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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's conviction of a man with close ties to Jean Chrétien reminded us that the sponsorship scandal was a Liberal scandal, a scandal that revolved around Liberal scheming, a scandal that made Canadian propaganda part of every one of Quebec's cultural events.

Twenty years later, the party and its values remain the same. One need look no further than fundraising cocktails and dinners affording wealthy Liberals access to ministers.

Above all, the sponsorship scandal was a federalist scheme to use taxpayer money to kill the separatist movement. Well, the feds failed because 20 years later, Quebec separatists are rising up, determined to make Quebec their own country.

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[*English*]

NOMINATE YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Mr. Ahmed Hussen (York South—Weston, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a new campaign I have launched in my riding of York South—Weston named “Nominate Your Neighbour”. The Nominate Your Neighbour campaign is about thanking and celebrating exceptional individuals in York South—Weston.

In addition to recognizing organizations, it is always important to formally recognize individuals who continue to make our communities stronger, safer and better. If my constituents in York South—Weston know of a neighbour who continues to make positive contributions to our community, they should put his or her name

forward to the Nominate Your Neighbour campaign and tell us why this individual deserves recognition.

Since I have launched this great campaign, I have received dozens of nominations. I look forward to continuing to pay tribute to these amazing individuals who continue to make our communities better.

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my S.O. 31 today, I want to acknowledge and give our thoughts and prayers to the friends and the families of the victims of the stabbing at Abbotsford high school yesterday afternoon.

It is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak about the University of Northern British Columbia in my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, the university in the north and for the north. For the second year in a row, it has received *Maclean's*' top honour of being the number one university in its class in Canada.

For the last five years, UNBC has consistently finished high in the rankings, with second place finishes in 2014, 2012 and 2008 to add to its back-to-back first place finishes in 2015, and this year. These rankings just confirm what we already know, that students come from all over the world to study at UNBC because it becomes a home away from home, because the friendships and the memories they create at UNBC last a lifetime, because the skills and lessons they learn at UNBC prepare those students for the next chapter of their lives, and because Prince George and our surrounding communities are a great place to live, work, play, invest and learn.

I congratulate the entire UNBC team and to our community of Prince George on this well-deserved achievement.

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COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a remarkable woman and citizen from my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, Shernett Martin, executive director of the Vaughan African Canadian Association.

Statements by Members

Since arriving from Jamaica in 1975, Shernett has served as an important fixture in the black community. For over 20 years, her outstanding contributions in advocacy on a variety of social issues have played a critical role in developing stronger, more understanding communities.

As a professional teacher, Shernett's innovative style and exceptional leadership skills have had a positive impact on countless lives in the classroom, in workshops around Ontario and Quebec, and while teaching English to refugees and immigrants.

Most recently, Shernett's story was selected to be featured in the upcoming book *100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women*, which serves as a testament to the invaluable contributions Shernett and like-minded women have made to Canadian society.

I invite you, Mr. Speaker, and all my colleagues to recognize Shernett Martin and her extraordinary achievements.

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SPORTS

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as critic for sport and persons with disabilities, I am honoured to welcome to Parliament Hill today the Team Canada athletes and coaches of the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

On behalf of my NDP caucus, we admire them for the talent, sacrifice and self-discipline that got them to Rio. Our profound gratitude is also theirs for the class they displayed, the sportsmanship, and the patriotism. We Canadians are fortunate to have them as ambassadors.

I am also proud of some local ambassadors who brought us HOCKtoberfest last weekend: the Windsor-Essex Sports Council, the Lakeshore Lightning team, the Sun Parlour Female Hockey Association, and all the volunteers and players of the ninth annual International Female Hockey Festival. Fifty teams from Ontario, Ohio and Michigan enjoyed top-notch competition and fun.

I thank them for reinforcing the positive image of Windsor as an exemplary host, and hockey as our quintessential game.

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LUSO CANADIAN CHARITABLE SOCIETY

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to highlight the work that is being done to help those with disabilities by the Luso Canadian Charitable Society.

The Luso Canadian Charitable Society is a community based organization that supports diverse families and adults who are living with developmental and physical disabilities to reach their full potential.

Since 2003, this non-profit charitable organization has worked toward providing caregivers and families temporary relief, while their loved ones are in a nurturing environment.

Currently Luso has two fully operational homes in Toronto and Hamilton, and will open their newest location in Mississauga this year.

I was honoured to be part of their super-successful 10th annual fundraising gala this past Saturday. I want to thank all the donors, volunteers, staff members and management for their great work, and a special thanks to Mr. Jack Prazeres, their president, for his leadership, and the organizers who put together such a wonderful event.

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4-H CANADA

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, years ago, I was a 4-H'er, and I am celebrating 4-H Canada's "Show Your Colours" day as we welcome all 4-H'ers who are here today.

This amazing organization has helped countless youth learn through hands-on experience to grow as youth leaders. It provides opportunity to learn about agriculture and get involved in their community.

Today is also "Take Your Child to Work" day, but 4-H Canada gives youth the chance throughout the whole year to experience and explore one of the most important and significant economic drivers and job providers in Canada, agriculture.

I want to thank 4-H Canada for the great work it does in our communities across our great country. I want to encourage all young people to get involved, learn about agriculture and show their colours. As the 4-H motto says, "Learn to do by doing".

* * *

● (1410)

ALEPPO

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind the House that every day, the residents of Aleppo, including 100,000 children, are struggling for their lives amid unimaginable horror.

Divided between the Assad regime backed by Russia and Islamic extremist groups, Aleppo is being reduced to rubble.

At an emergency hearing yesterday at the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, we heard from the Syria Civil Defense, the White Helmets, that civilians were being targeted and killed indiscriminately.

Humanitarian aid, schools and hospitals are being deliberately targeted and destroyed. Authorities report that fewer than 30 doctors remain in what is left of Aleppo.

It is imperative that these actions be investigated for violations of international law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs for his hard work on this issue.

Canada will never stand silent in the face of the indiscriminate murder of men, women, and children.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

MARIE-FRANÇOISE MÉGIE

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 29, 2014, the member for Papineau made an extraordinary announcement, the purpose of which was to put an end to partisanship and patronage in the Senate.

On July 7, 2016, the Minister of Democratic Institutions launched our new independent Senate appointment process. Over 2,700 Canadians applied to the advisory board to fill the 21 vacancies. We thank them for their interest.

Following the recommendations made by the Prime Minister of Canada, I would like to congratulate the new senators, who reflect the diversity of our country.

Among the recent appointments is a Haitian-born Canadian. Dr. Marie-Françoise Mégie has had a remarkable journey. My fellow Haitian Canadians and I are extremely proud that Dr. Mégie will be a member of this great institution of parliamentary democracy in Canada. Congratulations.

* * *

[English]

NUCLEAR SCIENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following are the recipients of the 2016 Canadian Nuclear Laboratories Awards of Excellence: the Torgerson Discovery Award: Tony Clouthier, Zhe Liang, and Reilly MacCoy for their work on hydrogen safety in nuclear power plants, and Youssef Ismail, Dmitry Klokov, Soji Sebastian, and Yi Wang for their work with radiobiological research; the Distinguished Merit Award: Robby Baidwan, Ian Donohue, Thomas Heale, Mitch King, Andrew Kittmer, Kevin Milks, and Terry Schaubel on specialized tooling to access the NPD reactor vault for general inspections; the Distinguished Merit Award: Jeremy Buck, Steven Hogg, Dag Horn, Colin Kramer, Jia Lei, and Brian Lepine on the inspection technique probe design for metal thicknesses in nuclear facilities using a non-contact electromagnetic method; and the Distinguished Merit Award: Jason Heal, Patrick Mansfield, and Tyler White for leading the return of the U2 loop to service in NRU, key to CNL's ability to declare itself a full capability technology developer.

Canadians can be proud of the advanced state of nuclear science that is being developed in Canada.

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ROBOTIC DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, Brampton welcomed the Prime Minister. He announced high-tech jobs in my riding of Brampton South.

Amazon opened Canada's first-ever Amazon high-tech robotic distribution centre in Brampton. The Prime Minister and provincial and city partners were together to share the positive news.

The facility has already hired over 300 employees, and is expected to create more than 700 jobs in total. This facility will create good, well-paying jobs that will help middle-class families in Brampton.

Canada is becoming a global centre for innovation. I am so proud that Amazon decided to grow here and to hire our talented people. I want to thank the Prime Minister for coming to personally give the good news about these jobs.

* * *

● (1415)

4-H CANADA

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize 4-H Canada, an organization with over 100 years of community engagement, for its contributions to young people across Canada.

Our government has made historic commitments to youth, from supporting young and growing families to post-secondary education. The value of learning is something I feel very strongly about. I believe in the potential of skilled, engaged, and responsible leadership when taking on challenges locally, nationally, and across the globe. This spirit is foundational to 4-H Canada.

Whether summer camps and science fairs or job shadowing, mentorship and international exchanges, 4-H Canada is committed to youth empowerment. With a wealth of programs promoting skills development and education, I invite my colleagues to join me in applauding 4-H Canada for its ongoing commitment to Canada's next generation.

Today 4-H Canada is wearing green. Let us show our colours and do the same.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, former Liberal Party organizer Jacques Corriveau was found guilty of money laundering and other offences as part of the sponsorship scandal.

Mr. Corriveau pocketed nearly \$7 million of taxpayers' money during the six years that he was a close friend of former Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien.

Such ethical lapses are nothing new for the Liberal Party. They have been the norm in that party for many years, and that has not changed with the current government. For example, this government paid \$200,000 in moving expenses for close friends of the Prime Minister and held a fundraiser where people paid \$1,500 for privileged access to a minister.

Oral Questions

These ethical breaches are a far cry from the transparency that this Liberal government claims to promote. It is therefore high time that the Prime Minister began taking some responsibility, stopped defending the indefensible, and started being honest with taxpayers—

The Speaker: The hon. member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun.

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[English]

2016 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Mr. David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to welcome some notable visitors to Parliament Hill today.

First, I want to salute our Olympians and Paralympians, as we celebrate their tremendous achievements at the Rio 2016 Games. In particular, I would like to congratulate Olympian wrestler, Dori Yeats, a new constituent of LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, who has made our community very proud.

[Translation]

Earlier today, I was very pleased to meet students from Verdun's École secondaire Monseigneur-Richard, a public school in my riding. These students were specially selected to visit Ottawa as part of the school's odyssey program, which encourages high school students to be open to the world, strive for academic excellence, and do volunteer work in their communities. I was really impressed by these students' achievements, their civic engagement, and their excellent questions.

If they go on to become our future leaders, we will be in good hands.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a little less than two weeks ago, some students at Laval University were sexually assaulted in their residence room. Since that time, many other victims have broken their silence and had the courage to report their attacker.

I am moved by the wave of solidarity with all victims of sexual assault that is sweeping Quebec. It is a wave of solidarity, but also of rage and frustration over the destructive rape culture that exists in our society.

The Stop Rape Culture movement emerged out of a desire to turn things around. It is time to stop worrying about the attackers' career and questioning the victims' clothing choices and lifestyles.

It is time for the federal government to assume its responsibilities on this file and immediately adopt a comprehensive plan to address violence against women because consent is at the heart of healthy relationships and should also be at the heart of our policies. If it's not yes, it's no.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Great War ended on November 11, 1918, which we commemorate at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Today, it is a day to honour and remember our veterans and their efforts to defend Canada. As the official opposition critic for veterans affairs, I know how proud veterans are of their service to their country and, in return, I wanted to show them how proud I am to serve them and listen to them.

In November, all Canadians must be of service to and recognize our veterans for what they have done for Canada throughout their lives.

In that regard, I would like to bring to the attention of the House a veteran from Beauport—Limoilou, Raoul Fournier, who is now 92. This proud Second World War veteran is finding it difficult to get the care he needs. That makes me sad.

However, Remembrance Day will remind all of us to be there for our veterans and to ensure that we do not let them down.

* * *

● (1420)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I welcome two special guests to Ottawa.

Dr. Homa Hoodfar, a retired Concordia University professor, has recently returned home after being detained in Iran. Her story has touched a chord with Canadians, and rallied them to action. The grace and strength that Dr. Hoodfar exhibited during her ordeal is inspiring.

She is joined today by her niece Amanda Ghahremani, who championed her aunt's cause with thoughtful and unrelenting determination.

On behalf of Homa and Amanda, I want to take this opportunity to thank our officials, our Minister of Foreign Affairs, our Prime Minister, and all MPs who raised her case.

I also want to thank Italy, Oman, and Switzerland for playing a constructive role in her release.

It has been my honour to get to know both Homa and Amanda. Dr. Hoodfar, welcome back home.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the nightmare for taxpayers continues.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister doubled down on a failed plan. He promised that if he spent billions of dollars, he would create jobs, but not one single new additional full-time job has been created in Canada since he was elected.

What is the Prime Minister going to say to the thousands of Canadians who are out of work, and who only see higher taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we actually lowered taxes for the middle class, and raised them on the wealthiest 1%, which the members opposite voted against.

We know Canadians need help in terms of support for the middle class, but they also need jobs. That is why our historic investments in infrastructure are going to make a significant difference by upgrading and supporting current infrastructure, by creating new public transit infrastructure, green infrastructure, and social infrastructure.

These investments will create opportunities for Canadians now and long into the future. That is what Canadians voted for. That is what we are delivering.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has only been six months since his first budget, and the Prime Minister is already back to borrow an extra \$32 billion. He has completely abandoned his plan to balance the budget. He does not even pretend to care anymore. He just shrugs his shoulders.

We know who is going to pay the taxes for all of this spending. It is going to be hard-working Canadian families.

When is the Prime Minister going to start showing them some respect?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to taxes for hard-working Canadian families, we lowered them on the middle class, so we could raise them on the wealthiest 1%.

The members opposite voted against the measure to lower taxes on nine million Canadians. We will take no lessons on investing in the middle class and building for the future from a former government that did not get it done for 10 long years.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vegreville is a rural community of only 5,800 people, and just like many parts of Alberta, it is hard hit. Oil and gas jobs are non-existent. A lot of people are worried about their mortgages. However, the Prime Minister is making a bad situation worse by shutting down the federal processing immigration centre in this small town. It is going to cost hundreds of jobs. This is devastating the community.

However, the Prime Minister can do something about it. He can reverse this decision, show some compassion, and leave these jobs in this town.

•(1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past months, we have stepped up to historic

Oral Questions

levels our investments and support of communities across the country, including Alberta.

Whether it is strengthening the EI system, or making hundreds of millions of dollars flow into Alberta to support the important economy there, we know that what Albertans need most is a government that understands that getting resources to market in a sustainable way is something all Canadians need, that the previous government was unable to do.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I know that members have lots of enthusiasm today, but I hope they would save that for when we have the athletes come into the chamber. Remember that we are supposed to listen to the other side, even if we do not like what they say.

The hon. leader of the opposition.

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ETHICS

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the Prime Minister that these people have jobs. They want to keep them. They do not want EI. They want to keep the jobs they have.

We now have new bribery charges against one of Kathleen Wynne's top advisers. This is the same person who once held a fundraiser for the Prime Minister.

Now we have our Prime Minister and the cabinet refusing to acknowledge their own ethical violations with their cash to access scheme.

This is a lesson for the Prime Minister. He can enforce his own ethical guidelines, or he can end up one day like Kathleen Wynne.

What is it going to be?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to reassure, and remind Canadians that at the federal level we have some of the toughest rules on fundraising of any level of government across the country, indeed the continent.

There are very strict limits on personal donations, and a total ban on union or corporate donations. It is important to draw Canadians into the political process. It is important to go out and meet with them, and be accessible, as we are, to record levels.

However, it is also important that people be able to donate and support the political parties of their choice. We are respecting all the rules and, indeed, we have opened up the level of openness.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It appears that the hon. members for Edmonton Centre and Chilliwack—Hope did not hear what I said. I would remind them not to interrupt. Let us listen, please.

Oral Questions

Let us have a little order in the House. We actually have some teachers here today. Let us show them how we can behave.

The hon. leader of the opposition.

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem with what the Prime Minister just said is that, in fact, he is not following all the rules. He is not following his own rules.

He came into office saying he was going to raise the ethical standards. He brought in his own ethical guidelines for himself and for his ministers, and they are all violating them.

Will he follow his own rules?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely following our own rules. We are following all the rules in place.

This government is doing more open engagements with Canadians, more listening to Canadians, and more connection with stakeholders than any previous government.

At the same time, when it comes to political fundraising, we are following all the very important and clear rules around limits on personal donations, on banning corporate and union donations.

Canadians need to be reassured that we actually have an extremely strong and robust political fundraising system at the federal level, one in which Canadians can be confident.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wrote in the mandate letter to every one of his ministers the following:

...you must uphold the highest standards of honesty and impartiality...This is an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law.

What did the Prime Minister mean by that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of a government that did not do a good job of living up to Canadians' expectations, we know people needed and wanted a government that was more open, transparent, and mostly accessible.

That is exactly what we have been in terms of pre-budget consultations that the minister has done, in terms of consultations that we have done right across the country, and been roundly criticized for talking too much with Canadians, for listening too much to Canadians.

We have demonstrated a level of openness and accountability that no government up until ours has ever had, and we are proud of that.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, cash for access fundraisers do affect the impartiality of his ministers, and yet, the Liberals keep defending themselves as the Prime Minister just did because they are in technical compliance with the law. That is not what he promised.

• (1430)

[Translation]

Cash for access fundraising is a form of corruption, and this country has had it with Liberal corruption.

The Prime Minister must choose: either he can claim they are adhering to standards that are even stricter than the law or he can assert that they have done nothing wrong because, technically, they are complying with the law. Which is it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can be assured that the federal government has extremely strict rules around fundraising.

This is important to all Canadians, and we are following the rules because we know that people need to have confidence in their government, in their ministers, and in how our political parties operate. That is why we are always transparent, accountable, and open about our fundraisers.

That is what people expect, and that is what we are doing.

* * *

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has signalled that he may also break his promise on changing the electoral system. The reason he gave is that the Liberals won the last election with the current system. That is actually what he said.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister about his own private town hall on electoral reform. Can he tell everyone here today, among those attending, which electoral system had the most support?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as many members in the House know, and indeed people across the country, the minister and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions have been out across the country doing many town halls.

I was fortunate enough to drop into a town hall for a few minutes in my riding and encouraged people to express themselves. The report on that consultation along with all the other consultations done by the minister and MPs will be part of the deliberations coming up.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know the Prime Minister has a hard time admitting this, but most of the people at his secret town hall supported proportional representation. The Prime Minister has repeatedly stated that he believes in evidence-based decision making. Well, 90% of the experts who testified before the parliamentary committee were in favour of proportional representation.

Will the Prime Minister look to the evidence in deciding how to proceed with electoral reform?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that there are many expert opinions and perspectives on how to reform our electoral system. That is why we have a committee and are holding consultations.

I am looking forward to the results of all of these consultations and ideas about reforming our electoral system in a way that reflects the values and desires of all Canadians.

*Oral Questions***FINANCE**

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we welcome our Olympic athletes here today, the only medal that government over there deserves is a medal for the worst public administration.

The Liberals promised a \$10-billion deficit, which was already pretty huge, but now it looks like it could be double or even triple that amount by the end of the fiscal year. Furthermore, the government does not have a plan for returning to a balanced budget.

Why is there no plan for returning to a balanced budget?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am confident that Canadian families who have benefited from the Canada child benefit and a tax cut would give us a gold medal, because they now have more money in their pockets.

We started with a very important first step: making life better for Canadian families now. This means that we can now focus on investing in the future for their children and grandchildren. That is what the program we announced yesterday is all about, and we are implementing that.

Hon. Denis Lebel (Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my former colleague, Jim Flaherty, was once named the best finance minister in the world. I cannot wait to see who will be named next.

The only medal our children might get is a medal for hope, because they will be the ones left to pay off the Liberal deficit for generations to come. We will never see the end of this story.

Why is there no plan for returning to a balanced budget? Canadians cannot trust this Prime Minister.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the economic statement we delivered yesterday, because we explained to Canadians how we are going to improve their situation with our plan for economic growth. It is very important.

We are going to make investments in infrastructure to stimulate our economy and create more jobs and future opportunities for young people and future generations. It is an important plan for the future of Canada.

* * *

● (1435)

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is a corporate guy who knows all about returns on investments, so maybe he can explain this. He says we need to borrow \$26 billion this year to spend on creating jobs, yet since the borrowing binge began, we have actually lost 6,000 full-time jobs. If it costs \$26 billion to kill 6,000 jobs, how much would it cost to create one?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians can agree that the challenges we are facing as a nation require a long-term plan. We have started, with budget 2016, making a real and measurable difference for Canadian families, improving their lives and improving the lives of their children. We

are now moving forward with a long-term plan, one we are going to execute responsibly by ensuring that we make investments in infrastructure that can improve our economy over the long term and can help Canadian families, with more jobs, in the short term.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the finance minister does not understand is that every dollar he adds to the economy in new spending he must first subtract through borrowing and by taxing it out of the economy in the first place. As Churchill would say of the finance minister, he is like the man who tried to lift himself up and fly by standing in a bucket and pulling up on the handle. In reality, he is pushing down, 6,000 jobs down, since the borrowing binge began.

When will the government stop pushing down on our economy, our workers, and our taxpayers?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to Canadians that we are actually going to invest in the long term. We are going to make a real difference to the future growth of our economy. Canadians knew that the last decade of low growth meant that we needed to take a different tack, a tack that improves the lives of middle-class Canadians today, a tack that means we are going to have a better future tomorrow. We are going to make responsible investments that are going to make a real difference for our children and our grandchildren.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the government had a golden opportunity to turn Canada's economic situation around and grab the bull by the horns. Instead, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance decided to make matters worse.

The minister announced \$32 billion in additional spending over the coming years. Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will have to foot the bill for those billions of dollars and this mismanagement.

Earlier, in committee, I asked the minister four times to tell me when the budget would be balanced again. I am a good sport. I am prepared to give the minister a gold medal as soon as he tells us exactly when the budget will be balanced for all Canadians.

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I announced our long-term economic plan. This plan will truly help grow our economy for the future of our country. In the meantime, we want to be prudent. That is why our GDP-to-debt ratio will fall during our term.

The important thing for Canadians and the middle class is that we are investing in them and in our country, like a country that is confident in its future.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the worst case scenario. Five times I have asked the minister when we will get back to equilibrium. No answer at all. That is a clear message to hard-working Canadians.

When we are not paying what we have to, well, we will be sending the bill to our children and grandchildren.

It is curious. The government is spending billions of dollars. It can borrow billions of dollars. However, when we talk to ordinary Canadians, it is tougher for them to borrow money and get mortgages, thanks to the Minister of Finance.

What does that mean? Is it do as I say, not as I do?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians decided that balancing the budget at all costs was the wrong decision.

Focusing on how we can improve the economy over the long term is exactly what we are trying to do. We are focusing on how we can make investments in the long term for our country that will make a real and measurable difference in our productive capacity. Most importantly, it will create jobs for Canadians. It will help the middle class.

Yesterday was an important day in setting out our vision for doing that. We are going to do it in a responsible way. It will have a real impact over the long term.

* * *

● (1440)

*[Translation]***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House we adopted a motion calling on the government to end the discrimination against first nations' children. However, there is nothing new in the minister's economic update to enforce that decision.

The only indigenous economic adviser on the government's advisory council noted that the minister should include something more helpful for first nations' children in his speech. It is one thing to vote in favour of the motion. Now it is time to implement it.

When will the minister release funding for first nations' children?

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, we have been making tremendous progress in supporting first nations children in this country. We are the first government to step up and accept Jordan's principle and are investing more than \$382 million immediately in first nations children. We were the first government to accept the ruling of the tribunal and move immediately to invest more than \$635 million in first nations children in this country.

We know the system needs to be reformed. We ask all colleagues in this House to work with us and indigenous governments to make that happen.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Europe has been clear that CETA cannot proceed without changes to investor state rules to protect national sovereignty.

The minister has already tabled legislation to implement CETA, in spite of the fact that she has provided no answers on compensation for dairy farmers, nothing to address rising drug prices, and no plan to fix rules that leave our environmental laws and local procurement at risk of foreign lawsuits.

Will the minister admit that there is more work to be done and commit to removing investor state provisions from CETA?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CETA is clearly in Canada's national interest. It is a progressive trade deal that ensures very high standards for environmental protection, for labour, etcetera.

It is time, we believe, for all members in this House to rally around it and put partisan politics aside. All 28 member countries in the European Union have supported CETA. It is also supported by all the provinces, including Quebec. The trade committee will have a chance to look at CETA and address certain issues, but for the time being, Philippe Couillard, Premier of Quebec, has called it a historic, modern, and progressive agreement.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is taking \$15 billion away from communities, money that has already been announced for public transit, for green infrastructure, and for rural and northern communities. This is a betrayal. The communities across this country have been waiting and planning for this money to build important infrastructure projects and to create much-needed jobs.

