meet every month, and for ways for their children to have an equal opportunity to succeed in life, go to university and take part in sports, art programs, recreational activities and so forth.

Speaking of investments, we on this side of the House put in place what is probably the most important social innovation of the past 10 or 20 years in Canada: the Canada child benefit. On July 20, families in Gatineau received their first Canada child benefit cheque, as announced in budget 2016. In the riding of Gatineau alone, the Canada child benefit is helping 10,600 families and 18,480 children.

The average monthly payment in Gatineau is around \$520. That is \$520 every month, tax-free, that can be used for food, skates, clothes, child care expenses, school supplies and more. That is \$520 every month that goes back into the local and national economies.

*Government Orders*

On this side of the House, we are extremely proud of this social innovation, this benefit for the middle class, the parents in my community and all across Canada. It is the most important public policy in decades.

Moreover, under Bill C-29, the Canada child benefit will be fully indexed to inflation starting in 2020. This will ensure not only that this important measure will be sustainable, but also that benefits will rise every year starting in 2020.

[*English*]

The budget implementation act also supports our seniors by helping them to retire in more comfort and with dignity. In budget 2016, we repealed the provision in the Old Age Security Act that increased the age of eligibility for old age security and guaranteed income supplement benefits from 65 to 67, and allowance benefits from 60 to 62, over the 2023 to 2029 period. Budget 2016, also increased the guaranteed income supplement top-up benefit by up to \$947 annually for the most vulnerable single seniors, starting in July 2016.

[*Translation*]

I do not know if it is the same for my colleagues, but I get asked by seniors what it means to have \$80 more than expected at the end of the month. They ask me what that means for seniors on a fixed income and for their quality of life. Well, it helps them pay the rent and buy groceries, and it may even give them the means to take part in sports and other recreational activities, for example. That is very important at their age. I get comments like this a lot, as do all my colleagues in the House, I am sure.

[*English*]

This measure represents an investment of over \$670 million per year, and will improve the financial security of about 900,000 single seniors across Canada.

[*Translation*]

That is not all. In this second budget implementation bill, we are delivering on the solemn promise we made in budget 2016 to support senior couples who face higher costs of living and are at an increased risk of poverty because they must live apart. We are all aware of cases where, unfortunately, because of health concerns or for other reasons, spouses are separated from one another because one of them has to be institutionalized.

When couples who are receiving the guaranteed income supplement and the spouse's allowance have to live apart for reasons beyond their control, each of them will receive benefits based on their individual income.

For seniors in such a situation, it will mean an average increase to household income of \$3,500 per year. That is very important for our most vulnerable seniors, who will be treated more fairly and receive more help from the government through the guaranteed income supplement. These new measures enable the government to treat seniors with greater fairness and allow them to live with dignity in retirement.

● (1330)

[*English*]

Canadians deserve financial consumer protection that keeps pace with their needs. We have seen this debate all over the world in the wake of the financial crisis. Bill C-29 would amend the Bank Act in order to strengthen and modernize the financial consumer protection framework. The financial sector plays an important role in supporting economic growth. Canada's financial sector weathered the 2008 financial crisis well because it was built on solid foundations. The government is seeking to build on this strength.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-29 amends the Bank Act to consolidate and streamline provisions that apply to a bank or an authorized foreign bank in relation to the protection of customers and the public. This was another consumer protection commitment our government made in budget 2016 that will contribute to the financial security of Canadians.

The federal government is showing leadership by adopting targeted measures to better protect consumers of financial products. Regarding the tax system, our government committed to implementing an action plan to combat international tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

All these measures contained in Bill C-29 or in the budget deliver on our commitment to get Canada's middle class back on its feet and make it once again a priority for the Government of Canada.

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, during the election, the Liberals said that they would invest in Canadian infrastructure. That is on page 15 of their platform. During the last couple of weeks there have been reports suggesting the Liberals are considering selling off some of our public infrastructure, such as airports, bridges, and ports, which were not mentioned in their platform.

Since budget 2016, the government has mused about asset recycling and flywheel for reinvestment. What do the Liberals mean by these fancy words? Is it to privatize our public infrastructure?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, the commitment we made during the campaign was to double infrastructure spending to about \$120 billion over 10 years, compared to the \$65 billion mentioned or promised by the previous government. That is what we are going to do.

In communities from coast to coast to coast, including in Gatineau, we are starting to feel the effects of our basic infrastructure spending in social housing, recreational infrastructure, and so on.

*Government Orders*

Our platform also included the possibility of increasing our infrastructure spending through an infrastructure bank or some other alternative funding mechanism. The goal was to offer Canadians other ways to fund strategic infrastructure in order to increase exports, create jobs, and boost trade.

I hope we will continue this debate.

• (1335)

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on an excellent speech. He reminded the House about all of the promises the Liberal government made and has kept, promises relating to youth, seniors, the middle class, and economic growth.

Can my hon. colleague talk about the impact those promises have had on youth, seniors, growth, the middle class, and job creation in his riding? I am sure he can share many examples from his riding because the Liberal plan is all about growth.

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Maurice—Champlain.

Gatineau is a very dynamic city. It is constantly growing, and its population is younger than average. Its needs reflect that. The fact is that we have a growing need for basic infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewage, and waste water treatment.

The infrastructure investments our government will be making in partnership with the Government of Quebec and our municipal partners will enable us to meet the needs of a steadily growing community like Gatineau.

As a demographically young community, Gatineau has families and middle-class families with young children, all of whom benefit greatly from the Canada child benefit. For example, hockey and gymnastics clubs and our cultural associations will thrive because children will have more opportunities to participate in various activities. With an extra \$520 or so per month tax free, parents will be able to invest in their children. This measure will help them make ends meet.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to share my time this afternoon with the member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

It gives me great pleasure to speak to bill C-29, the budget implementation act. Seven months after tabling the budget, Canadians are beginning to recognize the consequences, and the picture is not pretty. Being as it is Halloween, it is appropriate that we refer to the budget as downright scary. It is like a vampire sucking the blood out of most Canadians. The Liberals love spinning the budget into a huge spiderweb to catch people. Small businesses are upset, thinking it is Frankenstein who has come back from the dead.

Even with the low Canadian dollar, the Liberals have generated 20,000 fewer manufacturing jobs in our country. I thought for a moment it was Houdini, because these jobs just vanished. My province of Saskatchewan has lost 4,000 jobs in August over the same period from last year. The trend continued in September with

6,000 fewer people working during the same period as the year before. We have 42,000 unemployed in Saskatchewan currently.

Doug Elliott, the publisher of *Sask Trends Monitor*, says that going back to 1986 this is the highest number of unemployment in the month of August. Saskatchewan could very well see its first year of negative job growth since the year 2001, and that is scary. We have not seen unemployment levels like this in over two decades. Small business owners do not want the trick or treat, they want an opportunity. They know how best to grow the economy. The Liberals promised a reduction in their tax from 11% to 9%, and we have yet to see that.

Then we have Dracula with his fangs out ready to suck more out of the economy with the proposed carbon tax. This dark cloud hanging over this haunted house will not help with job creation in our country. It is hard to suck blood out of a stone, but the Liberal government seems determined to try. The carbon tax was never mentioned a year ago during the election, and now we know it always was behind one of its trap doors.

To quote Marilyn Braun-Pollon of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the state of business health in our country has deteriorated. Hiring plans remain very weak, with only 10% of business owners looking to hire full time, while at the same time 17% are foreseeing layoffs. This is deeply concerning as we head into the holiday season where generally more opportunity exists, mainly though for part-time employment. Retail spending is effectively flat in our province this year, a broad category that includes everything from automobiles, to clothing, to furniture and food. When we adjust for inflation, that means the total sales volumes in the province have declined by more than 2% over last year at this time.

Even the finance minister was quoted as saying that Canadians should get used to the so-called job churn. No wonder our youth were upset last week at the Prime Minister during a briefing. Our youth right now are experiencing record unemployment, and it is not what was promised to these millennials by the Liberals a year ago. It was all about sunny ways. Now we find out the clouds have rolled in and the government has no answers.

The full moon though has returned. The Liberals have gone back to their old ways of pay to play. Have they not heard from their previous skeletons in the closet? There are more ghosts and goblins as the Bank of Canada has determined more bad news for this economy, downgrading the country's growth outlook yet once again.

Ted Mallett, who is the CFIB's chief economist, says that employment is a big area of concern. While employment plans tend to experience, as we all know, seasonal fluctuation, this October's downward turn was sharper than we have ever seen it in the past. Investment plans have also dropped to a post-recession low.



*Government Orders*

• (1340)

Nearly 50% of Saskatchewan's small businesses plan to freeze or even cut salaries. We have not factored in the cost of a CPP increase or the much talked about carbon tax. This is more evidence that now is not the time for this carbon tax. I guess it is like CETA. The Liberals played a disappearing act and now they want to be Casper the Friendly Ghost, but I want to remind the House that it was the Conservative government that did all of the heavy lifting for this CETA agreement.

While the Liberals promised a modest deficit of \$10 billion to stimulate the economy, it looks like they were dead wrong. They continue to throw more deficit dollars at this problem. Let us remember that a year ago, the Liberals promised they could simply spend their way into prosperity. By most measures, I would say Canadian families are worse off than they were a year ago. Good jobs are in short supply and the vast majority of these new jobs created under the current government are really part time, which explains why weekly earnings for the average worker in this country are lower.

On the weekend, I was home in my riding of Saskatoon—Grasswood and had an opportunity to talk to several young people. Many said they had two and three part-time jobs just to make ends meet. Saskatchewan people, as many know, have always had a work ethic, but there comes a time when they see no light at the end of the tunnel.

Instead of growing the middle class, the government is breaking the middle class. Just last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that our Conservative budget would have resulted in a \$2.9 billion surplus for the year 2015-16, but we all know that a surplus is not in the Liberals' vocabulary. They continue to run massive debts. Where it will stop, no one knows. When will this circus stop?

The child care benefit will not be indexed until the year 2020. The PBO has estimated that indexing, in fact enriching, the CCB would cost over \$42 million over the next five years. Where, then, will the Liberals get this money? This program would cost more than double the original amount budgeted if indexed over this five-year period.

The current government reminds me of the show a way back called *The Munsters*. It was televised back then in black and white. I ask the current government to step out of the dark ages and realize you are spending our children's and grandchildren's money, with no hope of ever balancing the budget.

• (1345)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the member to address his comments to the Chair and not the government.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. François-Philippe Champagne (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, for all of those watching and listening to us, what is really scary is that the Conservatives just do not get it. They voted against the middle-class tax cut, they do not believe in climate change, they do not believe in investing in Canadians, and they do not believe in a plan for growth.

That is really scary. That is why people watching should be scared of members who voted against the tax cut for the middle class.

Our plan to invest in growth in this country, in Canadian families, in innovation, and in infrastructure was not only applauded by Canadians, it was applauded around the world. The IMF managing director said that she wished Canada's plan would go viral around the world. The front page of *The Economist* this week said that Canada is an example to the world.

My question is simple. Why did the member, for whom I have enormous respect, vote against the middle-class tax cut for Canadians in this country?

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that Liberals talk about nine out of every 10 Canadians benefiting. However, I should mention, because I am a former sportscaster in my city, that they eliminated the sports tax rebate and arts tax rebate. The middle class was what the previous government believed in. Families cherished those two programs, in particular. It provided a chance for kids to get off the couch and participate. Those are two programs that sorely need to be reinstated in this country right now.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's words. They were very haunting. Some of the statistics he mentioned were bone-chilling. It is quite spooky when we look at the horizon.

I am from Ontario and the member is from Saskatchewan. We see that the same staffers from Queen's Park who ran the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals have moved all the way up to Ottawa. We paid their expenses. They are welcome. When we look at their 12 years of massive Liberal spending, we see more taxes, more government red tape, and more jobs leaving. He listed a bunch of statistics about how his province is hurting, too. Maybe he could tell us how and why this type of thinking does not work.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Madam Speaker, yes, our province was the driving engine of this country for years, and now we are not. We are hurting, along with Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador. We have seen commodity prices go down, but at the same time, the government wants to impose a carbon tax. Would our previous government in 2008 have imposed a tax against the auto manufacturers of Ontario? No, we did the right thing back then. We propped them up, because we knew the economy of Ontario was in serious trouble back in 2008 and 2009.

Here we are with a government that wants to impose a carbon tax against our province and the rest of Canada at a time when Canadians, and my province of Saskatchewan, simply cannot afford it.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we are trying to address an ever-increasing child poverty rate. The last 10 years of the previous government saw this rate increase. I wonder if the member could comment on why today we find a poverty rate for children of over 11%.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Saskatoon West. In her former job as director of United Way in our city, she did a lot of work helping our community for years and years.

She knows, as well as everyone in our city, that we have a poverty issue with children in our city and in our province right now. The food banks are used more than ever before. However, with a strong economy we can hope that this poverty issue can get dealt with in our province.

● (1350)

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Madam Speaker, when my finance critic colleague asked me whether I wanted to speak today to the government's budgetary measures in Bill C-29, I jumped at the opportunity. I would even say that I am pleased to speak to this bill today.

Those familiar with my political career know that before being elected to the House of Commons, this grand institution, I tried my hand at provincial politics and was the mayor of Victoriaville. They know why I am in politics and what my motivations are. Those have not changed since 2003, when I first considered entering politics. They are also shared by many Canadians.

One of the reasons I got into politics was my concern over how the government is managing public finances and the debt burden it is placing on future generations, our children and our grandchildren. I see every level of government taking the easy route and spending money, which always leads to Canadians paying more taxes, even if those taxes are sometimes used to fund investments.

The other very important reason I got into politics is the cynicism that people have about politicians. I will elaborate on that a little later in my speech. When I asked people what they thought about my going into politics, they told me that politicians never keep their promises. That seems to be true of those across the way, the Liberal government having failed to deliver on a number of its promises. I will name a few, but first I want to talk about federal public finances.

How many times have the Minister of Finance and his colleagues refused to accept here in the House a report from the parliamentary budget officer in which he confirms what we in the official opposition have been saying, specifically, that we left the House in order when we were voted out of office in the last election? Canada had sound public finances and was in the black.

Despite all that, at every possible opportunity and in every forum, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister kept saying that we left the country in disarray and in massive debt. I invite those listening to consult the archives or even simply Google "Minister of Finance" and they will see the minister was in denial.

When he appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance on October 24, 2016, the parliamentary budget officer confirmed that

the Conservative government left a surplus of \$2.9 billion in the 2014-15 budget. For those who may not know this, the parliamentary budget officer is neutral. He is neither Liberal, Conservative, NDP, nor a member of the Green Party. He works independently to analyze Canada's public finances.

One of the government's first promises, which set it apart from the second official opposition party, was that it would only run up a small deficit of \$10 billion. On the contrary. Today, as we can see, the deficit stands at more than \$30 billion and it is spiralling out of control. It is not the official opposition pointing this out. The economists at Canada's major financial institutions have been telling the government for weeks to stop spending. TD Bank and the Bank of Montreal have told the government that enough is enough, and that it has lost control of its finances.

● (1355)

We are not against borrowing to stimulate the economy. There are times when we must. Everyone agrees with that. The problem with the Liberal government is that it does not have a repayment plan. I will use an analogy for the people watching at home. If a person wants to buy a house, goes to the bank, and applies for a loan to purchase a house worth about \$200,000, what does the banker do? He evaluates the borrower and looks at his income to determine whether he can make the payments. Then with the help of a spreadsheet, the banker calculates the number of monthly payments it will take to pay the mortgage, which is the loan that makes it possible to create wealth, be a homeowner, and have access to a home for his family and children.

The government is borrowing money. The problem is that it does not have a plan to pay that money back. It is like me going to the bank and saying that I need \$200,000 to buy a house but that, unfortunately, I do not have enough money to make monthly payments to pay back the loan and I have no plan to do so. I would have to ask the bank to wait four or five years before we revisit the issue and figure out how I will pay the money back. What would happen if I did that? They would send me packing and ask that I do my homework next time and present them with a realistic proposal. It makes me tear my hair out to watch this government continue to lie to Canadians by not giving them the real numbers, by telling them lies about the situation, and by not being straight with them.

When they voted for this government a year ago, Canadians had very high expectations. Today, no one knows how the government is going to pay back this out-of-control deficit.

We might ask ourselves what options the Liberal government has for repaying that money. It so happens its recent announcements shed some light on the matter. The Liberals intend to tax and tax some more. What is more, they are offering no constructive measures to stimulate the economy.

*Statements by Members*

They claim to have provided tax relief to families. I am sorry, but the people that I talk to who want their children to be active or to get involved in cultural activities had their tax credit cut.

They even had the audacity to reduce the amount of savings that a father or mother can set aside and watch grow tax-free, money they can use one day when they need to purchase something, thereby keeping our economy going.

The Liberals are implementing a system that will make Canadian families pay more for the Canada pension plan. I think that once Canadians realize this, they might revolt and demand that the government not change the CPP, because everything the government touches seems to turn into a deficit later on.

What we need is not a government that runs deficits, but rather a government that creates wealth. Spending more and taxing Canadians is not the way to create wealth. Instead, we need to help businesses by lowering corporate taxes and introducing job creation and R and D programs.

When we look at the situation, we see that major institutions like the IMF, the OECD, and the Bank of Canada have downgraded their forecasts for Canada. It has become very clear that this government's approach is not working.

Today I ask this government to do its homework. I ask this government to stop taking more taxes and more taxes and more taxes from Canadians, and to listen to leading economists who are urging the government to stop spending in order to stimulate the economy. There are other ways to achieve that.

This brings me to my closing remarks. The Prime Minister broke his promises immediately upon taking office. He broke his promise of running a modest deficit by borrowing three times more than he said he would. He broke his promise to lower the small business tax rate from 11% to 9%.

• (1400)

He broke his promise to offer a revenue-neutral fiscal plan. He even said that family benefits would be cost neutral, but that did not happen, either.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to speak to this issue.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADA GOOSE

**Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, winter is coming, yet we, the true north strong and free, are not afraid of winter. We embrace it and keep warm with glowing hearts and world-class brands like Canada Goose.

This business, one of whose flagships is located in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence, started nearly 60 years ago. Since then, Canada Goose has become a significant innovator, jobs creator, and one of the most recognized winter apparel clothing companies around the world.

[Translation]

Last week, in recognition of the excellent work this local company is doing, the Prime Minister came to talk to the employees about their work.

[English]

Like the Prime Minister, I would like to recognize that for the past 60 years, Canada Goose has been a trailblazer on how to develop a made-in-Canada brand that is a success the world over, one that we can all be proud of.

Winter is coming, but we will all be warm.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### NEW LINK BETWEEN LÉVIS AND QUEBEC CITY

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of excellent Conservative governance, the people of Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis have a big problem.

For months now, I have been swamped with resolutions not only from municipalities in my riding, but from others in Montmagny, Côte-de-Beaupré, and even Gaspé. Why? Because of traffic congestion. What is the solution? A third link between Lévis and Quebec City.

We have the skills and expertise to make this project happen. In light of the Liberals' promise to invest billions in infrastructure, it is time to invest in a third crossing east of Lévis and Quebec City to improve urban mobility.

A third link will accelerate our region's socioeconomic development. As an engineer, I would like the Liberals to show some leadership for once and work with the Government of Quebec to set up a project office dedicated to building this vital piece of infrastructure for the development of our eastern Quebec communities.

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### ANDRÉE P. BOUCHER

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this last day of Women's History Month, I want to talk about a wonderful woman who inspired me a great deal.

The theme of this year's Women's History Month was "Because of Her". Because of her, I fought my first political fight to prevent the closure of the Myrand ski hill, where I would go snowboarding. I was eight years old. Because of her, I fought my second and third political fights, with her in fact, against the forced municipal mergers. Because of her, I enjoyed Plage-Jacques-Cartier park during my entire childhood, and I still enjoy it today. Because of her, thousands of children back home in Sainte Foy have enjoyed affordable playgrounds. Many have also benefited from affordable housing because she thought it was better to invest in families than in bricks and mortar. She inspired me to get into politics. She knew how to navigate a man's world.

*Statements by Members*

I am talking about mayor Andrée P. Boucher. Unfortunately, she left us too soon. She was a generous, kind, and genuine woman to whom a owe a great debt, as do all citizens of Quebec City and Sainte Foy.

Thank you, Mayor Boucher.

\* \* \*

**HOSPITAL FUNDRAISER**

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I am proudly wearing a moustache bow tie in support of the “Une moustache pour mon CH” campaign. For the past four years, this outreach and education campaign on men's health has been raising funds to give urologists in my regional hospital the best, most cutting-edge tools for diagnosing and treating male cancers.

I would like to thank David Nollet, who is himself fighting testicular cancer, for agreeing to be the campaign spokesperson. Our regional strongman not only has a large physical presence, he also has a big heart.

Whether we participate by creating a Facebook profile and posting our best moustache photos to raise donations or by buying promotional items related to the campaign, the goal is the same: to raise enough money to fill the coffers to overflowing.

To those who cannot or do not want to grow a moustache and to those ladies who prefer their men with a clean upper lip, I would say be creative and find another way to support this cause.

Let us give generously to the “Une moustache pour mon CH” campaign.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[*English*]

**CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, between 1952 and 1992, the CBC produced, in-house, thousands of hours of Canadian content, now archived.

As a young immigrant, the CBC helped me understand my new country and its people. I remember with fondness a B.C. series, the *Beachcombers*, launched in 1972, telling a unique west coast story of salvage loggers.

For 19 years, Nick, played by Bruno Gerussi, entered my home and heart with his unsavoury rival, Relic, played by Robert Clothier, and the hapless RCMP Constable Jackson Davies, who met each other at the local cafe, Molly's Reach.

I never missed an episode. The series was syndicated globally and sparked a tourism bonanza for Gibson's B.C. that is still alive today, 44 years later.

That is where my love affair with British Columbia began. On our 150th anniversary, let us replay those stories and reclaim our heritage.

**AGRI-TRADE EXPO**

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a stressful time for many western Canadian farmers as they struggle to get this year's crop in the bin.

Getting together with industry leaders in agricultural manufacturing, farm business analysts, and fellow producers at Red Deer's Agri-Trade Expo, November 9 to 12, would be an excellent time to either celebrate the harvest or discover new management strategies to address whatever new twists Mother Nature may bring.

Agri-Trade Expo is also an opportunity to help build and bridge the rural-urban divide by showcasing “advocates” who tell the story of Canadian farmers, a story that champions the safest, most ethically produced and managed food available on earth.

I am also looking forward to speaking at the Western Canadian Wheat Growers event on Thursday night to highlight new opportunities in agriculture and to celebrate Wheat Growers' commitment to Canada's new marketing freedom system.

I am inviting everyone to come join us for an innovative, informative, and exciting 2016 Agri-Trade Expo at Red Deer's Westerner Park.

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**BURNABY TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS**

**Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand in the House today to share the exceptional work of Wanda Mulholland and the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness.

This month I was proud to host the task force at our constituency office with representatives from all three levels of government, including the member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Our team is making important progress at every level of the housing continuum, but homelessness is a reality still faced by far too many Canadians. While the national housing strategy is being developed, our government is investing an additional \$111 million in the homelessness partnering strategy. This is the single largest investment in the program since 1999. From this, \$12.5 million will fund innovative projects submitted by Canadians that aim to tackle homelessness.