Why are the Liberals creating high-risk schemes that will fail communities and out-of-work Canadians?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear. We announced yesterday an historic plan for investing in infrastructure. It is an important plan that provides a \$2-billion investment in rural communities. It is an historic plan that provides, as well, a significant amount for a Canada infrastructure bank that is going to allow us to do even more with our infrastructure dollars for transformational projects. We have set out something that we know will have a big impact on our economy and on jobs both today and tomorrow.

Oral Questions

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, according to reports, job creation over the last year was half of what it was over the five previous years, and no full-time jobs were created. The Liberals have increased the debt, and yesterday the finance minister announced that he will borrow yet another \$32 billion. This is for the same infrastructure plan that resulted in zero job gains.

When will the government admit that this is a failed plan and heed the advice of leading economists and stop spending more taxpayer dollars?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to know that we are moving forward on our plan, because we know that it is the right thing to do, but we also know that leading economists around the world are looking at what Canada is doing and are saying that this is absolutely what we should do.

With the fiscal situation we have and the opportunity to make investments, we are moving forward, because we know it is better for our economy, it is better for Canadians, and it will create jobs. I can say that Christine Lagarde, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, says she hopes that our policies go viral around the world. Leading economists recognize that we are doing exactly what we should be doing at this time for our economy.

* * *

• (1445)

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem for the Minister of Finance is that it will be Canadians, not people from around the world, who will be paying down our deficit.

Yesterday, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities stated that 950 projects worth \$11 billion have been approved, but according to the Infrastructure Canada database we are really talking about 860 projects worth \$4.2 billion. In addition to these conflicting figures, there is another figure that stands out. It is the number one: one year of Liberal governance, one year of excessive spending, one year of deficit and fewer than 10 new projects under way so far.

When will this government start creating real jobs here in Canada?
[*English*]

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a historic day for Canadian municipalities from coast to coast to coast. We committed to invest more than \$180 billion over the next 12 years, and as part of our commitment in budget 2016, we approved more than 950 projects, with a combined investment of \$12 billion. The majority of those projects are under way, helping municipalities buy buses, do their advance planning work for the next stage of infrastructure, improve water—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.
[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Finance announced the creation of a Canadian investment bank. All we know right now is that the

\$15 billion promised to communities will go to this bank. What people need to see are not new organizations, but people at work, and not money invested in banks, but money invested in job sites.

Can the minister finally propose a real job creation plan that will put Canadians to work?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Canada infrastructure bank will help our economy. We will have the opportunity to leverage our efforts and generate more opportunities for projects that will be transformative for our economy. That is our goal. We know that with more investment in infrastructure we will create jobs now and in the future for Canadian families.

* * *

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the onset of a national student movement, the Liberal government has promised that graduates can delay paying back their student loans until they earn at least \$25,000 a year. However, that is nothing new. It is a recycled announcement from the last budget, and it does not solve any of the basic problems that are causing students to rack up massive amounts of debt.

Will the government stop trying to use smoke and mirrors and finally take real action to guarantee affordable access to post-secondary education in Quebec and Canada?

[*English*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a great day for Canadian students as the loan repayment act came into being and now Canadian students do not have to start their repayment until they have employment that pays over \$25,000 annually. This is over and above the \$1.5 billion that this government has invested in student grants. We have increased the level of student grants for low-income Canadians by 50%. The lowest-income Canadians are now eligible for a cap of \$3,000, up from \$2,000. We are listening to students and we are—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, students on the Hill and across the country are speaking for a generation that is burdened by debt and facing rising rates of unemployment. They are putting forward bold solutions in the face of rising, precarious work, ones that we heard on our national tour across the country.

Oral Questions

Instead of placating young people and telling them to accept the unacceptable, will the Prime Minister, the Minister of Youth, listen to students' solutions and stand up and show leadership for the millennial generation?

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand fully that it is important to offer young Canadians that opportunity for a first job. We have doubled the amount of money for the youth employment strategy and doubled the number of summer jobs for young Canadians.

I would like to thank the student organizations, those I have met with. I was just at Mount Saint Vincent and I was at Cape Breton University. Roy Karam, the president of the student union at CBU, commented about our investment in students, "I'm excited and I know students will be happy as well—it's a win for students".

This government knows the needs of students and we are here to support them.

* * *

•(1450)

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, the Minister of Finance appeared before the finance committee to answer questions on the fall economic statement, which he delivered in the House of Commons yesterday. It was the first time such a statement has been given to Parliament in almost 10 years.

Would the minister explain how our government's plan will help middle-class families and what the next steps are in order to grow the economy sustainably?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a year ago, Canadians asked this government to put the middle class first. That is exactly what we have done, by supporting Canadians through our first budget where we put in place measures that are really helping families, and by moving forward in our economic statement yesterday to talk about how we are going to actually make a long-term difference through better long-paying jobs for Canadians.

This is part of a plan. We will continue to work on behalf of middle-class families. We will move forward in budget 2017 to make measurable impacts—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thornhill.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have just witnessed the annual ritual of some of the world's worst human rights abusers elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The good news is that Russia has been denied the seat it so long took for granted. However, China, Saudi Arabia, and Cuba will be seated. The vote, as usual, was secret. However, the vote is not the minister's. It belongs to all Canadians.

Will the minister tell Canadians how Canada voted on these four notorious human rights abusing nations?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that we seek to maximize membership on this council with countries that have strong human rights records at home and abroad, and that this council, as everywhere, will promote universal human rights, as we have done over the last year with the greatest of results.

This government asked for clemency in all cases of Canadians facing execution abroad. We will adopt the optional protocol to the convention against torture of the United Nations and a lot of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thornhill.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago, former Liberal justice minister and human rights champion Irwin Cotler, among others, called on the minister to defy the UN's secretive and hypocritical tradition and make Canada's vote public. The minister refused, as he did again today.

We recognize the Liberals' willingness to mute Canada's principled voice in their shameless quest for a security council seat, but will the minister, today, reconsider, demonstrate leadership on the human rights file, and tell Canadians how Canada voted on Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Cuba?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to comment on the impressive record we have with respect to the promotion of human rights over the last year.

We created the office of human rights, freedoms, and inclusion. We are supporting the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with a contribution of \$15 million in new base funding. Canada has been elected to the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations.

Human rights, freedoms and inclusion are now among the fundamental objectives of all Canadian heads of missions. We have tabled new legislation to guarantee and protect the legal rights and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is too ashamed to admit how he voted at the UN.

Yesterday, we learned the defence minister is making another trip to Africa. It seems the Liberals are hell-bent on sending 600 Canadian troops into harm's way. Before the minister sends our troops anywhere, he should explain to Canadians what interest we have in sending troops to Mali where 100 peacekeepers have already been killed.

Will the Prime Minister admit that sending troops to Mali serves no Canadian interests, other than his own vain campaign to win himself a seat at the UN Security Council?

Oral Questions

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last summer I had the opportunity to travel to five different countries in Africa, where I was able to take Canadians to understand the conflicts within those nations.

While Canada has a responsible part to play in this world in conflict prevention and conflict reduction, this is another trip that I will be taking to Africa to learn more and work with my colleagues in a whole-of-government approach to peace operations, which I look forward to sharing with Canadians and all parliamentarians.

•(1455)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the minister is going to visit Mali, where the government is preparing to send our troops. As a former commander of this type of infantry, I am well aware of the risks associated with the different missions.

I would like to remind the House that, this year alone, this mission has cost over 32 peacekeepers their lives, bringing the total number of casualties up to 100.

If the minister discovers that the mission is too dangerous for our troops and that it does nothing serve our national interests, will he stand up to the Prime Minister?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we look at all aspects of conflict in Africa, we will be selecting a place where Canada can make a meaningful contribution. Our Canadian Armed Forces have participated in UN peacekeeping operations around the world and we have been recognized for it.

Canada has a role to play in conflict reduction and conflict prevention, and we have a responsibility to the world to be a responsible partner. We will bring a whole-of-government approach to this and I look forward to sharing this with all parliamentarians.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA POST

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last winter, thousands of Canadians were unable to get their mail because their mailboxes were frozen shut. Rather than buying mailboxes made in Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Canada Post chose to buy mailboxes made in Kansas.

It is funny. The Liberals promised to bring back home mail delivery, but I have not heard the members opposite talk about this issue lately.

The government wants to spend billions of dollars to privatize our infrastructure, so why does it not require crown corporations to buy products that are made in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Judy Foote (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Canada Post is a crown corporation. It makes decisions about where it buys its products.

We are working closely to make sure that Canadians get the services they need and deserve. That is what we are doing with the review of Canada Post, which we committed to do. I am looking forward to getting a report from both the task force and the parliamentary committee that is presently on the review.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, back in September, the Prime Minister told the entire world that fighting AIDS was a priority. At the same time, the Public Health Agency of Canada was cutting funding to Dopamine, an organization that fights HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C among drug users in Hochelaga. With criteria that remain unspecified, documents that are mistranslated or not translated at all, and botched decisions, the process surrounding the community initiatives fund is a complete boondoggle.

Will the minister sit down with community groups in Quebec to find a solution to this disaster?

[English]

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the matter of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections is a very serious one. I am working actively with the Public Health Agency of Canada to update our approach to these conditions, including hepatitis C and HIV. We will be working with communities to make sure they have access to the resources they need.

We look forward to an approach that will make sure Canadians are healthy into the future.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Premier Wall penned a letter to the Minister of Public Safety urging him to speak up for the people he is supposed to represent. The Liberal carbon tax scheme will cost Saskatchewan jobs, yet the minister from Wascana continues to support this tax on Saskatchewan families.

When will the Minister of Public Safety remember that he was elected to represent the people of Saskatchewan in Ottawa rather than forcing an Ottawa-knows-best scheme on the families of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the substance of the federal proposal, it provides the province with complete control over program design and also all the revenues. This would enable Saskatchewan to eliminate its personal income tax, or its property tax, or a whole variety of other taxes. It makes carbon capture and sequestration far more competitive and it makes a stronger case for building a pipeline. It also supports science in water, food, and CCS. It provides funding for a power grid announced just yesterday, and major water development projects to control flooding and expand irrigation.

It is a good plan.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Premier Wall has written a letter to the Minister of Public Safety asking him to start defending his constituents instead of job-killing Liberal policies, but Saskatchewan's lone Liberal MP has gone into hiding.

I would like to believe that the member for Regina—Wascana wants to do the right thing and defend his province. Why will he not? When will the Minister of Public Safety stand in his place and start defending the interests of our province and all Saskatchewanians?

• (1500)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been doing that with considerable success since 1974.

This summer, I had the privilege of announcing more than half a billion dollars in federal investments in science, infrastructure, and job creation in Saskatchewan, as well as housing and a vast array of social programs.

I will continue to fight every inch of the way for the best results for Saskatchewan.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the history of the member for Regina—Wascana. As agriculture minister, he stripped the 100-year-old Crow rate advantage from western Canadian farmers. As minister, he coordinated the jailing of farmers just for trying to sell their own grain. Now he stands against prairie farmers by supporting a federally imposed Liberal carbon tax that will drive up the price of everything, fuel, fertilizers, and equipment, making our farmers uncompetitive.

For once, will he stand up and put Saskatchewan farmers and farm families ahead of his own Ottawa political ambitions?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the consequences of climate change, like droughts, fires, storms, and floods, impose billions of dollars in costs and losses on provinces like Saskatchewan and its municipalities.

As I said earlier, the Government of Canada has an investment plan to expand the economy of Saskatchewan. Over \$500 million has already been announced. We are also prepared to invest in science, such as carbon capture and sequestration, which Premier Wall has advocated; the global food centre in Saskatoon; the major water facility at the University of Saskatchewan; smart power grids; and flood prevention.

Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: The member for Richmond Hill.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand that the economy and the environment go hand in hand, and that any credible plan to reduce our production of greenhouse gases must include carbon pricing.

In the federal sustainability strategy, the government announced its intention to create a low-carbon government. Can the minister update the House as to the government's plan to do its part in tackling climate change?

Hon. Scott Brison (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Richmond Hill for his work on this file.

Today, I am proud to announce that the Government of Canada will be reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030. We are creating a centre for greening of government at Treasury Board that will track emissions, coordinate efforts across government, and drive results.

[Translation]

The government must do its part, and that is what it will do by developing a clean, sustainable economy that creates good jobs while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have slashed HIV/AIDS funding without giving a single organization advance notice. These organizations play an important role in reducing the transmission of HIV/AIDS, and they provide support to the literally thousands of Canadians living with this illness.

Our previous Conservative government invested in Canadian programs. The current Liberal government is cutting them out.

Why are Canadian tax dollars not going to Canadian AIDS organizations before going to other countries?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising this issue in the House. The matter of HIV funding is something I have been interested in and advocating for over 30 years.

It is an issue that was not appropriately addressed in the past decade. In fact, there has been little attention paid to this matter at the federal level for some time.

We are interested in a new approach to sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, including HIV and Hepatitis C. We are looking for ways to invest in good organizations and will continue to provide the support that Canadians need.

* * *

• (1505)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Kootenay—Columbia who have lost their jobs will be facing a month-long interruption in receiving their employment insurance. This is because government was not prepared to process the number of applicants that would need assistance when it extended benefits for my region, which has been hit by the economic downturn.

Oral Questions

These constituents will now go without income for four weeks. What is the government doing to address the backlog, and what advice does the minister have for the people in my riding who will go a month without much needed income?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this issue.

In budget 2016, we announced important measures to increase the flexibility and inclusivity of EI benefits. We also announced substantial investments to improve the quality of government services. I look forward to working with all members of the House to ensure that those services are as useful and as relevant as possible for all unemployed workers.

* * *

SPORTS

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, many members had an opportunity to meet Paralympic and Olympic athletes along with the coaches who were in Rio, but we were not the only ones to have that opportunity.

Many students also had an opportunity to meet them at two events held simultaneously in Gatineau and Ottawa.

Can the minister tell us about the important role our athletes play in the lives of young people?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Vimy for her question.

On behalf of all parliamentarians, I want to congratulate our athletes on their performances in Rio and thank them for playing an important role in our society and in the lives of young people. Close to 1,000 students were with our Olympic and Paralympic athletes this morning. Our athletes inspire young people to be more active and more involved in sports, to dream, and to aspire to their own podium.

[*English*]

I wish to welcome our athletes later on and to give them the heroes' welcome they deserve in the House for representing Canada on behalf of all Canadians. I thank them for their wonderful results in Rio this summer.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's excuse for closing the Vegreville processing centre and moving it to a Liberal city riding is nonsense.

He claimed there was a strong business case and cited efficiencies. He also said that the union agrees, but prairie PSAC reps say, "This has nothing to do with workload or the capacity of these employees to deliver service.... The reasons given by department heads were trivial". They confirm that senior officials said that no cost analysis was done. They call for a reversal of this edict.

How can Vegreville believe anything the minister says?

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working with the stakeholders to ease the transition.

My staff has had a good conversation with the mayor. I would be happy to meet the member at any time.

The fact of the matter is there is a net increase in jobs in Alberta, but there is a strong case for this. We have a responsibility to spend taxpayers' money wisely, to improve the efficiency of the immigration department and reduce processing times.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, here is a scenario. If the CETA agreement were in force and a controversial Ajax mine in Kamloops, British Columbia were turned down by the British Columbia government, the Polish mining company would have the right to bring an arbitration case against Canada. On the other hand, were a Canadian company to have a grievance with Poland, it is not at all clear that it could sue, because Wallonia has won opt-out provisions for every European nation.

Will the Prime Minister commit that Parliament will have adequate time to research, study, and understand CETA before we vote on it?

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for bringing her unique voice to the House. CETA is clearly in Canada's national interest, and it is time for all of us to rally around it. On top of delivering tangible growth for our economy and opportunities for the middle class, CETA will provide a strong foundation for Canada and the EU to demonstrate leadership on what is truly a progressive accord, a green accord, a health accord, and a labour accord. It also enshrines the right to regulate.

The ICS provisions, I suspect, are something that the trade committee will look at over the upcoming weeks. We will work with the committee and with our European partners as well.

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● (1510)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, 11th Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Tuesday, October 26, 2016, the House will now resolve itself into a committee of the whole to welcome Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

I do now leave the Chair for the House to resolve itself into committee of the whole.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADA'S OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

(House in committee of the whole to recognize the 2016 Summer Olympic Games and Paralympic Games athletes, Mr. Geoff Regan in the chair)

[*And Canada's 2016 Olympic and Paralympic athletes being present in the chamber:*]

The Speaker: Canadians are rightly proud of our athletes. Like them, we all appreciate the years of training and sacrifice and the determination it takes to become a world-class athlete.

[English]

Today is an opportunity to recognize the coaches, the administrators, and the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees for their support, as well as our athletes.

As we are welcoming a very large group of people into a restricted space, I would ask members not to impede the athletes' parade through the chamber. I understand there is agreement among all parties to have the names of the Olympic and Paralympic athletes who are with us today printed in the *Debates*. Members are all welcome to join our guests at a reception immediately following in room 237-CB.

Now it is my pleasure to welcome onto the floor of the chamber many of the athletes who competed at this year's Olympic and Paralympic summer games in Rio:

Rosie MacLennan, David Eng, Penny Oleksiak, Camille Berube, Eric Bussiere, Cody Caldwell, Tammy Cunningham, Patrice Dagenais, Marco Dispalto, Angelina Dolezar, Theresa Ferguson, Christine Gauthier, Shelley Gautier, Nydia Langill, Pamela LeJean, Alison Levine, Charles Moreau, Cindy Ouellet, Austin Smeenck, Michelle Stilwell, Curtis Thom, Amanda Yan, Crispin Duenas, Georcy-Stéphanie Thiffault Picard, Mathieu Bilodeau, Aaron Brown, Alicia Brown, Lucas Bruchet, Brittany Crew, Derek Drouin, Evan Dunfee, Crystal Emmanuel, Liz Gleadle, Inaki Gomez-Gorozieta, Nikkita Holder, Farah Jacques, Sekou Kaba, Segun Makinde, Noelle Montcalm, Carline Muir, Tim Nedow, Jessica O'Connell, Charles Philibert-Thiboutot, Anthony Romaniw, Andrea Seccafien, Gabriela Stafford, Taryn Suttie, Damian Warner, Sage Watson, Chris Winter, Jennifer Brown, Eva Fejes, Renee Foessel, Alister McQueen, Ness Murby, Guillaume Ouellet, Marissa Papaconstantinou, Tristan Smyth, Kevin Strybosch, Roberta Fried-Levine, Francine Hebert, Joanna Marchlewicz, Arthur Biyarlanov, Mandy Bujold, Ariane Fortin, Cameron Smedley, Michael Tayler, Ryan Cochrane, Mark de Jonge, Hugues Fournel, Emilie Fournel, Kathleen Fraser, Genevieve Orton, Adam van Koevreden, Erica Scarff, Allison Beveridge, Leandre Bouchard, Laura Brown, Karol-Ann Canuel, Raphaël Gagné, Jasmin Glaesser, Leah Kirchmann, Kirsti Lay, Kate O'Brien, Georgia Simmerling, Michael Woods, Tristen Chernove, Nicole Clermont, Alan Greer, Jean-Michel Lachance, Michael Sametz, Robbi Weldon, Ross Wilson, Maxim Bouchard, Roseline Filion,

Philippe Gagné, Pamela Ware, Joseph Polossifakis, Brenden Bissett, David Carter, Taylor Curran, Adam Froese, Jagdish Gill, Gordon Johnston, Antoni Kindler, Benjamin Martin, Sukhi Panesar, Mark Pearson, Matthew Sarmiento, Iain Smythe, Stephanie Labbe, Shelina Zadorsky, Whitney Bogart, Bruno Haché, Meghan Mahon, Blair Nesbitt, Douglas Ripley, Ahmad Zeividavi, Elisabeth Black, Rosannagh MacLennan, Scott Morgan, Shallon Olsen, Priscilla Gagne, Tony Walby, Melanie McCann, Curtis Halladay, Kristen Kit, Meghan Montgomery, Victoria Nolan, Julien Bahain, Will Crothers, Will Dean, Robert Gibson, Susanne Grainger, Brendan Hodge, Lindsay Jennerich, Maxwell Lattimer, Jennifer Martins, Natalie Mastracci, Conlin McCabe, Cristy Nurse, Patricia Obee, Nicolas Pratt, Lisa Roman, Christine Roper, Tim Schrijver, Antje von Seydlitz-Kurzbach, Lauren Wilkinson, Eric Woelfl, Carling Zeeman, Ghislaine Landry, Karen Paquin, Jacob Chaplin Saunders, Graeme Chaplin-Saunders, Nikola Girke, Lee Parkhill, Erin Rafuse, Luke Ramsay, Tom Ramshaw, Ryan Cochrane, Stephanie Horner, Yuri Kisil, Audrey Lacroix, Brittany MacLean, Sandrine Mainville, Kylie Masse, Martha McCabe, Erika Seltenreich-Hodgson, Kierra Smith, Markus Thormeyer, Michelle Williams, Morgan Bird, Isaac Bouckley, Sabrina Duchesne, Alexander Elliot, Devin Gotell, Benoit Huot, Jean-Michel Lavallière, James Leroux, Danial Murphy, Tess Routliffe, Katarina Roxon, Samantha Ryan, Abi Tripp, Nicolas Guy Turbide, Jacqueline Simoneau, Karine Thomas, Eugenie Bouchard, Sarah-Anne Brault, Amelie Kretz, Tyler Mislawchuk, Andrew Yorke, Stefan Daniel, Chantal Givens, Christine Robbins, Heather Bansley, Josh Binstock, Jamie Broder, Benjamin Saxton, Chaim Schalk, Kristina Valjas, Chantal Beauchesne, Leanne Muldrew, Shacarra Orr, Tessa Popoff, Amber Skyrpan, Jolan Wong, Katelyn Wright, Marie-Eve Beauchemin-Nadeau, Pascal Plamondon, Erica Gavel, Korey Jarvis, Jasmine Mian, Erica Wiebe, Dorothy Yeats.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

• (1535)

[*And Canada's 2016 Olympic and Paralympic athletes having left the Chamber:*]

The Speaker: The committee will rise and I will leave the Chair.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

VETERANS OMBUDSMAN

Hon. Kent Hehr (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Veterans Ombudsman's Annual Report 2015-16.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 56 petitions.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled “Report 1. Venture Capital Action Plan, of the Spring 2016 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109 the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I would like to thank the analyst, the researchers, the clerk, and all the officials that helped with this report. We certainly appreciate the professionalism and the good work they do in helping the public accounts committee.

* * *

● (1540)

CANADIAN FORCES SUPERANNUATION ACT

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-319, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, the Judges Act, the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act (survivor pension benefits).

She said: Mr. Speaker, the first bill I wish to introduce today addresses the paternalistic legislation that prevents veterans, the RCMP, judges, and public sector employees, who choose to marry after the age of 60, from providing pension benefits after their death to their spouses.

As we age, we depend more and more on our spouses for care. Sometimes these can be the most difficult years of one's life. Spouses have a right to access pension benefits no matter at what age the relationship began, no matter when love began. The bill corrects this injustice.

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

* * *

CANADIAN FORCES SUPERANNUATION ACT

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-320, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Superannuation Act (deletion of deduction from annuity).

She said: Mr. Speaker, the second bill I am introducing today ends the unfair reduction of service pensions for retired and disabled Canadian Forces and RCMP veterans. The service pensions of Canadian Forces or RCMP members are unfairly offset when members begin to collect Canada pension plan benefits, or if members become disabled and collect Canada pension plan disability benefits.

The bill will end the unfair deductions. For their service and sacrifice, veterans and their families deserve to be treated with financial dignity, when they retire or when they become disabled.

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

Routine Proceedings

PETITIONS

CAMPGROUNDS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by campers who stayed at the Recreationland Tent & Trailer Park in Cumberland, Ontario, which is located in the riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. The petitioners call on 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.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House, yet again, and present another series of signatures on behalf of the unyielding and relentless residents of Shawnigan Lake in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, who have been long fighting a contaminated soil dump in their watershed. They are petitioning the Government of Canada to protect this critical watershed from contaminated soil under the authority of the Fisheries Act.

OVARIAN CANCER

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition put forward by people from my riding and adjacent areas.

Ovarian cancer is one of the most fatal forms of cancer affecting women in Canada. Over 2,800 will be diagnosed this year, and over 1,750 will die this year of the disease. Treatments have not changed since the 90s, and the results have not changed in 50 years in any progressive way.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support ovarian cancer research by submitting an extra \$10 million in this year's upcoming budget.

● (1545)

BANK OF CANADA

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today.

The first is one of the new forms of e-petitions. It calls on the Government of Canada to re-examine, and go back to the original use of the Bank of Canada as an interest-free source of loans for worthwhile projects.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents throughout my riding. It calls on the government to support global efforts for small farmers, mostly women, in the global south, and particularly to protect their right to save seeds.

Routine Proceedings

POVERTY

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House and share a petition signed by many Canadians who are seeking justice for people with a lived experience of poverty, whose voice and record have been excluded from the 2009 federal human resources standing committee hearings held on poverty reduction.

They, like many Canadians, are calling on the federal government to show leadership in ending poverty for Canadians who struggle in these situations every single day. I am proud to stand here and share their voices. We hope the government will listen and take action.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 353, 357, 364, 366, 368, and 372.

[Text]

Question No. 353—**Mr. Richard Cannings:**

With regard to the re-negotiation of the Columbia River Treaty: (a) what is the status of the re-negotiation; (b) have negotiators been named on behalf of Canada; (c) if the answer to (b) is in the affirmative, who has been appointed and for what term; (d) what changes to the Treaty is the government seeking in this re-negotiation; (e) when are negotiations expected to commence and what is the current schedule of negotiations; (f) what representation from First Nations communities will be a part of Canada's negotiating team; (g) has the government devolved any of the negotiation process to the Province of British Columbia and if so, what processes; and (h) will the consultations undertaken by the Columbia River Treaty Local Governments Committee be taken into consideration by the negotiating team?

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), reviews of the Columbia River Treaty, CRT, have taken place on both sides of the border and, as yet, neither side has given notice of termination or asked for renegotiation. The Government of Canada continues to engage with British Columbia on this issue and maintains regular contact with the United States in preparation for eventual discussions on the future of the CRT.

With regard to (b) and (c), negotiators have not yet been named on behalf of Canada.

With regard to (d), the CRT is a flood control and hydropower generation agreement and the original objective was to provide benefits that are shared equitably between the two countries. The Government of Canada will be focused on ensuring that the benefits from the CRT continue to be shared equitably in any future agreement.

With regard to (e), no negotiations are taking place at this time.

With regard to (f), the Government of Canada will continue to work with the Province of British Columbia and first nations on developing the process for first nations' involvement in CRT negotiations.

With regard to (g), the Government of Canada will work with the province in preparations and during any negotiations on the future of the CRT.

With regard to (h), Global Affairs Canada has had discussions with representatives of the Columbia River Treaty Local Governments' Committee about the CRT. The Government of Canada has a representative on the Columbia Basin Regional Advisory Committee, which was formed by the Columbia River Treaty Local Governments' Committee and BC Hydro, which, among other purposes, was created to continue engagement with local communities during negotiations of a future CRT. This ongoing conversation and previous contributions from the Local Governments' Committee will be considered by the Government of Canada as part of any negotiations.

Question No. 357—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to real or perceived conflicts of interest: (a) what are the precise reporting requirements of the Conflict of Interest Act with respect to Ministers and staff recusing themselves from decisions which would place them in a conflict of interest; (b) does the government operate under a standard of avoiding the appearance of conflict of interest; (c) if the answer in (b) is in the affirmative, how is this higher standard enforced; and (d) what plans, if any, does the government have to amend the Conflict of Interest Act to mandate this higher standard?

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the response from the Privy Council Office is as follows. With regard to (a), under section 21 of the Conflict of Interest Act, COIA, public office holders, including ministers and their staff, are required to recuse themselves from any discussion, decision, debate or vote on any matter in respect of which they would be in a conflict of interest. Under section 25 of the act, reporting public office holders, including ministers and full-time members of their staff, must make a public declaration of any recusal they have made to avoid a conflict of interest within 60 days after the day on which the recusal took place. This public declaration must include sufficient detail to identify the conflict of interest that was avoided.

With regard to (b), the conflict of interest standards applicable to ministers, parliamentary secretaries, ministerial staff, and appointees of the Governor in Council are set out in the Conflict of Interest Act. Section 4 of the COIA defines a conflict of interest as any situation in which a public office holder exercises an official power, duty, or function that provides an opportunity to further his or her private interests or those of his or her relatives or friends, or to improperly further another person's private interests. The act requires public office holders to arrange their private affairs in a manner that will prevent the public office holder from being in a conflict of interest. Public office holders are also barred from making a decision or participating in making a decision related to the exercise of an official power, duty, or function if they know or reasonably should know that in the making of the decision, they would be in a conflict of interest. Section 11 of the act prohibits public office holders and their family members from accepting any gift or other advantage that might reasonably be seen to have been given to influence the public office holder in the exercise of an official power, duty, or function. Furthermore, reporting public office holders are prohibited from engaging in outside activities and holding controlled assets, regardless of whether those activities or assets would place the public office holder in an actual conflict of interest.

Routine Proceedings

The COIA is interpreted and administered by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, an independent officer of Parliament. In her January 30, 2013, submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, the commissioner indicated that, in her view, the concepts of “apparent” and “potential” conflicts of interest are included in the current definition of conflict of interest set out in section 4 of the COIA, and are appropriately reflected in the other provisions of the act. The commissioner stated in her submission that she had not identified any provision in the act where the express inclusion of “apparent” or “potential” conflicts of interest would appear to be necessary.

Beyond the statutory requirements of the COIA, the Prime Minister has set out expectations for the conduct of ministers and other public office holders in “Open and Accountable Government”, a guide for his ministry. This includes the ethical guidelines set out in Annex A, which state that public office holders have an obligation to perform their official duties and arrange their private affairs in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny, an obligation that is not fully discharged by simply acting within the law. It also includes the guidelines in Annex B on fundraising and dealing with lobbyists, which require ministers and parliamentary secretaries to maintain appropriate boundaries between their political fundraising activities and their dealings with lobbyists and other departmental stakeholders. As stated in these guidelines, ministers and parliamentary secretaries must avoid conflict of interest, the appearance of conflict of interest, and situations that have the potential to involve conflicts of interest. Ministers are accountable to the Prime Minister for their adherence to these guidelines.

With regard to (c), the COIA is interpreted and administered by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. This includes administration of the public and confidential reporting requirements for reporting public office holders. After consultation with the commissioner, public office holders may adopt agreed compliance measures, such as the use of “ethical screens” to avoid having matters come before them in areas of potential conflict. Information about such measures is published in the online registry maintained by the commissioner. The commissioner is also mandated to investigate and report on possible breaches of the act, and impose administrative monetary penalties for breaches of the act’s reporting requirements.

Ministers are accountable to the Prime Minister for meeting the expectations for their conduct set out in “Open and Accountable Government”.

With regard to (d), the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has indicated that the standards of “apparent” and “potential” conflicts of interest are already included in the definition of conflict of interest set out in section 4 of the COIA, and are appropriately reflected in the other provisions of the act.

Question No. 364—Mr. Mark Strahl:

With regard to the decision by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to increase carapace size for Lobster Fishing Area 25 by one millimetre to 73 millimetres this year and to 77 millimetres by 2018: (a) what scientific analyses were undertaken by the Department on carapace size prior to this decision; (b) of the scientific analyses completed in (a) has the Department’s work been subjected to scientific peer review; (c) what stakeholders were consulted on increasing carapace

size; (d) was an economic analysis completed to determine the impact this decision will have on lobster fishers in Prince Edward Island; (e) if the answer to (d) is in the affirmative, what did the economic impact analysis show would be the impact on PEI lobster fishers; and (f) if the answer to (e) is in the negative, what is the rationale for proceeding with the decision to increase carapace size without considering the negative economic impacts the decision would have?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), scientific background information from peer-reviewed publications informed the decision on carapace size. See (b) below for a list of documents containing relevant scientific information and analyses. The key elements in achieving a healthy lobster fishery are good egg production, a reasonable fishing mortality, that is, the exploitation rate, and a biomass composed of several year classes. The lobster fishery in LFA 25 still operates under a regime of high exploitation rates greater than 50% and allows harvesting of up to 50% of immature females. In these circumstances, although lobster stocks have traditionally been quite resilient, there is still a risk of recruitment failure if the biomass is to change to a decreasing trend.

For long term healthy lobster populations that are resilient to natural population fluctuations, while supporting an active fishery with a high exploitation rate of greater than 50% percent every year, more female lobsters that produce eggs need to remain in the water. Increasing the carapace size would, therefore, have sustainability benefits in this fishing area.

With regard to (b), the following peer-reviewed scientific publications informed the decision on carapace size: 1, Comeau, M., and Savoie, F., 2002, “Maturity and reproduction cycle of the female American lobster, *Homarus americanus*, in the southwestern Gulf of St. Lawrence, Canada”, *Journal of Crustacean Biology* 22 (4), pages 762-774; 2, Comeau, M., and LeBreton, M., 2012, “A bio-economic model for the lobster (*Homarus americanus*) fishery in Canada”, pages 273-295, in Kruse, G.H., H.I. Browman, K.L. Cochrane, D. Evans, G.S. Jamieson, P.A. Livingston, D. Woodby, and C.I. Zhang (eds.), *Global Progress in Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management*, Alaska Sea Grant, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 396 pp., doi,10.4027/gpebfm.2012.014; 3, DFO, 2013, “American lobster, *Homarus americanus*, stock status in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence: LFA 23, 24, 25, 26a and 26b”, *DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep.* 2013/029; 4, DFO, 2014, “Reference point options for the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence lobster stock (Lobster Fishing Areas 23, 24, 25, 26A, 26B)”, *DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Resp.* 2014/027; 5, Rondeau, A., Comeau, M., and Surette, T., 2015, “American Lobster, *Homarus americanus*, stock status in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence: LFA 23, 24, 25, 26A and 26B”, *DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Res. Doc.* 2014/036, xii + 92 p.

A table of female maturity studies from 1994 to 2014 was also used as background science information, but is not yet published.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to (c), numerous meetings over the last several years have been held on the carapace size issue, the latest being the Lobster Fishing Area 25 Management Committee Meeting held on April 14, 2016. The decision to increase the minimum lobster carapace size was made following lengthy consultations with a number of stakeholders, including the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, the Maritime Fishermen's Union, the Gulf Nova Scotia Fishermen's Coalition, first nations and aboriginal organizations, provincial representatives and processors from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia.

With regard to (d), the bio-economic model used in Comeau and LeBreton 2012 was specifically built for Lobster Fishing Area 25 and showed that in terms of the lobster population, an increase in the minimum legal size produced an increase in egg production. The model simulations of increased carapace size also resulted in an increase in the weighted average landings. Both 1 and 2 millimeter minimum legal size increases resulted in an increase in landings by year 2, with significant increases in landings up to 6 years after the initial size increase. The simulations also showed cumulative revenues becoming positive. Also, looking at other lobster fishing areas of the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence where the minimum carapace size has increased in recent years, the economic and conservation benefits have been positive.

With regard to (e), the value of the lobster fishery in LFA 25 was over \$56 million in 2015. The "canner" lobster represented 58% of this total. At 81 mm, lobsters are considered "market size" in all LFAs in the Gulf region. Even at a carapace size of 76 millimeters, the Prince Edward Island fishing industry would still have access to a portion of their catch as "canners" for their market.

Question No. 366—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) retroactive payments for late applications for the years 2011 and 2016: (a) how many requests for retroactive payments have been made, broken down by year and province; (b) how many requests for retroactive payments have been outside the 11 month maximum, broken down by year and province; (c) how many court cases were brought against the government between 2011 and 2016 in order to gain monetary compensation past the 11 month maximum; (d) of the court cases in (c), what were the total legal costs to the government; and (e) what was the total amount of unclaimed CPP payments lost to claimants due to the 11 month retroactive payment limit, broken down by year and province?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is with regard to the Canada Pension Plan, CPP, retroactive payments for late applications for the years 2011 and 2016. In terms of parts (a) and (b) of the question, the requested information is not captured in the system used to deliver the Canada Pension Plan.

With regard to part (c), there have been four challenges to the retroactivity of CPP disability benefits. These cases involved claimants who had made a second application for disability benefits who were seeking benefits back to their first applications for benefits.

There have been three challenges to the retroactivity of CPP disability benefits where the claimants stated that they were incapable of forming the intention to apply for benefits, and therefore their applications for benefits should be deemed to have been received earlier, which would provide them with further retroactivity.

There have been two challenges to the retroactivity provisions respecting the disabled contributors child benefit, DCCB. Both of these applicants also sought relief under subsection 66(4) of the CPP, regarding administrative error and erroneous advice, in order to obtain the retroactivity that they were seeking.

There have been seven cases that seek retroactivity relying on subsection 66(4) of the CPP. This gives a total of 16 cases.

In terms of part (d), the department cannot confirm the total legal costs for the court cases that were brought against the government in order to gain monetary compensation past the 11-month maximum, as described in part (c).

With regard to part (e), the requested information is not captured in the system used to deliver the Canada Pension Plan.

Question No. 368—Mr. David Yurdiga:

With regard to all government funding provided through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada: (a) which grant allocations, programs, projects, and all other means of dispersing government funds, have been cancelled since November 4, 2015; (b) what was the rationale provided for the cancellation of each item identified in (a); (c) what amount of funding had been dispensed to each item identified in (a) at the time of cancellation, broken down by year; (d) what amount of funding had been allocated to each item identified in (a) at the time of cancellation, broken down by year; (e) what are the details of any departmental reviews of each item identified in (a) when they were originally proposed, including (i) the grade or score with which they were assessed, if any exist, (ii) the viability of the programs as it was originally determined; (f) what are the details of any and all department performance reviews of each item identified in (a) once they were underway, including (i) annual reviews, (ii) quarterly reviews, (iii) reviews undertaken at the request of the Minister; (g) which grant allocations, programs, projects, and all other means of dispersing government funds have been approved since November 4, 2015; (h) what consultations took place in relation to each item identified in (g) prior to their approval; (i) what are the details of any departmental reviews of each item identified in (g), including (i) the grade and score with which they were assessed, if any exist, (ii) the viability of these programs as it was originally determined; (j) what is the stated section of Budget 2016 under which each item identified in (g) fall, if any are applicable; and (k) what is the departmental mandate under which each of the items identified in (g) fall?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the program level, no cancellations of funding have occurred since November 4, 2015. The department cannot identify possible cancellations in other areas.

Question No. 372—Mr. David Tilson:

With regard to visa requirements for citizens of Bulgaria and Romania entering Canada, what are the details with respect to: (a) any formal visa exemption review that the department has undertaken; (b) each consultation undertaken with respect to lifting the visa requirements, including for each consultation (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the organizations and individuals consulted; (c) how the situation with respect to Bulgaria and Romania differs from the recent decision to provide a visa exemption for citizens of Mexico; and (d) the criteria applied for lifting the visa requirement for the Czech Republic and what, if any, differences are there between the situation with the Czech Republic and that of Bulgaria and Romania?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the government is undertaking a comprehensive analysis with federal departments and agencies, analyzing relevant criteria set out in Canada's visa policy framework. Canada launched visa dialogues with each of these countries in spring, 2016. The dialogues are bilateral processes to gather information related to pre-identified areas of concern or interest under Canada's visa policy criteria. As a part of the dialogues, Canadian officials from IRCC, the Canada Border Services Agency, CBSA; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, RCMP; and Global Affairs Canada, GAC, conducted a technical visit to Romania in June 2016, and Bulgaria in July 2016, to assess both countries against Canada's visa policy criteria.

With regard to part (b), IRCC does not hold public consultations on matters of visa policy. Federal partners, namely GAC, Public Safety Canada, the CBSA, and the RCMP were consulted on the necessary elements of the technical visits conducted this summer, as well as the findings of the visit. As these discussions are a part of ongoing regular business, specific dates and locations cannot be provided.

In response to part (c), in both cases, Canada has undertaken a comprehensive analysis to vigorously assess the criteria set out in Canada's visa policy framework, and has engaged extensively with Mexican, Romanian, and Bulgarian officials. Canada is building on existing collaboration with Mexico to implement specific mitigation measures prior to the visa lift date and to support a sustainable visa lift. While the approach may not be identical, Canada is working collaboratively with Romania and Bulgaria on the visa issue as evidenced by the launch of the visa dialogues. Romania and Bulgaria remain important partners for Canada, and Canada maintains its commitment to work towards the shared goal of visa-free travel for citizens of all European Union member states.

With regard to part (d), Canada's visa policy criteria are applied universally. The criteria applied in the assessment of the Czech Republic's readiness for a visa exemption were the same as those being currently applied to Romania and Bulgaria. Visa policy criteria cover a variety of aspects, including socio-economic conditions, migration trends, travel document integrity, border management, safety and security issues, human rights issues, and bilateral and multilateral issues.

With respect to the different circumstances and findings of visa policy assessments of the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Romania, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act, and certain information has been withheld on the grounds that it may be injurious to the conduct of international affairs.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 354, 355, 356, 358, 359, 363, 365, 367, 369, 371, and 373 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 354—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to consultations on possible electoral reform initiatives being undertaken by the Minister for Democratic Reform: (a) what consultations have been held as of June 1, 2016; (b) for each of the consultations in (a), who has the Minister or her officials consulted and what were the recommendations of each consultation; (c) what proportion of the groups or individuals consulted are (i) activists, (ii) academics, (iii) corporations, (iv) labour unions, (v) professional associations, (vi) Canadians with no official affiliation to a group advocating for electoral reform; (d) what steps have the Minister and her officials taken to receive a representative sample of public opinion on the matter of electoral reform; (e) what steps have the Minister or her officials taken to ensure a full and free discussion of electoral reform options; (f) have the consultations on electoral reform reflected the announcement by the government that 2015 would be the last election held under the first-past-the-post system, and if so, how; (g) if consultations on the current or alternate electoral systems have not yet been held, what steps does the Minister or her officials plan to take to ensure that the outcomes of future consultations are not prejudiced for or against any specific electoral system; (h) of the consultations in (a), which consultations have recommended maintaining the current electoral system of first-past-the-post; (i) of the consultations in (a), how many have recommended first-past-the-post, proportional representation (and variants), transferrable ballots (and variants), and other electoral systems, respectively; (j) has the Minister or her officials consulted other countries that have recently modified or considered modifying their electoral system regarding their experience; and (k) if the answer to (j) is in the affirmative, which countries were consulted, and for each consultation, what were the findings of the consultation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 355—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With respect to Shared Services Canada and the independent review recently ordered by the President of the Treasury Board: (a) what criteria will be used to select the independent contractor or contractors performing the review; (b) which factors were assessed in estimating the cost of the review at \$1.4 million; (c) what measures will be in place to ensure that the review is conducted on time and on budget; (d) should the review not be delivered on time and on budget, how does the Treasury Board plan to address this problem; (e) which factors were assessed in estimating the time that the review will take to execute; (f) what are the terms of reference for the review; (g) once the review is completed, when will the resulting report be made public; and (h) what security screening measures will be used to ensure the trustworthiness of the independent contractor or contractors selected for the review?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 356—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to the legal requirements that Ministers and Ministers' staff avoid conflicts of interest, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and his staff: (a) how many times has the Minister's Chief of Staff recused himself from decisions involving policy matters that directly affect egg farmers in Ontario or Canada; (b) for each instance in (a), what were the dates of such recusals; and (c) other than recusing himself from decisions involving policy matters directly affecting egg farmers in Ontario and Canada, how did the Minister's Chief of Staff comply with legal requirements to avoid conflicts of interest?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 358—Mr. Ron Liepert:**

With regard to the implementation of the new Phoenix pay system, and its technical issues which have resulted in a disruption of pay to public sector employees: (a) how many employees have experienced a disruption of pay since the system was launched, in total, and broken down by pay cycle; (b) of the employees in (a), (i) how many of those affected had no pay processed, and how many had other payroll errors, (ii) what is their breakdown by department and by sex; (c) how many staff are employed at the pay centre; (d) how many calls have been received regarding pay disruptions since the system launched; (e) what length of time has it taken before pay issues are resolved, on average, and broken down by individual complaint; and (f) how much overtime has been incurred, broken down by hours worked and costs incurred per individual pay period, in order to address these issues?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 359—Hon. Lisa Raitt:

With regard to the replacement of the universal child care benefit and the Canada child tax benefit with the new Canada child benefit in Budget 2016, what were the Minister of Finance's considerations concerning families that are just under the cut off adjusted family net income amount of approximately \$150 000, who will receive benefits, compared to those at, or slightly above, the \$150 000 mark?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 363—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to government programs for youth, particularly those concerning substance abuse prevention, mental health and the National Anti-Drug Strategy (NADS): (a) under the NADS, how much was allocated to prevention each year over the past five years; (b) under the NADS, how much is allocated to prevention each year over the next three years; (c) under the NADS, how much was spent on substance abuse prevention among youth under 25 years of age each year over the past five years; (d) under the NADS, how much is allocated to substance abuse prevention among youth under 25 years of age each year over the next three years; (e) under Health Canada's Substance Use and Abuse program, how much was spent on substance abuse prevention each year over the past five years, and how much is allocated each year over the next three years; (f) has the government prepared a youth education and awareness program in advance of the legalization of marijuana, and if so, what is its budget and how many government employees will work on this issue; (g) what was the value of the government's annual grant to the Mental Health Commission of Canada over the past five years, and what will it be over the next three years; (h) what are the government programs concerning mental health among youth under 25 years of age, and for each of these programs, what are their annual budgets for this year and over the next three years; and (i) how much does the government plan to spend on programs concerning mental health among Aboriginal youth over the next three years?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 365—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to the Old Age Security Pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement indexation: (a) what has the government done to develop a new measure for the cost of living faced by seniors with a Seniors Price Index; (b) how many government departments and agencies have been tasked with working on the Seniors Price Index; (c) how many people are working on the development of a Seniors Price Index, broken down by government department and agency; and (d) how many working hours have been devoted to the development of a Seniors Price Index, broken down by government department and agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 367—Ms. Georgina Jolibois:

With regard to all federal funding in the riding of Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River for each of the fiscal years from 2011-2016, inclusively: (a) how many projects received funding from a department or agency over this period; (b) what projects received funding from a department or agency over this period; and (c) what was the value of the projects that received funding from a department or agency over this period?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 369—Mr. David Yurdiga:

With regard to all government funding provided through Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency: (a) which grant allocations, programs, projects, and all other means of dispersing government funds, have been cancelled since November 4, 2015; (b) what was the rationale provided for the cancellation of each item identified in (a); (c) what amount of funding had been dispensed to each item identified in (a) at the time of cancellation, broken down by year; (d) what amount of funding had been allocated to each item identified in (a) at the time of cancellation, broken down by year; (e) what are the details of any departmental reviews of each item identified in (a) when they were originally proposed, including (i) the grade or score with which they were assessed, if any exist, (ii) the viability of the programs as it was originally determined; (f) what are the details of any and all department performance reviews of each item identified in (a) once they were underway, including (i) annual reviews, (ii) quarterly reviews, (iii) reviews undertaken at the request of the Minister; (g) which grant allocations, programs, projects, and all other means of dispersing government funds have been approved since November 4, 2015; (h) what consultations took place in relation to each item identified in (g) prior to their approval; (i) what are the details of any departmental reviews of each item identified in (g), including (i) the grade and score with which they were assessed, if any exist, (ii) the viability of these programs as it was originally determined; (j) what is the stated section of Budget 2016 under which each item identified in (g) fall, if any are applicable; and (k) what is the departmental mandate under which each of the items identified in (g) fall?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 371—Mr. David Tilson:

With regard to visa requirements for citizens of Mexico entering Canada, what are the details with respect to: (a) any formal visa exemption review that the department has undertaken; (b) all evidence used to justify a lifting of the current visa; (c) all plans with respect to a possible influx of asylum claimants from Mexico; (d) consultations that were undertaken with respect to lifting the visa, including for each consultation (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the organization and individuals consulted; (e) all assurances given by the Government of Mexico with respect to this decision; and (f) Mexican citizen asylum claimant levels that would trigger a re-imposition of a visa?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders*Question No. 373—**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:**

With regard to social infrastructure funding and other investments to address housing and homelessness: (a) how much has been allocated per fiscal year from 2011-2012 to 2019-2020, overall and broken down by province or territory for (i) the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (ii) the doubling of the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (iii) affordable housing for seniors, (iv) shelters for victims of family violence, (v) renovations and retrofits of social housing, (vi) rental subsidies for CMHC-administered housing, (vii) northern and Inuit housing in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, (viii) Inuit housing in Nunavik, Inuvialuit and Nunatsiavut, (ix) housing in First Nations communities, (x) on-reserve shelters for victims of family violence, (xi) the Affordable Rental Housing Innovation Fund, (xii) affordable rental housing funding, (xiii) assistance for homeowners affected by pyrrhotite, (xiv) the Homelessness Partnering Strategy; (b) to date, what amounts have actually been spent or are the subject of a funding agreement for each fiscal year from 2011-2012 to 2019-2020, overall and broken down by province or territory for (i) the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (ii) the doubling of the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (iii) affordable housing for seniors, (iv) shelters for victims of family violence, (v) renovations and retrofits of social housing, (vi) rental subsidies for CMHC-administered housing, (vii) northern and Inuit housing in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, (viii) Inuit housing in Nunavik, Inuvialuit and Nunatsiavut, (ix) housing in First Nations communities, (x) on-reserve shelters for victims of family violence, (xi) the Affordable Rental Housing Innovation Fund, (xii) affordable rental housing funding, (xiii) assistance for homeowners affected by pyrrhotite, (xiv) the Homelessness Partnering Strategy; (c) on what dates does funding come into effect and terminate, broken down by province or territory, for (i) the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (ii) the doubling of the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (iii) affordable housing for seniors, (iv) shelters for victims of family violence, (v) renovations and retrofits of social housing, (vi) rental subsidies for CMHC-administered housing, (vii) northern and Inuit housing in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, (viii) Inuit housing in Nunavik, Inuvialuit and Nunatsiavut, (ix) housing in First Nations communities, (x) on-reserve shelters for victims of family violence, (xi) the Affordable Rental Housing Innovation Fund, (xii) affordable rental housing funding, (xiii) assistance for homeowners affected by pyrrhotite, (xiv) the Homelessness Partnering Strategy; (d) what is the funding mechanism for (i) the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (ii) the doubling of the Investment in Affordable Housing initiative, (iii) affordable housing for seniors, (iv) shelters for victims of family violence, (v) renovations and retrofits of social housing, (vi) rental subsidies for CMHC-administered housing, (vii) northern and Inuit housing in Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, (viii) Inuit housing in Nunavik, Inuvialuit and Nunatsiavut, (ix) housing in First Nations communities, (x) on-reserve shelters for victims of family violence, (xi) the Affordable Rental Housing Innovation Fund, (xii) affordable rental housing funding, (xiii) assistance for homeowners affected by pyrrhotite, (xiv) the Homelessness Partnering Strategy; (e) how much funding has been invested in or allocated to existing social housing under long-term arrangements per fiscal year from 2011-2012 to 2029-2030 (i) in Canada, (ii) by province, (iii) by social housing project; (f) what is the name of each social housing project and the expiry date of its long-term agreement; (g) since 1995, how many long-term arrangements have expired (i) per year, (ii) per province or territory; (h) how many long-term arrangements are scheduled to expire by 2030 (i) per year, (ii) per province or territory; and (i) what steps is the government taking or does it plan to take over the next 12 months to renew funding for the long-term operating agreements upon which social and cooperative housing organizations across Canada depend, given the impending expiry of funding agreements established under section 56.1 of the former National Housing Act and section 95.1 of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act, and agreements entered into by the federal government and the Quebec government pertaining to article 61 of Quebec's National Housing Act?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2016, NO. 2**

The House resumed from November 1 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. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to congratulate the member for Chilliwack—Hope for his omnibus speech he gave before question period yesterday. A big part of the problem with Conservative omnibus bills was that they were also ominous bills. Whatever the title, the actual result was often the opposite. The Fair Elections Act, for example, was about how to interfere with, not promote, fair elections.