I look forward to continuing our work in the riding and to creating better housing outcomes for families in Burnaby and North Vancouver.

*Statements by Members***AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Ahmadiyya community in Canada on its 50th anniversary and to thank His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, for his visit to Ottawa. Through his advocacy and the community's motto, "Love for All, Hatred for None", the community is helping to spread the message of peace.

The Ahmadiyya community is recognized worldwide for its outreach and humanitarian aid programs through its Humanity First organization. It provides assistance to those less fortunate via thousands of volunteers across the globe. In my riding, the community has helped to settle Syrian refugees, run a food bank and a homeless shelter, and raise over a million dollars to support the new Vaughan hospital.

I thank the Ahmadiyya community for all it does and for spreading the message of peace in a troubled world.

Congratulations on the community's 50th anniversary in Canada.

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**TAYLOR FIELD**

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, green is the colour and football is the game.

It was a glorious send-off for Taylor Field on the weekend in Regina. Rider nation said goodbye to their home as they prepare to move over to the new Mosaic Stadium.

Taylor Field has played host to 611 professional CFL games and three Grey Cups: 1995, 2003, and the much celebrated 2013 classic, when the Roughriders hosted Hamilton. Many called this the greatest game in Roughrider history.

Fans came this weekend from all over the world to witness the closing of this iconic site. A 30-minute tribute to the stadium had many in tears after the game. The final tribute was when Rider greats George Reed, Roger Aldag, Gene Makowsky, and Darian Durant passed the Grey Cup to each other, signalling the team's four championships.

Goodbye, Taylor Field, and thanks for all the memories.

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●(1410)

**HI-SPEED INTERNET**

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Internet access in rural economies is just as important as transportation infrastructure is in urban Canada. It is absolutely essential if rural economies, like my area of Nova Scotia, are to survive and prosper.

This year's successful phase 1 of the infrastructure program focused on clean water and waste water. In the next phase of the funding program, I urge the government to make rural broadband service a priority and to use the same successful approach for broadband funding to ensure that rural communities are able to access this necessary mode of communication.

**UNITED WAY OF PEEL REGION**

**Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour Shelley White for her incredibly hard work and dedication to improving lives in my riding and in many neighbouring communities.

As president and CEO of the United Way of Peel Region over the past 13 years, Shelley has focused on the prevention and eradication of poverty by mobilizing local residents as well as the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Shelley also believes that there is a clear link between mental illness and poverty. Through the United Way, she and her team have focused on eliminating the stigma of mental illness and on investing in community-based mental health programs and services.

As Women's History Month draws to a close, Canadians have celebrated the profound impact women and girls have had and will continue to have on our society.

It is because of Shelley White that our communities in Peel Region have been greatly enriched and that meaningful social progress has been achieved. I thank Shelley for her vision, her leadership, and her inspiration.

\* \* \*

**PHOENIX PAY SYSTEM**

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the Liberals have missed their self-imposed deadline to fix the Phoenix pay system. Sadly, my riding of Prince Albert is one of many that have been affected by Liberal incompetence.

Last week, unpaid workers employed at the Prince Albert penitentiary protested in front of my office. Their message was loud and clear. They want the Minister of Public Services and Procurement to take this issue seriously and to take action.

My office has reached out to corrections workers who have contacted me on this issue. I have personally met with union representative Boyd Ward to discuss the plight of many families who are suffering as a result of this Liberal mess.

Take, for instance, the plight of one corrections worker who is owed thousands of dollars in back pay while on maternity leave, or the plight of another who has yet to be compensated for the months of May, June, July, August, or September.

Every single federal government worker deserves to be paid the money that is owed. On behalf of the corrections workers of Prince Albert and federal workers across the country, I demand that the Liberal government stop setting meaningless deadlines. Instead, pay them what they are owed.

*Oral Questions***DIWALI AND BANDI CHHOR DIVAS**

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists in my riding of Scarborough Centre and across Canada celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, and Bandi Chhor Divas. I had the pleasure of taking part in several Diwali celebrations this weekend in Scarborough.

Diwali is a time of happiness and joy, of togetherness, community, and family. It is a time of pageantry and entertainment, and of course, of great food, although the sweets really are too tempting.

More than anything, Diwali is a time of community and of coming together. Our diversity is our strength, and the Hindu, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist communities are part of the diversity that makes Canada strong.

To all those celebrating, I wish them a very happy Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas.

\* \* \*

**WINDSOR-DETROIT CROSSING**

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Halloween is the perfect time of year to talk about the Windsor-Detroit border, because under the current government, it keeps getting scarier and scarier.

After stirring up old Liberal ghosts to lead Canada's most important infrastructure priority, the project seems to have slipped into the twilight zone. Whether it is spooky backroom conversations with the ghouls at the Ambassador Bridge or a zombie-like approach to property acquisition, the government appears to be lost in a haunted corn maze rather than on track to build a new crossing.

When we patch together the missed deadlines, terrifying confusion around tactics, and a creepy coziness with the company working to suck the lifeblood right out of Windsor, the government appears to be building its very own Frankenstein and is just waiting for a lightning storm to flip the switch.

The Liberal approach to this project is becoming a house of horrors for our bilateral trade capacity and for businesses that rely on surface trade between Canada and the U.S., and the businesses are scared stiff.

Let us resurrect accountability for a happy Halloween.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

**THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, on the night of All Hallows' Eve, Canadians have a reason to be afraid  
The Liberals promised treats, but have only provided tricks to date.

The Liberal legion of doom seems intent on stealing our tax dollars,  
This is enough to make anyone run or holler.

Instead of handing out candy or treats, they are giving out creepy carbon taxes,  
which will only lead to jobs facing axes.

Whether dressed up as a fisherman from New Brunswick or Newfoundland,  
or a logger in B.C., they can all expect to have less in hand.

This terrifying tax is nothing more than a Liberal trick,  
The only Canadians getting treats are the preferred, the top picked.  
They are dressed up as Liberal lobbyists attending pay-to-play fundraisers,  
Doctors, lawyers, or Liberal Party chasers.

While dressed up as a treat, it is plain to see,  
The Liberal plan is a frightening trick being played on members and me.

It is raising the deficit to scary new levels,  
So we know it is not those dressed up as ghouls, ghosts or Tasmanian devils  
That Canadians have a reason to hide this day,  
It is because the Liberal legion of doom seems intent to haunt our jobs and growth  
away.

\* \* \*

**RONALD MAY**

**Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my father, Ronald Lloyd May, loved Halloween. Dressing up in beat up old mechanics overalls and my mom's 1970s fur hat, he would entertain the trick or treaters. He was amazing at recognizing when the younger goblins and ghosts were apprehensive. He would encourage their bravery and praise the quality of their costumes. I would watch with glee when he would scare the teenagers who may have been a little too old to be going door to door.

When I was 12 years old, my father passed away from a very rare form of bone marrow cancer, and I took up the responsibility of manning the door on Halloween. Today is the first time 30 years I will not be handing out candy for the kids at my home in Cambridge.

This day always reminds me of my dad, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to stand up and praise the man who taught me respect, honesty, caring, and responsibility.

From Ron May and me, happy Halloween, everyone.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[English]

**ETHICS**

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister set in place ethics rules for his own ministers to follow in his document called "Open and Accountable Government" that forbid the kind of cash for access fundraisers they are involved in. In fact, the Prime Minister is also involved, and he is violating his own ethics rules.

What kind of an example is the Prime Minister setting when he cannot even follow his own rules?

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for over a year now, the members opposite have been criticizing this government regularly for engaging with Canadians too much, for being too open and accessible, for consulting regularly with Canadians and demonstrating, quite frankly, the most open and accessible government this country has ever seen.

We, of course, follow all the rules and make sure that we engage with Canadians. We are listening to them in the most positive and respectful way possible.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is the Prime Minister brought in new rules that he claimed would raise the ethical standard, but he is not doing that. In fact, he is violating these very ethical rules that he brought in. These fundraisers are not open to the general public. These are exclusive fundraisers for people who can afford it and who happen to be invited.

I ask again, how can we expect other people to follow the rules when the Prime Minister will not even follow his own?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite well knows, I spend a tremendous amount of time working hard for Canadians right across the country, meeting with them, meeting with crowds, meeting with individuals, listening to consumer groups, listening to small businesses, engaging with Canadians right across the country, and I will continue to do so, as will the members of our cabinet.

The finance minister has embarked on unprecedented levels of public consultations to make sure that we are responding to the very real challenges that Canadians are facing. This is why we did things like raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% and lower them for the middle class. These are things Canadians wanted.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, “unprecedented” is one word that I could use for these very exclusive fundraisers. These invitations are completely hidden from the general public. They all feature a cabinet minister as the star attraction. Worse, they are being hosted and attended by insiders and lobbyists who want something from government. The Prime Minister could put an end to this problem today, if he wanted to.

All he has to do is enforce his own rules: no cash for access fundraisers, no preferential access to government. Why does he not just stop doing this?

• (1420)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is there is no preferential access to this government. This government is demonstrating the most open and transparent approach, not just of following the rules but being more engaged with Canadians than any previous government.

Canadians, people with concerns, want to meet this government. We are consulting. We are engaging. We are, quite frankly, constantly receiving criticism from the other side of the aisle that we are spending too much time listening to Canadians.

The fact of the matter is that listening to Canadians is what is allowing us to deliver for Canadians, as we have been doing for the past year and as we will continue to do.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about that because every day, life for families is getting more expensive under the Prime Minister.

His expensive carbon tax will raise the cost of home heating, gasoline, and groceries. He is making decisions every day that will cost households thousands of dollars extra every year. He is even taking away tax breaks for kids' hockey, music lessons, and arts classes.

Tomorrow's economic update is going to unveil even more expensive promises that Canadians cannot afford. Who does the Prime Minister think is going to pay for this next spending spree?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that over the past year, we raised taxes on the wealthiest 1% and lowered them for the middle class. The members opposite voted against raising taxes on the wealthiest 1% and lowering them for the middle class.

We have been working hard to support the middle class, to invest in their future, to demonstrate that the government understands the concerns that Canadians are living with and is actually responding to them. That is what Canadians expect, that is what we are going to continue to do, and that is why I am looking forward to the fall economic update tomorrow.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, here is the reality. The economy has not created a single net new full-time job since the Prime Minister was elected. In fact, the economy is on track to create approximately 100,000 fewer jobs this year than last year. The Prime Minister's plan has clearly failed.

Tomorrow, is he going to table a new plan that will actually create jobs, or can we expect the same old, same old, with billions of dollars in spending and higher taxes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I look forward to tomorrow's announcement that is going to put more money in the pockets of the middle class and put us on a positive growth trajectory, but it is important to take a moment right now to recognize a significant landmark that we reached yesterday.

For seven years, there was an awful lot of work done on a free trade deal with Europe, and I need to credit the members opposite, including the member for Abbotsford, for doing a lot of work on that over the years. I am very pleased to also credit the Minister of International Trade, who did an extraordinary job on getting the deal signed. We can all be proud that we now have an extraordinary, positive deal with Europe.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we were pleased to learn via Twitter this morning that, after seven months of legal battles and four days of attacks against Cindy Blackstock's expertise, the government plans to support our motion to put an end to discrimination against indigenous children.

We are getting used to this government's empty rhetoric. I am therefore asking the Prime Minister this question: can he tell us what deadline he has set for implementing the will of Parliament?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, very few commitments are as important to this government as fixing the broken relationship with Canada's indigenous people and ensuring that the young people from these communities have a bright future. That is why we invested \$8.4 billion over five years in our first budget and why we are continuing to work with the communities to invest in the health and safety of their young people.

That is a priority for us. We are going to continue to work on this with everyone in the House.

**Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear an answer. Without a deadline, it is all just hot air.

In 2007, the Liberals voted for our motion on Jordan's principle. Now the Liberals are in power, and even after two court orders, the children are still waiting. They cannot and must not wait any longer.

Therefore, I will repeat my question: what deadline has the government set for putting an end to this discrimination?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have often said, we must address problems that have existed not just for a few years, but for decades and even generations. That is why we must take action now. We must come up with solutions now and build a system that will address these issues in the long term.

That is why we are taking action right now and making historic investments. We will continue to put in place the tools required and to work in partnership with indigenous peoples to improve the situation.

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we thank Justice Murray Sinclair for reminding parliamentarians of our duty to put the children first and to vote to order the current government to be in compliance with the Human Rights Tribunal. Until forced to vote, the government refused mediation from the tribunal, ignored two compliance orders, and its Liberal caucus members were insinuating in the House that the shortfall numbers put forward by Cindy Blackstock to the tribunal were pulled out of thin air or like throwing confetti around.

Will the Prime Minister commit to the immediate implementation of the \$155 million shortfall in child welfare that was identified this year?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges this House and this government have always faced is the fact that dictating the solutions from the government side upon indigenous peoples has not worked. Indeed, that has continued to fail.

That is why we are so committed to working with indigenous peoples and with provinces and territories, municipalities, and partners to ensure that we are building a strong and resilient future for young people right across the country. That is what we are committed to. That is why we have made historic investments of \$8.4 billion in budget 2016, and that is why we recognize there is much more to do and why we are going to continue working on that.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, reconciliation is not a hashtag. We are talking about a court order. So I will take that as a no.

The motion tomorrow specifically instructs the government to end the court cases against children who have been denied medical treatment. Let us look at his government. It has decided to spend four times more on lawyers to fight a child denied special orthodontic surgery that would keep her teeth from falling out than the actual cost of the treatment.

This question is for the Prime Minister. Will he at least assure the House that he will respect tomorrow's vote, end this court fight against this child, cover the medical costs, and end the systemic denial of medical services to indigenous children? Yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since we took office, this government has demonstrated that no relationship is more important to us than fixing the broken relationship with indigenous peoples and making real investments in partnership with indigenous communities to be able to end the systemic neglect and pain that young people across the country in indigenous communities are going through.

This is something we are committed to fixing; it is something we are working very hard on, in partnership with indigenous Canadians; and we will continue to do so.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last Friday the Minister of Finance was in Toronto and said, "we will continue to be fiscally responsible".

Is it fiscally responsible to run up a \$30-billion deficit, or three times the amount projected? Is it fiscally responsible to make announcements about family benefits and forget to index them? Is it fiscally responsible to impose a Liberal tax on carbon?

Is it fiscally responsible to do such stupid things?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that what is most important to Canadian families and the middle class is to invest for the future. We know that investments can make the future better for our children and grandchildren.

At the same time, it is true that we must act responsibly with the country's money, and our goal is to invest responsibly in order to have a future that is better than the present.

\* \* \*

**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the quality of his French.

There will be an economic update tomorrow. Will the minister be providing an update on his election promises, particularly those relating to small and medium-sized businesses?

During the election campaign, the Liberal Party promised to reduce the tax rate to 9%, but it has not done so. Instead, it brought in the Liberal carbon tax and higher Canada pension plan contributions.

The government's plan is not working, so what is it going to do to help small businesses, which create wealth and jobs?

• (1430)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I will be telling the House about our economic plan for the future and reviewing the current economic situation.

We will have a long-term plan to improve our economy, thereby helping small and medium-sized businesses, families, and the middle class. That is our goal. We have a long-term plan to make things better for our country and the future.

\* \* \*

[English]

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is telling our young workers that they have to accept a lifetime of contract work and job churn. The Liberals' plan is making things even worse. They are making it difficult for businesses to hire and are piling up the debt that this younger generation will have to pay back on their behalf. The participation of young workers has dropped because they cannot find jobs.

When will the Liberals stop taxing our job creators into the ground and actually provide economic stability and hope for the rising generation?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we believe that it is critically important that we create success for this generation and for the next generation of Canadians.

We know that helping students to do well and get money so they can get through secondary and university education is critically important. That is what we have done.

We know that thinking about training and retraining is critically important. We know that we need to consider the challenging

economy that young people face and to do better for their future through the kind of investments that will make a real difference.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on October 20, I asked the finance minister why he is making it harder for young families to buy homes through new mortgage rules.

The parliamentary secretary agreed that buying a house is the most important investment most Canadian families will make. However, a few minutes later, when confronted on the Liberals' out-of-control spending and borrowing, the same member said that when interest rates are low, that's the time to invest.

The finance minister cannot have it both ways. Why does the minister use low interest rates to justify huge deficits, while denying families the opportunity to buy homes?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to talk about the housing market in Canada. We have taken important measures to keep the housing market stable for the long term. We know that for Canadians who have a house, or for young Canadians who want to buy a house, they care about having a home that can maintain its value over time. They care about a stable and secure housing market. That is what we are working to make sure exists for young people today and for families who own a home. That is our responsibility.

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals said that a massive deficit would create jobs, but here is what the parliamentary budget officer's employment assessment said after a year of Liberal borrowing: zero new full-time jobs.

Job growth is at half the rate as that of the previous government, and all of the jobs are part time. Despite the low dollar, there are 20,000 fewer manufacturing jobs than a year ago.

Will the Minister of Finance use tomorrow's update to cancel planned tax increases that his department has been warned will kill yet more jobs?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer this question, because we were left with the lowest growth era after the last decade. We came into office promising Canadians that we would make a real and measurable difference for their families, that we would improve the outcomes for middle-class Canadians. We set right about doing that work, by lowering taxes on the middle class, and by increasing the Canada child benefit, so that we can help Canadians. We are going to start seeing that impact.

*Oral Questions*

What we are going to do tomorrow is talk about our long-term plans to make a real difference for middle-class Canadians, for their future and for their families' futures.

\* \* \*

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary budget office said that just was not true. He needs to get off those talking points.

Atlantic Canada has had a lot to bear, a lot of real change of late. For the first time ever, they have an ACOA minister from outside of Atlantic Canada. The Prime Minister attempted to deny Atlantic Canada representation on our Supreme Court. Now, Atlantic Canada is being denied any representation on the Liberal's Advisory Council on Economic Growth. So far, it seems that the only way that Atlantic Canadians can have any input is by paying \$1,500 a plate to attend a Liberal fundraiser.

When will one of the 32 Atlantic members on that side of the House stand up for their region?

• (1435)

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have had 10 years of the previous government that pitted one region against the other, and pitted Canadians against each other. We have a different approach. I work with all MPs from Atlantic Canada, regardless of their political affiliation, because I believe it is time for change. It is time to work with four outstanding ministers who, along with the four premiers, and along with 28 MPs, have put forward an Atlantic growth strategy. It is a strategy that is investing in the economy and creating jobs. It is good for Atlantic Canada and it is good for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned that, once again, a *La Presse* reporter is under police surveillance.

This dredges up memories of a similar incident involving the federal government: a *Vice* reporter may go to jail for refusing to disclose his sources to the RCMP. With Bill C-51 measures still in effect, journalists and civil liberties groups are worried things could get worse.

Does the government see that there is an urgent need to order the RCMP to honour freedom of the press?

[English]

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, freedom of the press is a fundamental principle that is in fact enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The utmost care must be taken by law enforcement when criminal investigations and journalism intersect. At the federal level, the RCMP is governed by an explicit ministerial directive on sensitive sector investigations, which outlines the special care that is demanded for investigations that

impact on fundamental institutions of Canadian society, including the media, academia, religion, and unions. We take the freedom of the press in this country very, very seriously.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, if they support freedom of the press, they should act accordingly.

After just one year in power, this government has already reached the height of Liberal arrogance.

The Minister of Finance is hosting a fundraiser at \$1,500 a plate with a hand-picked group of elites in exchange for guaranteed access. The Commissioner of Lobbying thinks this is suspicious and is keeping a close eye on it. The Liberal Party's response is that it is none of the commissioner's business. She cannot investigate ministers.

Here is a news flash for the Liberals: it is her business and it is our business.

Will the Prime Minister bring his ministers into line?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the federal rules are among the strictest in the country.

In fact, in some provinces, individuals can donate in the tens of thousands of dollars. Other jurisdictions have no limits. Some provinces also allow donations from unions, trade associations, and corporations.

That is not the case in the federal system. There can be no conflict of interest when the rules are followed, and that is what we will continue to do.

[English]

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in another brazen example of cash for access, on August 29, the Minister of Natural Resources attended a high-priced fundraiser at the offices of MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman. MLT is one of the largest law firms in Canada. It specializes in the natural resources sector, the same sector that the minister regulates. This is a clear conflict of interest.

When will the government stop these unethical fundraisers and put an end to its cash for access schemes?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member very well knows, the federal rules are some of the strongest in the country. In fact, in some provinces, individuals can donate in the tens of thousands of dollars, and in other jurisdictions they have no limits. Some provinces accept donations from unions, trade associations, and corporations. That is not the case in the federal system. The federal rules are some of the strictest in the country, for all members, and are open and transparent.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it gets worse. Less than a month after this fundraiser, MLT merged with Aikins, MacAulay & Thorvaldson. This firm has lobbied the minister's department on several occasions. Once again, we have Liberal insiders hosting ministers at exclusive high-end fundraisers and then turning around and lobbying them. The minister should have never attended this cash for access fundraiser. Why did the minister completely ignore the Prime Minister's rules and put himself in this blatant conflict of interest?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, federal politics is subject to some of the strictest political financing legislation and regulation in all of the country. When the rules are followed, no conflicts of interest can exist, and we will continue to follow the rules.

•(1440)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I fear we have not seen the last of the skeletons come out of the closet, or should I say, the Liberal Party coffers. We already know that some ministers offer privileged access and now we learn that a law firm with a stake in natural resources hosted the Minister of Natural Resources.

Who obtained privileged access following a fundraiser hosted by the law firm MLT last August?

How does the government not see that this is another conflict of interest?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the federal rules are among the strictest in the country.

In fact, in some provinces, individuals can donate in the tens of thousands of dollars. Other jurisdictions have no limits. Some provinces also allow donations from unions, trade associations, and corporations.

That is not the case in the federal system. There can be no conflict of interest when the rules are followed, and that is what we will continue to do.

[English]

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister clearly does not get it when it comes to cash for access fundraisers. Former Liberal deputy prime minister, Sheila Copps, said that these private elite events are an opportunity for people doing business with the government to make a pitch to a senior cabinet minister. She said, "You go and you get an envelope." They say, "I need this. I want this. I want this." We should thank Sheila Copps for reminding us that the Liberal Party and cashed-up envelopes go hand in hand.

When will the Prime Minister follow his own rules and stop these cash for access events?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will repeat for the member that the federal rules are some of the strongest in the country. In fact, in some

provinces, individuals can donate in the tens of thousands of dollars, and in other jurisdictions there are no limits. The federal rules are some of the strictest in the country, and all members are abiding by the same rules. Those rules are open and transparent.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. I have a feeling people have been into the Halloween chocolates already.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

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## PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this Halloween was supposed to mark the end of the nightmares caused by the Phoenix pay system, but the horror story lives on. Today, more than 30,000 cases of no pay or inaccurate pay are still unresolved. Hundreds of public employees spent their lunch protesting in front of the Prime Minister's Office, demanding to be paid.

Why did the government miss its own deadline, and can Liberals tell us when exactly all of the Phoenix cases will be dealt with once and for all?

**Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, for anyone to go without pay for work performed is completely unacceptable, especially when there are hardships involved. We are working very hard to make sure that all of the outstanding issues are resolved. We have resolved 75% of the outstanding cases.