In the last Parliament, the member whom I worked for as a staffer was critic for, among other things, citizen services. The Auditor General's report, the year that we got that portfolio, dealt with the websites of the Canadian government and their focus on citizen services. What we learned was that the Conservatives had, immediately upon taking power in 2006, stopped all research into how people actually used government websites. Heaven forbid they cater to the needs of the people rather than to the desires of the government.

Our government consults extensively. We do policy on the basis of evidence and on the wants and needs of the country. There is nothing ominous about that.

Does the member for Chilliwack—Hope accept the evidence of evidence-based policy, or does he continue to believe that dogma is the most important factor in policymaking?

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can understand why that hon. member does not actually want to talk about the budget implementation act, because he is probably, like most Canadians, ashamed of the economic record of the current government.

Government Orders

Just yesterday, after I gave my speech, the finance minister got up and said that after only a few months, he had already blown his economic projections out of the water in the wrong way. He had already had to use his contingency. The \$6 billion contingency was gone. He had to borrow another \$32 billion from future generations of Canadians.

So yes, we know that the government likes to consult Canadians, but at a cost of \$1,500 apiece. We have certainly seen that from multiple ministers, selling access to themselves for \$1,500 to well-heeled Canadians. I can tell the House that the 100,000 energy workers, who have been laid off since the current government took office, cannot afford the entry fee to consult with the government.

• (1550)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was going to pose a question in terms of the mounting deficit. As we heard yesterday, another \$32 billion on top of what is already there, and no plan to pay it back.

Could the member comment on how he feels that is going to affect the next generation?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, the member is exactly right. This will affect the next generation.

As Canadians know, when they borrow money, they have to pay it back. The members of the government broke their word to Canadians to the tune of three times the deficit they promised, when they promised a \$10 billion deficit that would be reduced to no deficit in their mandate. They have blown both of those promises out of the water. It is now a \$32 billion deficit, and instead of being back to balanced budgets by the end of the first four years, the Liberals have no plan.

The finance minister was clear yesterday that he has no intention and no plan to bring this back to a balanced budget. We know it will be future generations of Canadians who will have to pay this back through higher taxes, or through critical program services cuts. The Liberals are good at that. They did it the last time they were in power. They cut \$25 billion from the health care budgets across this country. We are heading down that same path with this out-of-control, reckless spending plan.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is quite rich, coming from the members of the opposition who spent 10 years, the vast majority of which, delivering deficits and accumulating a \$160 billion debt. What did they have to show for it? What projects did they bring in that they can show for it? No, they do not even have jobs to show for it.

The decisions from this side of the House, in terms of implementing and adding to the deficit, are for real opportunities and real job creation. The projects that will be put forward will be ones that genuinely will get the economy moving again.

I find it quite rich to hear members from the other side of the House talk about deficits and trying to lecture the government on deficits. What do the Conservatives have to say about the \$160 billion of debt they added to this country? What are they going to say to the future generations about that?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, had the member actually been paying attention in the last 10 years, he would know that the Liberal

Party was demanding that we spend more and that we borrow more money.

We had a plan to get back to a balanced budget, and that is what we did. The independent parliamentary budget officer confirmed that the Conservative government left a surplus. We also left something else, a surplus of 1.3 million net new jobs. That is as opposed to the record of the government, which has borrowed \$30 billion and has negative 6,000 jobs to show for it.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment to say thanks to all the Olympic athletes and Paralympic athletes who were here today. It was quite an honour to see that. For 15 minutes, the whole House kept applauding. It was great to have had them represent us in Rio the way they did. I want to give a special shout-out to Olympic boxer Mandy Bujold and Paralympic swimmer Alexander Elliot, who live in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler.

During last year's election campaign, I spoke confidently to the residents of my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler about our plan to grow the middle class and revitalize the Canadian economy by doing three things.

First, I talked about our plan to reduce income taxes on the middle class and those aspiring to join the middle class. Lowering taxes means leaving more money in the pockets of those who need it most and having more money to spend on goods and services in our economy.

Second, I explained our plan to implement a tax-free, means-tested Canada child benefit to replace the patchwork of existing programs. The Canada child benefit will assist families with the high cost of raising their children.

Third, I talked about our plan to borrow at current historically low interest rates to make very large investments in both physical and social infrastructure.

As I spoke to people, I stressed that these programs would not only help individual families that were struggling after years of stagnant growth but would grow our economy, generate economic activity, and create jobs by way of what economists call the multiplier effect.

As I spoke with people at the door, I did so with confidence, because I believed that our plan offered immediate help to those who needed it most. It set an ambitious long-term approach for growth by strengthening the heart of Canada's consumer-driven economy, the middle class.

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. When we have an economy that works for the middle class, we have a country that works for everyone.

Government Orders

Judging from the reaction I got from people throughout my riding, the message I was delivering resonated with voters. The results of the election speak for themselves. Our message of hope caused voters across the country to raise us from a distant third place in this House to a majority government. On election night, Canadians saw the merit in our plan, and Canadians chose a plan to invest in our future for generations to come.

Our plan increased again, when legislation to reduce personal income tax rates, as promised, was introduced by this government last December as the second piece of legislation proposed in Bill C-2.

The hon. Minister of Finance tabled the government's budget in Parliament on March 22 this year. A budget is more than a mere forecast of expenditures and revenues. A budget is a financial strategy to fulfill what a government sets as its mission. A budget is a comprehensive plan of action designed to achieve the policy objectives of the government. A budget is a financial blueprint for action. A budget will remain only a blueprint unless there are the workers, materials, coordination, skills, and activities necessary to construct it.

Real change will remain only a vision unless there is legislation to implement the budget that flows from that vision. Following quickly on the heels of the budget, Bill C-15 was the first legislation introduced by the government in April. It was the first budget implementation bill. It turned the second major promise I made to the constituents of Kitchener South—Hespeler, as I went door to door during the election, into a reality.

Bill C-15 brought in the Canada child benefit. Simpler, tax-free, and more generous, the Canada child benefit replaced existing child benefits. Bill C-15 passed quickly through this House and the Senate and received royal assent in the third week of June.

● (1555)

Immediately afterwards, in July, the Canada child benefit payments started flowing to families to fulfill their financial responsibilities in raising the next generation of Canadians.

The Canada child benefit is a social program of unprecedented generosity. Since July 1 this year, families can receive up to \$6,400 per year for each child under six and \$5,400 for each child aged six to 17. Nine out of 10 families are better off. They are receiving higher monthly benefits, and hundreds of thousands of children will be raised out of poverty.

This government has taken a long-term approach to helping families, who will be able to count on extra help now and for years to come. When Canadians look towards the future and think about planning, they know that the Canada child benefit will be there to help fulfill their financial responsibilities.

Today before the House is Bill C-29. It is the second of two pieces of legislation intended to implement the budget tabled in the House in March. Bill C-29 is the second act to implement this year's budget. It contains a number of consequential housekeeping amendments to various acts, such as the Employment Insurance Act, the Canada Education Savings Act, and the Canada Disability Savings Act, to replace references to "child tax benefit".

However, for most Canadian families, the most important part of Bill C-29 is the introduction, as promised, of indexation of the Canada child benefit. Bill C-29 would implement the budget by indexing to inflation the maximum benefit amounts and the phase-out threshold under the Canada child benefit, beginning in the 2021 benefit year. This means that the benefits will increase if prices increase, and thus the purchasing power of the benefit will remain the same after 2020.

I would now like to turn to a couple of articles.

The first article is from *The Economist*, which said, "Canada is in a better position than almost any other rich country to take advantage of low rates".

With the historically low interest rates, this is the time to invest in Canadians, in our future, and in the young generation to take advantage of these low interest rates.

The second article I want to refer to is from *CBC News*:

The IMF head [Christine Lagarde] said economic growth has been "too slow for too long" and the IMF advocates a "three-pronged approach" from governments trying to kick-start the global economy.

She said the [Liberal] government is following that approach with monetary, financial and structural reforms that will mobilize the resources of the state to increase growth.

For those reasons, I would therefore encourage all members of this House to support Bill C-29.

● (1600)

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the child tax credit and all the things being done for youth. Can he explain to the House why removing the tax credits for arts programs, sports programs, and text books for students is actually helping our youth?

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, the new Canada child benefit plan is more inclusive. It is helping those who need it most. We made sure that the child benefit plan, the tax plan that is coming to middle-class families, goes to the ones who will get the most, and we decreased and eliminated it for those who have a family income of more than \$200,000. This is going to directly impact families who need it most.

Also, our government has put in a policy that students who graduate and make less than \$25,000 do not have to pay back interest on their loans.

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my hon. colleague a question related to his comments near the end of his speech. It related to the necessary measures to bring Canada from a low-growth situation to a path to greater prosperity.

Does the member have a particular thought on the types of investments and how we could ultimately amplify the proposed investments in the budget implementation plan in terms of what the Minister of Finance announced with respect to the infrastructure investment bank? Does he think that amplification by using private capital will help accelerate growth?

Government Orders

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler and the greater Waterloo region, we are getting light rail transit. This is an infrastructure project that is going to help our region move goods and services to market quickly, and we will be able to move people quickly around the city. Light rail transit, for our region, is going to increase the number of jobs in the skilled trades in our riding. Literally every street in my riding is closed down. There has been bit of controversy with some of the councillors, and we poke fun at them.

It is short-term pain for long-term gain in our region. I am really thankful for the infrastructure plan we have put in place.

• (1605)

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned being out in the community and talking to members of the community. I am curious to know if, while he was out knocking on doors, he heard that a carbon tax is the answer or that moving from a \$10-billion deficit to a \$30-billion deficit is the answer.

Mr. Marwan Tabbara: Mr. Speaker, in my region of Waterloo we had a consultation on the environment. A lot of people in my riding were concerned about the environment, and they wanted to make sure that the government was taking positive steps. I received many emails after the consultation and after we announced it in the House. There was really good feedback on the approach we are taking, which is balancing the economy while maintaining the environment. The constituents in my riding know that we need to balance both, and we are doing that.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the House on the debate on the implementation act 2016, the complete measures we have introduced in budget 2016.

We have completed more than a year in the Government and have brought the changes we promised to Canadian during the last year election.

I was successfully elected as the first member of Parliament from the newly-formed riding of Brampton Centre. The mere reason for our success in the election was because our constituents believed us and the policies we gave to them. I believe we all must listen to Canadians, otherwise we will not be here the next time.

During my door-to-door campaign, I met many Canadians who told me stories of their economic condition. I was told that they were working hard, trying to make their life easier, but things were not working because of the bad economy and lack of jobs. People were struggling to make ends meet. They were working hard, but were unable to cope with their own expenses.

People were concerned about their children's care and maintenance, their education and then about their employment. They were worried about their jobs. We came across issues of employment insurance, affordable housing, and senior poverty anxieties. They were worried about how they would be able to better care for their kids and grandkids.

After over a year in government, we have brought many of the changes we promised Canadians. As a government, we are proud of our first budget. As we promised, the government will take solid

steps to bring real changes for the betterment of the middle class, and for those working hard to join it. We know the middle class is the backbone of Canada. If the middle class is strong, Canada is strong. When middle-class Canadians have more money to save, invest and spend, everyone benefits.

The budget implementation act 2016, No. 2 complies with the implementation of the outstanding measures we introduced in budget 2016. It will build a strong economy for Canada. It will give the middle class and those working hard to join it more money in their pockets to save, invest, and to grow the economy.

I firmly believe that we as a government are focused on exactly the right things. We are focused on people and growing the economy for the long term in a way that will benefit all Canadians. Canada's middle class will drive our economy forward.

The following are a few important steps taken by the government toward helping families regain their confidence in the government.

To meet our platform promise, we told the 1% of wealthiest Canadians to pay more taxes, and we gave tax benefit breaks to those who earned less to help fund the middle class.

In budget 2016, we introduced the new Canada child benefit. This benefit will help parents better support what is most precious to them, their children, by putting more money into the pockets of families with children. The Canada child benefit will lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. Nine out of 10 families now receive more money than they did under the previous system. The Canada child benefit is simpler, more generous, and also tax-free. Its attractiveness is that it helps those who need it most in our society. It will put extra money directly into the hands of families to buy school supplies, groceries, and warm clothes for the winter.

• (1610)

The Canada child benefit will help parents cover the growing cost of raising their children. Families can count on this extra assistance today for years to come because this Canada child benefit will be indexed to inflation.

Further, budget 2016 makes post-secondary education more affordable for students from low and middle-income families. It will be easier for them to repay their student loans. The increase in Canada student grants for students from low and middle-income families and for part-time students is a big incentive for them to join the workforce. It will also help young Canadians gain the much-needed experience, the income they need and to find good jobs after graduation.

Government Orders

Working toward poverty reduction, budget 2016 also improves the employment insurance regime. Canada's employment insurance program provides economic security to Canadians when they need it most.

Whatever the circumstances, no Canadian should struggle to get the assistance when they are in need. To ensure Canadians get help when they need it, several changes are being proposed in the EI system. Changes to eligibility rules will make it easier for new workers and those re-entering the workforce to claim benefits. The waiting period will also be reduced from two weeks to one week. This improvement in employment insurance will provide money to unemployed workers with hundreds of dollars more at the time they need it most.

In budget 2016, we increased the monthly payment for the most vulnerable seniors. The government reverted the pensionable age to 65 and will index seniors' pension.

Restoring the eligibility age for old age security and guaranteed income supplement benefit to 65 will put thousands of dollars back into the pockets of Canadians as they become seniors and look to retire.

This second budget implementation bill would amend the Old Age Security Act to make the program more flexible. When couples who are receiving the guaranteed income supplement and the spouse's allowance must live apart for reasons beyond their control, each of them will receive benefits based on their individual income.

By extending this treatment to couples receiving the guaranteed income supplement and spouse's allowance, the government is improving fairness for seniors and helping them live with the dignity they deserve and need in retirement. That is the right thing to do.

The government realizes that our veterans have dedicated their lives to the defence of our country and they deserve our unwavering support. We owe them. It is a sacred obligation that we must meet with respect and gratitude.

Budget 2016 has provisions for the measures to support Canadian veterans. The Government of Canada has a social covenant with veterans and their families.

Yesterday, in the House, our Minister of Finance highlighted in his fall economic statement and stressed that our government wanted to tell Canadians that we believed we should be focusing on making investments for today and for tomorrow that will allow us to have a higher level of economic growth in our country, and we are doing it in a fiscally responsible way.

•(1615)

As we promised Canadians, we will make an historic investment in green transport as well as in social infrastructure. We have already started making record investments, which will help the middle class grow and prosper today, while delivering economic growth for years to come. Infrastructure investment will shape the economy and make Canada economically strong.

I have my personal news announcement regarding infrastructure spending in my riding, which I want to share with—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Questions and comments, the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about his government being a responsible government. Part of that responsibility includes having a plan to balance the budget. Could he explain to Canadians what that plan looks like?

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Mr. Speaker, people told us to do things that would help them and their families, and to grow the economy. We intend to do just that.

We have plans to help the middle class. We started by providing them with income tax breaks. We are reducing the tax for the middle class and asking the wealthiest 1% to pay more.

We made improvements in the Canada child benefit. Nine out of 10 families will now get the benefit. We have also given benefits to seniors. This is what Canadians want us to do.

Our government has also relaxed student grants, which will give students a chance to go to college or university and pay their debt at a later stage when they are employed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his eloquent speech. I have a question for him about the Canada child benefit, which he mentioned a number of times in his speech.

He forgot to mention the glaring mistake that Canadians and experts noticed right away. The Canada child benefit is not indexed, and as such it will not be worth as much over the years. At the end of the day, it will be worth less than the benefit that the Conservatives came up with.

The Liberals listened to reason and announced that they were going to index the Canada child benefit, but not until 2020. I wonder why they chose 2020 to start indexing and why not 2019, 2018, 2017, or even this year so that the benefit does not lose value by 2020 and can continue to grow. Canadians' expenses keep growing, while their salaries, unfortunately, continue to stagnate.

•(1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Mr. Speaker, the member wants to know why indexing was not done at the first stage and was considered later on. I would like to bring to the attention of my friend that whenever the government works on any plan, it works through the Advisory Council on Economic Growth. The council provides advice, not decisions. Decisions are made by the government at a later stage. A recommendation was prepared and given to the government, and it is up to the government to accept it or not.

We have helped Canadians. We are trying to boost the economy. We want to work with Canadians and give them what we promised them.

Government Orders

Ms. Dianne L. Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-29 aims to implement a series of budget measures and tax changes in budget 2016, which was tabled in Parliament on March 22 of this year. We have heard from the government over the course of this year how going into debt would help the economy and would create jobs. We also heard from the government how increasing taxes would help the economy and the middle class and create jobs. We heard from the government how the tax-free savings account was not for seniors and not for students and not for people trying to save and get ahead, and therefore, it could be cut in half and it really would not make any difference.

Then we heard from the Prime Minister on September 8, 2015, while he was being interviewed by Peter Mansbridge, “a large percentage of small businesses are actually just ways for wealthier Canadians to save on their taxes”. Now even though there are 1.14 million small businesses in Canada, employing 8.2 million people, plus another 2.3 million people employed in medium-sized businesses, those small businesses did not get the reduction in taxes as promised in the platform by the Liberal government and to be clear, the promise was to reduce the small business tax from 11% to 9%, to assist with job creation. However, that did not happen.

Instead, the Liberals increased the CPP contribution so that workers would have to pay more and see less of their paycheques, and employers will also have to pay more, which goes against the internal documents from Finance Canada. Those documents show that financial officials advised the minister that higher CPP premiums will reduce job growth until 2035. That advice was ignored.

The government decided to implement the so-called tax cut for the middle class and then announced to the general public it was going to be revenue neutral. The plan is not revenue neutral. A report from the parliamentary budget officer puts the cost at \$1.7 billion, which is now added to the growing tax burden for Canadians.

However, it gets better. The Liberal government told taxpayers that for a tiny small deficit of \$10 billion, infrastructure projects will grow the economy and create jobs. The Liberals burned through a \$1-billion surplus and created a deficit that is over \$30 billion, but it still gets better. With all these job-creating measures the government has come up with, one would think that jobs were really being created. This is not so. A report just released last week by the parliamentary budget officer states that job creation over the past year was half of what it was over the past five years and that there have been no net new full-time jobs.

The Liberal job creation plan is simply not working.

Let us just recap. We have a \$30-plus billion deficit, \$7.1 billion spent overseas, \$2.9 billion committed to an Asian infrastructure bank, new housing rules that will cost the economy \$6 billion by the end of 2018, a national carbon tax that will increase the cost of heating, groceries, and gas, and just announced yesterday by the Minister of Finance was that he has spent the \$6-billion contingency fund and is borrowing another \$32 billion. As well, \$15 billion is being put into a newly created infrastructure bank and the \$15 billion “will be sourced from the announced funding for public transit, green infrastructure, social...and rural and northern communities”.

We already have a structure in place with \$1.3 billion available and it is called P3 Canada. It was specifically set up to leverage private sector dollars. Pension funds can invest anywhere they choose; they do not need an infrastructure bank. That was stated by the CEO of the largest pension fund in Canada.

• (1625)

Let us hear from the experts. Craig Alexander, chief economist at the Conference Board of Canada stated, “The part of the fiscal plan that hasn't shown up is the infrastructure spending”. Stephen Poloz, Bank of Canada governor, said that in the data “there are no signs yet” of a boost to grow. Benjamin Reitzes, senior economist from the Bank of Montreal, said, “It's certainly very fair to say that impacts were overestimated”. The TD Bank and the Bank of Montreal projected that the government spending plan would add less to growth in 2016 than the finance department or the Bank of Canada had estimated. They have now publicly called on the government to halt additional spending.

There is a way to stimulate the economy and create the environment for job growth and job creation. The Liberal way is just not that way. Governments do not create jobs. Governments create environments in which job creation either flourishes or it stagnates. Unfortunately, what we are seeing from the current government is stagnating the environment for job growth through out-of-control spending, deficits, higher taxes, red tape, and frankly, not knowing what job creation really means.

Creating the environment for job growth means low taxes, less red tape, working with all levels of government to create livable cities, transportation to move people and goods to market, and fiscal responsibility to pay down any debt and balance the budget. In the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the Conservative government had the lowest taxes in 50 years, balanced the budget, completed over 7,500 infrastructure projects, and created the environment for 1.3 million new jobs. That is how it is done.

• (1630)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand back and I marvel at times at the Conservative Party's view that it was such a steward of the economy. We certainly saw over 10 years what regressive policies have done for the country: two recessions and a budget that was balanced at the last moment via the shell game I talked about yesterday.

Government Orders

The party opposite is so big on saying that our grandkids are going to have to pay for this and that we are mortgaging our children's future. However, it was the Conservatives' own finance minister, when they doubled the TFSA or tried to, who said that Stephen Harper's grandkids could pay for that.

I am going to ask the member opposite how she squares that her own former finance minister, in the past, said that Stephen Harper's grandkids could pay for the Conservatives' promises, yet for us it is the opposite. I wonder if the member can comment on that.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that my colleague marvels at us Conservatives.

We will talk about the TFSA because in my riding I have a lot of seniors, and one thing they really wanted was to have the contribution amount left at \$10,000. Unfortunately, it was the Liberals who went on this rant that nobody had \$10,000 just hanging around. That was not what it was for. It was for seniors. It was for students. It was for people who were trying to save. That is exactly what we put in place. We had the lowest taxes in 50 years and created 1.3 million jobs. I am sorry, but I do not know how that is wrong.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague and I both share concerns about the huge debt that families are seeing. Especially over the last year, families have been carrying enormous debt. With that, we are seeing a significant increase in the rate of child poverty in Canada, which is estimated to be as high as 11.2% by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. In my riding of Courtenay—Alberni, in Alberni itself one-third of the children living in Alberni Valley are living in poverty, and one in five children in Courtenay are living in poverty.

I know the member cares a lot about child poverty so I want to ask her this. Why did the child poverty rate become so high under the Harper government? Maybe the member can answer some of the questions I have around that.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, actually Statistics Canada shows the child poverty rate went down overall. However, I would also admit that was not in all communities.

As the former mayor of the city of Surrey, we created our child poverty reduction plan. We have to look at each community in a different way. As we look at the country as a whole, there are measures we can put in but we have to work together with communities to make sure we are taking care of those left vulnerable. I am sure the member knows from his community the great work of Clyde Hertzman, who had a benchmark that looked at all the indicators that were causes of child poverty. We cannot take our foot off the gas on this issue. We have to continue to ensure that our kids and our communities are resilient, and that our kids are school-ready when they get into kindergarten.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I met this morning with a particularly troublesome constituent to speak about the debt the Liberal government is accumulating. My two-year-old daughter wanted to know whether or not the member agrees that saddling her generation with multiple billions of dollars of debt and \$10 billion to \$15 billion more in debt financing charges is fair to her generation, and our children and grandchildren.

Ms. Dianne L. Watts: Mr. Speaker, I have met the member's beautiful daughter, and it just breaks my heart to know that child is going to grow up with that kind of debt.

When we see a government that has absolutely no plan to pay down the debt or to balance the budget, that it is not even on the horizon, this should be troublesome to every single Canadian across the country, because it will come back to haunt each and every one of us, our children, and our grandchildren.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Status of Women; the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway, Health; the hon. member for Saskatoon West, Indigenous Affairs.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are debating the second and last budget implementation bill. Unfortunately, the needs expressed by Quebec citizens and organizations are still not addressed in the budget. With respect to the health, education and social service transfers, the cuts announced by the Conservatives have not been reversed. In short, Quebec still gets nothing.

Our students' education and textbook credits were cut and they have not been adequately offset. In the case of Quebec students, for example, we are talking about a net loss of \$120 million. They have been shortchanged, and the bill does nothing to address the situation. That is very disappointing. The government has really disappointed us. There is nothing for our strong economic sectors such as the green economy, high technology, aerospace, and informatics, nor is there anything for our farmers and unemployed workers.

In short, we are disappointed that Quebec's needs are not among the government's priorities. However, that is not a big surprise. Canada and Quebec are such completely different nations that for years now millions of Quebecers have understood that we would be rather better served by being masters in our own house.

This bill basically deals with two things. The first is the indexing of the Canada child benefit. It is reasonable and appropriate that it be indexed. The second is a host of small changes to close tax loopholes that allow tax avoidance. For example, the bill eliminates the possibility of claiming the small business tax credit multiple times. That does not make sense. Companies that own companies that own companies and so on down the line like nesting dolls will no longer be able to use this strategy.

Government Orders

However, if the government really wants to crack down on tax avoidance, it is missing the mark. It does not realize that, while it is trying to put out the fire in the recycling bin, the whole house is going up in flames.

When it comes to tax avoidance, the root of the problem lies primarily with the banks, the financial industry, and the multinationals that happily and legally send their billions of dollars to tax havens. That is shameful. For Canada's five big banks alone, we are talking about \$6 billion a year in lost revenue for the governments, whether it be the federal government, the Government of Quebec, or the other provincial governments. That has nothing to do with the amounts announced in this bill. The Liberals have missed the boat.

What is more, we do not need to renegotiate international agreements to solve the real problem with tax avoidance. The government can take action right here and now.

I would like to remind members of a little known fact: no treaty or law authorizes the use of tax havens. For example, Canada's tax treaty with Barbados stipulates that companies entitled to any special tax benefit in Barbados, or in other words companies that are entitled to a ridiculously low tax rate of 0.25% to 2.5% rather than Barbados' usual tax rate of 25%, must pay taxes in Canada. It says so in article XXX of the treaty.

Tax avoidance is legal because of backdoor changes that have been made to Canada's tax regulations. Previous governments put these regulations in place without even allowing MPs to debate or discuss them.

I would like to make a positive contribution to the debate by suggesting one simple, practical thing that could be done to resolve an essential element of the problem of tax evasion. We simply need to get rid of two regulatory changes.

First there is paragraph 5907(11.2)(c), which invalidates article XXX of the Canada-Barbados tax treaty, a subparagraph that stipulates that taxes must be paid here. Thanks to that regulation, Barbados became a tax haven for Canada just over 20 years ago. That regulation passed quietly, and it might even be illegal.

That regulation was put in place without a vote in the House, and it made it possible for banks and multinationals to legally profit from tax havens. It is high time that we outlawed something that is unethical, in the name of justice and fairness.

We also need to get rid of the amendment to subsection 5907(11) that was passed in 2009. With the stroke of a pen in the regulations, the government opened up 22 other tax havens.

As soon as Canada has a comprehensive tax information exchange agreement with a tax haven, any profits that come back to Canada are tax-free, plain and simple. Once again, that amendment was passed quietly.

• (1640)

It can be found in a schedule to one of the mammoth budget implementation bills, tucked in the section "medical expense tax credit" even though it is totally unrelated. That shows bad faith, and not just a little.

Again, when it comes to tax avoidance, we have to tackle the root of the problem and make illegal what is unethical. Tax avoidance is a legal practice that puts enormous pressure on public finances. It is not right that people who are paying more and more taxes and user fees are seeing public services disappear, while big corporations and major banks shirk their responsibilities.

Inequality is growing and we have to change that. It is time to take action. However, we will have to start by changing the culture of Parliament and of successive governments. Even though Canadians generally deplore tax avoidance, as Quebecers do, the banks have so much power that the government, the party in power, and the official opposition continue to wash their hands of the matter, just as Pontius Pilate did in a well-known story. The time has come for elected officials to start truly representing Canadians, rather than the economic interests of the giants.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I always enjoy his colourful speeches. I would also like to congratulate him on the work he is doing to fight tax havens, a serious issue facing our generation and one that the House must tackle as quickly and effectively as possible.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the part of the bill about country-by-country reporting standards for multinationals. If the bill passes and the OECD country-by-country reporting standards are implemented, multinationals with revenue in excess of 750 million euros will be subject to this new rule. What does my colleague think of that?

Also, what does he think of the 750-million euro threshold for country-by-country reporting, which would give Canada access to more information about the activities of multinational entities in all the countries in which they are present and trigger a more in-depth analysis of these companies and their activities?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention and for the work he and his party are doing to combat tax evasion and the diversion of profits to tax havens.

Country-by-country reporting is a good initiative that was introduced as part of the OECD's work. However, it is but a very small step in the right direction, and infinitely more needs to be done immediately. There is no need to wait for every country in the world before we take action ourselves. There are things that Parliament could do right now to address this.

For instance, the 750-million euro threshold could be much lower. That is a small step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done right now, including getting rid of the two regulatory amendments that were mentioned.

Canada could be doing much more right now, but it needs to stop deferring to the banks. It needs to stop asking them for substantial assistance in the drafting of tax legislation. We need to represent our constituents and take action now.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. He is young and I would like him to tell me how we can trust a government that changes its tune the way the Liberal government has in the past year.

A year ago, during the election campaign, the Liberal Party's platform promised a modest deficit of \$10 billion over the first two years. It said that at the end of the next two fiscal years, the deficit would decrease and the investment plan would allow Canada to return to balanced budgets in 2019-20.

However, when the budget was tabled, we learned that the deficit would not be modest; instead we would have a massive \$30-billion deficit. Yesterday, during the economic update, we found out that another \$32 billion is being added to this debt over the next six years. In other words, the deficit will be \$111 billion within the next few years.

Given the Liberal government's unimpressive results after just one year, does the hon. member believe that we can trust the government to manage the economy?

• (1645)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

In fact, it is very worrisome. They are playing with Canadians' money. People want services in exchange for the taxes they pay. When managing the budget of a country like Canada, the government must always be conscientious and prudent. Our party is more concerned about Quebec's interests. If the government must run a deficit, it has to ensure that it will stimulate the economy in an efficient and effective manner. It certainly has not proven it will do that. We can reasonably wonder about people's confidence.

With respect to the deficit, I was referring to just the five major banks. If we closed the tax avoidance loopholes in tax havens made possible by regulations that were passed in secret without elected officials having a say on these amendments, we could recover at least \$6 billion more a year.

That would mean less pressure on our finances. There is growing pressure on middle class taxpayers, on ordinary people, while the big players, who have or at least seem to have ties to government, are getting a free ride.

It is high time that situation changed, and deficits should never be taken lightly.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by telling the House how disappointed I am with Bill C-29 and the measures it contains, or rather the measures it does not contain. More specifically, there is a significant lack of practical measures for SMEs, families, the middle class, unemployed workers, and the most vulnerable members of our society.

I would also like to point out that this bill, which was introduced on Tuesday, October 25, contains 146 provisions and amends 13 laws, and we started debating it just three days later. We had only three days to grasp the scope of the changes that these 146 provisions make to 13 laws. Members will agree that that gave us very little time to conduct a full and comprehensive review of the bill and to properly understand all the details and the scope of its content. It is very easy to see what is missing from this bill, and that includes larger health care transfers for the provinces and many other things.

Government Orders

As a progressive MP who represents the people of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, I am opposed to this bill because it is sorely lacking in substantial measures for middle-class families, unemployed workers, and the most vulnerable members of society. This party promised to stand up for the middle class, but we are once again seeing that all of its fine promises were nothing more than empty rhetoric.

Yesterday, we got the government's economic update. It offered no compensation for dairy producers and nothing for Bombardier. Basically, all it contains is a privatization plan that will take \$15 billion of the funding promised for infrastructure and invest it in a privatization bank designed not to meet the needs of communities but to meet the needs of companies and provide investment returns. It means that much less funding for municipalities in my riding, which will be disappointed.

My riding has massive infrastructure needs, including the Casavant Boulevard tunnel, the Saint-Pie and La Présentation community centres, and dire waste water treatment needs. These are just some of the major projects that are very important to my riding.

Municipalities and citizens were under the impression that money would be allocated to these projects because that is what they were told repeatedly. What the Liberals never told us was that their plan was to make investments by privatizing our infrastructure. In the 2016 budget, they brought up the possibility of asset recycling. That sounds pretty good, but what it really means is privatization.

Why did this government not promise privatization during the election campaign? Because it is not something that works. That is why we did not hear a peep about this during the election campaign. On the contrary, any time we talked about tolls or the Champlain Bridge, the Liberals kept saying that they would never ask the bridge users to pay a toll. That might be true, but what they failed to mention was that they would charge tolls everywhere else.

When did the Liberals tell Canadians that instead of the public infrastructure and public investments promised, Canadians would have to pay user fees and tolls, because their taxes would not be used for those things? They never said anything of the sort.

Bill C-29 does contain some positive measures that of course we support, but its contents do not even come close to fulfilling the Liberals' election promises or combatting inequality.

As my party's critic for families, children, and social development, I am still disappointed that the Liberals decided not to index the Canada child benefit to inflation. They could have fixed that yesterday, but no, they are going to wait four years.

The result of that political decision is that families back home in my riding, and all across Canada, are going to be out over \$5,000. The Liberals keep repeating that that benefit is going to lift thousands of children out of poverty, but in reality, families are going to have \$5,000 less over the next few years.

Government Orders

•(1650)

In the end, this benefit lifts families out of poverty for a month or two. To a family struggling to make ends meet every month, \$5,000 is a lot. It boggles the mind to hear my Liberal colleagues brag about lifting children out of poverty, when in fact, families are losing thousands of dollars.

Families cannot afford to wait for the new Canada child benefit to be indexed to inflation in 2020. By 2020, low-income families will be getting only \$6.50 more a month than they were from the Harper government. The difference between the Conservatives and the Liberals is \$6.50 a month.

Giving an extra \$6.50 a month is hardly anything to brag about. That is not even enough to buy a loaf of bread and some milk. When I talk about this with organizations in my riding that work with low-income families, they are shocked to learn how much families will really be getting at the end of the day. They are disappointed and I understand that. They know that families have felt the difference since July and are disappointed.

This decision will clearly hurt families, especially low-income families that are counting on this money. In the next four years, low-income families will receive about \$500 less. Canadians are disappointed with all these broken promises.

That said, I applaud the measure that will prevent a multiplication of access to the small business deduction, and prevents tax avoidance to some extent. This will help the government recover \$55 million to \$60 million a year, but many other measures could have been introduced.

For some time, the NDP has been calling for measures that would provide tax relief to SMEs, which are the real drivers of job creation. We are disappointed that the Liberals have broken their promise to reduce the small business tax. They had promised to lower it to 9% by 2019. Job creators in our ridings were counting on this tax cut. It is disappointing that another promise has been broken. The Liberals, and the Conservatives before them, gave huge tax breaks to the most prosperous corporations in Canada. They have once again let down our SMEs.

I am so proud to represent a riding with SMEs that are constantly innovating. According to a Canadian Federation of Independent Business study, Saint-Hyacinthe is the sixth most entrepreneurial city in Quebec and the 20th in Canada. However, in order to ensure that these businesses survive, we need to give them a leg up. That is why the NDP cannot accept a bill like this one that does nothing for families, SMEs, or the middle class.

In short and in conclusion, I want to repeat that I am disappointed, as are the people of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, with these measures that do nothing to help our SMEs, the many dairy producers in my riding, Bombardier, located in the neighbouring riding of Valcourt, municipalities, families, unemployed workers, the most vulnerable members of our society, or the middle class.

•(1655)

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate my friend and colleague for her speech. We both

sit on the human resources committee, and we have a passion to reduce poverty that is unequalled.

Some of the things my colleague said in her speech are a little puzzling. Let us not forget that the NDP ran in the last election on austerity and balancing the budget. I feel that it was a party that lost its way and obviously lost its base.

The member's party supported the UCCB, which gave the same amount to millionaires as it gave to those who make \$20,000 a year. Will she not concede that the Canada child benefit is a much better program than the UCCB, that it is transformational, and that, starting in July, it will help families that are living in poverty?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, I said it before and I will say it again, poverty is not a partisan issue.

In the time that I have been working with poor families and low-income individuals, I have relied on facts. The fact is that the benefit these families have been receiving since July will not be indexed to the cost of living. As the years go by, and as we move toward 2020, they will be getting less money from that benefit. Those are the facts and that is why I am criticizing the fact that this benefit is not being indexed immediately and for subsequent years.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her passionate speech about the budget and life in her community, Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, which is quite similar to what I am experiencing in Sherbrooke, which is a few dozen kilometres from Saint-Hyacinthe.

Since coming to power, the new Liberal government has promised major investments in infrastructure and much more of them. I was wondering whether anything has materialized in her riding over the past year and whether work on infrastructure projects has begun. Not much is happening in my riding. From what I can see, not much is happening across Canada.

Is my colleague concerned about how slow the infrastructure program is being implemented and the fact that the fine promises are not materializing? Is she concerned that the promises will not be kept because the Liberals are not taking this seriously?

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, after the election a year ago, municipalities had very high expectations.

When I met with them, they all had projects, and they all expected those projects to be funded after the budget. After the budget was tabled, I had to tell them that there was nothing for small municipalities in ridings like mine. In the first year, everything went to big cities.

Their disappointment did not end with yesterday's economic update. They have massive needs. That is what they are saying.

Government Orders

I have not yet seen any infrastructure funding for my riding even though municipalities have submitted proposals and have needs as they cope with bigger and bigger responsibilities. Small municipalities are the ones having the hardest time meeting their obligations. As I have said many times, they are barely keeping their heads above water, so any little wave that comes along puts them under. Nevertheless, all of the funding is flowing to big cities.

Yesterday, the government announced that it will invest billions over an 11-year period, and I could not believe it. Municipalities are going to be disappointed for 11 years. That is unacceptable.

Many of us here in the House represent rural ridings that do not have big cities in them and we are not seeing any money coming in. We have to keep speaking out on behalf of these small municipalities that are always having to wait their turn.

● (1700)

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance admitted to Canadians, in his fall economic statement, that his ideas are just not working. That is not what he said, but it is what Canadians understood.

GDP growth is lower than he expected in his March budget. He plans for another \$31.8 billion in borrowing over the next five years. This is a fantasy number, given that the original promise was to run a modest deficit of \$10 billion annually. What the minister was really saying is that he plans to keep throwing taxpayers' money at the economy, because eventually something good may happen if the Liberals spends enough.

Such an attitude has not worked in the past, but I guess the Minister of Finance has not learned that those who do not learn from the mistakes of history are doomed to repeat it.

As the Canadian debt numbers increase, the government hopes that somehow people will not notice. The Minister of Finance needs to tell Canadians what taxes he will hike and which programs he will cut to fund these expensive new promises. The Minister of Finance still has no plan to balance the budget, and the Liberals have no idea how to get Canadians back to work.

Given the gentleman's background in business before he entered political life, I am somewhat surprised that he is not more embarrassed by such a deficit, especially as he has no plan to turn things around. I can only surmise that he is also a student of history and understands that Liberal governments are only good at one thing: spending money that does not belong to them.

In March, the government was full of high praise for its budget. Eight months later, that praise seems more wishful thinking than reality. According to the parliamentary budget officer, job growth over the past year was half the average of the previous five years. There has been a drop in the number of full-time jobs. The PBO says that under the Liberal government, the Canadian economy has failed to create any new full-time jobs. That is a sad record.

The Prime Minister promised Canadians that if he borrowed billions of dollars, he would create jobs and grow the economy. Now, Liberals are full of excuses. Canadians must have missed the fine print. Borrowing billions has not created any jobs so far. A

logical person would look at that record and conclude that that approach does not work. A rational person would look for an alternative that would help get Canadians back to work.

The Minister of Finance is borrowing more money, sinking the government and people further into debt under a spending program that has already been shown not to work. That suggests to me that he really has no idea what to do to create jobs.

The minister has announced changes to the Canada pension plan. This expansion will cost more than expected. Internal documents show that officials advised the minister that higher CPP premiums would be a drag on the economy until 2030, and that the negative impact on jobs would last until 2035. The PBO expects the fiscal cost of the expansion to reach \$825 million a year by 2021-22, due to the tax deductibility of CPP premiums and increased spending on the working income tax credit.

When these changes are introduced, Canadians will take home less in their paycheques each week. The government wants us to think that the amount is not much, and that we will never notice it. However, every penny less in a person's pocket makes a difference to that person. The minister likes to think that increased CPP payments are not a tax, but money taken from a person's paycheque by the government is a tax.

A promise to return it with interest some years later remains just a promise. The government is good at making promises. It has not shown itself to be as good at actually delivering on those promises. For example, the government has promised a lot of money for infrastructure projects. The government says this money will create jobs. Well, we all know there are no jobs. No jobs have been created, so what has happened?

● (1705)

According to Bloomberg, out of the 860 infrastructure projects approved by the Liberals so far, only one has actually broken ground. That is not a very impressive track record. I wonder why the government did not choose to fund projects that were ready to proceed? Certainly, there was more than one infrastructure project planned in Canada this year that could have been implemented by now.

The government is also introducing new rules on mortgages that will make it harder for Canadians to buy a home. The Bank of Canada says that these new housing rules will cost the economy \$6 billion by the end of 2018.

Government Orders

The role of government should be to create a fiscal environment in which businesses can create permanent jobs for the people of Canada. The government should not be introducing measure after measure that restricts economic growth and costs people their jobs. That would seem to be simple economics, but that has escaped the Liberals' grasp. Spending billions of taxpayer dollars with no results does not make sense.

We cannot spend our way to growth, just as we cannot tax our way to prosperity. What is needed is an economic plan, not a politically motivated and hastily conceived piece of legislation. These changes, by increasing government debt, will have a negative impact on all Canadians.

The results of the past year are dismal. We do not trust the Liberals to deliver results and, increasingly, neither do Canadians. Not only has their plan failed, Liberal tax hikes and red tape are making things worse.

First, they cancelled family tax credits for sports and art classes and cancelled the small business tax cuts. Now, they are imposing a CPP tax hike and a carbon tax that will cost families thousands of dollars every year.

The Liberals' only solution to those problems seems to be to borrow and spend even more money, money that will have to be paid back by Canadian workers, families, and job creators.

Conservatives understand that when we borrow money, we need to pay it back, with interest. That is why we are careful, not only with our own money but also with that entrusted to us by the taxpayers. I only wish that Liberals felt the same way and had respect for Canadian taxpayers.

The bill would implement measures from a budget that lacks concrete, targeted plans to stimulate economic innovation. In effect, it would ignore the pressing need to develop the latter initiatives. The government does not seem to know where it is going and how it will get there, but it plans to spend a lot of money along the road.

The lack of transparency surrounding the long-term costs of the Liberal economic policy is cause for serious concern. Canadians have the right to know how the government's fiscal plan, or lack of it, impacts them and the country. This not about the present; it is about the future of Canada. As custodians of taxpayers' hard-earned funds, it is our responsibility to act responsibly, not recklessly, with the nation's finances.

As the government moves deeper and deeper into deficit and the national debt grows increasingly large, someone, at some point, will be called upon to foot the bill. When our children and grandchildren are struggling to maintain essential services and climb out from under a mound of government debt, they will be asking why we failed to act in a responsible fashion. What will we tell them? Will we tell them that we truly believed budgets could balance themselves?

The Liberal economic plan has failed, and Canadians are paying for it. When it comes to managing the economy, we do not get a second chance.

• (1710)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would contradict what the member said, because we have seen a very progressive government in the last year taking a truly different approach.

Canadians wanted real change, because they saw a Conservative government lose touch with what Canadians were thinking. When we saw the election of our government, we saw real, substantial change. We saw an increase in taxes for Canada's wealthiest to help compensate for the middle-class tax cut. We saw the Canada child benefit program, which will literally lift thousands of children out of poverty. We saw a substantial increase in the guaranteed income supplement for single seniors. Some of the poorest seniors in every region of our country will get \$900 more than they received previously. We have the most significant increase in infrastructure dollars and sense of commitment, with \$180 billion planned for the next 11 years.

Canadians wanted change, and they got real change. This is the type of thing that is going to see Canada do well in the future.

Would the member not at the very least recognize that the Conservatives did lose touch, and that we are now seeing our much more progressive to getting Canada's economy on the right track?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before I let the hon. member answer, I would remind hon. members that this is questions or comments. It does not necessarily have to be questions.

The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the member opposite, and he does not agree with me, as usual. I knew that he would contradict what I said.

However, it is not a heroic act to borrow money, spend it on people, and then tell people that you are spending money on them when it is coming out of their pocket. It is bad management, bad financing, and bad for the economy.

If the member understands the basics of the economy, he would understand that when we borrow money we need to pay it back. When we do not have the money, we do not spend it, but keep playing low for when there are economic difficulties in order to be able to manage the people's money.

It is everyone's responsibility in this country to make sure that Canadians' money is not up for grabs by any politician in this country, like the current government is doing.

[*Translation*]

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

Regarding budget implementation act, 2016, No. 2, the second budget implementation bill, and the economic update delivered yesterday in the House, I wondered if my colleague thought that the government was going down the wrong path with its current strategy.

Government Orders

The past year's economic results show no sign of improvement; they indicate no positive growth or job creation. Does the hon. member think that the government is doubling down on a strategy that does not seem to be working?

Albert Einstein said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Does the hon. member agree with that quote and our opinion that the strategies are not working and that the government should consider changing tack in order to create jobs and grow our economy?

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy sitting with hon. member on the finance committee.

What the member just said is exactly true. If the plan is not working, then we have to be very quick to change the plan to make it workable for Canadians.

To go deeper into debt, spend more and more money, and throw it at something that is not working is insanity. By any measure of economic, financial, and business standards, it does not make sense. The government is going in the wrong direction, and we know that the result is going to be devastating for every Canadian.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to respond to the economic update that was given yesterday and remind the House that the government is making Canadians even poorer by running this massive deficit. Today, Canada's future is bleaker and more unstable. I am worried about the future of my children and of generations to come.

First, I would like to point out that this was a very Liberal budget. It is all in the red. A balanced budget is a concept that no longer exists. That is worrisome. Middle-class Canadians know that they cannot live beyond their means forever. When a family buys a house that costs more than they can afford and then stops making payments, the bank will eventually foreclose. That is what could happen to us, but unfortunately, this government does not live in the real world. That is what happens when one is surrounded by so many people who have always lived safe, sheltered lives and have never experienced financial insecurity.

This economic update reminds me of a startling scene from a very popular Netflix series, *Narcos*. In it, drug lord Pablo Escobar keeps his family warm on a very cold night by literally burning millions of dollars. That is what the government is doing: burning hundreds of millions of dollars in a vain attempt to create some heat.

The difference is that, in this case, those are millions of dollars we do not have. It is a very high cost for paltry results. Yesterday's announcement tacks an additional \$32 billion onto the deficit. It might be easier to understand the scale of that if I express it as \$3,200 million. That seems a lot bigger because the truth is that \$32 billion is a massive number.