We are going to put in a dedicated team to look at the complex issues that remain. Those that remain are much more complex, some going back three years, in terms of the length of time that these employees have been without pay for services performed. It is totally unacceptable, and we are throwing—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Hochelaga.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, although it has taken a hard line in its negotiations with PSAC, the government is not even able to meet its own deadline for the Phoenix pay system.

Public service employees deserve better than the financial problems they have experienced in the past three years because the government, their employer, has not even paid them.

When will this government show some respect for its employees?

Is the minister responsible for this fiasco able to tell us exactly when the Phoenix pay problems will be resolved?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. It is totally unacceptable for employees to go without pay for work performed. I have said that repeatedly.

We have put extra measures in place to hire an additional 250 employees to deal with these cases. We are throwing everything we have at this, because, again, we want to make sure that now the most complex cases get resolved. We have resolved three-quarters of those that were outstanding.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the signing of CETA between Canada and the European Union is a historic moment. CETA will provide Canada with access to the EU's more than 500-million consumers. Canadians stand to benefit significantly by increased access to this 28-country market, which generates \$20 trillion in annual economic activity.

Can the minister update the House on how she intends to move forward with this ambitious and progressive agreement?

• (1445)

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after question period, I will have the honour of tabling the signed agreement in the House and will introduce the bill to implement CETA. This is a historic moment for Canada, and I hope all members will put aside partisanship and support this progressive trade agreement that will create jobs and growth for the middle class.

With CETA, Canada is setting the international standard for 21st century trade agreements.

\* \* \*

**AGRICULTURE**

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. One would think it is Valentine's Day or something. Let us now all calm down and listen to the hon. member for Bow River.

**Mr. Martin Shields:** Mr. Speaker, ranchers in southern Alberta are reeling from a recent outbreak of bovine tuberculosis, and there is no resolution in sight. CFIA has been on the ground investigating, but there is no clear answer on how long it will be before the quarantines are lifted. In difficult economic times, ranchers need to know when they can get their cattle to market. They get one payday a year.

What will the Minister of Health do to ensure that there are enough inspectors on the ground to get answers as soon as possible, to limit the economic losses for these farm families?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our

government is committed to protecting the health of Canadian families and of animals.

To meet that commitment our department is investigating the matter. As a control measure we have restricted the movement of all animals that could be affected. In all cases of reportable disease, the objective is to minimize the impact on our producers while respecting our domestic and international obligations.

*[English]*

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, more than 30 ranch families in southern Alberta are facing devastating news: they cannot sell their cattle. This could not have happened at a worse possible time. They have fall contracts, but this quarantine is preventing them from selling their calves. Ranch families in southern Alberta are facing more than \$5 million in losses, but this will reverberate throughout the industry. Processing plants, feedlots, and trucking companies in southern Alberta will all feel the impact.

Time is of the essence on this issue. What action is the minister taking to help the cattle ranchers in southern Alberta?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

As I just stated, as a control measure we are restricting the movement of all animals that could be affected. In all cases of reportable disease, the objective is to minimize the impact on our producers while respecting our domestic and international obligations.

We are taking appropriate action to protect the health of Canadians and Canadian livestock, while retaining access to our international markets.

\* \* \*

*[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week the minister said there was a “strong business case” for closing the Vegreville case processing centre, but no one was consulted, not local staff, nor administrators, nor town leaders, nor residents.

When asked directly if a full cost analysis was done, senior department officials said no. Therefore, obviously the minister cannot claim a business case without even a cost analysis.

What can possibly be the minister's excuse for devastating the people in Vegreville?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the lease was coming up on the building. There was a great deal of work to be done, and the department made a very strong business case for moving the operation to Edmonton. I can mention that the union was on side with this. All employees will retain jobs in Edmonton should they wish.

This government has a responsibility to spend taxpayers money wisely. I can assure members of the House, who will agree, that it is our duty to make immigration more efficient and to reduce the processing times, and that is what this does.

• (1450)

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals should stop saying that they are not causing job losses because this edict is deliberately killing jobs in Vegreville. I hope the minister will join me in town, speak directly with the people who will be hurt the most, look them in their eyes and tell them why he approves this action.

The minister should save these rural Alberta jobs. Will he stop this political removal of jobs from Vegreville to a Liberal-held city riding?

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from the point of view of the business case, there was a strong case for moving to Edmonton. Large numbers of people were retiring. The department was having trouble hiring people. In fact, it is projected that this move will increase the total jobs in Alberta, not reduce the number of jobs, and we will have a more efficient immigration system, which will reduce processing times and serve Canadians better.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### AIR TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week, we learned that the federal government asked the Credit Suisse investment firm to advise it on the benefits of privatizing Canadian airports.

Since Credit Suisse already invests in infrastructure such as airports, we have a good idea of what its recommendations will be. Not only are the Liberals letting a fox into the henhouse, they are leaving the door wide open. The Liberals never, and I mean never, mentioned privatizing infrastructure during the election campaign.

Under what mandate does the minister think he has the right to privatize Canadian infrastructure in this way?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we did not give ourselves a mandate.

One of the sixty recommendations set out in the report on the Canada Transportation Act raised this issue.

We are currently analyzing the situation. No decisions have been made and, if a decision is made, it will be in the best interests of travellers, airports, and our airlines.

[English]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberals have no mandate from Canadians to privatize, none. However, the Prime Minister's advisory council on economic issues recommends a Canadian infrastructure bank that will privatize the revenues of infrastructure. How can we get revenue from highways, bridges and waterworks? From tolls and user fees, of course.

#### Oral Questions

The Liberals promised small deficits to invest in infrastructure. How can they justify bringing along massive deficits while privatizing infrastructure?

**Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we committed to investing more than \$120 billion into infrastructure, supporting municipalities and provinces. We are engaging with both the municipalities and provinces as well as territories. We will continue to engage with the private sector to build more infrastructure on behalf of Canadians.

\* \* \*

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our small businesses are hurting. CFIB's October report shows that 61% of small businesses state that higher taxes and regulations are the most significant barriers to allowing innovation and growth in their businesses. Yet, the Liberals continue to raise taxes through both the CPP and their new carbon tax.

When will the Liberals stop punishing small businesses with high taxes and more regulation?

**Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for raising innovation, because that is a key component of our government's economic agenda.

Innovation is so critical for small business, which is why we are focusing on small businesses to make sure we invest in people and give them the skills and training they need to compete in a digital world. We are also focusing on emerging technologies and platforms that will allow them to be part of global supply chains. We are focusing on the small businesses to grow, to be more export oriented.

This is our economic plan on how we grow the economy and create jobs.

\* \* \*

#### TAXATION

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal hidden agenda of higher taxes continues to unfold. In the last election, the Liberals did not tell families about new higher taxes on children's hockey games, piano lessons, small businesses, and student text books, but then families were hit with exactly these tax hikes. Now the heritage minister has told us that she is looking at all scenarios for a new tax on the Internet.

Why does the minister want to tax hard-working, cash-strapped Canadians families just to give that money to her well-heeled friends in what she calls the entertainment ecosystem.

*Oral Questions*

● (1455)

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to set the record straight on taxes. We lowered taxes for nine million Canadians. For the nine million Canadians with lower taxes, the average individual has \$330 less taxes this year, and the average family has \$540 less taxes this year.

We lowered taxes for nine million Canadians. This is something we are doing to help middle-class Canadians do well.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we thought the Liberals disliked tax credits after they cancelled the text book tax credit for students, the arts tax credit for families with kids in dance, and the sports tax credit for families with kids in sports. However, we recently learned that the Minister of Canadian Heritage was creating a new tax credit for friends hosting talk shows. Apparently, the Liberals only dislike tax credits when they help hard-working families, but they like it when it helps their Liberal elites.

Could the minister tell the House how much this retroactive tax credit for talk shows will cost hard-working Canadians?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our Canadian content creation sector is strong, and our Canadian artists and productions have succeeded on the world stage. We are committed to supporting them.

We are in the midst of public consultations right now to make sure we hear all the voices of Canadians when it comes to how to support Canadian content and how we make sure we can export it. Of course, we are listening to a variety of ideas, but our main objective is to ensure we have the strongest content industry in the world, and we are working on this.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. A minimal amount of respect requires that we listen when the other side is speaking and we listen to each other. We take our turn, we listen to their turn, and we get our turn again, etc. That is how it works here.

Let us try and settle down and listen to the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, trade is essential to creating new markets for Canada's agricultural products. It also creates excellent opportunities and helps ensure economic growth for our farmers and their families.

Our government understands the importance of creating new markets for our agriculture products, while also protecting our local interests.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell us about the positive impact that CETA will have on our agricultural sector?

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Miramichi—Grand Lake for his question.

I first want to acknowledge all the hard work done by the Minister of International Trade during the negotiations. This agreement will help middle-class families and create new opportunities for many sectors of the Canadian economy, including agriculture.

We are proud of the work we have done and proud to have signed an agreement that will boost agricultural exports by over \$1.5 billion. We are very aware of the needs of our dairy sector, which is why we are currently working on transition assistance.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Halloween is all tricks and no treats for unpaid public servants. The government has been in office for a year and it is missing its own deadline to fix pay problems.

The minister made the decision to proceed with Phoenix, even though the system was known to be unready. Now my office and many others are being inundated with people desperate to get the money they are owed.

Will the minister responsible agree to suspend her own pay until all public servants get theirs?

**Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no one more concerned about the fact that we have employees who are not getting paid for work performed than this minister. That is why we have pulled out all the stops. That is why the Department of Public Services and Procurement has put in extra measures. We have hired 250 people. We have put in place four satellite offices. We are responding to the issues.

It is totally unacceptable for people to go without pay for work performed. We will continue to work hard to resolve these issues.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is more sad news coming from my riding. There has been a sixth suicide in the span of three weeks in northern Saskatchewan. On behalf of the NDP, I would like to extend our condolences to the families and communities going through this hard time.

The government needs to end the band-aid strategy and commit to a culturally appropriate long-term approach to mental wellness. Will the Prime Minister stand up and address the immediate needs for indigenous mental health in the north? How much louder do our kids need to be?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to echo the sentiments of my hon. colleague opposite. It is absolutely devastating to hear of these young people in northern Saskatchewan and indeed in other communities in Canada who have taken their own lives in recent weeks. I believe all members of the House would like to express our condolences to the families.

The member is absolutely correct. We need to be thinking not only of how we can support these families and these communities in the short term, as we are working very hard to do, but we must think of the long-term solutions. In fact, I look forward to working with all members of the House to support indigenous health and wellness, to make sure we find—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Scarborough Centre.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is Halloween and many children will be on the streets trick or treating. However, we must remember that roads can be dangerous and that our children must be protected.

Could the minister please update the House as to what he is doing to improve the safety of roads in Canada?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for her caution and safety on Halloween. All of us in this government care deeply about road safety. Although I am not a big one for tricks, I do like a treat once in a while.

That is why I am glad to announce that as of May 1, 2018, all new cars that are sold in Canada will have to be equipped with a rear camera system. We think this is a good idea, because even though rear-view mirrors do help, they do not give us the full picture. We are particularly concerned about the safety of our children.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister promised that the Phoenix pay problems would be resolved by October 31. However, as of today, not dozens, not hundreds, but thousands of federal employees have not been paid for several weeks, and in some cases, for several months.

What is more, we learned today of the skyrocketing operating costs. Naturally, skyrocketing costs, like the deficit, do not seem to bother the Liberals.

When will the Liberal government finally solve the problem and ensure that federal employees receive their pay with dignity and without being forced to beg?

[English]

**Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me repeat how unacceptable it is for public service employees to go without pay for work performed.

We are now looking at the complex issues that remain. Seventy-five percent of the backlog cases have been addressed. We are

putting a dedicated unit on to deal with the complex issues that remain. We are determined to get those resolved as quickly as possible.

Again, we are not at all happy that people are having to face hardships as a result of these pay issues. We are dedicated to finding a resolution to these outstanding pay issues.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, what a pretty picture yesterday in Brussels, as the trade agreement with the European Union was finally signed with handshakes and smiles for the camera. I am not sure that our cheese producers are smiling quite as broadly.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, what a pretty picture it was yesterday in Brussels, as the trade agreement with the European Union was signed with handshakes and a—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, point of order. I think I should have my 35 seconds to ask my question. May I?

**An hon. member:** Yes.

**Mr. Rhéal Fortin:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Brussels, all the handshakes and smiles for the camera made for quite a pretty picture. The agreement with the European Union was signed. I am not sure our cheese producers are smiling quite as broadly now that 17,000 tonnes of European cheese will be flooding the market. That spells trouble for our Quebec cheeses.

Will the Minister of Finance's economic update include fair compensation for our cheese and dairy producers, or will the Liberals once again cheer as they break another promise?

• (1505)

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the European Union signed CETA. We have always maintained that the government should help dairy producers and processors make the transition. We consulted the dairy industry, and the feedback we received is helping us develop programs to address the challenges the sector is facing and promote growth.

As I mentioned, we are committed to helping the dairy industry get through the transition and adapt to new conditions.

\* \* \*

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in his economic update, the parliamentary budget officer confirmed that the government can afford to spend more.

*Routine Proceedings*

However, it is not the expense column I am worried about. It is the revenue column. The government refuses to go after the billions of dollars that the big banks are hiding in Barbados. As a result, it is middle-class families that are stuck with the bill to pay for our declining public services.

Why is the government refusing to go after the money the banks are keeping in Barbados?

Is the government standing up for Canadians or for Bay Street?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, middle-class Canadians who pay their fair share have every right to be upset when wealthy taxpayers use sophisticated schemes to avoid their tax obligations.

The Government of Canada invested an unprecedented \$444 million to counter what is happening offshore. We have agreements in place, our officials are working on this, and we are going to keep our promises.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government is refusing to ask the banks to pay their fair share. The law remains unchanged and the government is doing nothing about it. However, it does not hesitate to take money from students.

The government brags about offering students in Quebec \$80 million in financial assistance, but then it turns around and takes \$200 million in tax credits away from them. The net balance is \$120 million less for students in Quebec. This falls under the Prime Minister's responsibility. He is the Minister of Youth.

Will the Minister of Youth announce in tomorrow's economic update that he will return the \$120 million he took from Quebec's students?

[English]

**Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that the Conservative bench is really pleased about the \$4 billion that we invested in students in this country, such as the \$330 million for the youth employment strategy, the \$1.5 billion for student grants, and the \$125 million for all MBAs. We believe in investing in students in this country. That is what will pay long-term dividends and create long-term, well-paying jobs. That is what this government is all about. We promised it and we are doing it.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

• (1510)

[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the agreement entitled "The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada,

of the One Part, and the European Union and its Member States, of the Other Part", done at Brussels, Belgium, on October 30, 2016.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATOR OF CANADA**

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to applaud my colleague the Minister of International Trade for her accomplishment but I have some documents to table as well.

I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the 2015-16 Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada as required under Section 192 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

[Translation]

I am also tabling the response to the three recommendations in the Public Safety Canada report and the response to the 24 recommendations regarding Correctional Service Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

**IMMIGRATION**

**Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to congratulate my colleague the international trade minister—

**The Speaker:** I would like to remind ministers that this is not debate so it is not the time to congratulate, but rather it is the time to make a presentation of what they are tabling in the House.

[Translation]

**Hon. John McCallum:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 94(1) of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2016 annual report to Parliament on immigration.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADA-EUROPEAN UNION COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT**

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-30, An Act to implement the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union and its Member States and to provide for certain other measures.

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

\* \* \*

**INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL RECONCILIATION AND MEMORIAL DAY ACT**

**Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-318, An Act to establish Indian Residential School Reconciliation and Memorial Day.



He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce an act to establish Indian residential school reconciliation and memorial day. I would like to thank Maeengan Linklater for helping to champion the bill's creation and member of Parliament Seamus O'Regan, the member of Parliament from Newfoundland, for seconding my bill.

My bill is designed to set aside June 2 to honour the survivors of the Indian residential school system and acknowledge Canada's colonial historical legacy of the Indian residential school system for what it is, an act of cultural genocide under the UN Convention of 1949.

I ask Parliament to support this legislation and work together, as a nation and a country, toward the revitalization of indigenous communities and to affirm the treaty relationship between Canadians and indigenous peoples.

*Tapwe akwa khitwam.*

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

• (1515)

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member and would remind him that we do not refer to members by personal names but rather by the names of our ridings or by ministerial titles and so forth.

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#### NATIONAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS DAY ACT

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.)** moved that Bill S-211, an act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, be read the first time.

He said: I am very pleased to rise in this House to introduce Bill S-211, an act respecting National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, which, about two weeks ago, passed in the Senate unanimously and without amendment.

On September 29, my office met with Rugi Jalloh, president of the Sickle Cell Association of Nova Scotia, along with her delegation. Each of them had compelling and personal stories of how this disease has affected their health or the health of their family members.

People with sickle cell disease frequently experience extreme pain in their bones. One person we met with has a sister who is mostly bedridden and requires home care. Another person we met had lost two family members to this disease.

June 19 is recognized as World Sickle Cell Day by many organizations, including the World Health Organization. Bill S-211 seeks to add our voice to this important cause by marking June 19 as National Sickle Cell Awareness Day in Canada.

I ask that my colleagues on all sides of this House join with the Senate in the speedy passage of the bill.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

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#### PETITIONS

##### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of some

#### Routine Proceedings

constituents from Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, in the communities of Little Rapids, Serpent River, and Thessalon, and other individuals from Sault Ste. Marie, Hamilton, and Sudbury.

The petitioners call upon the government to reinstate the modest subsidy that supported this important piece of infrastructure for this part of northern Ontario.

They remind the government that 75% of the landowners along the line relied on passenger rail to reach their properties and that any roads the government claims can be used are industrial roads that are not maintained or monitored since they are not intended for public use.

In addition, they remind the government of the positive effect passenger services had on the Algoma economy and how its absence has created significant difficulties for the businesses up and down the line. They point out that the service was important to first nations accessing traditional land and that the failure to consult the first nations before cancelling the subsidy infringed on the right to consultation.

They add that the passenger train has been the only safe, affordable, all-season access into the Algoma wilderness for the last 100 years.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by campers who stayed at Smiths Bay campsite in Eganville, Ontario, which is located in the great riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The petitioners call upon the government to ensure that campgrounds with fewer than five full-time, year-round employees will continue to be recognized and taxed as small businesses.

#### FALUN GONG

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to present a petition signed by dozens of individuals asking the Canadian Parliament to establish measures to stop the Chinese regime's mass murder of innocent people for their organs; including, but not limited to: introducing Canadian legislation to ban organ tourism and criminalize those involved; taking every opportunity to call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong; and urging the Chinese authorities to bring former leader Jiang Zemin and his cohorts to justice.

*Routine Proceedings*

## PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I also have another petition, also signed by many individuals, asking the government to enshrine in the Criminal Code the protection of conscience for physicians and health care institutions from coercion or intimidation to provide or refer for physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia.

[*Translation*]

## ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have chosen to present this petition in the House today because we are talking about poverty in the debate on the bill introduced by my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

This petition calls on the Government of Canada to do something to reduce economic inequality in Canada. For example, it calls on the federal government to implement a federal minimum wage of \$15 an hour, ensure that large corporations pay their fair share of taxes, and put an end to unfair trade agreements that result in the loss of jobs and lower wages.

I think that this was the right day to present this petition, which has been signed by dozens of my constituents.

• (1520)

[*English*]

## PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition regarding the protection of conscience of physicians in Canada. It highlights that during the committee meetings on assisted suicide, the committee overwhelmingly heard that coercion, intimidation, and other forms of pressure intended to force physicians and health institutions to become parties to assisted suicide and euthanasia is a violation of fundamental freedom of conscience rights in Canada.

The petitioners are calling upon this Parliament to support Bill C-268 to enshrine in the Criminal Code the protection of conscience for physicians and health care institutions from coercion and intimidation.

## PENSIONS

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present this petition on behalf of my constituents in Labrador, hundreds of people from the town of Wabush and Labrador West, who are calling upon the government today to ensure that pension plans for workers are guaranteed under CCAA, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act. As members know, when Cliffs Natural Resources went bankrupt in Wabush, many workers ended up losing a large percentage of their pension plan, as they were not protected under that act. The company itself still earns revenues and profits in the United States even though it does not operate in Canada, yet Canadian workers have been left behind.

The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure the protection of these pension funds that workers worked hard for.

## FISHERIES

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table this petition calling on the government to save the endangered wild Atlantic salmon of the Avon River in Nova Scotia.

The petitioners are asking the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to restore proper fish passage to the Avon River Causeway, which would assist with the recovery of the wild Atlantic salmon and other species and their critical habitat.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting today two petitions: one from northern Alberta, Grimshaw, Alberta; and one from people from across Ontario. I am pleased to present these petitions.

The petitioners are concerned about the accessibility and impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit material online and the impact on public health, especially the well-being of women and girls. As such, these petitioners are calling on the House of Commons to adopt Motion No. 47.

**Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw attention to petition e-440, which calls on Parliament to recognize May 15 as national DIPG awareness day, a step toward positive change for children with DIPG brainstem cancer. I wish to thank all those who supported this petition. This is for Caleb, Sevanah, and Ruby.

[*Translation*]

## POVERTY

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great appreciation that I, again today, table signatures in support of Bill C-245, which seeks to develop a national poverty reduction strategy.

Earlier today, we had the first hour of debate on this bill at second reading. The petitions in support of this bill keep coming in.

[*English*]

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petition e-431, initiated by Tsewang Rinzin of Toronto. This petition calls on the Government of Canada to send at the earliest opportunity a delegation of Canadian parliamentarians and/or diplomats to China to ascertain the whereabouts and well-being of the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, and to urge the Government of China to release the 11th Panchen Lama at the earliest opportunity.

The Panchen Lama is the second-highest ranking lama in Tibetan Buddhism after the Dalai Lama. The 11th Panchen Lama was declared as such on May 14, 1995. Three days later, he and his family disappeared and they have not been seen for 21 years.

I am pleased to be the sponsor of this petition, and I look forward to hearing from the government at the earliest opportunity in response.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand up in this flurry of petitions today to present two petitions.

The first petition is from my constituents of Shawnigan Lake who are asking for the federal government to step in and provide assistance for the contaminated soil dump.

• (1525)

## SENIORS

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition is one I have the honour to present as the NDP critic for seniors' issues. The petitioners are calling upon Parliament to appoint a minister for seniors and to develop a national strategy for seniors, given that this demographic is about to be a very large part of the population in the next two decades.

[Translation]

## IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to present in the House two petitions urging the Government of Canada to recognize that current legislation governing impaired driving is too lenient and needs to be tougher.

The petitioners want harsher minimum sentences for those convicted of impaired driving causing death. They want individuals responsible for such deaths to be charged with vehicular homicide.

\* \* \*

[English]

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

## BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 2

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-29, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**The Speaker:** The House has five minutes for questions and comments.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is related to the budget itself. We saw a

## Government Orders

commitment to reduce the middle-class tax bracket, which would provide millions of dollars for nine million plus Canadians. We saw a special tax increase on Canada's wealthiest. What surprised me is that in the past the Conservatives talked about giving tax breaks to Canadians, yet when it really came down to it, the Conservative Party voted against the tax decrease for Canada's middle class.

My question is fairly simple. Why did the Conservative Party vote against the tax decrease for Canada's middle class?

[Translation]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his question.

The answer is extremely simple. When I take a good look at this budget and try to sum it up in a few words, it is pretty straightforward: more taxes, more taxes, and more taxes. An out-of-control deficit is enabling the government to spend money and make investments while downloading those costs onto our children and grandchildren. When I look at the statistics and the real facts, I see that there are fewer full-time jobs in Canada right now. If my colleague thinks that is good for Canadians, then we will never see eye to eye, unfortunately.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying that I greatly appreciated listening to my colleague, who managed to present a clear and concise argument that made it easy to understand why he is against Bill C-29, a bill to implement the Liberal government's latest budget.

I have a simple question for my colleague. Does he know any expressions to describe what the Liberal government did, in other words promise one thing and do another?

**Mr. Alain Rayes:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to identify the expression we use when someone keeps talking and talking but does not do what he says he is going to do. The expression is: if you are going to talk the talk then walk the walk. The government is failing at the latter.

We are asking that the government's actions reflect what it says. That seems simple enough to me. When we compare the announcements that are made here and there to actual facts, we see that the results do not line up with what was said.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, another aspect of the budget was the increase in the guaranteed income supplement for our seniors, which has taken some of the most vulnerable seniors across Canada, in every region, out of poverty, as well as the reduction in the age of entitlement for OAS from 67 to 65. These are two very positive measures taken by the government through the budget.

My question is the same as before. Why did the Conservative Party vote against those benefits going to Canada's seniors?

*Government Orders*

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Rayes:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for this additional question. It is a similar kind of question, so it will get a similar kind of answer.

We voted against this budget purely and simply because this government's actions will hurt future generations. The Liberals think they are doing the right thing, although we are not satisfied with what they have presented. All they are doing is dumping the problem onto future generations.

I said so in my speech, and I would be happy to explain it again. It is like when someone goes to the bank to borrow money to buy a house. The problem is not the act of borrowing. The problem is having no plan for paying back the loan and leaving one's children to foot the bill. What does the banker do? The banker tells the borrower to go home and do their homework, to look at their income and figure out how they are going to pay off the mortgage.

If this government is so responsible and really wants to create jobs, we are calling on it to do its homework and present us with a plan for economic growth and the sound management of public finances. It has not done that so far, and the numbers prove it.

[*English*]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Intergovernmental Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in the House in support of this budget, which would do so much good for so many people right across the country, from coast to coast to coast. It is indeed a privilege to speak about some of the benefits it would bestow, in particular, upon vulnerable populations of this country, populations that for a long time have been ignored. I say that because tax cuts, quite frankly, are not the only way to help these people, which seems to be all that we heard over the last 10 years.

In particular, I want to talk about the support that has been provided to families, specifically low-income families, with the child tax benefit. This motion in front of the House today tries specifically to lock in that support even further, not just this year but in the years going forward, to support those families as they seek to join the middle class or cement their places in the middle class.

Most important is that the House has managed to listen and understand that not every piece of legislation is letter perfect and that when suggestions or improvements are put on the table, we respond in kind by embracing those ideas and making them better, because better is always possible. I am speaking specifically about indexing.

I would be remiss if I did not tell the Chair that I will be splitting my time with the member for Vancouver Centre. I neglected to say that off the top.

The second component is pensions and the guaranteed income supplement. We know that the most vulnerable people in our society are quite often women who, later in life, through no fault of their own, have found themselves in a position where they have not fully contributed to CPP and thus are not able to fully realize the benefits this country has bestowed on others, or where their partners have passed on and they are in very vulnerable situations.

The boost to the guaranteed income supplement is fundamental to lifting seniors and, in particular, elderly women out of poverty and into positions where their security, health, and their enjoyment of their later years of life are guaranteed by the additional support provided by this budget. These are two very specific groups, young families and single seniors, who quite often find themselves in the most marginalized of economic situations. This budget would address them directly.

Another group looking to this government for help is students. Support for students comes in many forms, but there are two specific measures contained within this budget document. One is the support provided to help students get into universities or colleges by providing support for tuition. These measures are taken specifically to reduce the cost burden of entry into post-secondary institutions, which give people the platform to succeed, thrive, and support themselves in this new economy.

The second is the support that would be provided through the doubling of the Canada summer jobs program. Additional measures contained in this budget would not only provide support for them to get into university but also keep young people in universities with access to good, quality summer jobs often related to their fields of study. That is good social policy that supports people with real work experience as they seek to get the skills they need to compete and thrive in the new economy as we embrace a new century.

The other component is EI reform. We know that not all cylinders in every economy fire at the same time and in the right way. We know that there are downturns in sectors from time to time, whether in the film and digital media sector in the city I represent, or folks in the oil patch out west, or folks on the coast who might be in the fishing industry. We know that EI has to be modelled around those employee groups to support them. We have taken steps in this budget to compress the time for the application of benefits and to make sure that benefits reach parts of the country that are most vulnerable, so that while help is on the way and being delivered, families do not go without, support exists, and is targeted for those sectors in a way that is very specific.

It is not a substitute for economic growth and it certainly is not a substitute for jobs, but we know that when Canadians fall on hard times, other Canadians need to support them. This bill would seek to change some of the dynamics around EI to make sure that folks who face that situation are not left behind as the economy moves forward in other parts of the country.

Also embedded in this budget are tax cuts and a series of tax reforms to make taxation fair. I think it was Richard Nixon who once said that taxes will never be popular, but they should be fair. This budget seeks to do just that, to make taxation a fairer proposition for Canadians so they are confident that the dollars sent to Ottawa are not being sent by one group at the expense of another, but that the tax burden is being shared based on the ability to pay. That is why taxes are focused on the top 1% and would provide tax relief measures to the middle class.

*Government Orders*

• (1535)

If we go through the budget document that is tabled in front of us, there are also measures being taken to tighten up the tax code, so that loopholes that used to be there are narrowed, if not eliminated. Doing so, again, would make the paying of taxes fair. It would give all Canadians confidence that those who have the ability to pay are being taxed fairly. It would give confidence that those who do not have the ability to pay and are in need of support are being taxed appropriately, if at all, and that supports are there for the unique circumstances across a broad range of issues that I have just discussed.

As we talk about the economic dynamics as a series of metrics, and its people as a series of demographic groups or folks fitting specific dynamics that challenge their economic reality, we also have to understand that the real goal of this budget is to do more than simply deal with the inequities. It is also to create an economy that is actually producing more, delivering more wealth to be redistributed, hiring more people, as the incentives are delivered to the private sector to help us build this country in partnership with the public sector and with the community.

The fundamentally most important part of this budget, from my perspective, is the investment in infrastructure that would deliver real housing to real people in real need right across this country, right across the full spectrum of housing needs that stretch across this country. That is whether they are folks living hard on the street through no fault of their own, who have fallen into chronic homelessness, all the way through to supportive housing and transitional housing, social housing, affordable housing, affordable rental housing. There are new programs to make sure that people gain access to the housing market, have their investments stabilized and protected, right through to the end, luxury and the private market affordability that is delivered to so many people.

The full spectrum of housing needs are spoken to in this budget. Most importantly, from my perspective, is that social and affordable housing are back on the federal agenda. It is back as a focus of interest for the national government. We are currently engaged with provinces and territories, and municipalities in particular, as well as aboriginal first nations, Métis, and Inuit groups, to make sure that housing is delivered right across this country, from coast to coast, in a way that supports people as they seek to support their families.

This is the most important part of the budget from my perspective. It is certainly the reason I came to Ottawa. The reason I left city council and ran federally was to make sure that this housing program was re-established on a national level. I am extraordinarily proud to see the work being done by our ministers on these files. I am extraordinarily proud of the fact that the government is stepping in and stepping up, for the first time in my lifetime, in a way that is truly meaningful and will transition this country back into a situation where housing is no longer seen as a vulnerability, but one of the shining examples of how Canadians can pull together to make sure that all of us are adequately housed, adequately supported, and put in a position to thrive and succeed, despite some of the challenges we are delivered by fate.

The other component of this, which I think is just as important, are the transitions and changes we are making around transit and transportation funding. We have come through an extraordinary period of time, in which transit has not been properly funded by the previous government. We have seen projects picked out of the air, on fishing trips in the case of Toronto, where one project gets the funding, but a whole series of other projects are left behind.

We have seen, for the last two years, the cities of Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Mississauga, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, and St. John's not receive a penny of new infrastructure investment. That was because the previous government liked to announce money, loved handing out the big cheques, but never actually wrote out a cheque to be cashed. It could cut ribbons, but it could not cut cheques. As a result, we lost years of growth in the transit file due to the sort of showmanship that was on display. It certainly was not good urban support or an urban agenda, by any stretch of the imagination.

As a result, lots of cities, lots of communities, and in particular lots of families, were left behind, as trains went by, packed full, unsupported by the federal government, or as buses never arrived because the dollars did not arrive in those cities either.

Not only have we stepped up historically on transit, but we have also done something else which is critically important for cities right across this country. We withdrew the firewall between state of good repair and new projects. In other words, if money arrived or it was promised, if there was any money on the table, it was only for new projects and new services, which quite often generated operational costs for cities and municipalities.

What we have done is we have removed that firewall. We have allowed state of good repair and capital maintenance to be included in the capital repair budget of transit operators across the country, and, in doing that, we are building stronger transit systems while also supporting the growth of transit.

Finally, with regard to the green infrastructure, there is an old saying at city halls right across this country, "If you don't manage the water, the water will manage your town eventually anyways." The green infrastructure funds around flood protection, clean water, and environmental adaptations to make sure that we embrace the next century with confidence rather than fear as a result of climate change have been made in this budget.

Together, all of those investments create an economy that partners with the private sector to deliver a new society, a new level of infrastructure, new capacity, and new strength in the Canadian economy. This is exactly the platform we intended to create. It is exactly what the budget motion would deliver. In doing so, we are going to create the context for people to succeed in this country. I am proud to support this budget.

*Government Orders*

• (1540)

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, during the election, the Liberals said they would invest in Canadian infrastructure. That is on page 15 of their platform, under the subject of infrastructure. However, during the last couple of weeks, we have heard reports which suggest the selling off of some of our public infrastructure, such as airports, bridges, and maybe roads, which is not mentioned in their platform. Therefore, I am wondering this. Since the budget has come out, it has mused about asset recycling, which I believe is a fancy word for privatization. Another new term is “flywheel for reinvestment”. I am trying to get an answer to this specific question. What do the Liberals mean by these fancy words? Is it to privatize our public infrastructure?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Madam Speaker, the infrastructure bank was certainly talked about in my election campaign, and it certainly has been talked about by this party for quite a while. However, it is not a replacement for infrastructure investments. The \$60 billion we promised is \$60 billion. The member can talk to his mayor in Hamilton to see how happy he is about the money arriving in Hamilton, for things like building the new LRT and the investments for housing. The mayor of Hamilton has endorsed our program as visionary, and has embraced it as a way of moving the city forward.

What we are talking about in an infrastructure bank is finding new ways to partner private capital with public good and public need, to see if there is a way to extend the capacity of this country even further by blending new mechanisms. I will provide a perfect example of why it is so critically important. There are small communities that cannot borrow against their assets and have no way of participating in the infrastructure program. The infrastructure bank might be a way for smaller communities to partner with these infrastructure funds, get ahead, and build the infrastructure they need, without having to borrow at even higher rates than they would have to currently. That is one of the things that the infrastructure bank could accomplish.

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke a bit about the increase in the student grants, which will help close to 350,000 low to middle-income students. I am wondering how this program will help students in his riding.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Madam Speaker, when we help students gain access to higher education at an affordable rate, it does two things: one, it gets them the education and the training they need to compete in the new economy, which is critically important for students who live in my riding, a riding that is home to three different universities and a number of different colleges; and, two, it allows students to graduate without as much student debt, which means they can enter into and spend in the economy in a more confident way rather than simply paying back debt. Therefore, it is a combination of measures. There is not any single one that is perfect, but, in concert, they are much better and much stronger. As a result, we are propelling students forward rather than holding them back. It is one of the reasons, again, to support this budget.

• (1545)

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about the issue I have raised a couple of times today regarding child poverty. I am quite disappointed that the government has decided to let the value of the child benefits erode

over the next four years, with no indexing until after the next federal election. That means that many people in my riding will lose the equivalent of \$500 in family benefits. The Minister of Families, Children and Social Development claims that these measures will decrease the child poverty rate from 11% to 6%. However, if that indexing does not happen until after the next federal election, will we actually see a decrease in child poverty? Or, will it start to increase again because the child benefit was not indexed right from the beginning?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Madam Speaker, I hear the concern from the member opposite, and I am glad that more indexing has been embedded into the proposal through this motion. I look forward to seeing what the committee does with respect to strengthening the child benefit, because I think it is a very effective tool. However, I would also add this. As an advocate for housing, the most important contribution that this government will make toward ending child poverty in this country is through the national housing strategy. It is currently being negotiated. That is the most important step, above all others. I hope we get the member's support to ensure it is as strong as possible, and as well funded as possible.

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I can either say that great minds think alike, or that because we both come from the two major cities in this country that are having problems with housing, that my colleague has spoken about something that I intend to speak about.

I want to support this budget implementation bill. As we heard earlier on, it is not just about lowering taxes for everybody, and it is not about boutique tax benefits or tax credits. One of the things that has always plagued my city of Vancouver a great deal is housing. Back in 1997, when I was a minister in the Chrétien government, we saw the problem of homelessness beginning to emerge. Later on, there was the inability to have access to affordable rental housing. We have seen people unable to buy into housing. We have seen the co-op housing system begin to weaken, because a lot of the co-op housing that was built in the sixties has begun to fall into disrepair.

We began to invest in housing. It is important. This was something that we started to do. It had begun to make an impact, but for a decade we saw very little investment in housing entirely. In my city of Vancouver, we can walk down the street and see tent cities, and that is a homelessness issue. We see people who cannot afford to take shelter. We know that there are many women who cannot afford to stay anywhere because of the fear of violence. They have to find a place to get housing that is going to shelter them.

*Government Orders*

We looked at the whole spectrum of housing in the budget, and that is very important. We looked at homelessness. We are looking at women who are fleeing violence, who are now getting safe shelters to live in. We are looking at the ability to have affordable rental housing. People do not understand, unless they live in a riding like mine, that we have a whole lot of people who cannot afford to move into their own housing, who cannot afford a first home, so they are staying in affordable rentals. The people who need affordable rentals cannot get into affordable rentals because of that bottleneck.

The ability to move into that next front is where we have come back into the housing market. We have done that. For the first time in a decade, the federal government is back into a national housing strategy, working with provinces, working with municipalities, and working with the private sector to build housing, so that people can afford to move out of affordable rental housing and move into homes and first homes. We have formed a very strong partnership with the cities across this country. We have seen them moving forward. We have seen that need for them to start to build, and we have seen provinces coming together with us to be able to build housing.

Housing is a fundamental human right. People who cannot afford housing live on the streets. People who cannot afford housing live in substandard housing. Their children get sick very easily. Their children cannot do homework, cannot go to school, and they cannot thrive. They cannot find that means to move forward so that the next generation can do better than this one. The issue of child poverty is inherently linked with the issue of housing. We have seen this happening in my riding over and over. People are housed in a two-bedroom place with five children and two parents, and quite often grandparents. For me, the most important thing is the ability to afford housing.

We put in \$550 million over two years for the affordable housing initiative, and that is a doubling of federal funds in that category. We are supporting 100,000 households. That is a large number of people. We will be able to build new units, renovate existing homes, and provide rent supplements. There will be \$30 million over two years for co-op rent subsidies. We know that co-op housing is an essential form of housing. It came in during the fifties and sixties and allowed people to move into a home of their own, where 50% of the people had market housing and 50% of the people had subsidized housing. This an important way to allow people to live. Families grow up in co-op housing, and they have moved on from co-op housing when the children leave into single unit seniors housing. It is a small village, where people begin to build their lifestyles.

We are continuing to allow rent geared to income in those co-ops, with \$200 million over two years to seniors for affordable housing. I have a lot of seniors in my riding, and for many of them, if they are going to pay for their housing needs or rent housing where rents are going up and up, they cannot afford to eat.

● (1550)

When we talk about what a budget must do, it must not just help the middle class. That is what we are hoping to do. A good government needs to look after the most vulnerable, those who cannot afford the necessities of life that keep them healthy and strong.

Another part of the budget I like is the ability to help seniors. A lot of seniors are chronically ill. They suffer with diabetes or arthritis. They cannot afford to eat properly. They are filling the hospitals.

It is a case of understanding that when we put money into things like this, we save money at the other end in terms of health care.

Putting money into community housing and into home care units is important in allowing people to age in their communities and to have a good quality of life as they get older. These are really important problems we are trying to solve.

We are putting \$208 million for CMHC towards supporting 4,000 units of affordable rental housing. We are exploring innovative ways to lower costs and risks. We are committed to developing a national housing strategy with the provinces, territories, indigenous governments, cities, and stakeholders. We will get a report from the minister on the consultations on this new housing strategy on November 22.

This is the first time we have begun to talk about the need for housing as an absolute staple in people's lives. In fact, the talk about getting back into housing has prompted some provinces to put money directly into housing. I know that the Province of British Columbia has committed \$500 million to affordable housing in this fiscal year alone. It is the largest increase in B.C. history for housing. The City of Vancouver, which does not have a lot of money, has offered 20 sites, worth \$250 million, on which the federal and provincial governments can build housing.

I cannot stress too much how important housing is. When I was a little girl, I grew up in social housing. I know the need for housing. I know the dignity of housing. I know the need to live in a place where one can be proud to bring one's friends home. I know the need my parents had to afford a place for me to live and to still afford to feed me and ensure that I got a good education. These are the kinds of things that help people move up the ladder so that future generations can do better, go higher, and begin to form stable lives.

Talking about seniors again, we know that many seniors cannot afford to eat food and live at the same time, so we have actually moved 900,000 low-income single seniors out of poverty by increasing the guaranteed income supplement. We have allowed people to get their old age security at 65. Many people at 65 have to retire, because they have been working in jobs where they have hurt themselves. They have back problems. They are not able to continue to work until age 67. That means that we are in touch with people. We were listening to what people were telling us they need.

*Government Orders*

We committed, in the spring, with the agreement of all the provinces, to do something that is really important: expand the CPP. We know that many people in this new world of work are working in precarious jobs. Not only are they working in part-time jobs with no security but they are working in jobs where they do not foresee retirement. Their employers are not able to give them the kinds of pensions we had about 20 years ago. We see people needing to put down those roots so that when they are seniors, they can be healthy seniors who are not in and out of hospitals in a health care system that is not able to support them, because we are all aging.

One of the things we see is that benefits will reach 33%, not only for seniors who are going to be retiring soon but for young people who are getting into the workforce who can look forward to about another 25 years of work. They can actually look at having a proper retirement and to being healthy when they retire.

I would like to say one final thing. Government is not just about taxes. Government is about ensuring that the taxes we get from the population go toward helping those who are most vulnerable. As a Liberal, for me, this is very important, because there are so many people in my riding who are extremely vulnerable. This budget is helping them.

• (1555)

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about retirement and the strength of the Canada pension plan. My concern is what the government is doing to allow people to save their own money. It is taking away a whole bunch of avenues for Canadians to actually save the money they earn.

She talked about the Canada pension plan. If someone is 64 years old and passes away, that money is gone. It goes back into the pot. Now the government is looking at expanding the Canada pension plan.

If there are options, the more options Canadians have the more decisions they can make based on their personal situations. I would ask my friend opposite how she expects Canadians to actually save for retirement when the government keeps taking away those options and increasing taxes and expects them to have some money left over at the end of the day.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, this is a virtuous cycle we are talking about. The virtuous cycle says that if we help people afford housing, help them get good, stable jobs, and help them get a pension from their employer, they are able to save money at the same time. They are able to save money, because they are not paying exorbitant amounts of money on housing. They are able save money, because they know that they will have a pot of money at the end when they retire.

A secure retirement is essential to most people, and we do not have that anymore. We are seeing people unable to retire, because they do not have pensions anymore.

On the ability to save, there is still more than \$5,000 for a tax-free savings account, and most middle-income people can barely afford that, but at least there is a place for them to put aside money, which encourages them. However, when we move to \$10,000 in a tax-free savings account, many of the people we are talking about, when they

become seniors, would not have the ability to live a good life. They could never afford to save that kind of money.

We are being realistic.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Madam Speaker, deficits are an interesting thing. Of course, the principle behind deficits is that we leave them to our children and grandchildren to pay. The government started during the election with a \$10-billion deficit then went to a \$30-billion deficit. I have heard figures as high as \$47 billion.

It is easy to be in government if one is willing to write cheques whenever an opportunity comes forward, but I wonder if the member could tell us how much she thinks might be too much, in terms of accumulating debt.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, again, there is no one solution to any problem.

You talk about accumulating debt and passing it on to our children, at the same time—

• (1600)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I remind the hon. member to address the question to the chair.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, the member knows that if we actually give people assistance in getting their children an education and in getting an affordable, stable, safe, and secure place to live, we begin to start helping people along that cycle, and their children do better and get better jobs.

It is not simply a matter of saying how much debt when we are also helping the next generation to get jobs and when we are building new industries in the creative sector for those people to get jobs. When we are investing in skills, training, and education, we are at the same time lifting that next generation and are not placing them in debt.

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her speech. Central to that speech was housing. I would ask the member how housing is the foundation for ensuring that all parts of our budget lead to a good and improved quality of life for people in her riding and especially for seniors, families, and the most vulnerable.

**Hon. Hedy Fry:** Madam Speaker, housing is essential to the quality of life people live. The evidence shows us that people who live in substandard housing or people who spend more than 70% of their money on housing in unaffordable rental housing, which people are doing in my riding, cannot afford food. They cannot afford to feed themselves properly. Women cannot afford to go to work, because they cannot afford to leave their children with anyone, because they do not have the means by which to do it.

It is all about how one thing plays into another. If we look at this as a holistic thing, if we look at housing as being a bedrock for creating strong and stable families, then we are actually moving forward in the right direction.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Hamilton Mountain. I want to wish everyone a happy Halloween.

Today we are dealing with the sequel to the first Budget Implementation Act. Once again, we see that Liberals seem to be emulating the Conservatives with another omnibus bill. This one is tipping the scales at a good 231 pages, while the previous one, which was Bill C-15, was 179 pages.

I remember debating Bill C-15 in June when it came before us for third reading. That bill changed 30 different statutes. I remember that the NDP at that time argued that several portions of the bill should be split so that members in this House could do their due diligence, both here in the House and at finance committee. Unfortunately, those recommendations were not agreed to by the government and we had to again go through the omnibus bill.

I remember that the Liberals at that time were extolling the virtues of their so-called middle-class tax cut and the fact that they were bringing in the child benefit and had made some significant changes to employment insurance. It seems that for the second budget implementation act, we are hearing much the same arguments. It seems to be a chance for the Liberals to again put forward the arguments put forward in March in their budget speech, and so on.