They are adding \$3,200 million to the debt, which will keep us in a deficit situation for an extra year. During their campaign, the Liberals promised to run modest deficits to stimulate the economy. They just forgot to tell Canadians their definition of a "modest

deficit". It is a minor detail, but in light of the logic espoused by the Prime Minister, who thinks the budget will balance itself, it comes as no surprise.

During the election campaign, the Prime Minister said we needed to grow the economy from the heart outwards. We are very familiar with this concept and see it often. This mentality is all well and good when you are improvising, but when you are managing a G7 economy, that does not necessarily work.

Unfortunately for Canadians, the prime minister's, oops, I mean the Prime Minister's Care Bear mentality does not work. In spite of all the money the Liberals have squandered since they came to power, not one net full-time job has been created in Canada. As the Minister of Finance said himself, Canadians just have to get used to precarious employment, because that will be the norm.

The Liberals are proud to say that their deficit is lower than expected. I would like to remind them that this is a far cry from the \$10-billion annual deficit promised during the election campaign. Based on that criteria, the Liberals seriously underestimated the deficit. In fact, it would be much larger if the government had not used the \$6-billion cushion to improve the picture.

It was not through the rigorous administration of the machinery of government that the deficit got so big. That cushion disappeared from the forecasts for the next few years, and we do not know when the government will return to a balanced budget. My colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, our finance critic, asked the Minister of Finance that question five times today, but got no answer.

Running a deficit during an economic slowdown or a recession is a practice that is generally accepted by society and economists. However, the Minister of Finance, a talented economist, said, "Our economy is growing, just not as fast as we would like".

If the economy is growing, then how does the Minister of Finance justify the massive ballooning of the deficit? What would happen if Canada was hit with another recession? If \$25.1 billion is not enough to stimulate a growing economy, how low is this government willing to take us?

We do not wish that on anyone, but we fear the worst. If we end up in a recession, then we will have to weather it on no credit, because we are living beyond our means. One of these days, this reckless spending will catch up with us and we will have to pay for it.

Another worrisome thing in this budget is the infrastructure bank. This measure will take \$15 billion out of funds that are already committed to help communities across the country. By definition, almost all the projects that will be implemented through this new institution will be in major urban centres. That is where we find major projects that might attract large investment funds hoping to get a return on their investments.

Government Orders

After barely a year in power, the Liberals are already starting to abandon Canadians who live outside large urban centres. For them, there is no salvation. Who would want to take an interest in their problems and help resolve them? Certainly not the banks, whose private investors will be looking for a return on their investment. Certainly not the Minister of Infrastructure, who seems more concerned with having a tastefully-appointed office than dealing with problems in Gaspé or the north shore.

• (1720)

As the saying goes, out of sight, out of mind.

They are taking resources away from small centres so that the larger ones have more. The Liberal government's sunny ways consist of centralizing everything, leaving everyone else in the lurch. Having someone else manage a large part of the infrastructure budget is an admission of the failure of the infrastructure program implemented by the government and the minister in charge.

If the government's plan is working so well, why does it need a new entity? The Liberals asked for Canadians' approval to go into debt so they could invest in infrastructure and stimulate the economy.

The Minister of Infrastructure and Communities is bragging about having approved a good number of projects. According to *Bloomberg* and *The Huffington Post*, only one of these projects is under construction. It is true that, coming from a minister who spent \$1 million on his office, it must be a record amount. However, other than setting up a sumptuous office for a minister, what has the government done to get projects up and running in order to help Canada's economy grow? With the exception of a single project, it has done nothing.

Unfortunately, today we must give these very stern speeches, because we now have a deficit of more than \$25 billion according to the government, which said that it had to run up a modest deficit in order to invest in infrastructure. There is not even a single project under construction. That makes no sense.

We all suffer from the Liberal government's foot-dragging on infrastructure, because it takes a lot of time for major work sites to get going. What we need to get Canada going is simple: rather than creating new structures to boost Canada's image, we need to keep our taxes low, properly manage our finances, and cut red tape. That is the best way to help Canada develop, and that is what we did when our government was in office. We made Canada the best country in the world in which to do business.

In closing, as a father, I do not understand how the Liberals can present such a document and then claim to be fiscally responsible. Mortgaging our future without delivering any results in the present is not responsible. Burning through billions of dollars is not good management. Greece tried that, without much success. I am worried that Canada is going down the same road.

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I want to point out that over the last 10 years of regressive policies and trickle-down economics, Canada was ready for a change. The previous government was one that oversaw two recessions and balanced its budget with a shell game, by throwing in

the EI surplus, the GM sale of stocks and its rainy day fund. That is how the Conservatives balanced their budget.

Canadians wanted a change. It was known throughout the country. Experts said that Canada was in an infrastructure deficit. There was not enough being spent on infrastructure over the past 10 years across the country.

Does the member not agree that infrastructure spending is a way to stimulate the economy?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I will try to remember the name of the riding of my colleague from Saint John—Rothesay, because I found he said some rather insulting things about the former government.

For 10 years, the former government navigated the worst global economic crisis. It made investments in infrastructure to get the economy back on track. As I mentioned in my speech, when there is a global economic crisis and the economy is flagging, governments can take significant measures to revive it.

Right now, we are in a period of economic growth; the minister said so himself. Modest growth is still considered growth. How then can the government justify jeopardizing our children's future?

I have a 13-year-old son and a 12-year-old daughter. How wonderful it will be for them in 20 years to have to pay huge amounts of taxes to pay off the current Prime Minister's debts, just like we are still today paying off the debts incurred when the father of the current Prime Minister put us in a tough spot.

I will not have anyone accusing the former government of doing a poor job. That is my right and that is all I have to say.

• (1725)

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under the current government, regions like mine could end up being penalized. The government is creating a privatization bank where interesting projects are ones that might attract investors and a return on their investment. Small villages like the ones in my riding could end up not seeing any investment.

I have a friend who lives in Rapide-Danseur, a small village of 300 or 400 people. Her village will likely not see any investment. The cost of living has gone up. Many things, such as groceries, cost more. On many levels, things are not improving.

It may be unfair to ask him to do the math in his head, but I would like to know if my colleague can calculate how much more debt my friend's eight children will be saddled with at the end of the Liberal government's term, after the 2019 election.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I do not have a calculator, but off the top of my head I can say that after four years under this Liberal government, the deficit will be over \$100 billion.

What I noted from her question is something I mentioned in my speech. The regions will be overlooked by this new approach involving the new infrastructure development bank. The government is centralizing things. Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and perhaps Calgary will really benefit from the major programs, because private companies will want to invest in major infrastructure such as a toll train or another bridge, any big project. Those are the projects that make money. Private companies will not invest in projects if there is nothing in it for them.

Who will go and invest deep in the Abitibi? No one. That is why the ministers responsible for regional development made sure that investments were made in infrastructure in every region of the country. In Quebec, a minister responsible for regional development would ensure that the regions have the infrastructure they need.

The government is currently centralizing things to please the finance minister's buddies, who give him \$1,500 cheques. The minister then finds them lucrative contracts, and a private company will invest in the project. That is how it works; it is not complicated. There is no point in kidding ourselves.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech.

Clearly the Liberals think they are qualified to take over where the good Lord leaves off, but that is not how it works in real life. We understand things too, but our understanding is not the same as theirs. I will not allow anyone to insult my colleagues because they see things differently.

I would like to ask my colleague a question. My daughter is no manager, but last weekend, she figured out that the cost per child is \$44,000 right now. In 10 years, that will add up to nearly \$100 billion. I am talking about the regions.

What about the army? Will they be giving the army any money?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for her question.

Our children will owe an extra \$1,000. The fifth grandson of a colleague of mine was born yesterday, and his debt went up by \$1,000 the moment he entered this world. What a thoughtful gift from the current Liberal government.

Here is what I have to say about defence. In the first budget, which was presented in the spring, \$3.8 billion of the defence budget was set aside. Once again, they manipulated the figures. They said the money would be available if needed, but money seems to disappear in the administrative twists and turns of each budget. What about that \$6 billion yesterday? They said it was a cushion, a reserve. Since a \$31.1-billion deficit makes the government look bad, it moved that \$6 billion over, and now the deficit is just \$25 billion. That is not so bad, is it? We all see what happened. Canadians will not fall for it.

There is no news on national defence, but we know that defence needs major cash because it is important. I hope the government will take a good look at what is going on with defence in Canada.

Private Members' Business

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION TO ATLANTIC CANADA

The House resumed from October 26, consideration of the motion, as amended.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 39, as amended, under private members' business.

Call in the members.

• (1810)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 141*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Barlow
Baylis	Beech
Benson	Bergen
Bernier	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Block	Boissonnault
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Brosseau
Brown	Caesar-Chavannes
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Carr
Carrie	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Chen	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Deltell	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Dion	Diotte
Doherty	Donnelly
Dreeshen	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk	Fast
Fergus	Finley
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Footo

Private Members' Business

Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry	Fuhr
Gallant	Garneau
Garrison	Généreux
Gerretsen	Gladu
Godin	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Gourde	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardcastle	Harder
Hardie	Harvey
Hehr	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jeneroux
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kang	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Lake
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Lemieux
Leslie	Levitt
Liepert	Lightbound
Lobb	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	Lukiwski
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Malcolmson
Maloney	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCallum	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Menicino
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Soeurs)	
Moore	Morrissey
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nassif
Nater	Nault
Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paul-Hus
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poilievre
Poissant	Quach
Qualtrough	Ramsey
Ratansi	Rayes
Reid	Richards
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Saganash
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sansoucy
Sarai	Saroya
Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Schiefke	Schmale
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shields
Shipley	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sopuck	Sorbara
Sorenson	Spengemann
Stanton	Stetski
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Tilson	Tootoo
Trost	Trudeau
Trudel	Van Kesteren

Van Loan	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vecchio	Viersen
Virani	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Watts	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Whalen	Wong
Wrzesnewskyj	Zahid
Zimmer— 283	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[*Translation*]**NATIONAL SEAL PRODUCTS DAY ACT**

The House resumed from October 27, consideration of the motion that Bill S-208, An Act respecting National Seal Products Day, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading of Bill C-208 under private members' business.

● (1815)

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

(Division No. 142)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Anandasangaree
Anderson	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Aubin
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Barlow	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Benson
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Block
Boissonnault	Boucher
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Brosseau
Brown	Caesar-Chavannes
Calkins	Cannings
Caron	Carr
Carrie	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chan
Chen	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Deltell
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Di Iorio	Dion

Private Members' Business

Diotte
Dreeshen
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyolfson
Fast
Finley
Fisher
Foote
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Gallant
Garrison
Gerretsen
Gladu
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Graham
Hajdu
Harder
Harvey
Hoback
Housefather
Hutchings
Jeneroux
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Kelly
Khalid
Kitchen
Lake
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary)
Lebouthillier
Lemieux
Levitt
Lighthound
Lockhart
Longfield
Lukiwski
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson
Marcil
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
Mathysse
May (Cambridge)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McDonald
McKay
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Soeurs)
Moore
Mulcair
Nantel
Nater
Nicholson
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Pauzé
Peterson
Philpott
Poilievre
Quach
Ramsey
Rayes
Richards
Robillard
Romanado
Rudd
Saganash
Saini
Samson
Sansoucy
Saroya
Schiefke
Schulte

Doherty
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Dusseau
Dzerowicz
Egliniski
El-Khoury
Eyking
Falk
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garneau
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Goodale
Gourde
Grewal
Hardcastle
Hardie
Hehr
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Kang
Kent
Khera
Kmiec
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lefebvre
Leslie
Liepert
Lobb
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
Maguire
Maloney
Masse (Windsor West)
McCallum
McCrimmon
McGuinity
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Morrissey
Murray
Nassif
Nault
Nuttall
Oliphant
O'Regan
Paul-Hus
Peschisolido
Petipas Taylor
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Ratansi
Reid
Rioux
Rodriguez
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Sarai
Scheer
Schmale
Serré

Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sopuck
Sorenson
Stanton
Stetski
Strahl
Tabbara
Tassi
Tootoo
Trudeau
Van Kesteren
Vandal
Vaughan
Viersen
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj
Zimmer — 283

Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Sorbara
Spengemann
Ste-Marie
Stewart
Stubbs
Tan
Tilson
Trost
Trudel
Van Loan
Vandenbeld
Vecchio
Virani
Warawa
Wauham
Weir
Wong
Zahid

NAYS

Members

Davies
May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)— 3

Erskine-Smith

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

● (1820)

[English]

GOOD SAMARITAN DRUG OVERDOSE ACT

The House resumed from October 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-224, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (assistance—drug overdose), be read the third time and passed.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-224.

● (1825)

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

*(Division No. 143)***YEAS**

Members

Aboultaif
Albrecht
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Angus
Arseneault
Aubin
Badawey
Bains
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu

Albas
Aldag
Alleslev
Amos
Anderson
Arnold
Arya
Ayoub
Bagnell
Barlow
Baylis
Beech

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise this evening to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-311, an act to amend the Holidays Act (Remembrance Day). At the outset, I would like to express my thanks for the work done on similar bills in previous Parliaments, most recently by former New Democrat MP Dan Harris, in the 41st Parliament, but before that by former Conservative MP Inky Mark and former NDP MP Chris Charlton.

In the last Parliament, in November 2014, Dan Harris's bill passed second reading in the House with near unanimous support. The 41st Parliament ended before the bill could be voted on at third reading.

The bill changes the wording and status of Remembrance Day in the federal Holidays Act by making it a legal holiday, like Canada Day and Victoria Day. It is intended that this amendment will correct the Holidays Act, which currently has different language for Remembrance Day than the language used for Canada Day and Victoria Day. I believe that it is important to fix this inconsistency and properly recognize Remembrance Day in our federal legislation as a legal holiday.

More than simply correcting this inconsistency, however, I believe it is important that we continuously examine how we as Canadians remember the sacrifice of our fallen heroes and honour the service of past and present Canadian Forces members. In so doing, I am hoping that the bill will start a conversation across Canada about whether we are doing enough to appropriately recognize Remembrance Day.

Personally, I believe that it would be appropriate for Remembrance Day to be a statutory holiday in every province and territory in Canada so that it is marked from coast to coast to coast as a national holiday and a day of solemn remembrance. However, I completely respect that it is not within the purview of Parliament to enact such a law, and of course, the bill does not do so.

Nevertheless, I believe that if the bill is passed and our Parliament reinforces in this way the importance of November 11, it can give the provinces that do not already do so a good opportunity to revisit whether they want to mark Remembrance Day as a statutory holiday in their jurisdictions.

Bringing this forward makes us pause to reflect on why Remembrance Day is so important. Canadians are rightly proud of their country. We are so blessed to live in such a beautiful, diverse, and free society. We must never take for granted everything we are blessed with in Canada. We are 36 million people, but we are less than one-half of one per cent of the world's population, and we are so very fortunate to live here.

Our beautiful and peaceful country did not happen by luck. It was built by those who have gone before us, those who protected and defended our liberties, values, and rights, those who have served in our Canadian Forces.

Remembrance Day is on November 11, because that is the day in 1918 when the guns fell silent and the Great War ended. It has come to symbolize, mark, and solemnly remember those who paid the supreme sacrifice in the service of our country. From Ypres, Flanders Fields, and Vimy Ridge in World War I, to Dieppe, Italy, Normandy, and the Pacific in World War II, to Korea, peacekeeping missions, the Gulf War, and Afghanistan, along with other conflicts in tormented places around the world, our brave men and women have

made us proud. We continue to honour them and the sacrifices of others who have gone before them. It is right that a grateful country such as Canada pays tribute and remembers our fallen.

[*Translation*]

For decades, Remembrance Day has given us an opportunity to gather together and pay tribute to all those who died while serving our country and to recognize the courage of current and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

All too often, we take for granted our values, institutions, freedom of association, freedom of speech, and right to make our own political choices without fear of reprisal. Our veterans, including many Acadians in my region, went to war overseas because they believed that the values and beliefs that we still share as Canadians were threatened. They were determined to protect, at all costs, vulnerable populations who were being oppressed by radical ideologists.

Remembrance Day reminds us of the importance of preserving this sense of freedom that our heroes wanted to protect and of our responsibility to keep the peace for which they fought.

● (1835)

[*English*]

Growing up in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Remembrance Day was instilled in me to be a solemn day. My family always went to the cenotaph on Main Street for 11 o'clock on November 11. There were a lot of people who did so.

However, I must say that it is encouraging to see that the numbers of those attending such ceremonies right across my riding, all across Nova Scotia, and indeed, across Canada, have been increasing over the last number of years.

The main Remembrance Day ceremony in Yarmouth is now in the Mariners Centre, a hockey arena that is more accommodating of the large crowd and also for the many veterans who have mobility issues and cannot attend at the cenotaph. The cenotaph still has an excellent ceremony and there are a lot of people who attend at each place. I look forward to attending the Mariners Centre this year in order to share the occasion with many veterans from my area and also many citizens who will be there to mark the solemn occasion.

As important as these ceremonies are on November 11, I will never forget the veterans who would come into my school, when I was a child, in the days leading up to November 11. They would tell us their stories of sacrifice and valour, but also in their message was pride for our country and their love of peace over war. It touched me profoundly to see their emotion when talking about the horrors of war and about the terrible loss of a comrade. I believe these stories need to be taught throughout the year to our young people. However, it is at this time of year, in particular, near Remembrance Day, that they are especially poignant and meaningful.

Private Members' Business

A few years after high school, I was extremely fortunate to be selected to work as a tour guide at Vimy Ridge, France. The Canadian monument at Vimy and its place in our country's history are awe-inspiring. My time at Vimy Ridge and learning the history of Canadians who fought there reinforced, in my mind, the significant debt of gratitude our country owes to our forces and to our veterans.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was fought in April 1917, and in only a few short months, we will be marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. It is significant that it is also in the year Canada will be celebrating its 150th anniversary as a country, as Vimy Ridge was the first time that Canadians from across our country fought together, shoulder to shoulder, as a cohesive formation and achieved a remarkable victory. Many believe that out of this event with its success but tragic loss, Canada's national identity and nationhood were born.

As members of Parliament, we will each be returning to our ridings next week and on Friday of next week, November 11, will be attending Remembrance Day ceremonies and events.

I know that there are many activities planned throughout my riding of West Nova throughout the whole day. Last year, I had the pleasure to attend the moving Remembrance Day ceremony at Kingston, Nova Scotia, and visited various events throughout the Annapolis Valley, home to 14 Wing Greenwood. I am so privileged to represent those members of the Canadian Forces and also the veterans who have contributed so richly to my community.

Like many of my colleagues, I will also be attending ceremonies in the days leading up to November 11. For example, on November 8, at the Yarmouth Consolidated Memorial High School, and on November 10, at Meadowfield elementary school, I will be attending Remembrance Day ceremonies with students and staff, as well as veterans, to honour and share in solemn remembrance those who have sacrificed so much for Canada.

In many schools next week, it is in fact marked as Remembrance Day week. Students learn about the history of our men and women in service to Canada and pause to reflect on their sacrifice. These are just a couple of the many ways that Remembrance Day is marked at schools in West Nova and in the days leading up to November 11. It is encouraging to know many young people will also attend Remembrance Day ceremonies with their families on November 11, or perhaps as part of the memorial club in Yarmouth, whose young members throughout the year, but particularly on Remembrance Day, demonstrate their pride in Canada and gratitude for our veterans.

I am very pleased that many veterans in West Nova and across Canada are supporting the bill. They believe, as I do, that it is important to draw attention to the significance of Remembrance Day.

● (1840)

One of the legions in my riding is the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 155 in Wedgeport, Nova Scotia. Over the past several months, I have been fortunate enough to attend two different ceremonies, where a member of a branch has been received into the French Legion of Honour for their incredible service and as a sign of France's respect for their contributions to the combat that led to the liberation of France in World War II.

Bernard Smith and Vernon Doucette joined two other members of the Wedgeport legion, Alcide LeBlanc and Wesley Spinney, in receiving the French Legion of Honour for their part in the liberation of France. Western Nova Scotia is very proud of these four gentlemen and their service to Canada in the cause of freedom. It is, indeed, very special that one small legion branch has four such heroes who have been recognized in this significant way.

There are so many other stories like theirs across my riding and across our country. We honour their sacrifices and living legacies, and also remember the many men and women who have donned a Canadian Forces uniform in our history, who did not return home, and who did not have the chance to have us thank them for their valiant and brave service to Canada.

As it relates to the bill, in addition to modifying the language to make Remembrance Day a federal legal holiday and have the same status in the Holidays Act as Canada Day, the bill also purports to do two other things.

First, subclause 3(2) provides that if November 11 falls on a weekend, similar language to that of Canada Day be used to make the following Monday a holiday.

Second, subclause 3(3) provides that on Remembrance Day, the Canadian flag on the Peace Tower shall be lowered to half mast.

Upon reflection and consultation with my colleagues, I realize that both of these provisions are, unfortunately, problematic. I am, therefore, very open to these provisions being deleted from the bill by amendment at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, where the bill will be referred to should it pass a vote in the House after second reading. In fact, I am very happy to propose them directly to the committee if this is to be done.

The main objective of the bill and the motivation I had in putting it forward in the first place is not furthered by either of these provisions.

Let us, in this 42nd Parliament, do what is right. Let us recognize Remembrance Day as a federal legal holiday, put it on the same level in the Holidays Act as Canada Day and Victoria Day. We can also provide the occasion to the provinces that do not already recognize Remembrance Day as a statutory holiday to revisit how Remembrance Day is observed in their jurisdiction.

From McRae's famous poem that echoes through the ages:

To you, from failing hands, we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields

Let us then do our duty and not break faith with those who have died for Canada. Let us do all we can to ensure we honour their sacrifice. I believe Bill C-311, in a modest way, would help in that cause, and that is why I ask for the support of my colleagues.

I ask all Canadians right across our country to please show their respect for our veterans and our fallen, wear a poppy, and attend a Remembrance Day ceremony next week.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

Lest we forget.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked about two parts of the bill that may not necessarily reflect a purpose. Could he expand further on those two parts of the bill?

Mr. Colin Fraser: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the second provision, which is when November 11 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it was my intention that would be placed in the bill in order to standardize it to similar holidays mentioned in the Holidays Act, and that the following Monday would be the holiday. It was obviously never my intention that November 11 would not be celebrated on November 11. For other reasons, the fact that if this were done, it would need to be amended in the Labour Code and as this provision really has no effect, I have no problem with it being removed.

With respect to the other provision, that the Canadian flag fly at half mast, it sounded like a good idea until I started understanding the protocol regarding flags at half mast. I now understand there is no problem with the flag flying at half mast on Remembrance Day, that it is already in the protocol, and that it could cause other problems in the protocol. For example, if the Queen were in Ottawa on that day, her standard would fly over the Peace Tower and, by protocol, would never be lowered to half mast.

For those reasons, I have no problem with those sections being removed.

• (1845)

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the legislation and for remembering all of those who brought it to this place before him.

To what degree has he talked to veterans in his community? How do they feel about the bill? Sometimes veterans are leery of making Remembrance Day a holiday.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Mr. Speaker, certainly I have consulted with veterans in my riding in particular, but I have also heard from veterans across the country who feel that it is important at every opportunity possible to elevate, to recognize Remembrance Day, and to make sure that it is in the forefront of Canadians' minds to mark this special day of solemn remembrance.

With regard to veterans, in my riding, they have been very supportive of the bill. They feel that it is a good measure. I know that there are other veterans who may not share that view because they feel that rather than a day off, which the bill does not provide, but if it were to go that way, it would be better for the schoolchildren, for example, to stay in school.

The examples I gave from my experience in Nova Scotia show that veterans have the opportunity to come into schools, meet the children, and then everybody gets the chance to go to the cenotaph or memorial ceremony on November 11.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my friend from West Nova for this excellent proposal to honour our veterans.

One of my proudest days was near Côte Saint-Luc, when we named the park next to our city hall Veterans Park to honour those men and women who came back to Canada and built so many of our suburban communities after the war.

I ask my hon. colleague from West Nova whether or not his interaction with veterans has been one of the highlights of his time as an MP and whether that led him to put forward the bill.

Mr. Colin Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's enthusiasm for meeting with veterans. In my riding in particular, I have a number of veterans that I am privileged to represent in the House of Commons.

I have met with many different veterans' groups in my riding, and certainly the legions. On every occasion I have the opportunity to attend one of their functions I am so pleased to do so. It really is an honour to share in their marking services, which are coming up next week. Just the contribution that veterans and Canadian Forces members make to our communities right across the country is something we need to celebrate more often.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the hon. member has brought forward today. Having taken many students to places in Europe, to Vimy Ridge, to Italy, I understand the importance of it.

We have a national Legion. Has he had the opportunity to discuss it with the national organization and is it in support of this?