The bill amends 13 separate pieces of legislation. I would have hoped for a little bit more time to study each individual one, but I hope that the finance committee will get its opportunity to do that. Some of the major acts that will be changed by the bill concern the Income Tax Act, the Employment Insurance Act, and the Old Age Security Act, among others.

One of the things we in the NDP have been concerned about that we have been hearing from the Liberal government both last week and this week, and what I suspect will be formalized in the economic update tomorrow, is the privatization of our infrastructure. This is very worrisome to me and to many of us on this side, and indeed to many Canadians, because it was an agenda that was never presented in the Liberals' election platform.

I am one who believes fundamentally that when we put forward a platform and use it to get votes, we should honour it, and there should be no hidden surprises. I feel that with this privatization agenda, the Liberals are taking a page from their provincial cousins in Ontario and that consumers and Canadians will be the ones who end up paying in the long run.

I believe that the real change that was promised last year was not supposed to be just a coat of red paint over the old blue one. There was supposed to be a whole new vehicle for Canadians. I think we are seeing a lot of the same arguments come forward. The Liberals did not run under these promises.

I will say that the Liberals are very good at acting like New Democrats during an election, but when it comes to governing, they are very good at acting like Conservatives.

The biggest problem is the fact that this was never outlined in their platform. I will go into further detail about that.

The first point is that the Liberals stated in their platform that they would establish a Canadian infrastructure bank, and I believe they will be going ahead with that. This bank was to provide low-cost financing for new infrastructure projects, but again, nothing was mentioned about privatization.

The second point is that the federal government would use its strong credit rating and lending authority to make it easier and more affordable for municipalities to build the projects their communities need. Again, nothing was mentioned about privatization, nothing about taking those assets and selling them to the private sector for private interests.

The third point was that when a lack of capital represented a barrier to projects, the Canadian infrastructure bank would provide loan guarantees and small capital contributions to provinces and municipalities to ensure that projects were built. Again, there is no mention of privatization of infrastructure assets.

I believe that Canadians were misled and will be in for a surprise at tomorrow's update.

• (1605)

At this point, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques. He has done some amazing work as our finance critic and really has led the charge for our party in exposing these plans and raising our party's concerns about them.

In budget 2016, we got a hint about what was to come and we started to see the term asset recycling. We found out that the government was now asking Credit Suisse for advice on the benefits of privatizing airports. This advice is coming from a company that buys airports. This is a clear conflict of interest. It would be like me asking a senator on whether it is a good idea to abolish the Senate. I do not think I would get an honest answer to that question.

I believe the infrastructure bank that is being proposed is going to be largely funded with private funds, and those are ultimately going to bestow a high cost on our society. Any company that invests in infrastructure is going to demand a high rate of return. It is not going to act in the public interest, and that is an important point to establish. It will be working on behalf of private shareholders.

Infrastructure projects by their very nature are a public institution. Everyone depends on them. When we start selling those off, it is very hard to get them back and it becomes very hard to implement policies for the public good. On this side, we are all about that. We are about ensuring the public good is recognized and maintained for all policy options.

When companies want that rate of return on their infrastructure events, it means having user fees or tolls, and those charges are always passed on to the consumer. The consumer will not have any effect on changing those user fees or tolls because they will not have a democratically elected government in charge of them anymore.

We have seen experiences where public infrastructure projects have been privatized. I think of BC Ferries in British Columbia. The whole B.C. ferry system was made into a corporation. We have seen no stop of user fees and ticket prices go up and up, making life really unaffordable for the coastal communities.

*Government Orders*

This is all coming under the context of the Liberals having hidden their true plans, and it is a fundamental betrayal of the trust of Canadians.

The term asset recycling is no more than a cover word for privatization. We have seen experiences of this in other governments around the world. For example, the right wing government of Tony Abbott in Australia tried to introduce asset recycling schemes. The Australian senate saw through the use of this language and it gutted and retitled the bill to call it “encouraging privatization”. Perhaps that is what we should be calling this bill.

I will go back to B.C. The B.C. Liberal government has become an expert in this. It sold off a ton of public assets to balance the books. To me, that is short-term gain for long-term pain.

Asset recycling will fundamentally rob future governments and budgets of the ability to regulate and generate revenue. The Advisory Council on Economic Growth was started up in March to advise the Liberal government. The chair of this group is none other than Dominic Barton, who has spent 10 years with the McKinsey consulting group, which promotes massive private involvement in infrastructure. If that is the advice the government is getting, it is easy to see exactly what we will see in the update tomorrow.

On October 20, the Advisory Council on Economic Growth published three reports with recommendations. One of those key recommendations was that Ottawa should privatize some of its existing assets as a way of raising money to spend on other infrastructure.

The road map seems pretty clear to me: to sell off our public assets that were funded by taxpayer dollars so private interests can start generating their own revenue streams on them. This is contrary to what was promised to us in the election. The NDP can never support a bill that would sell off our communal assets to make a quick buck. It has been shown not to work. That is why we stand opposed to the bill and the general economic policy of the government.

• (1610)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think there were a great many Canadians who were disappointed on how the New Democratic Party voted on the budget issue, and this is a budget implementation bill.

If we look at finances, we see a movement toward the equalization of the distribution of wealth. For example, there is a substantial increase in taxation for Canada's wealthiest and a substantial decrease for Canada's middle class of hundreds of millions of dollars, which will affect nine million Canadians. We are seeing thousands of the most vulnerable seniors being lifted out of poverty through the GIS. Through the Canada benefit plan, thousands of children are being lifted out of poverty.

For all intents and purposes, I and many would argue that this is a very progressive budget. Therefore, could the member tell members of the House and his constituents what budget was more progressive than this budget, and why the NDP would vote against it?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, with the budget implementation bill being an omnibus bill, there were a number of items we agreed with, but there were also a lot we did not. The

problem with bills like this is that they have to pass the House in their current form. Therefore, because there were those poison pills in the budget, we could not support it.

With respect to the tax breaks, we agreed to raising the tax rate for people who earned over a certain amount. It was the so-called middle-class tax cut, because the true maximum benefits for that came into effect for people earning between \$89,000 and \$200,000 a year. As I have stated in the House many times, that was the equivalent of every single Liberal member of Parliament giving themselves a tax break. However, when the median income in Canada is \$31,000 a year, the constituents in my riding get nothing. I did not come to the House to give myself a tax break, and I certainly stand by my decision earlier this year.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to seize upon the question just asked by my Liberal friend from Winnipeg, who seems to assess the progress and nature of budgets by how big their deficit is. Certainly, burdening our future with the debts of today is not progressive. I would contrast this, and the hon. member touched on it in his speech, with the fact that in the last election the NDP tried to offer a plan for the future that was not just runaway deficits. Also, a number of the tax provisions the Conservative government provided for low-income families, particularly cutting the GST, which consumed most of the lowest income level earners household income, would be progressive.

In reference to what the member for Winnipeg North just asked, suggesting that the Liberals' budget was the most progressive in history, is that just from their running a deficit? I noticed he mentioned that the Liberals liked to run as the NDP in elections and then govern in an entirely different way. Would the member comment further on that?

• (1615)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to go over our electoral platform for the benefit of all members in the House.

The NDP is often asked how it will pay for these things, but no mention is ever made by the Liberals or the Conservatives about the current low corporate tax rates. That fits in nicely with the infrastructure programs I talked about earlier. A large number of the infrastructure that exists in Canada has been funded by the taxpayers. A lot of that infrastructure, such as the bridges and the rails we have built, benefit corporations because they are able to move their goods efficiently.

*Government Orders*

However, the fact is that we have put all that public money into that infrastructure and we still have a very low corporate tax rate. Therefore, what we argued in the NDP was that corporations, particularly the very wealthy ones, should pay a bit more to ease the burden off the rest of society. For far too long, we have had this trickle-down economic theory where we think that if we lower the corporate tax rate to these really low levels, somehow all of this money will magically trickle down to the lower classes. Instead, as the former governor of the Bank of Canada has pointed out, the corporate bank accounts are simply swashing full of millions of dollars right now, which is dead money not being reinvested into the Canadian economy. We asked for fairness, and that was what we ran on.

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-29, a second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016 and other measures. I am also pleased to rise today so I can express my complete disappointment with how the bill has been introduced and the structure of the bill.

Bill C-29 is 234 pages, has 146 clauses, and would amend 13 pieces of legislation. How is this bill supposed to get proper review, study, and consideration? It simply will not, and the government know that and it is counting on that.

This kind of behaviour comes from a government that either has something to hide or does not want the public to know what it is up to. I suspect that a government which has not lived up to its promises on so many fronts, such as electoral reform, on the relationship with first nations, on meaningful reform to the Canada pension plan, and on its commitment to help the workers and former workers at U.S. Steel Canada is now finding it is necessary to hide its real intentions, and that is to fudge the facts, invent new and meaningless buzz words, and obscure the truth.

I need to take a moment to speak about what is to me an unfolding example of the government's desire to mask its real intentions behind a wall of rhetoric and doublespeak. I refer to the government's plan to privatize public infrastructure by selling off public assets and creating a new infrastructure bank to monetize future infrastructure projects.

As a former city councillor, I know about the dire state of our local infrastructure. I know about the lack of assistance for municipalities to help fund vital infrastructure rehabilitation. I have also seen the effects of both the federal and provincial governments downloading the costs for infrastructure projects onto the municipalities. This has helped create a staggering crisis.

No one should be fooled by the government's plan for infrastructure. The Liberals plan to privatize. No one should be fooled about what this means. It means user fees. It means toll roads and toll bridges. It means downloading the costs onto me, other members and all our constituents.

The finance minister's advisory panel on economic growth issued a report, and we expect some of its recommendations in the minister's economic statement tomorrow. Among those recommendations were the following: first, develop a focused federal infrastructure strategy which is in line with the government's economic growth agenda; second, create a Canadian infrastructure

development bank to leverage institutional capital and deliver over \$200 million with the projects over 10 years; and, third, create a flywheel for investment by catalyzing the participation of the institutional capital in existing assets.

We all know and agree that there needs to be new investment in infrastructure. Canadians from coast to coast have been calling on the federal government to take meaningful and substantial action for years. However, we are concerned by reports of the Liberal plan to privatize our infrastructure.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has expressed some serious concern that the government will take money that has been promised for housing and local projects and instead put it into its new infrastructure bank. That would mean less money for local priorities. That would mean less money for communities that were counting on addressing urgent infrastructure needs.

There are also reports that suggest the Liberals are moving ahead with plans for selling off existing public infrastructure, like airports and bridges. Having failed to sell their privatization schemes by calling them asset recycling, they have now invented the new term, "flywheel for reinvestment". Do not be fooled. This is just a new word for privatization. Why do the Liberals want to sell off the valuable infrastructure that hard-earned dollars of Canadians have built? To pay for their budget shortfalls. This is just another example of the government trying to keep its promises from and then trying to use sleight of hand to fool Canadians into thinking otherwise.

The bill before us today is just another example of how the government is trying to pull the wool over our eyes. The bill is far too big and far too complex, and the time allotted for debate is far too short to allow for the in-depth consideration and discussion that a budget should receive.

• (1620)

We have discovered, however, that the bill does contain some positive measures that the NDP has fought for, but it comes nowhere near what the Liberals have been promising, and nowhere near what is necessary to strengthen our economy and to combat inequality.

We are disappointed that the Liberals have decided to let the value of the new child benefit erode over the next four years, taking the equivalent of \$500 away from families. We wanted to see more aggressive action to ensure tax fairness, including more to combat tax evasion by multinational corporations, and to close the stock option loophole for wealthy CEOs. It is also unacceptable that the Liberals are making adjustments to eligibility for small business taxes without restoring the promised tax cuts for small businesses.

Canadians were hoping for better from the current government. Many people have been left shaking their heads wondering why the government, which promised change, is acting like the Conservative government.

*Government Orders*

I can tell members that people in my community are shaking their heads, especially the 25,000 workers and retirees of U.S. Steel Canada, who thought that the current government would stand up for them through the bitter corporate restructuring currently taking place. Instead, we have seen a government and a Prime Minister turning their backs on the people of my community. This is a Prime Minister who, during the election, promised to do everything he could to help, but has left our pensioners and workers out in the cold.

One year after the election there has been not a word from the government or the Prime Minister about providing any help at all. It is shameful, and the people of Hamilton are not soon to forget. People in my community expected better, but like all Canadians, they have been left shaking their heads.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am sorry the member feels as if the Prime Minister has left his constituents out. I can tell him that the Prime Minister has done no such thing. We have a Prime Minister who is committed, in a very significant way, to assist and work with Canadians with unprecedented consultations and policies that will make a difference for the everyday living conditions of all Canadians.

The member may want to reflect on some of the initiatives taken. We can talk about the tax breaks for the middle class, the additional tax on Canada's wealthiest, the Canada child benefit, the increase in the GIS, and many other initiatives that have been taken by this government in one year, which will do well for his constituents and in fact all Canadians.

Would the member not at the very least acknowledge that we have seen more done in the last year than we had in the previous 10 years under the Harper government?

• (1625)

**Mr. Scott Duvall:** Madam Speaker, yes, we have seen a little bit of positive change, but not what was promised when the Liberals rolled out their promises. Almost everything they promised to change has been watered down.

If you look at your child tax benefit—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the member to address his comments to the chair.

**Mr. Scott Duvall:** Madam Speaker, if we look at the child tax money that the Liberals have handed out, they now do not even want to index it at the rate of inflation for another five years.

If we look at the Canada pension plan enhancement, people are surprised that it will only help future retirees and does not do anything for people now, or for people who are out there on disability, or for those who have been raising their children and do not get credit for having done so, because they did not make contributions.

To finish my answer, yes, there have been some changes, but they are watered down changes, and we expected better than that.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in my previous life I was mayor of a community called Cranbrook, and one of the burdens that our taxpayers ended up living with was a failed public-private partnership. A new

recreational complex was built in Cranbrook, a public-private partnership that failed. The city ended up having to buy out the private partner, and we were locked into about 15 years' worth of loans at 8% that we could not even borrow money to pay down, because the loans were locked in.

What are some of my colleague's other concerns about privatization of infrastructure? It certainly was a failure in Cranbrook.

**Mr. Scott Duvall:** Madam Speaker, there would not be enough time to say what happens when governments partner with private companies. Most of time when we join with private companies, they seem to get the bigger benefit and the public side always seems to get the shortfall. In Ontario, we paid millions and millions of dollars for Highway 407. Then it was privatized and all of a sudden its owners are making millions of dollars, which we said we could not do. I am having some difficulty with any kind of privatization, but if it is going to happen, we have to make sure that it will be of benefit to Canadians and not just to corporations.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mount Royal.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to two aspects of budget implementation act, 2016, No. 2. This bill makes significant amendments to the Canada Disability Savings Act and the old age security program.

At first glance, these two programs seem to be different. However, they have the same goal, namely to ensure that the most vulnerable Canadians enjoy a good quality of life and live with the dignity they deserve.

First of all, I would like to remind the House that the Canada Disability Savings Act governs how the grants and bonds provided by the government are paid into registered disability savings plans, or RDSPs.

RDSPs were created in 2008 in order to help people with disabilities and their families save in order to provide long-term financial security. Canadian residents who are entitled to the disability tax credit can open a RDSP until the end of the year in which the recipient turns 59. Parents or guardians can open an RDSP on behalf of a minor. There is no annual contribution limit, but the lifetime limit is \$200,000.

The gains accumulated are tax free until withdrawn from the RDSP. The government contributes to the RDSPs of eligible recipients by providing grants or bonds, or both, up to a maximum amount.

The bill being debated today would amend the Canada Disability Savings Act. These changes are required because the act refers to the Canada child tax benefit. As all members know, that benefit was replaced by the new Canada child benefit last June. Every year, the amount of the grant or bond that the recipient is entitled to is calculated on the basis of adjusted family income.

*Government Orders*

With regard to RDSP benefits for youth under the age of 18, this adjusted income, the amount used to determine the government's contribution in the form of a grant or bond, was also used by the government to calculate the amount of the Canada child tax benefit. Since that benefit no longer exists, we need to amend the provisions of the Canada Disability Savings Act that mention that benefit. We also need to amend the provisions that mention "phase-out income".

As members know, the amount of the bonds decrease for those with higher incomes. The threshold at which the bonds start to decrease is called the "phase-out income". It is important to understand this concept because the formula used to calculate the phase-out income includes the Canada child tax benefit.

As a result, the following three consequential amendments will be made to the Canada Disability Savings Act. First, the references to the Canada child tax benefit in five provisions of the Canada Disability Savings Act will be replaced by references to the new Canada child benefit. Second, the definition of "phase-out income" will be changed to include the Canada child benefit income threshold in the formula. Third, the definition of "child tax benefit" in the definitions section of the Canada Disability Savings Act will be removed since it will no longer be necessary.

Thanks to these amendments, the income thresholds for eligibility for the Canada child benefit and the Canada disability savings bond will be harmonized. The increase in the income threshold will produce a slight increase in total payments made for the bond in the RDSP of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are not the only group that needs additional government assistance. The income security of our country's seniors is another government priority.

That is why we will be formulating provisions to help Canada's seniors enjoy a good quality of life. Seniors are important members of our society, who contribute actively to the well-being of their families and of our community, as well as to the growth of our economy. We have one of the lowest rates of senior poverty in the world.

In 2013-14, the most recent year for which data were collected, the Government of Canada paid Canadians over \$79 billion under the Canada pension plan and old age security. These programs have contributed greatly to reducing the low-income rate for seniors over the last 30 years. However there still remains a great deal of work to do.

• (1630)

In 2014, the most recent year for which data were collected, 3.9% of the country's seniors were living below the low-income cut-off established by Statistics Canada, representing some 200,000 people. Nearly 80% of these low-income seniors, or the vast majority, are single, and most of them are women.

That is why we have also increased by \$947 per year the amount paid as the guaranteed income supplement to low-income single seniors. This measure will support the most vulnerable seniors who depend almost exclusively on their old age security pension and guaranteed income supplement, and who are thus at risk of experiencing financial difficulties.

Similarly, this measure will improve the financial security of some 900,000 seniors all across Canada, and we estimate that it will help lift nearly 13,000 of the most vulnerable seniors in Canada out of poverty.

We already support senior couples, in cases where the two members of the couple are receiving the guaranteed income supplement, have high living expenses, and are at high risk of poverty due to the necessity of living apart, for example, when one of the spouses is forced to live in a nursing home.

In some senior couples, one partner receives the guaranteed income supplement and the other the spousal allowance, but they have to live apart for reasons beyond their control, such as one of them needing long-term care. We are in the process of amending the Old Age Security Act to ensure that such couples receive higher benefits based on each individual's income.

I would like to point out that the allowance is paid to people 60 to 64 years of age with low income whose spouse or common-law partner receives the guaranteed income supplement.

Our government also reversed the decision to increase the age of eligibility for old age security from 65 to 67, which should come into effect in 2023. That change will give low-income seniors up to \$17,000 per year. With these key measures, we will provide essential support to the most vulnerable Canadians.

The Government of Canada cares about seniors. Canadians work tirelessly their whole lives. We should all have a chance to live into old age without worrying about making ends meet. That is why our minister was given a mandate to improve income security for low-income seniors. These measures are how we are keeping that promise.

We promised to help more Canadians escape poverty. To me it is unimaginable that in a country like Canada there are still people who are unable to meet their basic needs. This is unacceptable and we are doing something tangible to correct this situation.

I believe we all agree that no one should grow old in poverty or isolation. I cannot emphasize enough how important this issue is to our government.

I would also like to take a moment to discuss the Canada pension plan, another important pillar in our retirement income system. Retirement income security has to start with solid and stable public retirement plans such as the Canada pension plan.

We are also working with the provinces and territories to strengthen the plan. Earlier in October, we introduced a bill to amend the plan in order to help middle-class Canadians achieve their goal of living a dignified life in retirement with guaranteed income security.

We are making a considerable investment in the well-being of seniors. Canadians who work hard contribute to our society throughout their lives and our government believes that every Canadian deserves to grow old with respect and dignity.

*Government Orders*

Laurentides-Labelle has more of an aging population than most other ridings. The 2011 census found that the average age in the riding was 49.5. I look forward to the results of the 2016 census, but I would be surprised if the average age had not risen considerably.

Seniors' issues are crucial; we must improve their quality of life without delay. We can always do more, but I think we are on the right track with this bill and with this budget. Canada has always been a leader when it comes to delivering services to seniors. Our retirement income system is considered one of the best in the world.

I strongly urge my colleagues to help make sure it stays that way by supporting this bill.

• (1635)

[English]

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to repeat in English what the hon. member said in French about senior citizens and the changes that are being made to allow senior couples, who have to live apart for reasons that are no fault of their own, to be spared having money come off the seniors' supplement. One party is earning money but they are not living together, which increases their costs.

I met a lot of couples like that in the election where one spouse was in a retirement home because they were too sick to live with their spouse. I was just wondering if my hon. colleague also had similar experiences in the election and met couples who were affected by that measure.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Madam Speaker, my own family was affected by this. My grandparents lived in adjacent units in Lac Saint-Louis, I think it was that riding, for the last couple of years of their lives.

We see the reality of the situation. It is very important that we take care of our seniors in every possible way that we can.

**Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his very detailed presentation speech on some of the measures that are contained in the bill, which is close to 234 pages long. I am disappointed that it is being presented in this way and that we are not having enough time to really give it proper consideration and study.

I would like to share with my colleague my disappointment with one part of the bill; that is, the decision not to index the child benefits over the next few years. Actually, the indexing will not happen until the next federal election. That will have a bigger impact on low-income families, which are the majority of families in my riding.

I wonder if you would agree with me that was a bad decision and that indexing should happen sooner, not in the next election.

• (1640)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind the member to address the questions to the Chair and not to the individuals.

The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for drawing our attention to this very good program that, at least in my riding, is expected to help about 4,000 people out of

poverty. It is an incredibly important program. It is an incredibly progressive program. I am really proud to support it. I am looking forward to the future changes that we make as we go forward.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a simple, common-sense question for my colleague. How does he explain the difference between a modest \$10-billion annual deficit and a \$30-billion annual deficit? How does a government member explain to the people of his riding, who placed their trust in him, this change in attitude once his party took power?

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Madam Speaker, I have no problem explaining that. I believe that the deficit exists everywhere you go: it exists in our infrastructure, in our society, and in our government. Personally, I want us to invest in the future of our country, in our infrastructure, in all the programs that we need to implement. I do not want to ignore those things in order to achieve a certain number. I want to invest, and that is what our government is doing.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my question is with regard to the whole issue of consultation. I met an interesting individual, Kourosh Doustshenas, who had raised an issue with me. I want to ask the member what he thinks of consultation and the importance thereof.

For example, this individual talked about the homebuyers' plan and how it has helped close to three million people since 1992. He believes that the government needs to take a look at that particular program.

I wonder if my colleague would just talk about the importance of consultations.

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham:** Madam Speaker, for just over a year now we have consulted. My riding is a huge riding. I have 43 municipalities and 300-and-something city councillors. In my office, we met with all of my city councillors, my seven chambers of commerce, my four regional development agencies, every organization we could find to get their input, and that consultation is what fed our ability to contribute to this process.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order, please.

It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Essex, Dairy Industry; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Infrastructure; and the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou, Veterans Affairs.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mount Royal.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today on this second act to implement certain provisions of the budget.

*Government Orders*

Many of my colleagues who were former municipally elected officials would join me. As mayors and councillors, we frequently passed budgets that were in the \$50-million range and, in some cities, in the \$1-billion range, like the regional government in Montreal, and yet meetings were very sparsely attended. There may have been one or two people in attendance to see a \$1-billion budget pass and yet if there was a meeting on a dog run, there would be 400 people. The reason is that it is very difficult to understand bills that consist of 243 pages and go into very minute financial detail. It is not sexy, but it is important.

I am proud of the budget that we delivered earlier this year and I am pleased to talk about this bill, as well as the investments that the Government of Canada has been making to keep Canada and its people strong and growing for the long term.

This second budget implementation act proposes items that would complete the implementation of outstanding measures from the Government of Canada's first budget. As a government, and as the MP for Mount Royal, I am proud of our first budget. It put people and families first. It introduced investments that were an essential step to grow the middle class, such as, of course, the improved family allowance. I was particularly happy to see it targeted at families who needed it the most on a tax-free basis. This is the first step of a long-term plan to restore hope and revitalize the economy for the benefit of all Canadians.

This is a budget and a plan, by the way, that not only resonated with many Canadians but is garnering international praise as well. The *Financial Times* called Canada a glimmer of light. *The Wall Street Journal* called Canada the poster child for the International Monetary Fund's global growth strategy. Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, praised our approach as well.

*The Economist* magazine has put Canada's approach on its cover, with a story entitled, "Liberty moves north". It stated, "the world owes Canada gratitude for reminding it of what many people are in danger of forgetting: that tolerance and openness are wellsprings of security and prosperity, not threats to them". Our budget earned endorsements because we, as a government, are focused on the right things. We are focused on people, growing the economy for the long term, and doing so in a way that should benefit every Canadian.

Canadians deserve financial consumer protection that keeps pace with their needs. In line with this, budget 2016 contained plans to strengthen and modernize our financial consumer protection framework. Budget implementation act, 2016, No. 2, a very sexy title, would amend the Bank Act in order to strengthen and modernize the financial consumer protection framework.

Canada's financial sector weathered the 2008 financial crisis well, but we are seeking to build on this strength. We want to make sure the financial sector is able to adapt to new trends, including emerging financial innovation and technologies that would challenge existing business models, evolving consumer preferences and customer relationships, changing demographics, and continuing globalization.

Budget 2016 proposed to modernize the financial consumer protection framework by clarifying and enhancing consumer protection in the Bank Act and to work with stakeholders to support

the implementation of this framework. This legislation proposes to consolidate and streamline existing consumer provisions into one new chapter of the Bank Act and introduce amendments to the Bank Act to enhance consumer protection in the areas of access to basic banking services, business practices, disclosure, and complaints handling, as well as corporate governance and accountability.

The federal government is exercising leadership by taking targeted steps to strengthen financial consumer protection. This includes measures to improve access to basic banking services and enhance disclosure to facilitate informed decision-making by consumers. These reforms would reaffirm the federal government's intent to have a system with exclusive rules for consumer protection to ensure an efficient banking system from coast to coast to coast.

As part of an international effort to combat tax evasion, budget 2016 confirmed the government's intention to implement the common reporting standard developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

• (1645)

Under the common reporting standard, Canadian financial institutions would be expected to have procedures in place to identify accounts held by non-residents and to report information on those accounts to the Canada Revenue Agency. Tax administrations in foreign jurisdictions would likewise collect information from their financial institutions about accounts held by residents of other countries, including Canada. The CRA would formalize exchange agreements with foreign jurisdictions, having verified that each jurisdiction has appropriate capacity and safeguards in place. Then the financial account information would begin to be exchanged on a reciprocal, bilateral basis.

The introduction of the common reporting standard is an important global development, which will help enhance tax compliance and eliminate opportunities for tax evasion. Canada intends to implement the standard, consistent with our commitment to the G20 and similar commitments by more than 100 other jurisdictions.

The budget also announced plans to implement a new requirement for country-by-country reporting. This is an initiative agreed to under the G20/OECD project to address tax avoidance by multinational enterprises through base erosion and profit shifting. Under these new rules, large multinational enterprises would be required to file with tax authorities information providing a high-level profile of their activities in each jurisdiction where they operate. These reports would enhance transparency and assist tax administrations in performing effective risk assessments.

*Government Orders*

Going forward, Canada will continue to work with the international community to ensure a coherent and consistent response to tax avoidance.

In addition to these new legislative tools, budget 2016 also announced \$444 million in new resources for the Canada Revenue Agency to address offshore tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance.

Budget 2016 represents a step forward in our plan to put people first and to deliver the help they need now, while investing for years and decades to come. With these investments, and inspired by a sense of fairness, we are ensuring that Canada's best days lie ahead. Our plan is about creating the necessary conditions to ensure that hope and hard work will not be wasted but rewarded, where our children and our children's children can flourish. The Government of Canada is focused on the larger picture of ensuring prosperity for Canadians well beyond our 150th birthday.

There are so many times I look at the House and wonder whether partisanship can ever be overridden. I was so proud earlier today when the government congratulated the official opposition on the way it negotiated the CETA treaty when it was in government. Both acknowledged the other party's steps in advancing the treaty, working to put it forward, and getting it ratified. That was the House at its best. All of us should always strive to be at our best in the House. The budget implementation bill is something we should all look forward to supporting on a non-partisan basis.

• (1650)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as a newer MP, my colleague has a great attitude as far as working together is concerned, but there are certain realities that we have to face. Coming from Oshawa, a manufacturing community, I recognize that even though we want to work together, sometimes we have to face certain realities when we are competing with our biggest competitor right next door. The Americans do not have policies such as state or federal carbon taxes. They are not increasing their payroll taxes, as we know the government is doing. He knows as well that we are saddled in Ontario with the highest electricity rates in North America.

I am wondering about his thoughts on our international competitiveness. If we start putting these policies forward, as former prime minister Mulroney was quoted as saying over the weekend, we should not foolishly put ourselves at competitive disadvantage. Is there anything he sees coming forward in their budgets that are going to compensate for those non-competitive policies that have been put forth by the Liberals?

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Oshawa for his kind remarks at the beginning of his statement.

Former prime minister Mulroney is a fine man. I have had the pleasure of meeting him on many occasions, and while I disagree with his comments in this case, I think he also has a very open mind to look at things in a fair-minded way. We all have to do that.

I disagree. The budget is actually putting forward measures that would enhance Canada's innovation and would ensure that Canada is able to compete on worldwide basis. I also agree with my colleague

that we need to look at each and every measure. We need to ensure we are on a level playing field. We cannot go to either extreme.

Government has a role and so does private industry. We have to work together to make them thrive. Therefore, while we may disagree on this point and on carbon pricing, on the whole, we agree in principle that government has a role in the economy, but so do other parts of the economy, including, very importantly, private business.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Madam Speaker, obviously, I am in favour of the Canada child benefit, but under the bill before us, the benefit will not be indexed for four years. That does not create the new day care spaces we need. I was looking at how much it costs to put a child in day care. It can cost from \$35 to \$73 an hour. This benefit, which is not even indexed, will pay only a fraction of the cost of day care.

In addition to the Canada child benefit, why does the government not also create, as we suggested, day care spaces and affordable day cares that cost \$15 a day to help women return to the labour market after having a baby?

• (1655)

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hochelaga for her question. I really appreciate it.

The family allowance is a very important measure that this government put in place. I am very proud of the fact that we are now sending money to those who need it most. We are going to lift thousands of Canadian children out of poverty.

During the election campaign, the NDP was the one that had a day care plan. The Liberal Party had no such plan. We said that we would rather give that money to the parents of the children and that is what we are doing with the family allowance.

I appreciate my hon. colleague's question.

[*English*]

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his wonderful speech. I would suggest that he is a rising star in the House.

The Canada child benefit, the income tested tax-free child benefit, was a promise that effectively became our biggest strength during the campaign. In my riding we have young people who for the first time are involved in sports, in the arts and culture, and dance lessons. This is an incredible policy. Are you seeing the positive effects that I am seeing in your riding, such as food bank usage going down and things like that?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am not sure if I am seeing the positive effect in his riding, but the member needs to address the question to the Chair.

The hon. member for Mount Royal, please.

**Mr. Anthony Housefather:** Madam Speaker, I would love to bring you to my riding to show you the positive effects that my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour speaks of.



*Government Orders*

Yes, in the poorer sections of my riding where there are many people who really need government help, I have seen more kids involved in those types of programs. I want to thank him for his incredibly kind comments and let me return the favour by saying the same about him.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague opposite for mentioning the sometimes non-partisan work done by both sides of the House. The opposition's role is to acknowledge the government when it does something right. Unfortunately, the opportunity does not present itself very often. However, the government gives us ample opportunity to criticize it for not doing things right. Our job is to make Canadians aware of the government's mistakes, oversights and broken election promises.

We will always gladly collaborate at committee or through parliamentary associations to move issues forward, but sometimes, and people need to understand this, the role of the opposition is to look for things that might be wrong. This role is easier to play when the government gives us a lot of material, like the current Liberal government. Still, I wanted to acknowledge my colleague and his presentation, in which he mentioned the non-partisan work we do in this House.

I would also like to thank our new finance critic, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, who has done a great job since his appointment. To be put in charge of a file like a budget implementation bill and have to study it and give a speech on it with only a few days notice is no easy task.

Bill C-29 implements the Liberal government's first budget. Honestly, I think our colleague has done a great job pointing out the inconsistencies in Bill C-29 and, therefore, the inconsistencies in the Liberal government's first budget.

Usually, we expect a bill to implement a newly elected government's first budget to include the new government's plan, the plan promised by the Liberals to Canadians during the last election campaign. After careful consideration of the budget and Bill C-29 which we are discussing today, I find that, instead, Parliament is faced with a glaring example of Liberal void.

I would like to go back in time a little bit. Since the Liberals came into power, the legislative agenda is the lightest it has been in two decades. I can quote one of my colleagues who did some research with the help of the Library of Parliament:

The first few months of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government have been the least productive of any government in over two decades...

I am not making this up. The Library of Parliament looked into the matter.

Ten bills have been passed by Parliament during the first nine months of Mr. Trudeau's tenure. By comparison, the Conservatives passed 18 pieces of legislation, nine of which were passed in their first 23 days. These statistics, which were provided by the hon. member for Durham, speak volumes.

● (1700)

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Madam Speaker, pardon me for interrupting the debate, but the Prime Minister's name has been said twice now. I would like to remind my colleague that members' names are not to be used in the House.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I did not hear it, but if the member said the Prime Minister's name or that of any other member of the House, he should take note that names are not to be used.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I did use the Prime Minister's name, and I apologize. I got a little carried away in my fervour, but I will not let that happen again.

Still, I can talk about former prime ministers, including former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin. Internationally, he was seen as indecisive, but he found ways to pass more legislation as he tried to keep his struggling minority government afloat. During his first nine months in government, 36 bills became law.

How about another one? During Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien's first nine months in office, 34 bills received royal assent in 1994, and 38 more were passed after the 1997 election. The current Prime Minister has managed to pass a mere 10 bills.

It is with that in mind that we begin our study of Bill C-29. This being a budget implementation bill, one would expect to find the government's promises in it. It should include massive infrastructure investments, a modest deficit, tax cuts for small businesses, home mail delivery, an agreement on diafiltered milk, a softwood lumber agreement, and plenty more. Unfortunately, none of those things are in Bill C-29.

No one could tell me where those promises came from. From the beginning, the opposition has been reminding everyone and repeating the same thing. I took the time to confirm everything and went back a year in time to see exactly what these infamous Liberal promises were. I found a lot. I do not understand why they have not introduced more legislation, considering all the promises the Liberal Party made during the last election campaign.

First of all, let us talk about modest deficits. On page 11 of the Liberal plan, or what I call the Liberal void, it states:

We will invest now in the projects our country needs and the people who can build them.

They do say "now", and not in 10 years or five years. Page 12 continues:

We will run modest short-term deficits of less than \$10 billion in each of the next two fiscal years to fund historic investments in infrastructure and our middle class.

After the next two fiscal years, the deficit will decline and our investment plan will return Canada to a balanced budget in 2019.

That is one promise the Liberal government has broken. There was another promise about modest deficits. It is worth reading. Page 73 states:

We will be honest about the government of Canada's fiscal position, and base our projections on the recent report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, instead of April's outdated budget figures.

*Government Orders*

If the parliamentary budget officer is so important to the Liberals, why did they refuse, about 50 times, to allow the parliamentary budget officer's reports to be tabled right here, before parliamentarians?

Once again, they say one thing, but then do the exact opposite once they are in power. There is another interesting promise on the same page:

We will run modest deficits for three years so that we can invest in growth for the middle class and credibly offer a plan to balance the budget in 2019.

That is just one more promise the Liberals have broken.

To sum up deficits, I will quote someone who is not an opposition member. A TD Bank representative said:

The federal government's deficit this fiscal year will be about \$5 billion higher than Ottawa predicted in its March budget...

That is what the TD Bank is predicting. It blames the sluggish economy. According to TD Bank:

Over a five-year span, the cumulative deficit is likely to be \$16.5 billion higher than forecasted in the last budget.

The forecast in the last budget was not \$10 billion. It was not a modest deficit of \$10 billion annually, but \$30 billion annually. TD Bank tells us it will be even higher:

The higher-than-expected deficit will soak up the \$6-billion annual cushion and then some that the government built in to its finances to protect against unforeseen events.

This could go beyond that even. The Liberals promised modest deficits, but I have to say that they did not keep their word.

● (1705)

As such, when it comes to budget implementation, the opposition parties feel quite reticent about trusting the other measures contained in Bill C-29.

Nonetheless, let us move on because there were other promises in the Liberal plan, or the "Liberal void" I should say. The plan says, "As we reduce the small business tax rate to 9 percent from 11 percent...". Not only did the government not reduce the small business tax rate to 9%, but it imposed a tax on carbon which will greatly hinder small and medium sized businesses in Canada. That is another broken promise.

With regard to agricultural producers, we find this little sentence on page 16: "We will help Canada's agriculture sector be more innovative, safer, and stronger." How will they help the agricultural sector be stronger? They will "defend Canadian interests during trade negotiations, including supply management."

The diafiltered milk problem was an urgent issue and a solution had to be found. The solution was simple, but it lay in the hands of ministers. Unfortunately, despite the numerous promises of the Liberal government and the fact that producers from all over Quebec and Canada came right here, to Ottawa, to practically beg for action on diafiltered milk, there is not even a single measure in the budget on this subject. There we have another broken promise of the Liberal government.

In the softwood lumber file, a file that directly impacts every region of Canada that has trees, those magnificent works of nature that grow and enable us to develop our economy, we were supposed

to conclude an agreement. We had one year to try to reach an agreement with the Americans. Unfortunately, Bill C-29 contains absolutely nothing on the possible implementation of a new softwood lumber agreement.

However, the Liberal platform says, "Canada's economic success relies on strong trade relationships with our closest neighbours: the United States and Mexico."

Furthermore, the next sentence is really worth quoting: "Unlike the Conservatives' short-sighted approach, our focus on rebuilding relationships will build a solid foundation for greater trade, stronger growth, and more job creation."

Here is one last little sentence: "To underscore the importance of the United States to Canada, we will also create a Cabinet committee to oversee and manage our relationship."

We have no results on the two issues that concern the Americans, softwood lumber and diafiltered milk. Where is this committee? What is it doing? Does it exist? Unfortunately, I must once again say that this is another unkept promise by the Liberals.

I still have many pages of broken promises to mention. Let's talk a bit about Canada Post. On page 34 of the "Liberal void", we read: "By ending door-to-door mail delivery, Stephen Harper is asking Canadians to pay more for less service. That is unacceptable."

One year later, absolutely nothing has changed on mail delivery. The decisions that were made by the Canada Post Corporation, an independent organization, are still the same, and home mail delivery has nowhere been restored. Once again, these are false pretexts and another promise not kept.

This is what they had to say about Iraq: "We will end Canada's combat mission in Iraq." They withdrew our CF-18s and sent our soldiers to the front, where they are in even greater danger. We had decided to send our jets to protect Canadian soldiers. However, they decided to withdraw our planes, for strictly ideological reasons, and to send our soldiers to the front lines instead, to help the fighters there do their part. Yes, Canada must be involved, but could we have the facts? Could we be told exactly what we are doing in Iraq? This is another promise that was broken by the Liberal government.

Last week, here, in the House, I witnessed some things that impressed me. Some Liberal members introduced very interesting bills that were given the nod by cabinet.

● (1710)

The bill to provide a tax credit for first aid courses was of interest to me. Cabinet members voted against the bill introduced by one of their own members even though we find the following on page 30 of the Liberal platform:

We will make free votes in the House of Commons standard practice.

We will give Canadians a stronger voice in the House of Commons by limiting the circumstances in which Liberal Members of Parliament will be required to vote with Cabinet.

*Government Orders*

I am convinced that cabinet members did not read these lines because they voted against the bill of one of their own colleagues. It did not happen once or twice, but three times. It is important to mention that the promise to have free votes is, once again, a broken promise.

The Canada child benefit will not give rise to any new administrative costs. It replaces and is based on the structure and success of the Canada child tax benefit.

In Bill C-29, the Liberals confirmed that they are going to index the Canada child benefit to inflation as of January 2020. The parliamentary budget officer estimates that indexing the Canada child benefit will cost \$42.5 billion over the next five years. The parliamentary secretary said that they are going to move forward with the measure despite the financial pressure it puts on the public purse. The government did not provide for this indexing in the budget. The parliamentary budget officer showed that it will cost billions of dollars more than predicted per year. Where will the Liberals find that money? The Liberals have shown us where they will get it from the outset. They will find it in Canadians' pockets.

When the Minister of Finance introduced Bill C-29, he spoke about the future. He said that the purpose of the bill was to help Canadians. He spoke about a long-term plan and how things will be tough in the short term. In fact, this is going to cost Canadians a lot of money in the short term.

Let us talk a little bit about the vision of the Minister of Finance. I was shocked to read his comments in the *Edmonton Sun* this weekend. The article spoke about the Minister of Finance and talked about what young people and not-so-young people would do with all the time they will save as a result of technology. As everyone knows, today's technology allows us to do a lot more than before in much less time. Back in the day, we thought that would give young people more leisure time. However, the reality is quite the opposite. The Minister of Finance was asked some questions. I will read a brief excerpt from what he said, but before I do, I would like to say that I think that all young people should take the time to read this article.

[English]

The other day, Finance Minister...told Millennials, the generation most-addicted to high technology and social media, that they had best get used to a series of dead-end jobs and continuous retraining, coupled with bouts of unemployment, and a life where job security is a pipe dream.

• (1715)

[Translation]

That is unbelievable. What kind of message is the government sending our young people?

[English]

He called it "job churn," as in never-ending job losses and job searches, resume rejections, and living day-to-day....

[Translation]

The Liberal plan for youth is to teach them to get fired, get a new job, get fired, get a new job, and so on. Is that the Liberal job-creation plan? Every new hire-and-fire will count as a new job. That creates zero jobs and puts us no further ahead.

The article quoted the Minister of Finance. Is that supposed to make young people feel hopeful?

The Minister of Finance said this:

[English]

"We need to think about, How do we train and retrain people as they move from job to job?".... "Because it's going to happen. We have to accept that."

[Translation]

No, we do not have to accept that. Our young people have the right to stable jobs. Our young people have the right to work. Like us, they have the right to have a career, to succeed, and to hope for something better than going from job to job to job. The Liberal hire-and-fire plan is not good enough for us.

The economic forecasts are dismal despite the Liberal government's fine promises. The Bank of Canada, the Bank of Montreal, and TD Bank all say that the economic situation has not improved under the Liberals despite their fine promises.

I will vote against Bill C-29, and I hope that parliamentarians will vote in favour of the amendment proposed by our finance critic, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent. His amendment amends the motion considerably, making it significantly more acceptable to Canadian taxpayers.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I take exception to a number of things the member has said. I have often talked about a number of concerns. Conservative members give the impression that when they lost governance a number of months ago, there was an actual financial surplus. They are not going to fool Canadians. Canadians know the Liberal government inherited a deficit. When Stephen Harper became prime minister, the Conservative Party inherited a multi-billion dollar surplus and turned it into a deficit of over \$150 billion.

The Liberal Party has taken Canada out of deficits and into surpluses. It has provided surpluses in the past to Conservative regimes that have blown those surpluses. Could the member explain to Canadians, or at the very least explain to the House, why he believes the government should take any advice with respect to surpluses from a Conservative Party that has never really delivered a surplus?

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I recognize the talents of my colleague from Winnipeg North, who somehow managed to tiptoe his way around the fact that the parliamentary budget officer confirmed many times over the past year that the Conservatives left a surplus in the last fiscal year.

What I do not understand is why the government continues refusing to allow us to table the parliamentary budget officer's reports in the House, so that all Canadians can read them. The member needs to explain this rather puzzling decision.

*Government Orders*

How can the Conservatives be blamed for a surplus which the Liberals deny when these same Liberals prevent us from tabling unbiased proof from someone who is not affiliated with any party in the House of Commons?

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am not sure I understood correctly.

A Conservative member told the Liberals that they broke their promise to restore home mail delivery. If I remember correctly, during the previous Parliament, it was the Conservative government that made all those cuts and reductions to Canada Post's services.

Does this mean that the Conservatives now support restoring home mail delivery? If so, I say bravo.

• (1720)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I understand why my NDP colleague is a bit confused given all of the Liberals' broken promises. Eventually, it becomes difficult to know who said what and who promised what.

We never promised to bring back home mail delivery service. There is a simple reason for that. Canada Post is an independent corporation. The Conservatives did not decide to put an end to home mail delivery. It was Canada Post that made that decision.

However, the Liberal government promised to interfere in the management of Canada Post. How much is that going to cost Canadians?

[*English*]

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Speaker, new members of Parliament have come in as a result of the last election, and that member is one we are pleased with. I can assure his constituents that they are being well represented.

In regard to the Liberal question that was just posed, my colleague said that his government tried to table the facts. The truth of the matter is that last week the Liberal government tabled three big volumes called the *Public Accounts of Canada*. Those very documents show that we had a \$1.9 billion surplus and that the books were balanced.

The Liberal member also mentioned how his party always brought forward balanced budgets under Paul Martin. Perhaps he could remind the House of how Paul Martin did that. He cut transfers in health care to the provinces. He cut back every transfer and balanced the budget on the back of provincial governments in all provinces.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, when such a well-posed question receives a worthwhile answer, all I can do is build on what was said.

Good Conservative management practices yielded good results. During the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, Canada had the best job creation record and the best economic growth in the G7.

We cut taxes to the lowest they have been in 50 years, such that a typical family of four saved over \$7,000 a year. We did all that while working to balance the budget so that our children would not have to pay the price later.

[*English*]

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will get to it a little more quickly this time.

The member said that the role of the opposition, on the other side of the room, was to criticize the government. That implies criticizing for the sake of criticizing.