Mr. Colin Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to speak to the national Legion. In previous iterations of the bill, when testifying at committee, members of the national Legion had expressed reluctance in supporting this type of bill because they thought that it should not lead toward a national holiday. The bill does not do that, of course.

In my discussions with representatives from the Royal Canadian Legion, national branch, they expressed the same reluctance to accept what the bill does. However, I look forward to continuing those discussions. As it relates to Legion members I have spoken to, those in my riding, and many other Legion members across the country, they are supportive of the bill.

• (1850)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise on behalf of the great residents of Barrie—Innisfil as the official opposition critic for veterans affairs.

My colleague from West Nova and I have had many discussions over the course of the last several weeks since I assumed this position. I believe he is very sincere in his attempt to raise the relevance and the prominence of Remembrance Day in this country.

That being said, there are some issues with this bill that I will be outlining throughout the course of my speech.

I want to thank the member for Beauport—Limoilou who was the previous opposition critic for veterans affairs for the work he did, and the work he has helped me with in the transition, as well as the member for Durham, the previous minister of veterans affairs. I really appreciate the fact that they have taken me under their wing, and have guided me on many of the issues with respect to veterans.

Private Members' Business

I am pleased to speak to Bill C-311, which is an act to amend the Holidays Act for Remembrance Day. I commend the hon. member for West Nova for his work on this bill, and recognize his work on behalf of the men and women of our armed forces.

Veterans week is only days away, and the annual poppy campaign by the Royal Canadian Legion is now underway with thousands of veterans and volunteers around this country sitting in grocery stores, community halls, shopping malls, and so many other places.

Last week, I had the pleasure of supporting the Montgomery Legion, located just blocks from Parliament Hill, to kick-off their poppy campaign. Money raised from the sale of poppies stays in the community and supports our vets close to home. That was a very important message that the Montgomery Legion wanted me to bring to the House today.

What veterans are doing to help support each other continues to be amazing. Legion halls provide a community for our veterans to gather, talk, perhaps talk like they are unable to at home, retelling stories of their experiences.

More importantly, veterans organizations provide support, information, and a way through the maze which sometimes can be difficult when seeking help and assistance. I am fully supportive of honouring the blood and treasure of those who came before us with further distinction. However, I have questions about how that would be integrated into provincial laws.

Canada will be commemorating the 97th Remembrance Day, a day that first started as Armistice Day, in honour of the end of the Great War in 1918. At the 11th hour, on the 11th day, of the 11th month, we will remember. Veterans, soldiers, families, Canadians, will gather at local cenotaphs, or war memorials, to honour those who have answered the call of peace.

Canada's National War Memorial was officially unveiled by His Majesty, King George VI. In 1939, over 100,000 people attended that event. Originally, the National War Memorial was dedicated to those who fought in World War I. It was not until 1982, when the monument was re-dedicated with the addition of World War II and Korean vets.

In a moving ceremony in 2000, the remains of an anonymous soldier, who previously lay near Vimy Ridge, was placed in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Today, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is where thousands of Canadians leave thank you notes, flowers, and in a moving tribute to the unknown soldier and all soldiers, they leave their poppies on top of the grave.

On Remembrance Day 2014, the monument was once again re-dedicated, when the dates of the South African War and the mission in Afghanistan were added. This year, 77 years later, after it was originally dedicated, Canadians will see a refreshed National War Memorial after months of work on the monument and the grounds it stands on surrounding the great response, the sculpture designed by Vernon March of Farnborough, Kent, England.

About the monument, March wrote, it was "to perpetuate in this bronze group the people of Canada who went Overseas to the Great War, and to represent them, as we of today saw them, as a record for future generations."

In Bill C-311 the member for West Nova wishes to formally recognize Remembrance Day in Canada. Though each province has selected just how the 11th day of the 11th month is commemorated, Remembrance Day is, in fact, held every year from coast to coast to coast. There is not one province or territory that does not mark this day.

● (1855)

The bill needs further work in committee. I am quite certain the government side will not disagree with that notion. There, in committee, we will be able to hear from stakeholders, including the Royal Canadian Legion, and thoughtfully consider their opinions, as they did on a similar bill, Bill C-597, which was brought to the House in 2014 by MP Dan Harris, who was then the member for Scarborough Southwest.

I am suggesting, as well, that Bill C-311 be heard at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, a committee on which the sponsor of the bill and I sit. We will be able to ask questions and seek further guidance from not only the Legion but other veterans groups.

By going to committee, we can ask other stakeholders about the impacts of the bill. One group might include labour organizations or federally-regulated companies. These stakeholders will be part of the ripple effect of the bill by making Bill C-311 a legal holiday, and giving it the same standing as other legal holidays, such as Canada Day. Establishing another legal holiday will affect other legislation, specifically the Canada Labour Code, as the member for West Nova has identified.

In doing research on the bill, I inquired with the Library of Parliament and parliamentary counsel on the legal definitions and differences between a legal holiday and a statutory holiday.

Did members know there are none? In fact, the terms, according to the Library of Parliament, are interchangeable. Therefore, when is a holiday a holiday, or even a legal holiday? These are questions that need to be asked and answered in committee. Our veterans and current forces members, who represent our next generation of veterans, deserve that.

As well, the bill proposes to provide a day off when Remembrance Day falls on a Saturday or Sunday. I have always stood with my fellow Barrie residents on November 11, whether the day fell on any day during a work week, Monday to Friday, or if it was a Saturday or Sunday. I do not differentiate between a week day and the weekend, but again, I would like to hear from Canadians, the Royal Canadian Legion, and affected employees on how they feel about this.

The third part of the bill, that was not in Bill C-597, deals with how the flag is flown on Remembrance Day. We all know that the flag is half-mast on many occasions during Remembrance Day. The rules for this, and many other rules regarding the treatment of our flag, are found in the national flag of Canada etiquette and rules for half-masting the national flag of Canada

While the rules are available to be read, it is unclear if these rules are set in legislation. If there is legislation, it needs to be identified. The current rules have served the flag in Canada well, and if there is a need to set in legislation these rules, again, let us debate them in committee.

In Canada, there are over 100 days that either have national, provincial, local, or religious commemoration. Nationally, there are only four days that are recognized in each province and territory across Canada on the same day. They are New Year's Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, and Christmas Day. Days we would think are national holidays are, in fact, not national holidays. Thanksgiving, Good Friday, and Victoria Day are examples of days we could all rightly assume were marked across the country, but are not universal.

While I did not serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, I did wear a uniform, the uniform of a firefighter. I understand the pride I felt while wearing that uniform, and I also understand the responsibility that came from wearing it.

In my riding of Barrie—Innisfil, a great many men and women living in my riding serve and have served our country. For 100 years, Base Borden has been instrumental in the training and education of thousands of Canadian and foreign soldiers, and my home of Barrie—Innisfil has a deep connection with our service members and their extended military families.

I was honoured to have been present at the Base Borden Legacy Wall unveiling earlier this year. It is a sacred place that gives a nod to the many who trained at Base Borden and served all over the globe.

The Legacy Wall is a special place, and I am so proud of the work by the Vimy Foundation. Base Borden is a special place. Contained within the Legacy Wall is an urn of soil from the battlefield at Vimy Ridge. It will forever be a proud place of honour.

As I close my remarks on Bill C-311, the bill needs to go to committee, because there is much more work to be done on it.

I will close by honouring the men, women, and service animals who have served our country so dutifully. For some, their struggle overseas pale in comparison to what they face when they return home. We owe our veterans so much, and all of us in the House of Commons need to support, and act to ensure that when our soldiers come home, they can be healthy and active in our Canadian society.

For those who serve, we honour them.

● (1900)

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank the member for West Nova for introducing this legislation. I am most grateful for the privilege to be the critic on behalf of veterans of Canada.

Interestingly, this private member's bill has come before the House for debate in previous Parliaments and has been introduced across the spectrum of members from the NDP, Conservative, and Liberal caucuses.

The bill, making Remembrance Day a legal holiday federally, is very often misunderstood. The ramifications, if passed, are minimal, as the jurisdiction for statutory holidays still remains with the provinces. Thus, a change to the legislation is a formality only, and

Private Members' Business

would not impact how we recognize or appreciate veterans on November 11 each year.

That being said, the bill remains controversial within the veterans community. Many veterans are concerned that by expanding the legal holiday designation, it will, by extension, more formally indicate that the federal government recommends making Remembrance Day a statutory holiday. On the other hand, many veterans want Remembrance Day to be a holiday across Canada to ensure that all Canadians can have the opportunity to participate in ceremonies on November 11 each and every year.

Today, Remembrance Day is considered a holiday for all federal employees. It is also a holiday in all provinces and territories, except for Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. Actually, Ontario provincial government employees also have the day off.

The hope behind the bill is that if all provinces adopt Remembrance Day as a statutory holiday, it will allow everyone who chooses to be afforded the opportunity to pay tribute to our fallen soldiers and veterans by observing this day with their loved ones.

The provinces that have already enacted this legislation have seen positive outcomes, as more people are able to attend local ceremonies. When families attend ceremonies together, they are able to teach their children about the sacrifices and bravery demonstrated by the servicemen and women who fought, and continue to fight, for the freedoms we cherish as Canadians.

Supporters of this legislation, such as Mike Blais from Canadian Veterans Advocacy, have argued in favour of it. These are Mike's words:

This is a wonderful opportunity for parliamentarians to embrace this sacred obligation to honour national sacrifice in a significant and meaningful manner. There is so much that we as a nation can do to honour the fallen, the wounded, our veterans, and serving members, but there must be inclusion, recognition, the understanding of national sacrifice. Equally important is the opportunity for Canadians...to participate in our national services as a family unit to embrace the spirit of the nation as a community, despite the fact that the return of that day off will have to be discussed at the provincial level. I understand that. It is important that the words of the Holidays Act do not demean Remembrance Day.

Detractors of the proposed legislation argue that statutory or civic holidays are often not used or celebrated for the purpose for which they were intended. Many Canadians use those days to get away, or spend time with family, not necessarily to remember or commemorate a specific day.

Currently, Remembrance Day is recognized and honoured by many Canadians who participate or witness the ceremony at their local cenotaph. They do so out of choice, because it is important to them, and they have personal reasons. Making this a holiday of any sort would not change that.

Private Members' Business

It must also be said that the Royal Canadian Legion is clear in its position and is concerned that Canadians, if given the time off as a legal holiday, may not take the time to remember, that it may simply become a mid-week break or just part of another long weekend. We need to make honouring and remembering an important part of our regular routine on November 11 and not simply provide a day off from school or work.

Interestingly, after consulting with Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada (ANAVETS), on this legislation, it indicated that the organization had recently changed its position to support that Remembrance Day be a statutory holiday, with the caveat that if Remembrance Day fell on a weekend, no alternative day be recognized as Remembrance Day. ANAVETS was very clear that any holiday should be about giving all Canadians an opportunity to participate in ceremonies and not be treated as a holiday like any other.

• (1905)

I would like to note that this legislation does indicate that another day be designated, but I am pleased to hear that the mover of the legislation is open to changing this because of the concerns of some of our veterans. It is important that we be cognizant of their concerns.

I have also heard from both sides about the impact on schools and how children's education would be affected. Some veterans feel that the ceremonies in schools are key to ensuring that children are educated about veterans and the importance of Remembrance Day, but others feel that if schools held ceremonies and organized assemblies on a day other than Remembrance Day, more veterans would be available to attend and children as well as veterans would be able to attend the ceremonies at the local cenotaph with their parents and their friends. It is clear that veterans remain divided on whether Remembrance Day should be a statutory holiday, and no matter where one falls in this debate, it seems that the goal is to honour veterans with respect and dignity.

Sadly, many veterans are facing difficulties as they leave the Canadian Forces and begin their lives as civilians. Others find that their injuries take time to manifest, and they then struggle to get benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada. It is extremely concerning that many veterans may feel abandoned and ignored and remain distrustful of the very government that is supposed to look after them.

If we truly want to show our respect for veterans as parliamentarians, as Canadians, we should be focusing on ensuring that benefits and services for veterans and their families are easy to access and provide the needed support.

If we truly want to show our respect, the government should not be arguing in court that the Canadian government does not have a covenant of moral, social, legal, and financial obligations to our veterans.

New Democrats honour the service of the men and women who put their lives on the line for our country. It is critical that we listen to veterans in our communities and hear how they wish to honour their fallen brothers and sisters on Remembrance Day. We feel it is

important to listen, reflect, and to share their voices, to tell their stories in this community and communities across Canada.

I welcome this legislation and hope that it will be a starting point for a conversation with veterans on how they wish to be recognized.

I encourage all members of the House to speak with veterans in their communities, to listen not only to their views on this legislation, but also to listen to their experiences, their concerns, and to hear their questions.

Veterans deserve our respect. This legislation is an excellent opportunity for MPs to show their respect by listening and responding to local veterans and their families, and to understand that what they gave was so very precious, what they did was so very important, and that we must honour that.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House this evening to speak about Bill C-311, an act to amend the Holidays Act (Remembrance Day), introduced by my hon. colleague the member for West Nova. I deeply respect and admire my colleague's dedication to honouring our country and the brave women and men who have and continue to bravely serve it.

As bright red poppies begin to appear on the lapels of Canadians from coast to coast to coast, let us take a moment to pause and reflect on those we will be honouring on Remembrance Day, Canadians like Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae whose iconic poem, *In Flanders Fields*, has become an enduring symbol of remembrance and hope, and those like 28 year old Master Corporal Byron Garth Greff, who grew up in my hometown of Morinville and tragically lost his life in Afghanistan in 2011.

Remembrance Day is a time for all Canadians to come together to honour Lieutenant Colonel McCrae, Master Corporal Greff, and the tens of thousands of men and women who have served and continue to serve our country with pride. It is with our deep and heartfelt gratitude that we stand in the House today.

• (1910)

[*Translation*]

Bill C-311 would amend the Holidays Act, which was adopted in 1970 to consolidate the Dominion Day Act, the Armistice Day Act, and the Victoria Day Act.

Canada Day and Victoria Day are designated as legal holidays, whereas Remembrance Day is a holiday.

Bill C-311 seeks to remedy the situation by designating Remembrance Day as a legal holiday, which would provide consistency with the other two days in the Holidays Act, namely Canada Day and Victoria Day.

Previous bills on this issue, for example Bill C-597, which was debated in the last Parliament, raised questions about whether this change would create a paid holiday across Canada. I want to be clear. That would not be the outcome if the law that institutes legal holidays were amended.

In fact, according to constitutional law, legislative measures concerning paid holidays fall under the jurisdiction of Parliament and the provincial and territorial legislatures. Legislative measures concerning provincial and territorial paid holidays are the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces and territories, as set out in subsection 92(13), property and civil rights, and subsection 92(16), matters of merely local or private nature in the province.

[English]

Our government supports making Remembrance Day a legal holiday, which would provide consistency with the other holidays in the Holidays Act and demonstrate our respect and support for our veterans and serving women and men.

Last year, I had the opportunity to attend the Remembrance Day celebration at Edmonton city hall with Mayor Iveson, and I later attended the commissioners' ceremony at the University of Alberta's Universiade Pavilion. It was an immense privilege for me to see veterans, young people, and members of our community come together to pay tribute to our veterans and soldiers. This is at the heart of what it means to be Canadian. I look forward once again to participating next week in Remembrance Day commemorations in my hometown of Edmonton.

In addition to this change, Bill C-311 also proposes two other changes to the Holidays Act. Our government does not support either of these two changes. Proposed subsection 3(2) proposes, "When November 11 is a Saturday or a Sunday, the following Monday is a legal holiday and shall be kept and observed as such throughout Canada under the name of "*Remembrance Day*." These provisions mean that the official name of Remembrance Day could apply to November 12 or 13, should November 11 fall on a weekend. There is a profound reason why we mark Remembrance Day on November 11, and Remembrance Day must remain on the "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month". As such, we will support the removal of proposed subsection 3(2).

[Translation]

The purpose of the other change proposed in subclause 3(3) is to legislate the half-masting of the national flag of Canada on Remembrance Day. This provision is unnecessary, because this is already a long-standing tradition that is set out in the Rules for Half-masting the National Flag of Canada. Lowering the Canadian flag to half-mast is a moving part of the act of remembrance and an expression of our collective mourning.

In addition to this important symbol, Canada also marks Remembrance Day with community activities that are held across the country and by the national Remembrance Day ceremony that takes place at the National War Memorial here in Ottawa.

This ceremony is broadcast all across the country and is covered in the media from coast to coast to coast. Veterans from all the wars and peacekeeping operations, many dignitaries, the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP, members of the diplomatic corps, and youth representatives all take part in the ceremony.

Thanks to the many ways we express this tradition of remembrance, we will ensure that Canada never forgets.

Private Members' Business

●(1915)

[English]

The Government of Canada reaffirmed our commitment to honouring our veterans at the Remembrance Day ceremony last year. As the Prime Minister said:

We have an obligation to our country's women and men in uniform, our veterans, and their families. As a government, we will honour this social covenant with the respect and gratitude it deserves.

I call on Canadians to join me in expressing our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have worked and fought so courageously to keep us safe. Today, and every day, we remain committed to ensuring they have nothing less than the care and support of a grateful nation.

As we approach Veterans' Week 2016, which will be observed from coast to coast to coast from November 5 to 11, let us pause to remember and reflect on the ordinary Canadians who became heroes when confronted with extraordinary circumstances, and take time to express our gratitude to those who served our country as well as those who serve in uniform today.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-311, an act to amend the Holidays Act, regarding Remembrance Day.

I will start off by saying that I am one of the people, and I think we all are here, who believe our veterans should be celebrated every day for their supreme sacrifices, as well as those who continue to put the uniform on so that our maple leaf is still standing tall and that we remain the true North, strong and free.

I want to celebrate and acknowledge our colleague from West Nova for putting the bill forward. I think the intent of the bill is the right thing to do. However, as has been mentioned by not only the member himself but a number of other colleagues, the bill is flawed and does require some work. The intent of the bill is to ensure that all Canadians from coast to coast to coast have the ability to pay their respects to our soldiers and veterans and to make sure that November 11 continues to be a sacred day for Canadians. It is an opportunity for us to show our fallen, our veterans, our forces members, and their friends, families, and loved ones, that they are honoured and respected both in life and death. We will never forget.

There are thousands of distractions that compete for our time on a daily basis, be it the work email that needs to be answered, the TV in the background, or that phone call that needs to be returned. However, Remembrance Day is the one day where on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month Canadians pause to remember. It is an opportunity for us to take time to be thankful for the sacrifices of others, whether protecting our country, working with our allies and partner countries, providing humanitarian assistance, aiding countries by helping to restore the peace, or fighting for our freedom. The sacrifices of our brave men and women have allowed us to continue to live in a free and democratic country where we are tolerant and we respect freedom of speech, religion, thought, belief, and expression.

We live in the best country in the world. I know that I do not need to tell the hon. members in this chamber that. We all have the privilege each and every day to walk into this chamber and raise the issues that are important to our constituents.

Private Members' Business

I want to hearken back to when I was a sea cadet. For a long time, I proudly wore the uniform and I proudly marched in Remembrance Day ceremonies. I had what I consider to be the distinct honour of being an honour guard at a number of those ceremonies. I want to come back to one of the most proud days that I had, which was the day right after being elected last year. Remembrance Day had taken place and I was going to be sworn in the very next day, but I had that opportunity to lay the wreath that said "Canada" on our local cenotaph. I am getting goosebumps right now just thinking about that because there is no greater honour than paying respect to those who have given the supreme sacrifice. There is no greater honour than when we look through the windows and we see the flag.

As I am looking over your shoulder right now, Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but look at that flag and think of the blood that was spilled fighting for our country, the blood that was spilled ensuring that you, I, all of the members in the House, and our friends and our families can sleep silently and know confidently that we are protected.

We all have the privilege each and every day to walk into this chamber and raise the issues that are important to our constituents because of democracy, because of the sacrifices that these soldiers, these brave men and women, have made for our country. Remembrance Day is a time for everyone to come together and pay their respects for the loss of youth, for the blood of their comrades who may or may not rest in foreign fields, and for the sheer anguish of having fought in war.

We are now just understanding what the term PTSD means. It is one of the reasons why one of the very first things that I did in coming to the House was to table Bill C-211, calling upon the government to develop a national framework recognizing the challenging demands that our first responders, our military, and indeed our veterans have faced dealing with PTSD, as we are just now beginning to understand.

● (1920)

November 11 is not the only day to remember that. As I said earlier, we should always be remembering that supreme sacrifice.

There is much debate about the flaws in the bill and whether it is a provincial or federal regulation. The important part is that the bill is going to hopefully go to a committee. The bill as it stands today will be completely different when it comes out the back end, but my hope is that perhaps we can engage veterans from coast to coast. Perhaps we can engage the Legion. We need to have that conversation. We need to always be mindful of those sacrifices and celebrate them.

This day was created to honour our history and remember that the freedom we have in Canada comes at a cost. We are thankful to those who were there and to those who are today always willing to fight for us to have the privilege of waking up each and every morning knowing that we live in peace. As I said earlier, they are our silent sentinels. While most would run away from danger, they run toward it. When they wake up each day, they live with the knowledge that when they put their boots on in the morning, they may have to put their lives at risk to support and protect Canadians and our country.

It should never be forgotten that this freedom comes at the most significant cost of all, the supreme sacrifice. It comes at the cost of

bloodshed, injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder, and death. Even when our soldiers are able to return home, it will never be the same for them, because they will never forget. They will continue to be haunted by the horrific sights and smells of war. The nightmares and the mental demands do not end. These are graphic scenes and images that anyone would find difficult to see.

It is so important that we educate our next generation, our future generations, about this history, the importance of our forces, and the price that was ultimately paid by the youth of another generation in preserving our freedom. This responsibility falls on all of us as citizens, as educators, and as families across Canada.

We cannot have this debate without bringing in the fact that the Royal Canadian Legions are our guardians of remembrance. There are more than 1,400 branches across Canada. More than 300,000 members give about 1.5 million volunteer hours a day. They give back to the communities about \$6.5 million helping our soldiers and veterans come back and have some form of peace. They give back to their communities, and we can never forget that.

It is my hope that by getting the bill to the next level, Dominion Command will be invited to Ottawa to speak before the committee and that veterans will have the opportunity to be heard.

This is about the over 1.7 million Canadians who have served our country, whether in the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War, the conflicts we have had in recent years, or the ones we are facing today. It is about all of those who have honoured us by serving and some who made the supreme sacrifice.

In closing, it is a true honour and a privilege today to rise and speak about our troops and our veterans. I will be voting to send Bill C-311 to the committee stage. On a personal note, I hope that all Canadians will make an effort to participate in Remembrance Day ceremonies in their communities on November 11. If that is not possible, I hope they will take two minutes of silence at 11 a.m. to remember those who made such a huge sacrifice for all of us. To those who are listening to this debate today, they have served beyond.

● (1925)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Remembrance Day is a vital time for Canadians to reflect and honour the service of men and women who put their lives on the line for our country.

On November 11, we honour our veterans, our fallen soldiers, peacekeepers, and their families and we recommit to stand up for them as they have stood up for us. It is our solemn responsibility to ensure that every veteran has the care our country owes them.

Hundreds of volunteers conduct Remembrance Day ceremonies in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, and I am very grateful for their work. Nanaimo—Ladysmith has four legion branches. Members should listen to this rundown of ways our community honours veterans and remember on November 11. There are at least seven distinct events.

Adjournment Proceedings

On November 11, I will be at a breakfast for veterans, service members and their families at Legion 256 at 8 o'clock in the morning in Nanaimo. Lantzville and Ladysmith both have parades that lead to their local cenotaphs where wreaths are laid.

I will be at Lantzville luncheon for veterans, service members and their families, following that Remembrance Day ceremony.

The Gabriola Island veterans association holds a ceremony at the Gabriola cenotaph, which is at the RCMP detachment. I have been laying wreaths there for 12 or 14 years as a local government representative. It is a great honour. Hundreds of people come out in the community.

Both legions in Nanaimo work together to hold a hugely well-attended ceremony that includes a parade also. Two legions cooperate together to have that ceremony happen at the cenotaph in downtown Nanaimo.

Finally, I will see community members at 1:45 p.m. at Cedar Memorial Gardens, where Ladysmith's legion holds an afternoon ceremony in the community of Cedar.

Air Cadets, Girl Guides, Scouts and Beavers are always there. We have this fantastic wave of young energy, people who are learning lessons from the experiences of veterans and honouring together.

In my home province of British Columbia, November 11 is a holiday already. We really recognize that when families are able to come together to attend all these ceremonies. They can spend all day in my riding honouring veterans. It really has an impact.

Another powerful learning place in our riding is the Vancouver Island Military Museum. It has 25 exhibits showcasing Canada's military efforts. It has a Wall of Honour where local community members can honour veterans and their fallen loved ones. It has free admission on Remembrance Day, 11 o'clock to 4 o'clock. It has special exhibit this year highlighting the achievements of the African-Canadian Battalion of World War I, which worked with the Canadian Forestry Corps to ensure safe access, particularly to rescue fallen soldiers at the front.