Does the member not think that the job of the official opposition should be to work with the folks on this side to come up with better policy on behalf of Canadians?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing. The problem is that the Liberals are not listening. We are working very hard to show them the problems that their policies will cause for our children. We are showing them the problems that they will cause for our small and medium-sized businesses and for job creation. Unfortunately, no matter what tone we use or how, they never listen to give them the right answers.

The role of the opposition is to emphasize the government's small problems to ensure that it takes into account the opposition's excellent suggestion and amends its bills in order to improve them.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his excellent speech, which was very topical and honest.

During the election campaign, we heard some promises. We then saw the sunny ways, here, in the House. We saw the Liberal Party break its promises one after the other. My colleague tore up almost the entire book; there is not much left to tear up.

Our children were told that they will have precarious jobs. My colleague said it very well: our children and our seniors deserve to have a better life.

Could he tell me a little about the pension bill? Will it impoverish our seniors?

• (1725)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, once again, I know the page number of the Liberal promise concerning the Canada pension plan. During an election campaign, when a party sends its candidates out to campaign door-to-door in order to tell people that it is going to improve the Canada Pension plan, a 75-year-old might hear that and think that if the government is elected, their pension will increase the following day. People of that age do not think medium term or long term. In fact, at age 75, the long term and the medium term take on another meaning. Unfortunately, that is what the Liberals promised and that is what they are going to do. The enhancements will be felt in 40 years, and there is absolutely nothing for seniors now.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before we continue, I would remind the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable and all hon. members in the House today that when you have reference documents in hand you are not to tear them up.

I checked in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* and on page 612, chapter 13, it says:

*Government Orders*

Members may hold notes in their hands, but they will be interrupted and reprimanded by the Speaker if they use papers, documents or other objects to illustrate their remarks.

[English]

There was a decision from the Deputy Speaker on May 7, 1999. The Deputy Speaker at the time indicated that:

The hon. member for Kamloops, Thompson and Highland Valleys is an experienced and capable member of this House and he knows it is quite wrong to use props. Tearing up bills and other papers in the course of his speech is surely using the document as a prop. I know that he is excited about the subject....

I just want to say that I understand that the member is very passionate about it, but that the House will not tolerate having papers ripped up and I assume that the member will be picking it all up and not leaving it for the pages.

Resuming debate. 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 was thinking of taking those very same papers and putting on them a piece of tape that said, "Promise kept." Unfortunately, I will not be able to do that because it would be a prop and adding to what the member has cited.

What a privilege it is to stand in the chamber and talk about yet another very important piece of legislation that the government has tabled. Of course, it is all about the budget. When we think about the budget, we know it is all about priorities.

One of the things that today's Prime Minister stated a number of years ago when I was sitting in opposition with the then leader of the Liberal Party along with my colleagues at the time, was that there was an expectation. The expectation was that we as caucus members would go out and consult with Canadians and listen to what Canadians had to say about a wide spectrum of issues. I can say that virtually since our Prime Minister took on the role of leading our party he has been consistent on that very important issue that we need to work with Canadians, listen to what Canadians are saying, and then reflect what we are doing in this privileged House to ensure that Canadians are getting what they want the government to accomplish.

I would like to use an example. I have a constituent, Kourosh Doustshenas, who raised an important issue with me. It was dealing with budgetary types of measures. He raised the issue and I suggested that he maybe go out and do a petition on it, to try to show me and show the government some additional support. I want to provide this petition to the Minister of Finance because he and a few others, in particular members of the Winnipeg Real Estate Board and Manitoba Real Estate Association, had taken interest in doing that.

Let me share with the members of the House what that petition stated. Since 1992, the homebuyers' plan, the HBP, has helped over 2.8 million Canadians achieve their dream of home ownership. Also, the petition goes on to say that due to inflation the HBP has lost about \$5,200 in purchasing power compared to 1992. It goes further to say that purchases resulted in over \$2.9 billion in spinoff benefits and more than 22,000 jobs. The petition is calling for us to consider indexing the HBP to preserve its purchasing power and allow more Canadians to use it due to significant life changes.

I thank my constituents and I thank those who were involved. Most important, the reason I bring it up is because I truly believe that this government, more than many governments before it, is very genuine when it says that it wants input from Canadians. If we look at what the Minister of Finance has been able to accomplish in the last 11 months, it is overwhelming. I am going to do a year in review momentarily, but hundreds of thousands of Canadians have been reached out to by departments.

If I reflect on my colleagues within the Liberal caucus, I know there have been dozens if not hundreds of town hall meetings. In virtually every region of this great country, we have had MPs hosting or participating in town halls with the single purpose of trying to better understand what Canadians would like to see us as a government put in as priorities. I am proud to say that this government has delivered in many different ways.

That is unlike the Conservative Party, which lost touch with what Canadians wanted. I would suggest that had the Conservatives not lost touch, they might have done a bit better in the last election. Because they lost touch with real Canadians, we were provided an opportunity to form government. As the Prime Minister clearly indicated not only during the election but prior to the election, we can always do better. This is reinforced by this Prime Minister. In fact, many of my caucus colleagues genuinely believe that, and our efforts are in order to be able to achieve that.

When I look at this budget, I say it is all about priorities. What sorts of priorities have we seen from this government in the last year?

• (1730)

The first piece of legislation was a significant decrease in taxes for Canada's middle class. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars being put into the pockets of more than nine million Canadians.

We will often hear from the opposition benches, "What about small businesses? Give small businesses a break". Let me tell members that what drives Canada's economy is Canada's middle class. The healthier the middle class of Canada is the healthier our economy will be. If we put money in the pockets of the middle class, we will find that, generally speaking, the middle class will spend that money, which helps the economy.

That was the very first initiative. That was a promise given by the Prime Minister, and that was a promise that was kept.

I was very proud when the Prime Minister indicated that we were going to have a public inquiry with respect to the 1,200-plus murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, many of whom actually used to call Winnipeg North their home. This is an area I was truly concerned about. I believe that Manitobans and in fact all Canadians care passionately about this issue. Within a couple of months, we saw a commitment to have that public inquiry. I think it was long overdue. I had petitioned the government in the past. Many members of this chamber had asked the prime minister for that to take place.

These are but a couple of the initiatives that were taken right out of the gate.

*Government Orders*

The other day we were talking about gender equity and how important it is. We saw a Prime Minister, for the first time in Canadian history, introduce a cabinet with gender equity. I think that sends a very strong message. Not only do we have a better cabinet as a result; it demonstrates leadership from a Prime Minister that truly believes in gender equity.

We have seen a government that responded to what was taking place in Alberta. We are all concerned about the plight of many Albertans. For many years, Alberta, as a province, was contributing immensely to our nation. Many people would go to Alberta to generate income and would often go back to their home regions to continue to support families and so forth. Alberta is an important province. This has been demonstrated by numerous ministries. We have seen literally hundreds of millions of dollars spent in the province of Alberta, because we recognize how important it is to be there for that province.

We have seen employment insurance changes that have enabled individuals who are suffering hardship the opportunity to have a bit more money. Where we can help, we have offered additional stability. We hope, and we know, that it is only a question of time before Alberta is back in the role of providing that strong leadership.

There have been many issues since those first three months. Where do I start? How do I try to encapsulate the many different things that have taken place?

I do not know how many speeches I have given inside the House dealing with seniors. Seniors are such an important policy matter for all members of this House. I am so proud of how much we have done in such a short period of time.

I could talk about the fear factor of Stephen Harper, when he said that there was a crisis looming and we had to raise the age of retirement from 65 to 67. Many of my colleagues will recall that.

Within months of taking office, we reversed that decision. We know that Canada, as a nation, can in fact afford to allow individuals to retire at age 65. That is something I think sent a very positive message with respect to our seniors.

• (1735)

However, that is not all. We also introduced substantial increases to our guaranteed income supplement program. That one hits home for me because of the many doors I knocked on, and we all knocked on doors. Imagine the seniors who we talk to, the poorest, the most vulnerable of our seniors, telling us they do not know if they can afford to buy their medication because they have to put food on the table, or they say no to food, or go to food banks because they have to buy medication?

This is a very real issue for many of our seniors. With the increase to the GIS, the poorest and the most vulnerable of all our seniors will receive up to \$900-plus additional a year. When they make \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year, that really helps. That is something of great substance we are giving to our seniors.

Many Canadians, and I have produced petitions on this, have argued the importance of our three seniors programs, those social programs that are fundamental, that make us feel good about being

Canadian. I have talked about two of them. I will now talk about the third one, and that is our Canada pension program.

For years we sat in opposition and asked the Government of Canada, led by Stephen Harper, to do something about CPP. For years he turned his head and ignored the issue. There was no will at all from the former Conservative government to deal with the need to increase CPP into the future.

Just months ago, we were able to come to a historical agreement. Individuals who are working today will have more money in their pockets when it comes time to retire because of the leadership demonstrated by this government and its ability to work with the provinces.

Even though the Conservatives today oppose what we are doing with CPP, I should remind them that all the provinces had to agree. All that Ottawa could do was demonstrate the leadership, which we did, and encourage it. We had to get the support of other governments.

It pleases me to indicate very clearly to Canadians and to the House that we achieved that agreement. Because of that, many individuals will retire with more money. On the one hand, the GIS is lifting people out of poverty. On the other hand, the CPP will prevent future seniors from living in poverty. Seniors are important for the Liberal Party and the government.

Let us talk about the other end. We often hear New Democrats being somewhat critical. I think they are just looking for excuses for voting against this progressive budget. They often mention Canada's poor or those who do not make more than \$35,000 a year. The Canada child benefit program has been greatly enhanced. That increase will allow literally tens of thousands of children to be lifted out of poverty. It will be based on a scale of affordability. We do not need to give multi-millionaires the same money we give a single parent who has two or three children and is finding it difficult to make ends meet. There is more fairness in the Liberals' Canada child benefit.

I would challenge my New Democratic friends, who saw fit to vote against the budget, to show me a budget in the last 20 or 30 years where they have seen such a redistribution of Canada's wealth, where there has been more of a will to try to assist those in need.

• (1740)

Think of indigenous people and the level of commitment that is there in a tangible way. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars. However, it is not just the money. We are seeing a new era of recognizing the value of the many different stakeholders.

There is nothing more important, and the Prime Minister himself has said this, than the relationship with indigenous people and a nation-to-nation attitude. Does that mean we will be able to resolve every problem, such as foster care? Trust me, I know the issue of foster care well. I represent Manitoba, which has the highest per capita number of children in foster care, and that is not a good thing. There are a lot of wonderful things. I will talk a lot about the positive things in Manitoba, but when it comes to foster care, the answer is no.

*Government Orders*

Many of the issues correlated with indigenous people have become so problematic over the years that it might take some time, but I believe that we have started off on the right foot. That is because we have seen the level of interest in this government in working with others.

We saw another achievement here today. A big part of this government's agenda is jobs. We recognize the value of jobs. In fact, I suggest that if we were to do a comparison, we would find that past governments did exceptionally well. I am thinking of former prime minister Jean Chrétien and some of the policy initiatives he brought in. We can contrast that with the last 10 years, when we saw a government that took a back seat and said it did not want to get involved. We now have a government that genuinely cares and is prepared to get involved.

The CETA agreement was signed yesterday, and I applaud the Minister of International Trade and her efforts. I know the immense amount of commitment, time, and energy she personally put into that agreement. As the Prime Minister and she herself acknowledged, we appreciate the efforts of the previous government. The signing of that agreement has fantastic potential for Canada's economy, manufacturing, and jobs. We are a trading nation. The Liberal Party is very much aware of that.

The last time Liberals were in power, there was a multi-billion dollar trade surplus. We understand the importance of trade surpluses and are actively trying to reverse the hole the Conservatives put us into. When they inherited that multi-billion dollar trade surplus, they turned it into a multi-billion dollar trade deficit. It might take us some time to do that.

I only have one minute remaining, but I have so much more to say. We have helped students pay for their educations. We have ratified the Paris Agreement. I could speak for half an hour on the historic investments we have made in infrastructure. We introduced a new teacher and early childhood educator school supply tax credit. We have invested in innovation at Canada's post-secondary institutions. We have built new business relationships abroad. There is so much more. I have not even talked about immigration.

I will leave it at that. I hope there will be questions.

● (1745)

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his comments. Many of us on this side wanted to ask some questions, but I got the luck of the draw tonight.

We are doing a study right now on poverty and poverty reduction strategies in the human resources committee. One thing we found particularly strange was how many departments had not actually costed the CPP increases, and also a carbon tax.

As was also mentioned by the minister, how are Canadians going to be able to afford the increases from a carbon tax, considering that they have tight budgets? Kraft Dinner is something that a lot of Canadians eat at the end of the pay period because they simply cannot afford anything more. Now we are going to put a carbon tax

on top of it, plus a CPP increase. The CPP increase can be upwards of \$3,000, and a carbon tax could be \$3,000 as well.

The member talks about what the Liberal government is giving back to Canadians. What are you taking from Canadians?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am not taking anything from Canadians, but I will certainly redirect the question.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, that question demonstrates very clearly why the Conservatives are so out of touch with what Canadians really want and expect of their government.

Both of the examples that the member referenced were not just something that the national government had to put into place. We actually had to work with the different provincial counterparts, whether on CPP or the carbon pricing issue.

Therefore, we have provinces from all regions of the country, with different parties providing governments, and all of them are saying that on both accounts we need to move forward.

Not only are we thinking about today, we are thinking about tomorrow's generation. This is something that a good strong government does. It demonstrates leadership and does not just think about today. We think about the future, and all governments recognize that. It is only the Conservatives who have lost touch on this issue.

● (1750)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members that when someone is speaking, we allow that person to speak without having interruptions. The House is in process, so I would assume members would keep their voices down.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I always appreciate the member's unbridled enthusiasm for everything Liberal.

Last week, I attended a precarious workshop convention here in Ottawa that was hosted by the NDP. It brought together employable youth from across Canada. I went there to listen to some of the challenges they are facing, and it was with problems in finding work at all. A lot of the work is part time. It does not come with any benefits, and it does not come with any pensionable future for them. It was to the point where one of the members at the table I sat at was in tears.

My question to the member is, if this government is so good, particularly for employable youth, why has it left youth in tears?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question, but I would say to the member that we have a Prime Minister who truly cares in terms of what is happening with our youth. It is one of the reasons we have the Prime Minister's council on youth. It is why members of Parliament will see that there are councils being established virtually in all of the different regions.

*Government Orders*

However, it is more than just talking about youth. We have doubled the budget for youth summer employment. Often that summer employment allows for the connections to be made that will ultimately lead to full-time jobs. We have also increased Canada student grant amounts by 50%, from \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year for students from low-income families; from \$800 to \$1,200 per year for students from middle-income families; and from \$1,200 to \$1,800 per year for part-time students.

This is a government that cares about youth. Not only do we care, but we have demonstrated that we can actually make a difference if we have the right policies in place.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it was quite wonderful to hear what my friend had to say about the past year, and what a year it has been. When I say this, it is because all of us give up a lot to be here. We take time away from our loved ones. Today I am particularly heartbroken because I am missing Halloween with my family. We all do that, across aisles. However, we see that we are working towards something. We are doing something. It is heartwarming to hear of all the things we have accomplished so far, and to know there is so much more.

One thing I hear about in my community a lot is about the need for work on immigration. There is always a concern about immigration, with families who want to be reunited, as well as a desire to welcome more people, such as Syrian refugees. Could the member comment on that?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member asked that question because immigration is such an important issue, not just for me personally but also for the constituents I represent, and many other Canadians.

One of the things I take a great pride in is the fact that we have a Minister of Immigration who got the job done with regard to the refugee crisis. Also, and equally important from my perspective, is that we are seeing the processing times speed up. The family reunifications and marriages, particularly from the Punjab and other areas, was a huge priority for me. I talked a great deal about it. We are seeing a significant decrease in processing times for those, as well as a huge decline in that for citizenship applications. However, to quote the Prime Minister, we can still do better and the government will do just that.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

However, with regard to what he just said about immigration, I would remind him that at the Standing Committee on Official Languages, that is not at all what we were told. In minority settings, immigration is increasingly difficult for Syrians because of the language barrier. They speak neither of our languages and often have to rely on Arabic interpreters. If my colleague says that the minister got the job done, then someone, somewhere, misspoke because that is not what we were told in committee.

Could my colleague explain what the Minister of Immigration can do to ensure that immigrants in official language minority communities have the means to stay there?

• (1755)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I attribute Manitoba's success in good part to when then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien developed the provincial nominee program in 1998 or 1999, which has been hugely successful.

We have seen that this government is one that believes in consultations and working with the different stakeholders, including provinces like Manitoba or communities like Saint Boniface, Manitoba. Whether large or small communities, we have a government that is prepared to sit down and work on the smaller details to ensure that immigration reflects the needs of the community as much as possible while at the same time addressing the bigger picture of demonstrating leadership on issues such as refugees.

**Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the previous speaker for all of his information. I have heard that what the Liberals have done for the rich is take some tax money away, and what they have done with the child tax benefit is to make sure that poor people have enough money for their children.

However, what have middle-income people making \$44,000 or less and without children received? Why are they still going to the food banks?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, sadly there is a finite amount of resources. I posed this question to the member when he gave his speech. At the end of the day, when we look at the budget, what we have seen over the last nine or 10 months is a government that understands the way we can best help people and the economy as a whole. That is by investing in Canada's middle class and those aspiring to become a part of the middle class. We are doing that through the middle-class tax break.

If we look at the most vulnerable in society, our single seniors, seniors in poverty or those who are trying to raise children, especially single parents and so forth, there are serious challenges. More than any other government over the last 20-plus years, the government has recognized that need and is delivering a massive redistribution of wealth. I would argue that that is lifting seniors, children, and many others out of poverty, while supporting the middle class at the same time. I think it is a win-win, and I would encourage the member to support this budget.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today I join my voice to that of my colleagues as we continue our dutiful work of adequately informing Canadians on Bill C-29, which seeks to implement the series of budgetary measures and tax changes announced in budget 2016, tabled in Parliament on March 22, 2016. In so doing, we want to present Canadian taxpayers with the real, alarming, and absolutely catastrophic economic situation the Liberal government has willingly and irresponsibly put us Canadians in.



*Government Orders*

It is unbelievable that after being in power one year, this government has spent the Conservative government's surplus, which was \$2.9 billion in March 2016. The Liberals lied to all voters of this beautiful country when it told them that, if they voted for the Liberal Party of Canada, they would be choosing a government that would run a slight deficit of \$10 billion in the first year and that in four years it would balance the budget. Today, October 31, 2016, that is a lie. According to its budget for year one, the government expects to end the fiscal year in March with a deficit that is not the same, not double, but triple the deficit forecast in the March 2016 budget. That is huge — about \$30 billion. The experts who I trust much more than this government are forecasting a deficit of between \$34 billion and \$40 billion.

Our Prime Minister said that he has no idea of just how big the deficit is going to be. He is the prime minister of one of the most beautiful countries in the world, Canada, and he does not know when the wasteful spending will stop. I hope members will realize that that is irresponsible.

Tomorrow is All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, and the Minister of Finance is going to unveil his economic update. Will he resurrect valiant Canadians of generations past, the ones that built our beautiful country? Will he tell them that the Liberal government is destroying Canada, this beautiful country that our dearly departed built by the sweat of their brow? Stay tuned.

For several months this government has been boasting of having put in place the largest infrastructure program to help our businesses create jobs. Today, we have a 7% unemployment rate. Let us ask them the question. What was the unemployment rate last year when the Conservatives were in power? It was 7%. What is the supposed benefit of the astronomical cost of the infrastructure program? There is none. It is unacceptable to make people believe that they are creating jobs.

The Liberals doubled the size of the summer jobs program last summer. They poured twice as much money into the program. They have plenty of money; they print the stuff. What happened? The unemployment rate is the same as last year. If they had not doubled the budget for the summer jobs program, what would have happened? Quite simply, unemployment would have gone up. I am not an economist, a tax expert, or a numbers expert, but I am a common sense expert, which is why my constituents voted for me.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** They chose well.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** I thank my colleague, Madam Speaker.

● (1800)

Let us talk about families. The Liberals say they want to help families. Some help. They took away the tax credit for kids who participate in sports. They would rather parents keep their kids inactive at home. Their thinking, their beliefs, their policies are just unbelievable.

These are artists, people, kids whose talent we want to develop. As a father, I want my son to play hockey and I want my daughter to dance, but the credit is gone. How is the government going to support Canadians and give them the tools to help them motivate their children to play sports and take dance classes? The Liberals

took the credit away. What a great way to motivate kids. What vision.

The Minister of Finance was in such a hurry to help our Canadian families that he introduced a program to tell Canadian families hoping to buy their first house that they cannot do so right away and will have to keep working hard, trust the Liberals, and save more so they can maybe buy a house someday.

This is preventing young families from achieving their life goals and from dreaming. When a society stops dreaming, it means it is suffocating. This measure is unacceptable. The government introduced this measure because there was a problem in urban centres like Toronto and Vancouver. I have a great deal of respect for our big cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. I have no problem with them, but the Liberals need to stop choking our regions and start taking care of families.

This government is currently telling Canadian families that they need to be careful with their budgets, not waste money, and be responsible. Meanwhile, the same government is currently wasting taxpayers' money. It is spending \$44 billion. Experts estimate the deficit will be about \$40 billion, and there was about \$2.9 billion to \$3 billion to begin with. That adds up to \$43 billion. Sorry, I was off by \$1 billion, but that is no big deal, because according to the Liberals, that is only 30¢ these days. What they are doing is unacceptable. They lecture Canadians, but then spend themselves. Where is their credibility?

I was silent for the past few seconds on purpose. Silence can speak volumes and I am speechless. This government is inconsistent, and it has no vision and no plan. It wastes and borrows money recklessly and then asks people in our regions and Canadian families to tighten their belts.

In closing, I am going to jump ahead two pages and conclude with an acrostic of the word “Liberal”:

Lacking a plan and vision, this government spends recklessly.

It is irresponsible and has the same roots as the party caught with both hands in the cookie jar.

Beguiling, all this smooth talk makes him just “in” right now, but as the saying goes, he is all talk and no action.

Election promises made to Canadians have been forgotten by this smooth talker. In my book, honesty went out the window with nanny-gate.

Reality is the world the rest of us live in, while they plough ahead in the name of investment supposedly for the future of our children and grandchildren. I would say they are taking on debt at the expense of future generations.

At this rate, I can tell the House that in four years, the deficit will be \$160 billion.

Loco Locass should sing their famous song *Libérez-nous des libéraux* to protect our country from the catastrophe that awaits us under the federal Liberals. There are three more years to go.

● (1805)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would like to remind members that it is sometimes difficult for the interpreters to keep up when they talk too quickly.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

He paused to think about what his government has done in the past 10 years and to find alternatives to the wonderful platform that we have been able to implement over the past year. I would like to remind my colleagues that, in just 12 months, our government has implemented all sorts of measures. A few minutes ago, my colleague made a list of all of the measures that we have implemented, including the Canada child benefit, tax cuts, and support for students.

I would like to ask my colleague opposite whether he will acknowledge all the work that has been done by the government and all the practical measures it has taken to improve the lot of Canadians.

• (1810)

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, I thank my excellent colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for the good question.

What I want to say about our record over the past 10 years is that it was a successful one. We left the house in order. We left a \$2.9-billion surplus.

It is being said that the economy has stalled, and it is not the Conservative Party, the NDP, the Bloc Québécois, the future Liberal, or backbenchers who are saying it. Do my colleagues know who is saying that? It is the International Monetary Fund, the OECD, and the Bank of Canada. They have said that, right now, Canada is a difficult place to invest. The situation is fragile.

It is not complicated. When you make a personal budget—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will not disclose details about my personal budget. However, I will tell the hon. member that he must address his remarks to the Chair.

We have to make time for other questions and comments. The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech.

I would like him to tell us more. I am very interested in personal finance. We know the Liberals are in the red. As the saying goes, heaven is blue and hell is red.

I would like my colleague to tell us more about the Conservative government's successes.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Madam Speaker, I promise to address my remarks to you.

I would like to thank my excellent colleague from Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix for her comments.

As fathers, we have a family budget. All things being equal, if we spend \$40,000 more than we have, and if we have no plan to balance the budget, what happens? Bankruptcy. The country will probably not go bankrupt, but it will lose its rating, which will result in

investment instability. Nobody will want to invest here anymore. Small businesses are nervous, so they will keep their money in their pockets. That is the threat hanging over Canadians' heads.

On this Halloween night, I hope the Minister of Finance is not dressed up as a ghost. I hope he is working on tomorrow's economic update. I would ask him to take things more seriously and be more responsible, and I would like him to make job creation a priority for Canada's small businesses.

[English]

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to get up. It is really difficult, following that last speaker.

I congratulate the hon. member on being welcomed to the House, but I have to say I think he needs a bit of a history lesson. While listening to the hon. member talk about all the wonderful things the Conservatives did, I tried to reflect back, off the top of my head, on what that was.

What sticks out most to me was the “65 to 67”, talking about seniors' pensions and changing the age of eligibility from 65 to 67. To me, that signifies what the Conservatives were about for the whole 10 years. Things like that are very significant moves. To them, it meant very little. The Conservatives did not think people needed to get their pension at 65, that it just was wasted money, and that they could hold off until they were 67. They clearly did not speak to the people in my riding or in many other ridings, and I suspect that was the case in the member's riding. We could talk about struggling and poverty, and all of the other issues around that.

We will possibly have an opportunity to talk about other issues to do with budgets in the upcoming weeks. However, I am here tonight to talk in favour of Bill C-29 for two key reasons. First, the budget places my priorities, and my community's priorities, up front. Families, children, seniors, students, and small business-owners are all at the heart of our national financial plan. They are all the focus of this budget and this government's work.

As promised, the government's priority is the middle class and those working hard to join it. Unlike the twisted priorities of the Harper government that we heard about earlier, Liberals know that true economic success must be felt in only one place, around the kitchen table, when people are talking about how well they are doing or how poorly they are doing. It is not just about boardroom tables. Bill C-29 attempts to redirect the focus from the boardroom table to the kitchen table.

Now, just like any budget implementation bill, Bill C-29 is somewhat complex, but at its heart there are some important measures that directly impact middle-income families in my riding of Humber River—Black Creek. For example:

Division 2 of Part 4 amends the *Old Age Security Act* to provide that, in the case of low-income couples who have to live apart for reasons not attributable to either of them, the amount of the allowance is to be based on the income of the allowance recipient only.

*Government Orders*

We have often heard of elderly couples, and how when one of them has to go to a nursing home, they are separated, which of course affects the pension at the end of the day. This would correct that. This would mean seniors would not be financially punished for medical realities faced as a consequence of something as simple as their age. This would put money back into the hands of seniors at a time when they need it the most.

Similarly, there is a focus on the middle class:

Division 3 of Part 4 amends the *Canada Education Savings Act* to replace the term "child tax benefit" with "Canada child benefit". It also amends that Act to change the manner in which the eligibility for the Canada Learning Bond is established....

Bill C-29 would also restructure the way the benefit is calculated by adding an eligibility formula based on income and the number of children. This may seem minor, but I assure members that the change is quite substantial for low- and middle-income families. We will hear a lot from those families as a year or two or three of our government passes, because it is going to substantially help the very people we want to join the middle class.

Again, the Liberals are proposing measures that put more money into the hands of young families working hard to put food on that table I referred to, to pay the rent, and to give their kids the opportunity for a great future.

I understand the complexity of these measures, but the impact on Canadians is anything but hard to understand. It has been just over a year since the Liberals were elected, but I can say that it has made a huge difference throughout Canada. No matter where we go, people are optimistic and they are hopeful. Our commitments are being implemented one at a time, every day.

I say this because Liberals understand that a strong economy starts with a strong middle class. When middle-class Canadians have more money to save, to invest, and to grow the economy, everyone benefits. That is what Bill C-29 is all about.

• (1815)

Many middle-class Canadians are working harder than ever, but simply not getting ahead. For nearly a decade, the previous government ignored the middle class and directed all recovery efforts toward big business. Its philosophy was one of reducing taxes for businesses and that these businesses would somehow reinvest that money into employing more people. It did not happen, no matter how much it wished that it would. This strategy had limited success on Bay Street, but ignored everyone living on Main Street.

Today, there is a growing consensus in Canada and around the world that governments need to invest not only to boost economic growth in the short term but to set the stage for long-term growth as well. Canada has the lowest debt to GDP ratio of any G7 country, and interest rates are at a historic low. Now is the ideal time for Canada to invest in future successes for our country.

As I have already mentioned, a strong economy starts with a strong middle class. People are not afraid to work hard, but hard work needs to hold the promise of an improved standard of living. This is the place for government now to really lend a hand. A strengthened middle class means that hard-working Canadians can look forward to a good standard of living and better prospects for

their kids. This is not a terribly complex concept. Our changes to the CPP are one example of looking forward to being able to ensure that our children and grandchildren will have a better future.

When we have an economy that works for the middle class, we have a country that clearly will work for everyone. Now, more than ever, it is important that post-secondary education remains affordable and accessible. Young Canadians must have access to meaningful work at the beginning of their careers and not be burdened by increasing student debt. Budget 2016 makes post-secondary education more affordable for students from low and middle-income families and would make it easier for them to repay their student debt. Budget 2016 would also help young Canadians gain experience and extra income and find good jobs after their education.

Canada's employment insurance program provides economic security to Canadians when they need it most. Whatever their circumstances, no Canadian should struggle to get the assistance they need. To make sure that Canadians get the help they need when they need it, several changes are proposed to the current EI system. Changes to eligibility rules would make it easier for new workers and those re-entering the workforce to claim benefits. To ease the burden, the Government of Canada would extend employment insurance benefits in regions affected by localized challenges. The waiting period would also be reduced from two weeks to one week. This would provide unemployed workers with hundreds of dollars more, at the time they need it most.

However, the goals of budget 2016 are not restricted to just seniors, students, or the unemployed. Budget 2016 is about shifting to a new way of looking at national fiscal success. We want to give Canadian families more help with the high cost of raising children. This is why the government promised the new Canada child benefit. We want to give Canadians a simpler, tax-free, and more generous benefit. This is why we replaced an ineffective boutique tax system with the tax-free Canada child benefit. As just one example, under the new Canada child benefit, nine out of 10 Canadian families will receive higher monthly benefits, and hundreds of thousands of children will be lifted out of poverty.

This past weekend, I hosted a public consultation with families in my riding. We talked about the issues that mattered most to them. In a nutshell, they are not asking for wealth or for fancy programming. The families, students, seniors, and new Canadians living in my riding are simply asking for a fair chance and a hand up. They need a partner to help them when times are difficult. This is precisely what Bill C-29 is attempting to do.

I am pleased to be part of a government that clearly recognizes the challenges that Canadians are facing, one that is determined to make the investments that are possible so people can move forward in a positive way and our young people are encouraged that there will be very good jobs out there for them and a chance to get a good quality education.

*Government Orders*

• (1820)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's comments.

At the beginning of her speech, she said I needed a history lesson. However, if I need a history lesson, perhaps she needs one in socio-demographic phenomenon, and perhaps she needs to brush up on her economics. When the Conservative government decided to raise the age of retirement from 65 to 67, a measure that had been spread out over several years, it was about planning for the future.

Now the Liberal government is restoring the retirement age to 65, but it is beginning to realize that it does not have enough money, so it is introducing a carbon tax and raising CPP premiums.

Can my colleague clarify how she sees this? I genuinely do not understand the direction this government is taking, while its members attack me and say I need a history lesson.

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro:** Madam Speaker, I certainly did not appear to be attacking him. He was just so rambunctious in his presentation of incorrect information, I was simply attempting to ensure he had the right information.

No document was produced by the government or elsewhere that showed the OAS at age 65 was not sustainable. In fact, it was exactly the opposite. The budget officer, who we all work with on all sides of the House, said that old age security for seniors was completely sustainable. There was no reason to be concerned about that part of it at all.

Anyone who has family or seniors who have worked in the construction industry, or mining, or maybe housework, realizes how difficult it is and how the body gets worn down. The idea of being able to work to age 67, alleluia for those who can. However, there are thousands of Canadians who cannot.

On the CPP file, it is about ensuring that the people who are behind us have a better future. By contributing a small increase every day and every month by the government or the employer and the individual, those Canadians will have a much better retirement.

• (1825)

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, some people in this place may not know that I love to cycle. One of the things I have been very happy to see is investments in active transportation. It is one of my main modes of transportation around the city. I have seen investments in bike share, bike trails, bike safety, and other forms of active transportation. I recently went on a ride with Bells on Danforth and Cycle Toronto in my community and saw how important it was there.

How is my colleague seeing the impact of investment in public transit infrastructure and in infrastructure in her community?

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro:** Madam Speaker, due to our investments, we will have light rail transit going right through the community in my riding. That very much will help people who have to get from the subway to get home. Transit is extremely important and our government is finally investing millions and millions of dollars to

ensure that people can get from point A to point B in a safe, secure way.

However, then there is the issue of the carbon tax, about which people continue to throw around and banter. That money will go back to the provinces and be invested in transit or in the people who live in the province of Ontario.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have been in the House most of the day and have had a chance to hear the remarks of the members on both sides of the House.

One thing is crystal clear: this government has made decisions in its budget to create an annualized deficit, which is what it promised during the election campaign, specifically, a \$10-billion deficit a year for about three years. Scotiabank issued a statement today, on top of all the others it has issued over the past few weeks, to inform Canadians that the deficit will not be \$10 billion, as it had previously announced, but rather somewhere between \$32 billion and \$35 billion. That is three times higher than planned. In just one year, the Liberals will have created the deficit that was supposed to be spread over the next three years.

The government tells Canadians that it is going to invest, say yes to everyone, and hand out money like candy. However, at some point, someone has to pay for all this.

The difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives is that we managed to make many significant investments, in infrastructure among other things, without running a deficit.

During the election campaign, the Liberals said they would run small deficits of \$10 billion. This is year one and we already have the deficit that was projected for year three or four. The fundamental problem with all this is that there is no plan to return to a balanced budget. I have heard that a number of times here today. No government member has talked about returning to balanced budgets. None of them have.

Later I will ask how it is that these members and this political party can run a deficit with no light at the end of the tunnel, because there is nothing to indicate an eventual return to balanced budgets. I am sure that my colleagues will continue to ask the same question tomorrow. This is an extremely dangerous road we are going down.

I heard my colleague across the way say that the government was giving an extra \$900 to seniors. When the government says that it is going to hand out money left and right, the problem is that it gives with one hand from its own pocket and takes with both hands from the taxpayer's pocket. The carbon tax is a good example. It is a \$2,500 tax. The government is giving \$900 with one hand and taking \$2,500 with the other.

• (1830)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would like to inform the member that he will have seven minutes remaining when this matter returns before the House.

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

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

[*English*]

## DAIRY INDUSTRY

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP):** Madam Speaker, back in June, I asked the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food why the Liberal government has backed away from its commitments to Canadian farmers. There are three specific commitments that I would like to focus my comments on during tonight's debate.

The first one is compensation to farmers and fishers under CETA and the TPP. Today, we heard a hint from the government that there would be some type of compensation package, but, largely, farmers and the fishing community have been left to wonder whether the previous Conservative commitment would be honoured. In fact, when the budget was presented this year, they were quite concerned when it was not part of the actual budget.

We would like to know whether these commitments will be made. The TPP and CETA chip away at supply management, and farmers deserve an answer as to whether this compensation will be available to them.

The second issue I would like to address is the inaction on diafiltered milk. The fix to this problem is simple and quick. The trade committee and the agriculture committee have heard this. The trade committee held an emergency meeting this summer, on August 3. I joined my colleagues and opposition members in pushing for this meeting, because it is critically important that the dairy sector receives some understanding on where the government is at on diafiltered milk. It needs action.

When the Minister of Agriculture appeared before the trade committee on September 20, he refused to give specifics on how this issue would be fixed. The minister actually asked for more time of the dairy farmers and the supply management. This is so incredibly concerning because Canadian dairy has lost \$220 million because of diafiltered milk alone.

We want an answer on the inaction of diafiltered milk for farmers in our country.

The third thing I would like to focus on is why the inaction on PACA? This is the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act.

Earlier this year, I tabled a motion in the House calling upon the government to implement a payment protection program similar to PACA in the U.S., so that Canadian fruit and vegetable growers could export their products south while knowing they have legal recourse if they do not receive payment.

This was a Liberal campaign promise, so it is really quite shocking to see a lack of action on this particular file. It would help the produce and vegetable growers, certainly, in my region in south-western Ontario. My riding of Essex has many of these producers and being able to have PACA as a way to ensure that they would receive payment for goods that are crossing the border is incredibly important. However, after a year in government, we hear complete silence on PACA.

Farmers really deserve an answer on these very important issues. They have been largely left behind by the government, and the government has been silent on these very important issues.

The questions that I have focus on the compensation. Where is it? When will it be coming, so that farmers can be certain that they will have some type of protection? Why inaction on diafiltered milk, when there already is clearly a path and an understanding of the way to fix this problem that is costing dairy farmers? Why the inaction on PACA, something that was a campaign promise?

Canadian farmers are tired of the silence from the government. We have seen them here protesting on the Hill in anger over the silence that they have heard from the Liberal government. It made many campaign promises to them but has yet to follow through with them.

Why are Liberals backing away from their commitments to Canadian farmers?

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member from Essex for raising this important issue.

As a dairy farmer, I am proud that Canada can count on such a strong and vibrant sector. I will repeat, as we have said all along, that supply management is an important pillar of our agriculture and of the Canadian economy.

We are working hard to find a lasting solution that is acceptable to the entire Canadian dairy industry. We are pleased that Canada and the European Union have signed this historic agreement. It is a progressive agreement that will expand our exports, which may reach up to \$1.5 billion a year.

I would like to point out the exceptional work done by the Prime Minister, the Minister of International Trade, and their respective teams to secure the agreement.

It is our belief that the government must help dairy producers and processors to make the transition once CETA is implemented. We consulted dairy producers, their national and local associations, and processors; their input informed the development of programs designed to respond to the challenges faced by the sector and to foster growth. We have shown on many occasions that we are listening to the dairy sector and doing everything we can to find a viable long-term solution.

Of course CETA has not yet taken effect, and we will ensure that the transition assistance programs are announced before it does. We are committed to helping the dairy industry adjust to the new market conditions, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

With regard to the trans-Pacific partnership, we are continuing to consult Canadians in an open and transparent manner. The Conservatives chose to negotiate in secret and the New Democrats chose to oppose the agreement without even looking at it. We promised to consult Canadians and that is exactly what we are doing. We listened to over 450 economic stakeholders and the Standing Committee on International Trade has not yet finished its study of the TPP. It is also important to remember that none of the 11 countries that signed the TPP have ratified it yet.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I am proud of the work that has been accomplished to date, and we intend to keep building on that. The government will continue to promote the commercial interests of Canada's agricultural industry. That includes supply-managed sectors as well as those that will benefit from new trade access, such as the beef, hog, grain, fruit and vegetable, and processed foods industries.

Our message is very clear. We are the ones who implemented the supply management system and we fully support it. We understand that transition programs are important for the dairy industry. Such assistance is being developed and will be available when the agreement takes effect.

I can assure the House that we are working with all industry stakeholders and listening to their points of view.

[*English*]

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey:** Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his compliment to the trade committee, of which I am vice-chair.

I know well the amount of consultation that has taken place on the trans-Pacific partnership. Unfortunately, what is missing for Canadians, and certainly for Canadian farmers, is consultation on CETA. The Liberal government adopted a Conservative-negotiated deal, slapped a gold star on it, and said that it is the best deal it has ever seen, yet it is not bringing this deal to the Canadian people. Where is the same consultation with Canadians on CETA?

I am happy to hear that the parliamentary secretary is a dairy producer himself. I could not agree more that supply management is incredibly important. As a matter of fact, when the trade committee was visiting the eastern provinces, we heard that they will lose half their dairy farms under CETA and the TPP.

The government needs to stand up on behalf of farmers, and that starts with action. The words are done. They have been nice, but what farmers are looking for is action.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant:** Madam Speaker, the federal government's investments in innovation, agricultural programs, green jobs, and broadband Internet service will benefit the agriculture and agri-food industry as a whole.

We recognize the importance of helping supply-managed sectors with the transition under the Canada-European Union comprehensive economic and trade agreement.

We will keep the lines of communication open with farmers across the country. In preparation for the development of the new strategic agricultural framework, which will launch in 2018, we are also meeting with industry stakeholders to hear their thoughts on the current framework.

Canada's agricultural industry and all supply-managed sectors have some exciting new opportunities that spell big gains for them. We are all working together to cultivate a prosperous future for all of Canada's farmers.

● (1840)

[*English*]

## INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I had asked in the House why only 19% of the steel used in the new Champlain Bridge will be made in Canada. This is one of the largest federal infrastructure projects. I also asked whether Canadian or offshore steel would be used in several other infrastructure projects: the Alexandra Bridge, the Alaska Highway, and the Esquimalt Graving Dock. We have not heard an answer to those questions, but I am hoping the parliamentary secretary will be able to speak to the use of Canadian steel in those projects this evening.

It is very strange that the Government of Canada is importing steel while Canadian steel mills are laying off workers. I would consider why the Government of Canada might be doing that. One possibility is that it is cheaper to buy the steel from abroad. However, the rationale for these infrastructure projects is not simply to build the infrastructure at the lowest cost but to boost economic growth and to create jobs in Canada. The government itself has made that argument. If that is the goal, then clearly the government should be trying to procure the inputs from the Canadian economy. Doing so would generate more tax revenue in our country, which could certainly offset any higher cost of the steel.

The second reason we might be procuring steel from offshore for public infrastructure could be as a result of some sort of reciprocity; we want our steel mills to be able to sell Canadian steel for public infrastructure in other countries. While our biggest trading relationship is with the United States, we have relatively balanced trade in steel with the U.S. If the U.S. were to grant a Canadian exemption from buy-American policies, then it would make sense for us to also consider American steel in Canadian public infrastructure projects. However, there is no reciprocity in Canada's steel trade with the rest of the world. We export only about \$1 billion a year of steel offshore, yet we import more than \$4 billion of steel per year from offshore. There simply is no reciprocity to be achieved there.

I have mostly talked about steel procurement in economic terms, but we also need to consider some important environmental arguments. Steel is very heavy. It takes a lot of energy to transport it. The carbon emissions are much less if we are able to use Canadian-made steel rather than having it shipped from overseas. Similarly, it emits a lot less carbon to produce the steel in Canada, because our country has a much cleaner energy mix and also has much stronger environmental regulations. Producing a tonne of steel in China emits about 14 times more carbon than producing a tonne of steel in Canada.

If we are concerned about economic development in our country, if we are concerned about our environment, we should be using Canadian-made steel in federal infrastructure projects.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the interest of the member opposite in this issue. The Government of Canada wants all sectors of our economy to prosper, and at the same time it must carry out its procurement activities in a manner that enhances access, competition, and fairness. To provide more opportunities for Canadian suppliers, Canada has negotiated access to foreign government procurement markets through international trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Trade agreements place the legal obligations for competition into a global environment, while greatly expanding the marketplace for Canadian goods and services and resulting in more opportunities for Canadian steel.

• (1845)

[Translation]

An open trade and investment environment allows firms to thrive and helps create better jobs for the middle class. This is particularly important for the Canadian steel industry, which is highly dependent on export markets and is part of an integrated North American market. Some 48% of Canadian steel shipments are exported, of which 81% go to the United States.

There are a number of ways the Government of Canada can favour Canadian industry. The Canadian content policy, for example, encourages industrial development in Canada by limiting procurement opportunities to suppliers of Canadian goods and services when there is sufficient competition. Sufficient competition is defined as at least two potential suppliers of Canadian goods or services. The Canadian content policy is applied to most publicly advertised, competitive procurements by the departments of Public Services and Procurement and National Defence valued at \$25,000 or more.

To be considered Canadian, a good has to be wholly originated in Canada or, if it contains imported components, must have undergone a certain degree of transformation in Canada. A service is considered Canadian if it is provided by a company based in Canada.

[English]

Another procurement mechanism used to promote Canadian industry is the industrial technological benefits policy, managed by the department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. This policy requires companies that are awarded defence and security contracts by the Government of Canada to undertake business activities in Canada valued at 100% of the contract award. Over the last three decades, the policy has been applied to 125 procurements and has led to \$38 billion in obligations. These are just some of the ways that the Government of Canada seeks to maximize benefits for Canada in its procurements, and we are always looking for more.

My final point is that our government has an overarching strategy to spur economic growth across the country, and we believe strongly that the best way to foster future prosperity is by investing in the economy today.

[Translation]

The Alexandra Bridge project is covered by the Agreement on Internal Trade. The competitively tendered construction contract was awarded on August 1, 2016, to Stellaire Construction Inc. While the tender did not require that bidders provide Canadian steel, the specifications required that the steel quality meet the standards of the Canadian Standard Association, among others.

[English]

Public Services and Procurement Canada provides Infrastructure Canada, which leads the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

**Mr. Erin Weir:** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the parliamentary secretary made an argument that I very much anticipated, which is that we supposedly need to buy foreign steel for our public infrastructure in order to keep foreign markets open to Canadian steel. In fact, the parliamentary secretary went so far as to suggest that the North American Free Trade Agreement requires this. But as I pointed out, the United States has Buy American policies for public infrastructure. I would be all for negotiating a Canadian exception to that and giving reciprocal treatment to the United States. Perhaps in her final minute, the parliamentary secretary can let us know whether her government is actually doing that.

However, the bigger point is that with offshore markets there really is not any of this reciprocity. China is dumping steel into Canada; it is not buying any of our steel in exchange. So a far better policy would be to use public procurement here.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Madam Speaker, federal procurement activities operate within a complex framework of rules, policies, mechanisms, and international trade agreements that ensure fairness, and taken together are beneficial to Canadian suppliers of goods and services, as well as the Canadian economy.

• (1850)

[Translation]

Additionally, our government's plan for investment in the Canadian economy includes revitalizing public infrastructure. Canadians will see benefits in terms of job creation across the country, particularly in the construction, engineering, and manufacturing sectors, and in the ensuing economic spinoff activity.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou not being present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

I wish everyone a happy Hallowe'en.

The motion to adjourn the House is now 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 6:51 p.m.)

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