In my community there is a great deal of support and a deep recognition of the sacred responsibility to honour and respect. I look forward to standing with my community on November 11 in this way.

• (1930)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure the House will be pleased to know that the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith will have six and a half minutes time remaining for her remarks when the House next returns to business on this question.

It being 7:29 p.m., the time provided for 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.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to bring the House back to the conversation we were having about pay equity and the advancement of that issue in the House. Canada remains without federal pay equity legislation despite having made that commitment 40 years ago.

I am going to describe a few leaders in our country who are urging action.

Margot Young of the University of British Columbia has pointed out that “talk about gender equity, slogans like ‘it’s 2015’, are purely empty rhetoric without such things in place as proper and full pay equity law.”

Barbara Byers, secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress, has stated:

After 12 years, working women deserve nothing less than proactive pay equity legislation.... We can't let it languish in the archives any longer. Let us also be mindful that women have been waiting for longer than 12 years. We've been waiting for decades and decades, and while we wait, the debt owed to those who are caught in the wage gap continues to mount.

I was honoured in the House as a new MP to stand and present the NDP's motion on pay equity. I was so glad to have the government's support. The government did agree to strike a special committee, and my colleague, the New Democrat MP for Saskatoon West, was our representative on that committee. Her recommendation was that there be pay equity legislation tabled this December. That would be six months from the time of the report and it is what witnesses had said.

The committee itself recommended that it be June 2017, but, sadly, the government has just let us know that it will not be until 2018 that it tables that legislation. There is no rationale for that.

We just heard a report from the Canadian Bar Association that says:

So to recap: a 1956 federal law requiring equal pay didn't close the gender wage gap. Neither did the 1977 law establishing a complaint-based system for equal pay for work of equal value. In 2016 a special committee suggests the government get around to drafting proactive legislation based on a report tabled 12 years ago that said it was time for women to be paid the same as men for work of equal value.

It is time to act, indeed.

Fiona Keith of the Canadian Human Rights Commission has argued that, compared to alternative options, “the task force's recommendations will likely lead to the most robust and most effective right to pay equity, both in terms of implementation and cost.”

So, we have the right models. I want to know why the government is asking us to wait until the end of 2018. Even the President of the Treasury Board has said that “equal pay for work of equal value is a human right”. Why is his government still denying women their human right?

[Translation]

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak in the House today to the issue of pay equity.

Adjournment Proceedings

Our government believes that this is not a partisan issue. While we are working to advance social policies on pay equity, equality, and diversity, we have to stand together and involve all hon. members instead of working in a vacuum as the government or a political party in order to build a better and fairer Canada.

● (1935)

[English]

We believe that equal pay for work of equal value must be considered a fundamental human right. I do not disagree with my colleague across the way. This is unequivocal, and this principle was enshrined in the Canadian Human Rights Act, framed by constitutional guarantees of equality.

The goal of pay equity policy and legislation is to ensure that pay is based on the value of the work, not the gender of those doing the work.

[Translation]

In 1977, the Government of Canada became the first Canadian government to adopt legislative provisions on pay equity, which are found in section 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Under these provisions, pay equity complaints could be filed, which was considered progressive at the time. However, the context has changed and now it is time for the Government of Canada to re-evaluate how pay equity is addressed.

[English]

We are committed to resolving pay equity in a balanced and responsible way, which is why the government supported the creation of the special committee on pay equity. The committee heard from a number of different witnesses, and much of the discussion focused around the pros and cons of the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Bilson report, and the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act.

These systems attempt to address the pay equity issue, each by implementing different solutions arising from various decision points. Our government is taking action in response to the recent report of the special committee on pay equity. However, before we can implement pay equity in the federal sector, we need to undertake a careful review of the issue. This is why we need to hold meaningful consultations and carefully study the pay equity issue.

The government will then be able to table proactive pay equity legislation for federally regulated workplaces by the end of 2018. The committee's findings and recommendations will play an important role as we move forward to develop a new approach to pay equity.

I thank my colleague for raising this very important question, and I look forward to my colleague across the way supporting our upcoming legislation regarding pay equity.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, not a single witness at the pay equity committee asked for the timeline the government has suggested and not a single witness asked for consultation. This legislation was written in 2004, the last time a Liberal government was in power. No reason has been given to delay until 2018.

A further frustration is instead of actually making equal pay for work of equal value for all women across the country, the government has chosen to table legislation that deals with pay equity in a strange way, among its cabinet ministers. There is nothing more elite than that.

I was at a conference the other weekend where I heard speakers say that trickle-down feminism did not work any better for women of our country than any other trickle-down economic theory did. It is very much the wrong priority to bring in Bill C-24 instead of bringing in an act now. We could do it next month.

Again, what is so special about 2018? What will the government learn that it does not already know?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Mr. Speaker, this is concrete work that is being done at the present moment. We are taking the time needed to ensure this legislation is meaningfully analyzed, and it will be presented to this Parliament. We will all get to vote on it, my colleague included.

We understand that Canada is better off when the talents and skills of women are represented in every sector of society, in government at every level, and from the grassroots all the way up to the boardroom. We are setting the tone at the top.

The Prime Minister committed to an equal number of women and men in cabinet, and the Prime Minister delivered on that commitment, demonstrating his belief that our country is stronger and more effective when decision-makers reflect Canada's diversity.

In 2016, women expect and have the right to be full participants in the economic, social, and democratic life of Canada. Let there be no doubt. The Prime Minister's actions on gender parity demonstrate tangible progress, and we plan to work closely with all parliamentarians to make real progress on the issue of pay equity. It will happen.

● (1940)

HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before medicare, Canadian families were on their own when they got sick or injured. New Democrats understood then that this was profoundly unjust and that it ran counter to Canadians' most deeply held values.

That is why the NDP's founding leader, Tommy Douglas, set out to build a pan-Canadian public health care system rooted in the simple notion that we all have a responsibility to take care of each other and that access to health care should never depend on the size of one's bank account. Under medicare, the health of Canadian families was put before profit for the first time in our country's history, and by 1984, the Canada Health Act secured a national public health care system that has since become an essential part of our collective identity.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Canada Health Act is legislation that puts in place conditions for the provinces and territories to receive federal funding for health care, which is within their jurisdiction. There are five key principles enshrined in the act: public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability, and accessibility.

It came as no surprise that the previous Conservative government failed to enforce the Canada Health Act. After all, in his previous job as vice-president of the National Citizens Coalition, Stephen Harper went on record saying, "It's past time the feds scrapped the Canada Health Act", but when Canadians voted for change in the last election, they thought they would finally have a government in Ottawa willing to protect their public health care from creeping privatization.

Unfortunately, from upselling in Ontario to private MRIs in Saskatchewan, to private clinics in British Columbia, violations of the Canada Health Act are still on the rise all across Canada. Let us examine some examples.

In November 2015, the Saskatchewan government, the Conservative government of Brad Wall, voted to introduce pay-per-use MRI services, which allow wealthy individuals to jump the queue. Premier Wall himself had noted in 2009 that these clinics violate the principles of accessibility in the Canada Health Act, but he permitted the extra fees anyway.

In Ontario, there have been dozens of examples of independent health facilities charging extra fees for so-called upgraded services already covered in the public system. An example is cataract lenses, where people go to doctors for cataract surgery, a publicly covered medically essential service, and are told that if they spend an extra \$400, they can get a superior lens. That is happening every day in Ontario. Despite these contraventions, Ontario has never been penalized by the federal government.

In Calgary, the Copeman private health clinic has been giving preferential treatment to fee-paying patients and raising questions about double billing the Alberta medical plan. People in British Columbia have witnessed the Cambie medical clinic openly flaunting the Canada Health Act by selling preferential access to surgeries and charging user fees prohibited by law.

In New Brunswick, draconian regulations force women to get two doctors to declare an abortion medically necessary before it is publicly funded at one of the province's two hospitals. If a woman seeks an abortion in a private facility in New Brunswick, she has to pay for it herself.

The Canada Health Act exists to guarantee universal and equal access to essential health care services for all Canadians. New Democrats believe that it is the federal government's responsibility to enforce it all across the country.

My question is this. Will the Liberal government put an immediate stop to these unacceptable violations of the Canada Health Act or will we just see more ignoring of the principles of the Canada Health Act, as with the previous Harper government?

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has raised an extremely important issue. Our government has shown time and again that we stand behind the core Canadian values of equality and

solidarity. These are the very values that underpin the Canada Health Act. This is why we will continue to work collaboratively with our provincial and territorial colleagues to ensure that citizens across the country can depend on our health care system.

Canadians believe in the equality of citizens and our health care system reflects that fundamental belief. This belief is also reflected in the five principles of the Canada Health Act, which include comprehensiveness, universality, accessibility, portability, and public administration. Guided by the principles of the act, Canada has a publicly funded health care system where access to services is based on medical need and not on the ability or willingness to pay.

The Canada Health Act is clear. Under the act, provincial and territorial health insurance plans are required to cover medically necessary hospital and physician services for their residents on a prepaid basis and on uniform terms and conditions. Permitting payments for faster access to medically necessary services such as MRIs or CT scans at private diagnostic clinics, what has often been called "queue jumping", contravenes both the spirit and accessibility criteria of the Canada Health Act.

The concern is not only that a patient might pay for faster access to medically necessary diagnostic scans, but that they can also then gain faster access to any necessary follow-up care. That is to say queue jumping occurs on two fronts: both for the initial diagnosis and also for any required subsequent surgery or procedure within the publicly funded system. This is not access based on medical need. This is access based on ability or willingness to pay and it runs counter to the underlying principle of Canada's health care system. It is our government's belief that medically necessary diagnostic services like MRIs and CT scans should be covered by provincial and territorial plans, whether provided in a hospital or a clinic.

Canadians are justifiably proud of our publicly funded health care system. In fact, a Stats Canada report on Canadian identity, published in October 2015, found that almost 80% of Canadians express pride in the Canadian health care system. We want to ensure that they continue to be proud of our system.

When Canadians elected our government, they chose a government that promised to focus on new and more collaborative relationships with provinces and territories. Therefore, our government's approach to the administration of the Canada Health Act will emphasize transparency, consultation, and dialogue with our provincial and territorial colleagues. When issues of concern arise, we are committed to dealing with them in a fair and even-handed manner. The hon. member may be assured that our government is committed to preserving the fundamental principles of our health care system. We will continue to work with provinces and territories to ensure Canadians have access to publicly funded health care services based on need and not on their ability or willingness to pay.

Adjournment Proceedings

Let me conclude by confirming that our government believes that any trend toward privatization that results in two-tiered access or queue jumping to publicly funded health care is not compatible with the principles of the Canada Health Act. Our government will continue to defend the principles of the act and Canadians can continue to have pride in a health care system where access is based on individuals' health needs and not on their ability to pay.

● (1945)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, those are encouraging words from the government. The NDP will be watching very carefully to make sure that those words are backed up by action.

This is a far more serious and widespread problem than the government has admitted to date. Health Canada's most recent annual report to Parliament on the Canada Health Act uncovered a number of disturbing trends. It noted that private MRI clinics in British Columbia, Alberta, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan are charging user fees for patients today; hospitals are avoiding the ban on charging for drugs by routing the sick through outpatient clinics that do charge; the portability requirements of the Canada Health Act, which allow Canadians to access care anywhere across the country, are routinely ignored; and Prince Edward Island still has refused to provide medically necessary reproductive health services to women in P.E.I.

From pharmacare to mental health to meeting the needs of our aging population, it is time to renew medicare for the 21st century. Will the Liberal government commit to fulfill its responsibility to protect and enhance our public health care system under the Canada Health Act?

Ms. Kamal Khara: Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that our government is firmly committed to the principles upon which our publicly funded health care system was founded. We will ensure that Canadian citizens continue to have quality health care in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Canada Health Act.

We recognize that sustaining a strong universal health care system requires the collaboration and co-operation of federal, provincial, and territorial governments. Our government will work collaboratively with our provincial and territorial counterparts to realize the Canada Health Act's goals of ensuring that access to necessary health care in Canada is based on medical need, and not on one's ability or willingness to pay. As a government, we take that goal extremely seriously, and our administration of the Canada Health Act will reflect that.

● (1950)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to rise the day after the House voted to support an NDP motion calling on the government to recognize and remediate the historical discrimination faced by indigenous children across Canada. I would like to thank the government for finally acknowledging that it is inexcusable to short-change kids, and I hope it will begin to work with all of its partners to address the huge gap in services that exists for first nations children.

There are now three compliance orders issued by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Will the government now stop fighting families in court and start working with experts and representatives

from indigenous communities to get the help where it is needed as soon as possible?

During the debate on the motion, the member for Labrador was very indignant about this issue and accused the NDP of pulling numbers out of thin air. I would like to take this opportunity to point out to the hon. member and, by extension, the government that the numbers were not pulled out of thin air, but were based on the very numbers provided by the government itself. The same numbers the member disputed were given by Cindy Blackstock to the government six months ago. It did not dispute the numbers until it was asked to spend the money on kids on the ground.

Ms. Blackstock also pointed out that there is a stack of reports from the last 50 years that the government can draw on to implement some much needed services right away. However, the government preferred to appoint its own consultant, also called a special representative, to repeat much of the work that has already been done, instead of implementing solutions it already has.

In my home province of Saskatchewan, there have been six youth suicides in the last four weeks. These young people and their families need support and services in their communities now.

Last week, the NDP held a press conference in Saskatoon to call on the government to end the band-aid approach and to turn our culture of deniability into a culture of accountability that puts kids first. Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac la Ronge First Nation and FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron have called for all levels of government with overlapping jurisdictions to "work together to develop a plan of action to prevent future tragedies of this kind among aboriginal youth".

Instead of stable funding for social workers and support programs in communities, the government has cut 25% of front-line workers in recent years. Then, when there is suicide crisis among young people, emergency workers are flown in for a few weeks, but these workers cannot stay and the cycle begins again.

The same goes for communities where there is no medical centre. Patients and at-risk youth have to be flown out of their communities, instead of being helped and treated at home close to their families.

What the tribunal has ordered is an immediate remediation of this situation. Indigenous kids are being underfunded, and this has to stop. It is a national shame that today, in 2016, there are as many children in care as during the residential school era. Why is this happening? It is because there are not enough support services to allow families to stay together through a crisis.

The first 2,000 days of a child's life is when their most critical phases of development take place. What happens in the first 2,000 days can have a lasting effect, for better or worse. It is unconscionable for any government to postpone help when it is so urgently needed.

Adjournment Proceedings

How is it acceptable to postpone 54% of the announced funding until the last year before an election, or the year after the next election? Will the government revise its planned five-year roll-out of the funding it has announced to get funds to where they are needed right away, instead of in another four years? Indigenous children cannot wait.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Saskatoon West indicated, our government is committed to making the desperately needed investments in indigenous people and communities, including those in infrastructure, social services, and child welfare.

Indeed, the budget is very different from those we have seen in Canada in the previous decade. We are making historic and record investments in indigenous children and indigenous communities. We are taking this fundamentally different and concrete approach, because we know it is time to chart a new course for Canada, for indigenous people, and for the northern region. These changes are long overdue.

The member spoke about the motion that the NDP brought forward in the House of Commons this week. It was a motion that reflected the very actions that this government is taking and will continue to take.

However, it is an unfortunate reality that many first nations people on reserve continue to live with inadequate housing and overcrowding. We are all saddened by the number of suicides we have seen in indigenous communities right across this country. Our hearts go out to the families in Saskatchewan today who are mourning a tremendous tragedy with the loss of young indigenous lives.

We know that children and family services on reserve must also be overhauled. We would ask members of the NDP and all members of the House to support the efforts of government as we overhaul that system. We know that chronic underfunding of the first nations education system has held students back, and we know the time is here to make those changes.

We are committed to transformational change when it comes to our relationship with indigenous people in Canada, and we want to build that relationship on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. This is why the historic investments in budget 2016 helped us turn the page in Canada to open a new chapter in that relationship with our first peoples.

We are delivering on these funds quickly and working as quickly as we possibly can to get them out the door. The new funding that we have already approved will support the construction, service, or renovation of over 3,000 housing units, as well as 195 on-reserve water or waste-water projects, including 25 that will address 34 long-term drinking water advisories in 24 communities. We have funded 130 school-related infrastructure projects and 159 culture and recreation projects. We have committed \$635 million to address the funding gaps in first nation child and family service programs. In addition to this, the Government of Canada committed, in July, to provide up to \$382 million over three years to support an expanded approach to Jordan's principle.

When the member talked about the fact that we were reluctant to support numbers in a motion in terms of dollar investments in children on reserve or indigenous children in this country, it was only because we know that the investment is far greater. We know that more money will be required, and we are prepared to make the investments as they are needed.

● (1955)

Ms. Sheri Benson: Mr. Speaker, there is a mental health crisis faced by indigenous youth, and the government's response needs to equal the scope of that crisis. As my colleague and friend, the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, has said, not only do these communities “need immediate support to address this mental health crisis, they require long-term...solutions”, and “We cannot continue to stand by and watch our Indigenous youth fall through the cracks.”

Will the government follow through on its commitments to stop subverting Jordan's principle? Will it provide adequate funding for medical and mental health services for indigenous children now?

When our government stops fighting families in court over dental care and provides funding for decent, secure housing, then we will all finally see the change so desperately needed on the ground in these communities. I do hope the government will match its rhetoric with actions and honour its commitment to first nation peoples everywhere.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I understand the points the member is making. However, the member must also understand that, as a government, we have made record investments in indigenous governments and communities in Canada. We are the first government to step up with massive housing investments. This year, we have made investments for over 3,000 housing units to be constructed, serviced, or restored on reserves across Canada. We have made specific funding available in the North for Inuit housing.

To date, of the funding that we have allocated in budget 2016 for indigenous peoples, we have been able to move nearly 90% of that funding out the door in either commitments, or delivery to indigenous communities across Canada.

We are moving as quickly as the system allows us to move to address these long-standing inadequacies that exist in both infrastructure, child welfare, youth, health, and all of the other growing needs that exist in indigenous communities across Canada.

We ask for the support of all colleagues in this House to continue that good work and those good efforts.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (2000)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: 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 8:01 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ethics	
Ms. Pauzé	6459
Nominate Your Neighbour	
Mr. Hussen	6459
University of Northern British Columbia	
Mr. Doherty	6459
Community Leadership	
Mr. Sorbara	6459
Sports	
Ms. Hardcastle	6460
Luso Canadian Charitable Society	
Mr. Fonseca	6460
4-H Canada	
Mr. Shipley	6460
Aleppo	
Mr. Levitt	6460
Marie-Françoise Mégie	
Mr. Dubourg	6461
Nuclear Science	
Mrs. Gallant	6461
Robotic Distribution Centre	
Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South)	6461
4-H Canada	
Mr. Maloney	6461
Ethics	
Mr. Godin	6461
2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games	
Mr. Lametti	6462
Violence Against Women	
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	6462
Remembrance Day	
Mr. Clarke	6462
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Alghabra	6462

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Ms. Ambrose	6462
Mr. Trudeau	6463
Ms. Ambrose	6463
Mr. Trudeau	6463
Employment	
Ms. Ambrose	6463
Mr. Trudeau	6463

Ethics	
Ms. Ambrose	6463
Mr. Trudeau	6463
Ms. Ambrose	6464
Mr. Trudeau	6464
Mr. Mulcair	6464
Mr. Trudeau	6464
Mr. Mulcair	6464
Mr. Trudeau	6464
Democratic Reform	
Mr. Mulcair	6464
Mr. Trudeau	6464
Mr. Mulcair	6464
Mr. Trudeau	6464
Finance	
Mr. Lebel	6465
Mr. Morneau	6465
Mr. Lebel	6465
Mr. Morneau	6465
Employment	
Mr. Poilievre	6465
Mr. Morneau	6465
Mr. Poilievre	6465
Mr. Morneau	6465
Finance	
Mr. Deltell	6465
Mr. Morneau	6465
Mr. Deltell	6466
Mr. Morneau	6466
Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Caron	6466
Ms. Jones	6466
International Trade	
Ms. Ramsey	6466
Mr. Lametti	6466
Infrastructure	
Ms. Watts	6466
Mr. Morneau	6466
Ms. Watts	6467
Mr. Morneau	6467
Employment	
Mr. Rayes	6467
Mr. Sohi	6467
Mr. Rayes	6467
Mr. Morneau	6467
Post-Secondary Education	
Ms. Quach	6467
Mr. Cuzner	6467
Ms. Ashton	6467
Mr. Cuzner	6468

The Economy	
Ms. O'Connell	6468
Mr. Morneau	6468
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Kent	6468
Mr. Dion	6468
Mr. Kent	6468
Mr. Dion	6468
Mr. Bezan	6468
Mr. Sajjan	6469
Mr. Paul-Hus	6469
Mr. Sajjan	6469
Canada Post	
Ms. Trudel	6469
Ms. Foote	6469
Health	
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	6469
Mrs. Philpott	6469
The Environment	
Mr. Waugh	6469
Mr. Goodale	6469
Mrs. Block	6470
Mr. Goodale	6470
Mr. Anderson	6470
Mr. Goodale	6470
Mr. Jowhari	6470
Mr. Brison	6470
Health	
Mr. Carrie	6470
Mrs. Philpott	6470
Employment Insurance	
Mr. Stetski	6470
Mr. Duclos	6471
Sports	
Mrs. Nassif	6471
Ms. Qualtrough	6471
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Mrs. Stubbs	6471
Mr. McCallum	6471
International Trade	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	6471
Mr. Lametti	6471
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	6471
Canada's Olympic and Paralympic Athletes	
(House in committee of the whole to recognize the 2016 Summer Olympic Games and Paralympic Games athletes, Mr. Geoff Regan in the chair)	6472
The Speaker	6472

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Veterans Ombudsman	
Mr. Hehr	6472

Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lamoureux	6472
Committees of the House	
Public Accounts	
Mr. Sorenson	6473
Canadian Forces Superannuation Act	
Ms. Mathysen	6473
Bill C-319. Introduction and first reading	6473
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	6473
Canadian Forces Superannuation Act	
Ms. Mathysen	6473
Bill C-320. Introduction and first reading	6473
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)	6473
Petitions	
Campgrounds	
Mrs. Gallant	6473
The Environment	
Mr. MacGregor	6473
Ovarian Cancer	
Mr. Albas	6473
Bank of Canada	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	6473
Agriculture and Agri-Food	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	6473
Poverty	
Ms. Ashton	6474
Questions on the Order Paper	
Mr. Lamoureux	6474
Questions Passed as Orders for Returns	
Mr. Lamoureux	6477
Motions for Papers	
Mr. Lamoureux	6479

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Budget Implementation Act, 2016, No. 2	
Bill C-29. Second reading	6479
Mr. Graham	6479
Mr. Strahl	6479
Ms. Watts	6480
Mr. Gerretsen	6480
Mr. Tabbara	6480
Ms. Watts	6481
Mr. Chan	6481
Mr. Jeneroux	6482
Mr. Sangha	6482
Ms. Watts	6483
Mr. Dusseault	6483
Ms. Watts	6484
Mr. Long	6484
Mr. Johns	6485
Mr. Nater	6485
Mr. Ste-Marie	6485
Mr. Dusseault	6486

Mr. Berthold.....	6486
Ms. Sansoucy.....	6487
Mr. Long.....	6488
Mr. Dusseault.....	6488
Mr. Aboultaif.....	6489
Mr. Lamoureux.....	6490
Mr. Dusseault.....	6490
Mr. Paul-Hus.....	6491
Mr. Long.....	6492
Ms. Moore.....	6492
Mrs. Boucher.....	6493

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Immigration to Atlantic Canada

Motion.....	6493
Motion agreed to.....	6494

National Seal Products Day Act

Bill S-208. Second reading.....	6494
Motion agreed to.....	6495
(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) .	6495

Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act

Bill C-224. Third reading.....	6495
Motion.....	6495
Motion agreed to.....	6496

(Bill read the third time and passed).....	6496
--	------

Holidays Act

Mr. Fraser (West Nova).....	6496
Bill C-311. Second reading.....	6497
Mr. Brassard.....	6499
Ms. Mathysen.....	6499
Mr. Housefather.....	6499
Mr. Shields.....	6499
Mr. Brassard.....	6499
Ms. Mathysen.....	6501
Mr. Boissonnault.....	6502
Mr. Doherty.....	6503
Ms. Malcolmson.....	6504

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Status of Women

Ms. Malcolmson.....	6505
Ms. Dhillon.....	6505

Health

Mr. Davies.....	6506
Ms. Khera.....	6507

Indigenous Affairs

Ms. Benson.....	6508
Ms. Jones.....	6509

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